Talent and Prosperity for All Washington's Workforce Plan

April 2024

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

This is a combined plan.

A. COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

In addition to the four core WIOA title programs, the Washington state plan includes:

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Principles and Priorities:

The planning process for the Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan began with a letter in the spring of 2023 from Gov. Jay Inslee to the Workforce Board, describing his vision for the future of the comprehensive workforce development system in Washington. This vision included stronger cross-agency collaboration and enhanced outcomes for all Washingtonians, businesses,

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and communities, especially those historically and structurally marginalized from economic success. The letter also reflects the urgency experienced by many stakeholders involved in Washington's workforce system.

"Today, workforce challenges are one of the top concerns for both employers and workers here in Washington and across the country," Inslee wrote to the board. "Our extraordinary workforce challenges limit the ability of businesses to expand and grow, stifle economic opportunity for Washington families, and hinder our work to create a Washington where everyone can thrive."

The Governor's message underscores a central theme of this plan: a strong and stable workforce is critical for Washington's future economic success and quality of life.

The Governor's vision supplied the foundation for discussions at the Workforce Board's May 2023 retreat, where Board members and more than 60 stakeholder and partner representatives identified three guiding principles and five strategic priorities that would create the framework for the planning process for the 2024-28 state strategic plan for workforce development. Interviews were then conducted with each collaborating agency to learn how these principles and priorities resonated within the agency's vision and mission, short- and long-term goals and operating plans. These conversations helped shape impact statements connected with each priority area of the TAP plan

Guiding Principles:

1. **Close economic disparities for marginalized populations.**

Too many Washingtonians do not share in the state's economic prosperity. To ensure no one is left behind, this plan focuses on those farthest from opportunity. Our goal is for more people to share in this broader prosperity rather than relying on statewide averages that can mask the financial realities many of our neighbors face.

2. **Deliver comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment.**

Washingtonians are disconnected from the workforce for many different reasons, including the need for skill development, caring for their children or aging family members during work hours, a lack of affordable housing that makes it difficult to move to a new job or retain a current position, and the rising cost of transportation that makes owning a car, even a used one with many miles, economically out of reach. Needs are not bound by the eligibility and service limitations established in federal and state statutes. Success over the next four years will be determined at least in part by how well we support workers, not just with access to education and training, or help getting hired into open positions that fit their skills, but through wrap-around support that provides basics, from healthcare to childcare to transportation. Success also requires closer alignment with industry to help ensure Washington's businesses have the work-ready talent they need to succeed. This may require statutory and administrative reforms that help incentivize the hiring of employees with barriers, along with financial and other support to help keep them on the job. A positive example of how partners came together to change policy

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is in the creation of a state fund pool, Economic Security for All (ECSA) that allows for continued support for low-income workers once employed. This makes good business sense for employers, and it makes good economic sense for our state as a whole when we help our workers with significant challenges keep working. ECSA was made permanent in the 2024 legislative session.

3. **Provide systemwide performance metrics and accountability.**

Data is critical for understanding how the workforce system is operating as a whole. Are public investments in workforce development making a meaningful difference to the state's economy and equitable benefit to all Washingtonians? This goes beyond the performance of individual programs—although those measurements also hold value. Employment rates, earnings, common skill gaps, persistent hiring challenges, and the demographics of those doing the work—including race, age, gender, disability, education level, and more—need to be looked at more holistically so we have a big picture of our workforce system and its impact. Transparent performance tracking is central to engaging more businesses and Washingtonians in helping us understand what is working and what isn't. We will need to be more expansive and collaborative in our data collection and analysis to identify and more fully address the disparities that still exist.

Strategic Priorities:

1. **System:** Integrate system services, data, accountability, and resources with clearly-identified partners and roles to expand, improve, and streamline customer outcomes.

Impact statements: A simplified and common intake; improved data sharing; data-informed integrated service delivery.

2. **Industry:** Support business development and competitiveness by aligning with economic development and growth efforts.

Impact statements: Support sustainable and equitable industry growth; build and expand career pathways for critical industries; expand the definition of worker supports.

3. **Youth:** Improve opportunities for young people to transition to an economically successful adulthood.

Impact statements: Increase youth awareness of services and programs; broaden access and shorten the time to gain industry-valued credentials.

4. **Credential Transparency:** Explore credential transparency and expansion to improve equitable access, mobility, and long-term economic success.

Impact statements: Create a common definition of credentials using a single dictionary of terms; put learners at the center of credential pathway reforms.

5. **Job Quality**: Develop a job quality framework to guide decisions and key investments in the delivery of business services.

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Impact statements: Ensure access to pathways to living-wage jobs that are critical to communities; expand registered apprenticeships to more fields.

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Implementation Timeline

We envision that each of the five strategic priorities will follow a similar implementation trajectory over the next four years:

Year 1: Engage collaborators, identify success indicators, and build foundations Year 2: Develop and implement a transition framework; package promising practices for replication and/or perform pilot testing.

Year 2: Transition, framework development and implementation. The second year will capture the learnings of the first year and build those learnings into the strategic priority projects.

Year 3: Expand, integrate and scale-up and/or develop legislative proposals on how to do so.

Year 4: Review, modify or expand strategic planning.

Each strategic priority has specific tasks for each year of the TAP plan, from 2024-2028.

Implementation Oversight

Each state and local administrative entity maintains responsibility for the specific activities and outcomes listed in program-specific operating plans. Each has also made a commitment to participating in collaborative activities within the five strategic priorities and in alignment with the three guiding principles of the TAP plan. Transparent—public-facing—oversight of inter-agency collaborative efforts and progress towards improved outcomes will be facilitated by the Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board). The Workforce Board will maintain a calendar of progress reporting for each of the strategic priorities of TAP. Presentations and publication of progress reports, including an interactive data dashboard will coincide with the board's publicized meeting calendar, with availability announced in the Workforce Board's weekly newsletter.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The High-Level Numbers Look Good

Washington's economy is strong overall, but an uneven prosperity reveals challenges to consider as policymakers, employers and labor leaders work to implement Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) the next four-year workforce strategic plan.

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While the pandemic in 2020 was traumatic in many ways, including the unexpected shuttering of businesses and loss of jobs, the state's economy has recovered well since then.

Figure 1
National and State GDP
2005-2023, Quarterly
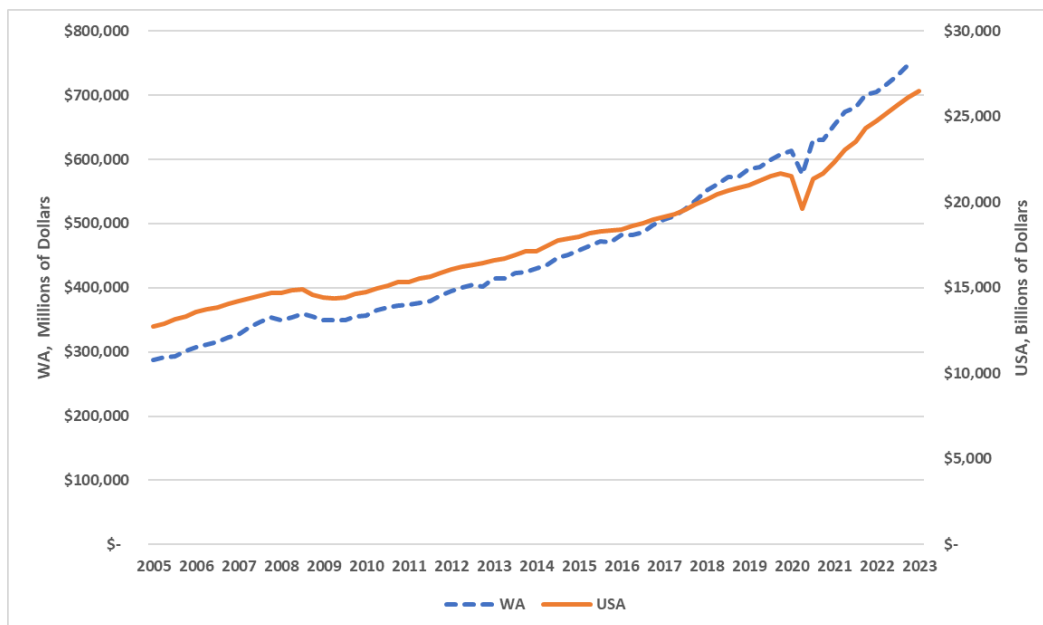
Source: U.S Bureau of Economic Analysis

Washington's high-level economic data has been very good, especially since the end of the Great Recession in 2009. Figure 1 shows how the state's economic output expressed as gross domestic product (GDP) has accelerated faster than that of the nation. As of 2022, only four states had a higher per capita GDP than Washington, and only five states had higher per capita personal income.

Figure 2
National and State Employment Levels
1990-2023, Monthly

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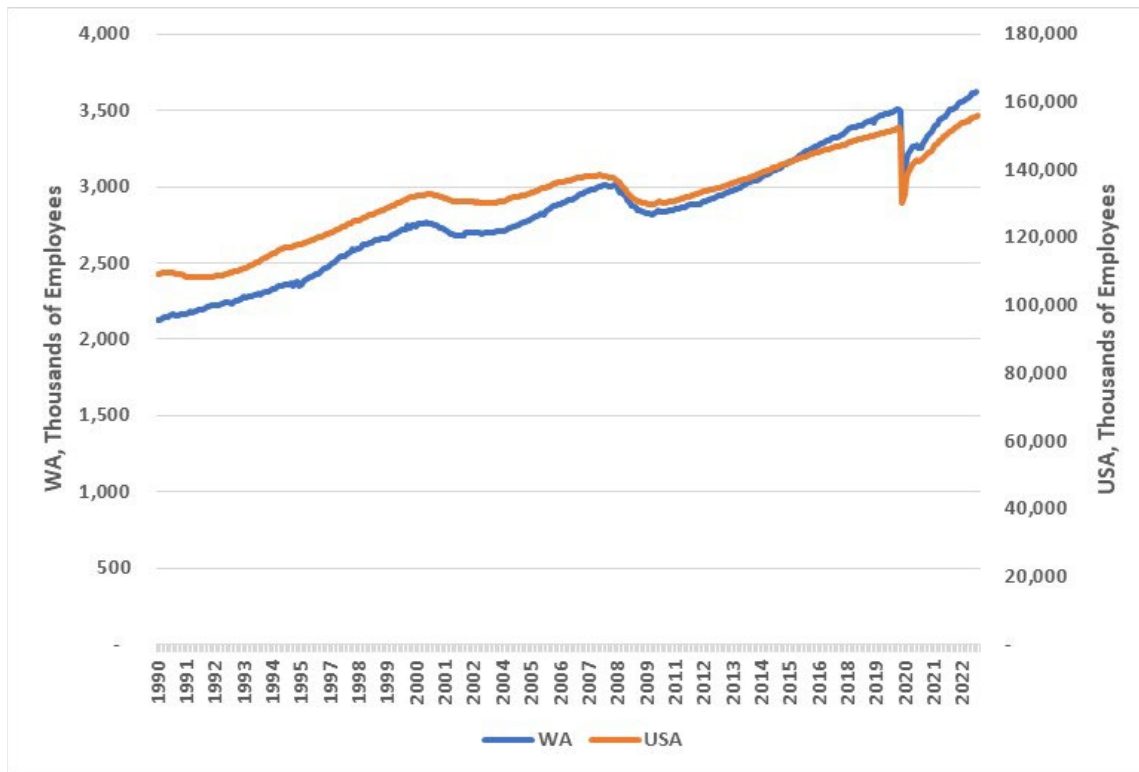
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Similarly, Washington state employment levels have recovered and moved beyond pre-pandemic levels (see Figure 2). The earnings of these workers in 2022 were on average just under $84,000. This was 20% higher than the national average of about $67,000 and higher than all but three other states. So, on average things are relatively great in the Evergreen State.

Prosperity Not Equally Shared

Average is the key word, though—as we know the average income in a given room jumps to millions when any of Washington's famous billionaires enters it. The state's average wage is driven by the exceptional earnings of workers in King County where, on average, workers earned just shy of $114,000 in 2022. This is 35% higher than the state's average wage. However, when King County—the state's most populous and highest-earning county—is removed, then Washington's average earnings plummet to $62,800, with five counties well below $50,000. That would drop us to 24th highest earning state—at the middle of the pack—just below North Carolina.

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Figure 3
Average Annual Pay 2022
Highest and lowest counties in Washington State

County	Average Annual Pay 2022	Rank
King	$ 114,000	1
Snohomish	$ 72,400	2
Clark	$ 67,000	3
Thurston	$ 65,600	4
Kitsap	$ 64,500	5
Lincoln	$ 46,900	35
Douglas	$ 46,500	36
Pacific	$ 43,900	37
Okanogan	$ 42,500	38
Wahkiakum	$ 41,700	39

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
*Rounded to nearest hundred

Figure 3 depicts Washington's top five earning counties in 2022 along with the bottom five earning counties. No surprise, King County is the highest earner, followed distantly by Snohomish, then Clark County. Note that King County was the only county with above average earnings. The bottom five counties are a mix of rural counties from across the state with the lowest earner being Wahkiakum at $41,700. King County workers earned nearly three times as much on average as Wahkiakum workers, although of course Seattle area workers also faced significantly higher cost of living challenges, particularly in housing.

There are likely several causes for these geographic disparities. One is the differing demographics in race, ethnicity, education level, employment history, and other factors. In the next chapter we explore demographics. For now, we will focus on other causes, in particular industry composition.

Industry Composition

The information industry notched both the highest average wage as well as the most total wages paid out in Washington in 2021—see Figure 5. Nearly one in seven dollars paid out by state firms was done so by firms in the information industry. Other high-paying industries in Washington include: management of companies and enterprises; professional, scientific, and technical services; and finance and insurance industries. They were respectively the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th best paying industries.

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Figure 4
Average Industry Wages and Employment 2021
Highest and Lowest in Washington State, 2-digit NAICS

Industry subsectors	Total 2021 wages paid	Average annual employment (1000s)	Average annual wage	Rank
Information	$41,994M	157k	$269k	Top Five Paying Industries
Management of companies and enterprises	$5,838M	43k	$135k	
Professional, scientific, and technical services	$28,389M	226k	$126k	
Finance and insurance	$12,040M	97k	$125k	
Utilities	$600M	5k	$113k	
Other services (except public administration)	$4,766M	91k	$52k	Bottom Five Paying Industries
Educational services	$2,000M	43k	$46k	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	$1,626M	40k	$41k	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	$3,628M	97k	$37k	
Accommodation and food services	$6,718M	238k	$28k	

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department
Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

The Accommodation and Food Service industry had the lowest average wage statewide; followed by agriculture; then arts, entertainment, and recreation. The average annual wage in the Information industry was nearly 10 times as high as wages paid to workers in Accommodation and Food Service.

King County has far and away the most employment in the state, accounting for 41% of the states' total employment in 2021. Many of those workers were also concentrated in relatively higher wage industries, with King County accounting for 86% of the information industry employment, 70% of the management of companies and enterprises, and 63% of the professional and business services. At the same time, Washington's most populated county accounted for 35% of statewide accommodation and food service employment.

Regionalization of Industries

This concentration of high paying industries in King County goes a long way in explaining the disparity between its relative prosperity when compared with the rest of the state.

Relative industry concentrations of employment can be determined by region through a tool called Location Quotients. It is a ratio of how big a given industry is in a particular area (West Urban for example) compared to how big it is in a larger area (Washington state). For example,

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in Figure 5, see that the employment location quotient (LQ) for Accommodation and Food Services in the Rural East region equaled 1.00. This means that employment there as a portion of all employment is equal to that industry's share of employment at the state level. In other words, its share of the regional employment is exactly equal to its share of statewide employment. Less than 1.0 means comparatively low share and above 1.0 means comparatively high share.

Figure 5
2022 Employment Location Quotients by Region
2-digit NAICS broken out by 4-regions

Industry Title	Rural[1] West	Rural[2] East	Urban[3] East	Urban[4] West
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1.23	6.04	3.68	0.21
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	5.12	1.81	1.08	0.76
Utilities	1.81	3.35	1.42	0.78
Construction	1.00	0.72	0.96	1.02
Manufacturing	1.05	1.50	0.89	1.00
Wholesale Trade	0.69	0.87	1.00	1.02
Retail Trade	0.95	0.65	0.79	1.06
Transportation and Warehousing	1.04	0.75	0.95	1.02
Information	0.16	0.17	0.14	1.26
Finance and Insurance	0.60	0.42	0.97	1.05
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.73	0.58	0.72	1.09
Professional, Scientific, & Tech. Services	0.41	0.35	0.66	1.13
Management of Comp. & Enterprises	0.21	0.08	0.65	1.15
Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt., & Remediation Services	0.68	0.43	0.94	1.05
Educational Services	1.19	1.95	1.10	0.93
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.13	0.86	1.29	0.94
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.49	0.63	0.86	1.02
Accommodation and Food Services	1.53	1.00	1.11	0.95
Other Services	1.28	0.68	0.76	1.05
Public Administration	1.99	1.25	1.08	0.93

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, QCEW

The Information Industry, the highest paying in the state, shows the most regional distinction with LQs. For the Rural West, Rural East, and Urban East regions the information LQ was 0.17 or lower, whereas it was 1.26 for the Urban West region. Similar patterns emerge for the "White Collar" type industries of Finance and Insurance; Real Estate and Rental and Leasing;

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[1] Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, San Juan, and Wahkiakum counties.
[2] Adams, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, ad Whitman counties.
[3] Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Pend Orielle, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Yakima counties.
[4] Clark, Cowlitz, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom counties.

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Professional, Scientific, & Tech. Services; and Management of Comp. & Enterprises. Conversely, agriculture and mining industries have very low LQs for Urban West but are high for the other regions.

This LQ analysis shows that the high-paying industries like information and Management of Companies & Enterprises are disproportionately found in King County (and other Western Urban Counties). On the other hand, the lower-paying industries of Agriculture and Accommodation industries are disproportionately found outside of King County.

Occupations

What a person does is often as important if not more important than who they work for in determining labor market outcomes. Washington state is projected to see growth in occupations that pay well, as well as those that pay well below average. Figure 6 shows the top 25 fastest growing occupations in the state. This is defined as those with the most projected openings due to growth (as opposed to openings due strictly to job turnover or movement from similar occupation to similar occupation).

Figure 6
Occupations with most Growth 2022

Occupational title	Estimated employment		% Growth	Employment Share in King County	Avg. Ann. Wage
	2023 Q2	2030			
Software Developers	118,162	146,418	24%	87%	$145,150
Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides	103,436	122,602	19%	30%	$36,120
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	66,513	80,756	21%	26%	$36,120
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Spec.	34,423	44,806	30%	77%	$93,210
Fast Food and Counter Workers	112,461	123,270	10%	28%	$32,910
Office Clerks, General	76,889	85,604	11%	35%	$45,000
General and Operations Managers	57,269	65,746	15%	49%	$134,690
Registered Nurses	63,775	71,549	12%	38%	$95,350
Management Analysts	34,168	41,880	23%	61%	$114,730
Construction Laborers	52,180	60,231	15%	27%	$54,550
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	54,989	62,393	13%	58%	$84,080
Retail Salespersons	107,844	117,904	9%	33%	$37,210
Janitors and Cleaners	53,081	59,305	12%	28%	$38,100
Customer Service Representatives	56,886	63,421	11%	49%	$43,930
Laborers and Material Movers	60,010	65,963	10%	38%	$39,080
Counselors, All Other	29,041	34,162	18%	31%	$58,710

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Web Developers	19,920	25,051	26%	88%	$101,920
Nursing Assistants	35,928	40,695	13%	38%	$38,270
Farmworkers & Laborers	76,462	79,387	4%	3%	$33,120
Stockers and Order Fillers	38,701	43,640	13%	27%	$38,750
Teaching Assistants, All Other	45,163	48,915	8%	27%	$42,130
Accountants and Auditors	37,426	41,859	12%	54%	$87,370
Waiters and Waitresses	49,454	54,461	10%	32%	$44,490
Human Resources Specialists	22,245	26,368	19%	58%	$83,940
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	32,282	35,693	11%	24%	$42,020

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, OES & Occupational Projections

Outside of General and Operations Managers, of which just under half were in King County, most high-paying occupations were predominant in King County. Typical of this trend were Software Developers, Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists, and Web Developers. In essence what this data is telling us is that while growth occupations are geographically dispersed, high-paying ones are not.

In addition, we have seen falling labor force participation rates. As of October 2023, 64.3% of the state's population (age 16 and over) was in the labor force (meaning working or looking for and able to work). This is down from a recent high of 66.2% in April 2020 and was as high as 69.9% in December 1998.

Business Characteristics

Employers are the critical other half of the state's workforce equation, and their financial health and overall economic conditions are critical to labor markets. Dun and Bradstreet, a company that provides business intelligence and analytics through proprietary software, makes data available looking at the relative health/outlook (distress) for businesses. Figure 7 shows this broken out by characteristics of the business owner as well as by Workforce Development Area. There are 12 workforce regions in Washington.

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Figure 7
Business Characteristics 2023

Workforce Development Area[5]	Small Business		Minority Owned		Female Owned		Distressed % for not small, minority or female owned
	% of Total	% Distressed	% of Total	% Distressed	% of Total	% Distressed	
Benton-Franklin	80.8%	10.3%	1.3%	12.8%	5.3%	11.7%	7.8%
Eastern	77.7%	11.3%	0.6%	12.3%	5.2%	12.3%	7.5%
North Central	79.3%	12.0%	0.9%	12.3%	5.1%	12.4%	7.6%
Northwest	82.1%	9.7%	0.6%	11.7%	5.7%	11.1%	6.8%
Olympic	82.1%	10.1%	0.8%	13.4%	6.5%	12.3%	7.5%
Pacific Mountain	79.0%	10.4%	1.0%	16.8%	5.8%	12.6%	8.1%
Seattle-King	82.6%	9.4%	1.5%	13.8%	5.0%	12.1%	8.5%
Snohomish	83.1%	10.2%	1.0%	13.0%	4.7%	13.0%	7.7%
South Central	78.7%	10.6%	0.9%	14.7%	4.9%	12.6%	7.5%
Southwest	83.3%	10.4%	0.8%	12.0%	5.0%	12.3%	8.0%
Spokane	80.8%	9.9%	0.7%	10.9%	5.0%	12.2%	7.2%
Tacoma-Pierce	81.3%	9.6%	1.5%	13.7%	5.0%	11.7%	7.2%
Statewide	*81.8%*	*9.9%*	*1.2%*	*13.5%*	*5.2%*	*12.1%*	*7.9%*

Source: Dun & Bradstreet

According to this data source, there is not a strong level of difference in distressed level when looking at it by area, however the owner characteristics see real differences. Companies that are not owned by a minority, a female or are small had just 7.9 % of firms considered to be distressed. Conversely nearly 14% of minority-owned businesses and just over 12% over female-owned were distressed. Additionally small businesses were also more likely to experience distress (0.9 percent).

Hiring Gaps

It is well known that since the pandemic Washington's employers, like those across the nation, have struggled to find workers. However, it is not always an easy thing to measure and much of the information on hiring gaps is anecdotal. There is however federal survey data collected on Job Openings, JOLTS (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey) that collects some information. The table below compares job opening and quit rates for various industries. Industries with the highest number of openings were Accommodation and Health Care, whereas industries with the highest quit levels were Accommodation and Retail. While this data is not available at the state level, it would likely be mirrored locally.

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[5] For information on how WDCs are defined see: Local Workforce Development Boards - Washington Workforce Association

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Comparing Rates for Jobs Openings and Quits
USA, 2022

2022
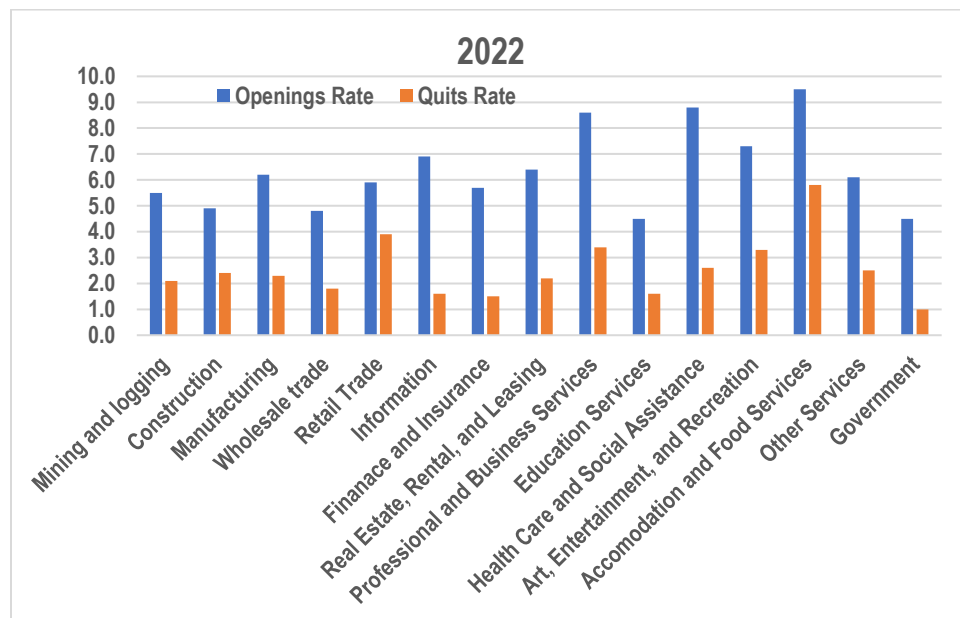
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, JOLTS

Data does allow us to get estimates of the numbers of unemployed persons relative to the number of job openings. The below chart shows the trend in this comparative measure from 2006 to 2023. The data shows that in weak labor markets (like the Great Recession and the Pandemic) the number of unemployed is high relative to job openings – seven unemployed Washingtonians per job opening in the Great recession and slightly over that during the pandemic. In the current tight labor market, there is less than one unemployed person per job opening.

Ratio of Unemployed to Job Openings

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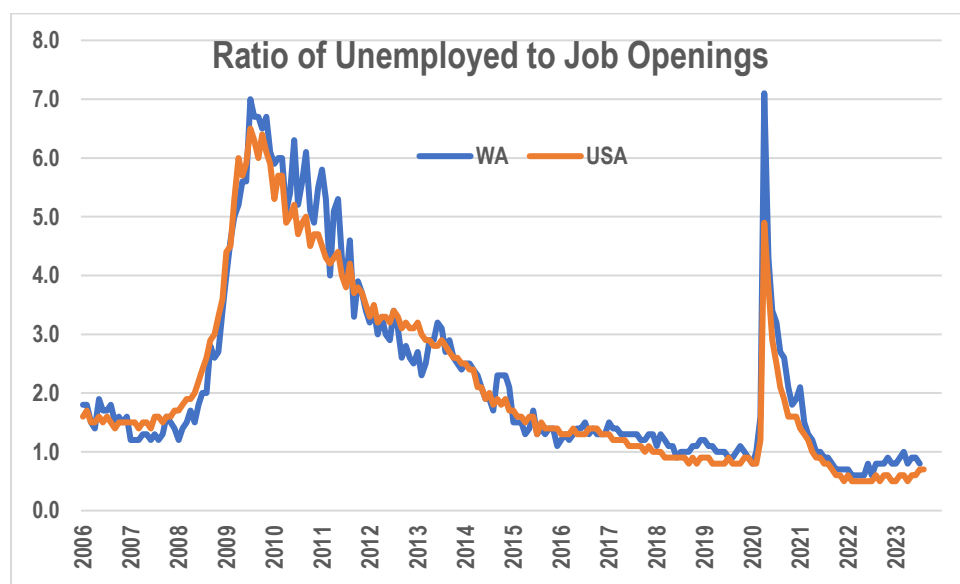
Conclusion

The data shows that when taken in aggregate our economy and labor markets are performing very well, with Washington considered a national leader. However, when drilling down by geographic area and industry we begin to see a very different and more challenging picture, with considerable differences among different regions of the state.

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WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

Washington is home to a diverse population. The Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic have tested the resilience of the state's workers, employers, and communities. Washington as a whole has recovered from both of these socioeconomic setbacks, but that recovery has not been equitable. Race, ethnicity, disability status, sex, location, education levels, and other characteristics all have an impact on a Washington resident's ability to find and keep a job. Moving out of the COVID-19 pandemic, Washington has the opportunity to mitigate the racism, sexism, "ableism" and other discrimination that exists within its systems. But to do so data must be presented in a way that highlights these differences so they can be better understood. This chapter presents data from the American Community Survey[6] disaggregated to better capture the population's intersecting identities.

Unemployment Rate by Race

The unemployment rate for all races peaked around the Great Recession and then generally declined until COVID-19 hit the economy like a tsunami.

The unemployment rates varied by race, with a recession era high of 23% for American Indian/Alaska Natives in 2010 compared to 8% for Asians the same year. Blacks also had higher unemployment (17%) during that year, compared to 10% unemployment among whites. Similar to the post-recession recovery seen around 2010, most races showed unemployment decreases in 2021 while moving out of the worst of the pandemic. Unfortunately, the Black unemployment rate increased two percentage points. This increase makes Black unemployment one of the highest rates for any race at 10%; American Indian/Alaska Natives also experienced 10% unemployment. People of two or more races

Unemployment Rate by Race
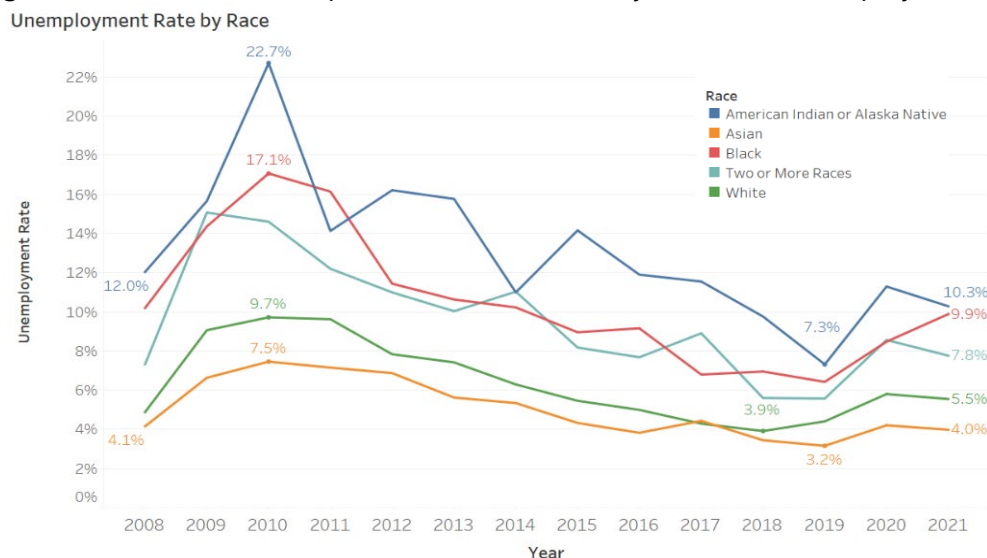
Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Civilian population, age 18-65

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[6] The American Community Survey (ACS) is an annual demographics survey program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau; it combines monthly surveys into an aggregate annual dataset reducing the effect of the pandemic during 2020. Some populations are too small to include and are not shown.

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(multiracial) had 8% unemployment and whites were at 6%. The lowest unemployment rate was 4% for Asians.

Unemployment by Race and Sex

Unemployment varies by sex within each race. The accompanying chart shows the unemployment rate for men and women of each race in 2021. For most races men have a lower unemployment rate than women. However, this pattern is reversed for Black men who have a 4-percentage point higher unemployment rate than Black women. The unemployment rate for Black men grew from 7% in 2019 to 12% in 2021. National data also show that there are high rates of Black men who are not working; either incarcerated or out of the labor force for another reason. The racial gap would likely increase if those populations were accounted for. A 2021 Brookings report concludes that the causes of higher unemployment for Black men are discrimination and social isolation that lead to lower education, skills, and work experience. The relatively high percentage of American Black men who are incarcerated also leads to lower employment in the long run.[7]
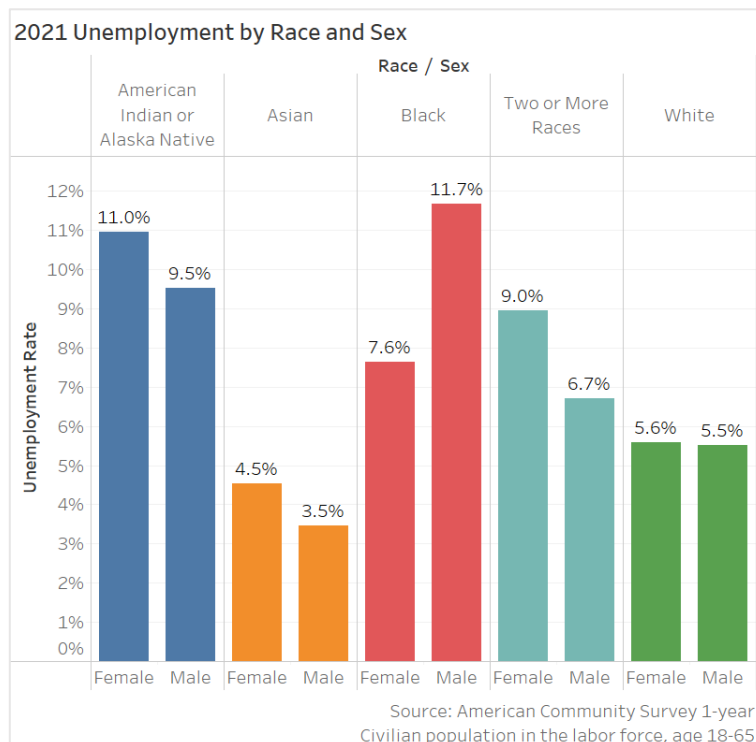
2021 Unemployment by Race and Sex

Race / Sex

American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Two or More Races	White
Female 11.0% Male 9.5%	Female 4.5% Male 3.5%	Female 7.6% Male 11.7%	Female 9.0% Male 6.7%	Female 5.6% Male 5.5%

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Civilian population in the labor force, age 18-65

Unemployment by Sex

Unemployment rate differences between Washington's men and women are less pronounced than with race or ethnicity. Men had higher unemployment during the Great Recession, but both sexes' unemployment rate decreased during the mid-to-late 2010s. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a surge in unemployment for both men and women in 2020. However, men recovered slightly in 2021 while women's unemployment continued to rise.

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[7] https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-are-employment-rates-so-low-among-black-men/

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Unemployment Rate by Sex

Unemployment Rate by Sex and Educational Attainment
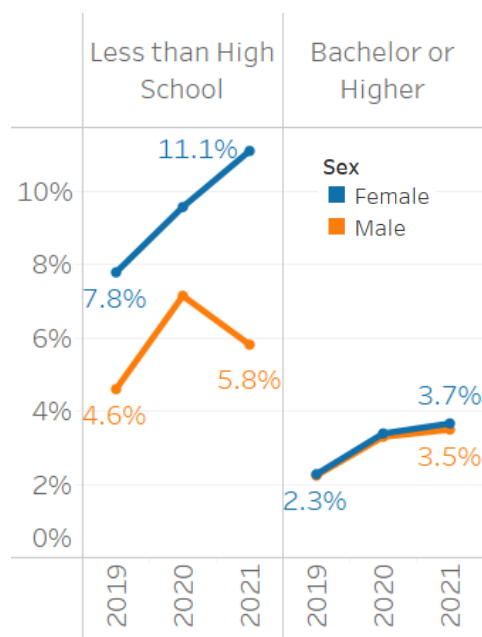
The rate of unemployment between women and men varied at least in part because of differences in education levels. Overall, people with lower levels of education experience higher unemployment. As education levels rise so do employment opportunities. However, the gap between the sexes also varies by a person's level of education; as the education level increases the gap between men and women's unemployment rate decreases. In 2021, women with less than a high school diploma had an unemployment rate double the rate of men with the same level of education. However, women with a bachelor's degree or higher had nearly the same unemployment rate as men with the same education level. A report from Pew Research shows that during the COVID-19 pandemic more women than men left the labor force, in part to take care of children because of pandemic-induced school and daycare closures. This further widened difference in employment rates between women and men. Women are

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disproportionally employed in occupations that had sharp cuts during the start of the pandemic - those that require them to work in-person, like food preparation and health care.[8]

Unemployment Rate by Disability Status

Unemployment Rate by Disability Status

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Civilian population in the labor force, age 18-65

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) one in four Washington adults has a disability. A disability can be loss of vision or hearing, mobility issues, problems with cognition, or not being able to live independently[9]. Many of those with a disability are not in the workforce; but the American Community Survey shows that about 7% of the workforce identifies as having a disability. People with a disability who are in the workforce show far higher rates of unemployment than those without a disability. In 2021, 12% of people with a disability were unemployed, compared to 5% of people without a disability.

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[8] https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/01/14/some-gender-disparities-widened-in-the-u-s-workforce-during-the-pandemic/
[9] https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/washington.html

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Unemployment by Ethnicity

Washington's Hispanic population has increased over the past few decades, doubling in the 1990s and growing to over 13% in 2020[10]. People of Hispanic origin can be of any race; the chart below shows the percentage of each race that is either Hispanic or Not Hispanic. There has been some debate over who is Hispanic and who is not. This is a shifting category that is not always defined the same way. The 2020 census grouped Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ethnicity origin under the umbrella term "Hispanic." A person was also added to the category "Hispanic" if they wrote in a country of origin in Latin or Central America for the U.S. Census, even if they did not choose Hispanic as their ethnicity or race.

Race/Ethnicity (2021)	Hispanic	Not Hispanic
American Indian or Alaska Native	39%	61%
Asian	1%	99%
Black	3%	97%
Two or More Races	47%	53%
White	3%	97%

The unemployment rate for Hispanic people in Washington has ranged between 5% and 14% in the last 15 years, and during that time unemployment has always been higher for Hispanics than for non-Hispanics. The difference between the unemployment rate for these two populations was greatest during the Great Recession and has since narrowed, ending in a gap of just one percentage point between 2018 and 2021.

Unemployment Rate by Hispanic Ethnicity

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
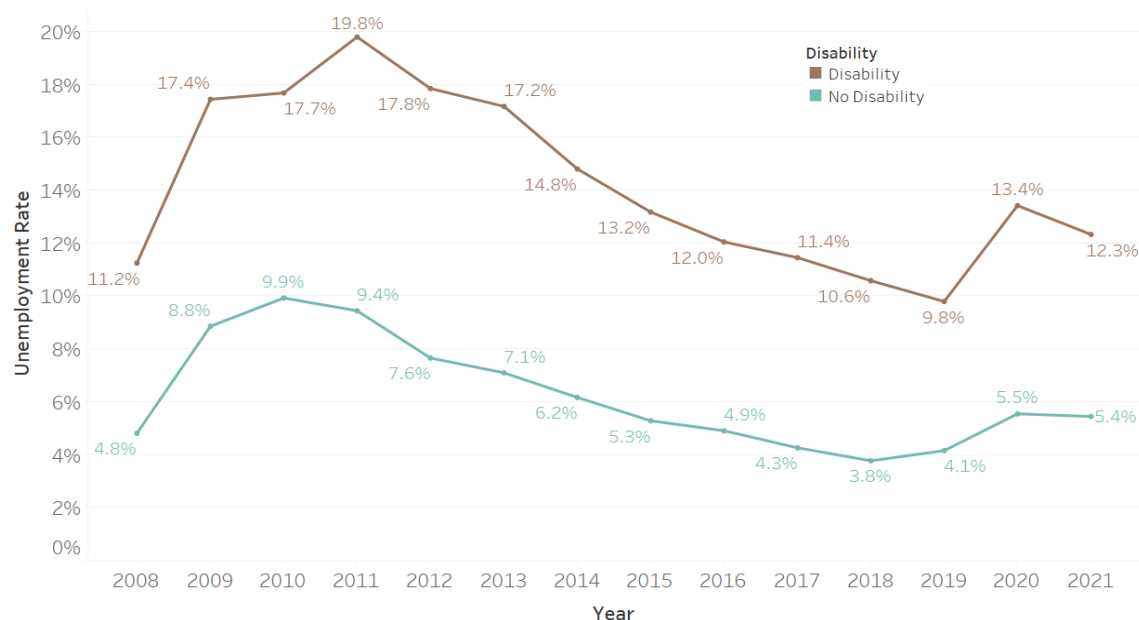Civilian population in the labor force, age 18-65

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[10] https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/statewide-data/washington-trends/population-changes/population-hispaniclatino-origin

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Unemployment Rate by Geographic Location (Rural/Urban)

Geographic differences show less variance in high or low unemployment than other factors we have examined. In 2021 there was a smaller than 2 percentage point difference between urban and rural and east and west. Over the last decade unemployment rates have consistently been lowest in the urban west, where the rate fell from 8% in 2012 to 4% in 2018 & 2019. The unemployment rate in the urban west rose during COVID, up 2 percentage points to 6% in 2020 & 2021, still lower than all other geographic areas in that time period. The rural west has tended to have the highest unemployment over the last decade, ranging from 11% in 2012 to 6% in 2018 & 2019. Both the rural and urban east mostly stay between the lows of the urban west and the highs of the rural west, with one obvious difference: the rural east hit a higher unemployment rate in 2012 (11%) compared to the other groups. There have been a few times when the rural east has exceeded the unemployment rate of the rural west, but by mere tenths of a percentage.

Unemployment Rate by Geographic Location
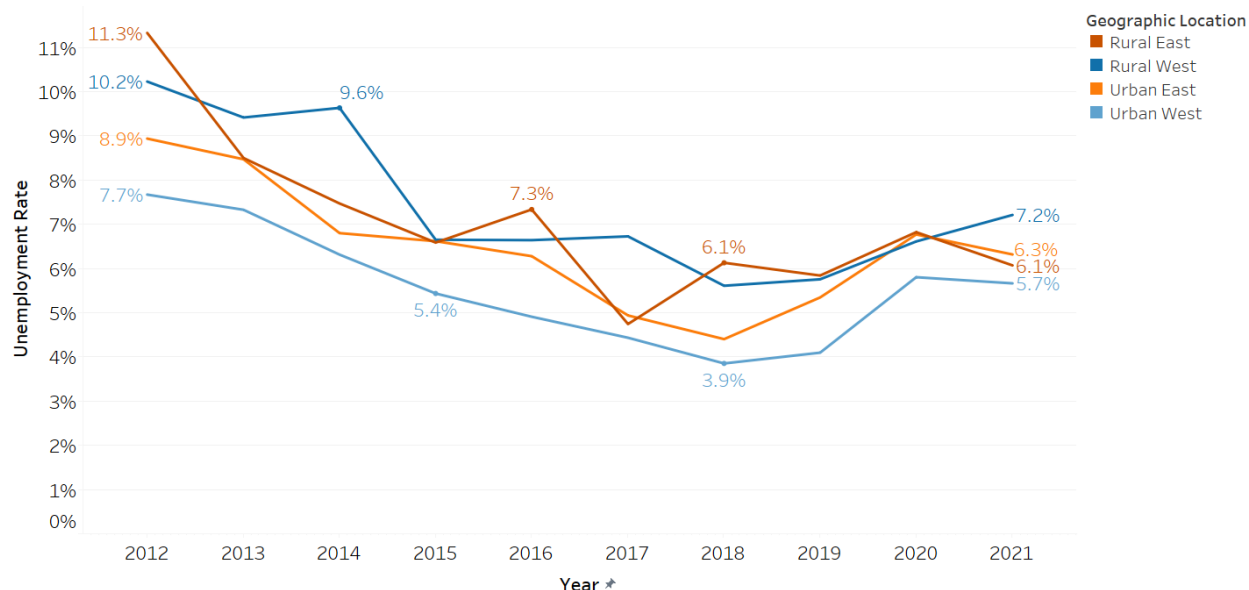
Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Civilian population in the labor force, age 18-65

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Unemployment Rate by Geographic Location and Educational Attainment

Higher education comes with higher employment rates. Post-high school education and training are increasingly important in securing a living-wage job. Unemployment rates are lowest for those with more education and training. Across the state in 2021 there is not much difference between those with a high school diploma, some college, or a college degree. However, there are substantial differences for those with less than a high school education. The rural west shows a 15%

Unemployment Rate by Geographic Location

Highest Ed ..	Geographic Location			
	Rural West	Urban West	Rural East	Urban East
Less than High School	15.4%	5.7%	5.5%	10.0%
High School Degree or Equivalent	6.9%	6.2%	5.8%	6.3%
Some College or Associate Degree	6.4%	5.7%	3.9%	5.9%
Bachelor or Higher	4.8%	3.7%	4.0%	2.0%

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Civilian population in the labor force, age 25-65

unemployment rate for those with less than a high school diploma, compared to 6% for the same population in the urban west.

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Educational Attainment in Washington

The Washington Student Achievement Council set a goal that 70% of adults between the ages of 25-44 will have a post-secondary credential by 2023. The state has not met that goal, but the percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased over the past decade. Since 2008 the percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased from 32% to 40% (2021). The percentage of people whose highest education is some college, or an associate degree has decreased from 37% in 2008 to 31% in 2021. The percentage of people whose highest education is a high school diploma or equivalent has remained fairly steady, between 21% and 23% since 2008. The percentage of people who have less than a high school diploma ranges from 8% to 10%, with the 8% seen only in the last few years.

Educational Attainment by Year

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Age 25-65

Legend:
- Less than High School
- High School Degree or Equivalent
- Some College or Associate Degree
- Bachelor or Higher
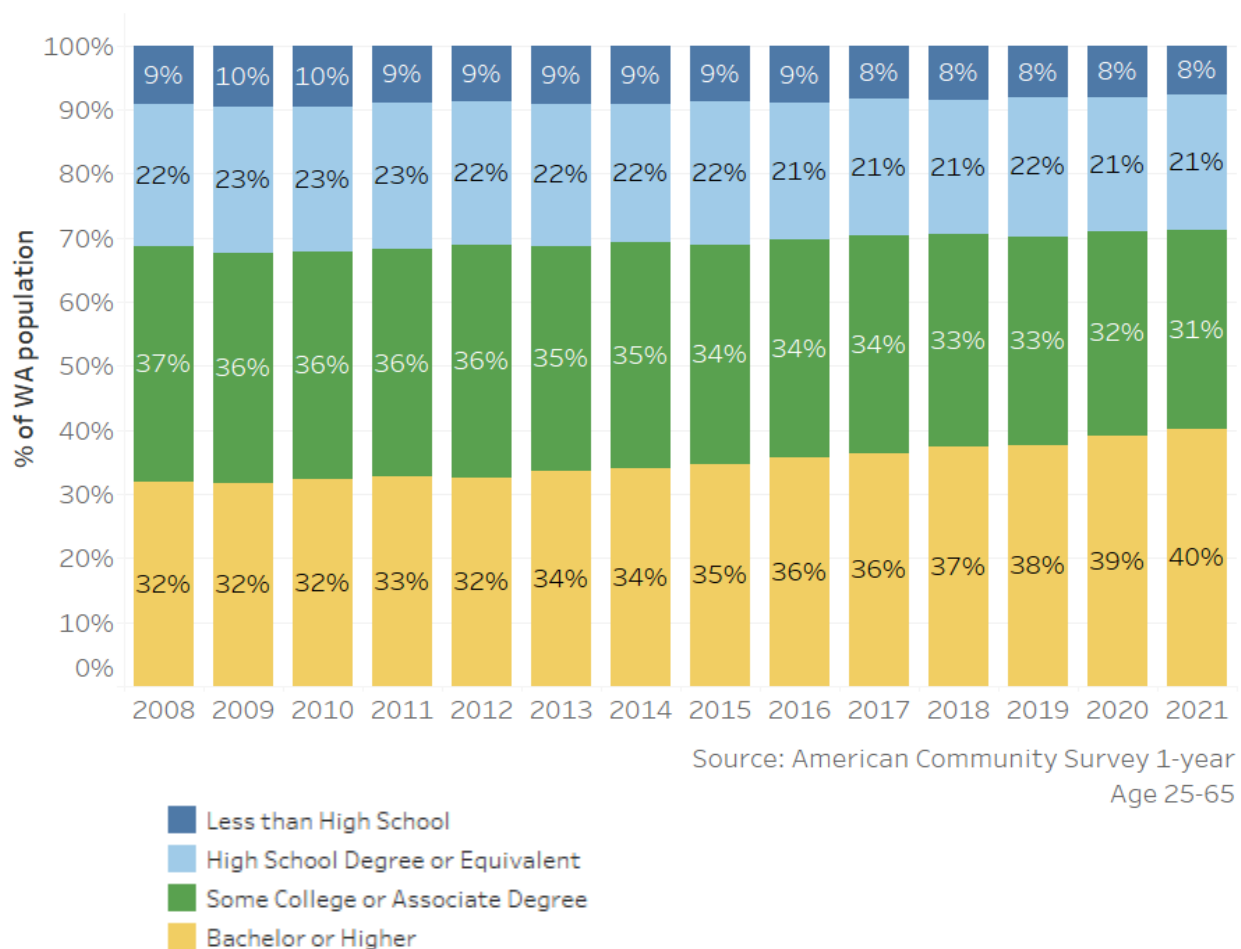
Of course, educational attainment is not the same for every demographic. A lower percentage of Black Washingtonians have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Although this percentage grew between 2008 and 2021, there is still a gap between Blacks and other races.

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Educational Attainment for Black/African-American

Highest Ed Level

- Less than High School
- High School Degree or Equivalent
- Some College or Associate Degree
- Bachelor or Higher

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Age 25-65
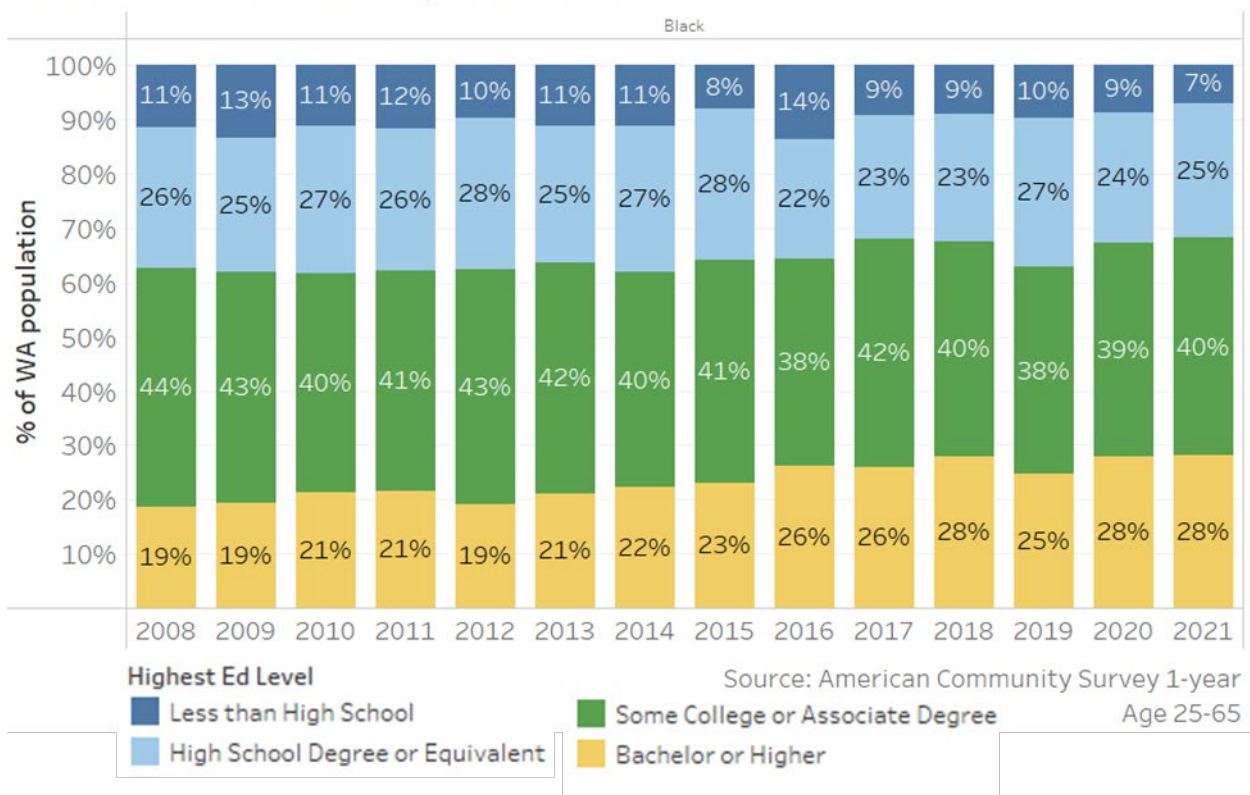
Educational Attainment by Race

In 2021, Washingtonians of Asian descent had the highest percentage earning a bachelor's degree or higher (64%); followed by whites (40%), people of two or more races (33%), Blacks (28%), and American Indians (17%.) Black and Asian Washington residents have the same percentage who have less than a high school diploma, 7% for each of these racial categories. Some 15% of American Indians did not earn a high school diploma, twice the percentage of Blacks and Asians. American Indians also had the largest percentage of people whose highest level of education was a high school diploma or equivalent (32%).

2021 Educational Attainment by Race

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Age 25-65

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Educational Attainment by Hispanic Ethnicity

College enrollment of Hispanics across the nation has increased from under 1.5 million in 2008 to over 2.4 million in 2021.[11] In addition, a growing number of Hispanics have reached higher educational attainment since 2008, this is true nationwide and in Washington. Although a gap persists between Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations, there has been a dramatic change in the percentage of Hispanics who have less than a high school diploma. The percent of Hispanic people who have less than a high school diploma has shrunk from 41% in 2008 to 27% in 2021. The percentage of Hispanic people who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher has increased from 11% to 20% in the same time frame.

Hispanic Educational Attainment by Year

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Age 25-65

Legend:
- Less than High School
- High School Degree or Equivalent
- Some College or Associate Degree
- Bachelor or Higher

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[11] https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/05/significant-educational-strides-young-hispanic-population.html

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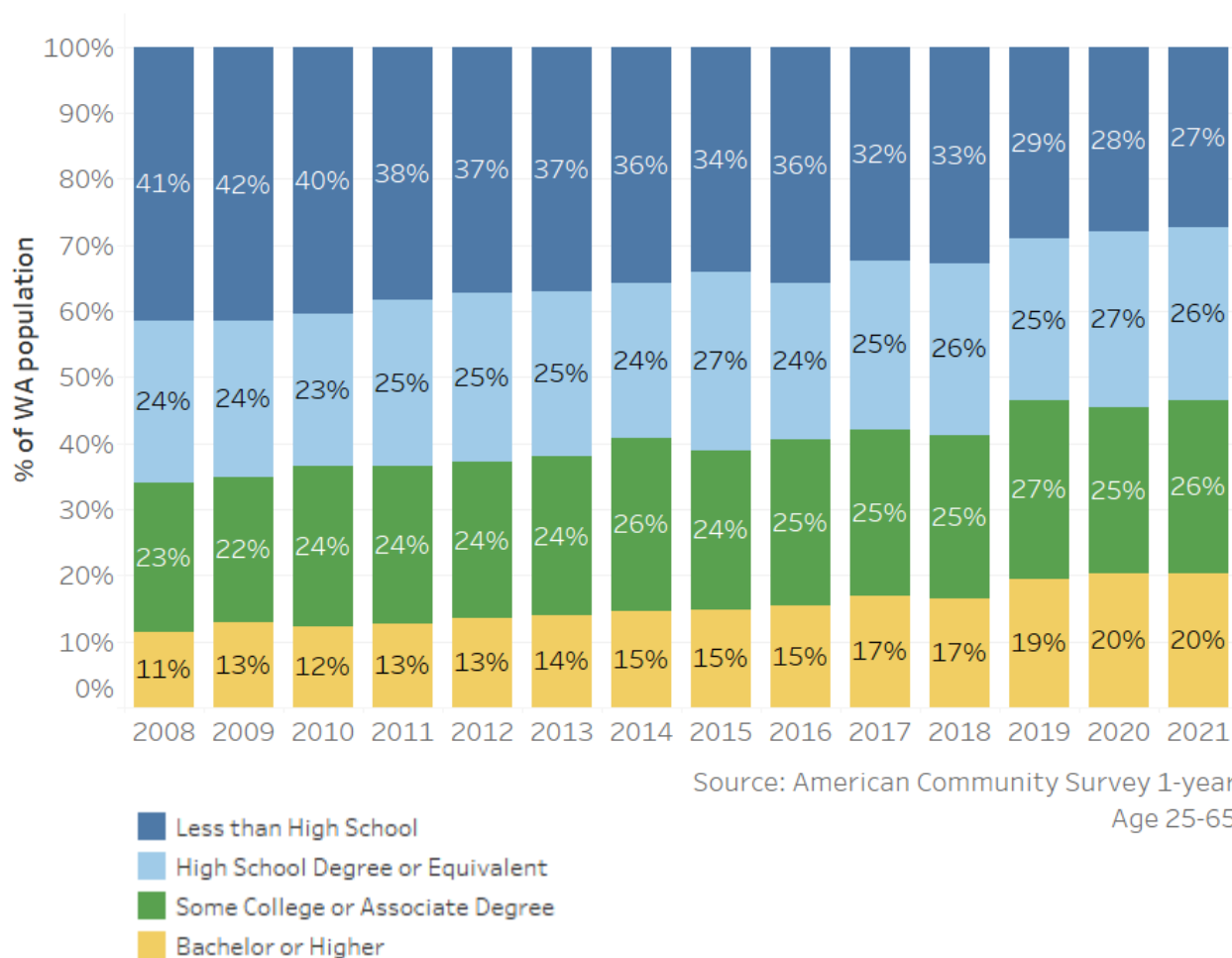
Educational Attainment by Sex
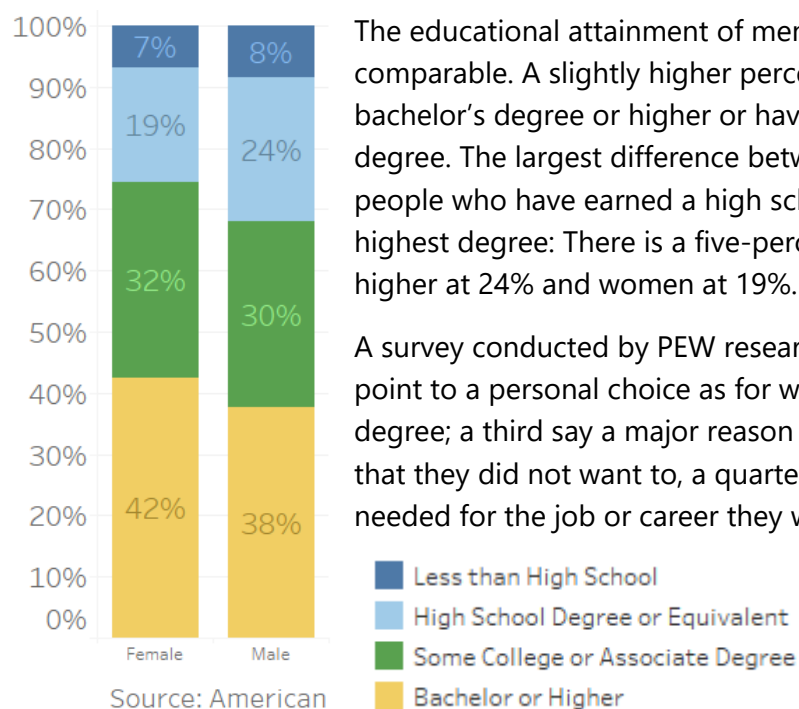
Source: American
Community Survey 1-year
Age 25-65

The educational attainment of men and women in Washington are comparable. A slightly higher percentage of women have earned a bachelor's degree or higher or have some college or an associate degree. The largest difference between the sexes is the percentage of people who have earned a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest degree: There is a five-percentage point difference, with men higher at 24% and women at 19%.

A survey conducted by PEW research showed that men more often point to a personal choice as for why they did not get a bachelor's degree; a third say a major reason they did not complete college is that they did not want to, a quarter say a bachelor's degree isn't needed for the job or career they want.[12]

Legend:
- Less than High School
- High School Degree or Equivalent
- Some College or Associate Degree
- Bachelor or Higher

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[12] https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/11/08/whats-behind-the-growing-gap-between-men-and-women-in-college-completion/

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Educational Attainment by Hispanic Ethnicity and Sex

As discussed previously in this report Hispanic people have lower educational attainment. The differences in educational attainment by ethnicity are compounded by sex.

24% of Hispanic women have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 17% of Hispanic men. There is a smaller difference between non-Hispanic women (45%) and non-Hispanic men (41%).

30% of Hispanic men have less than a high school diploma, 5 percentage points higher than Hispanic females. Non-Hispanic men and women do not show that notable of a difference.

2021 Educational Attainment by Hispanic Ethnicity and Sex

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Age 25-65

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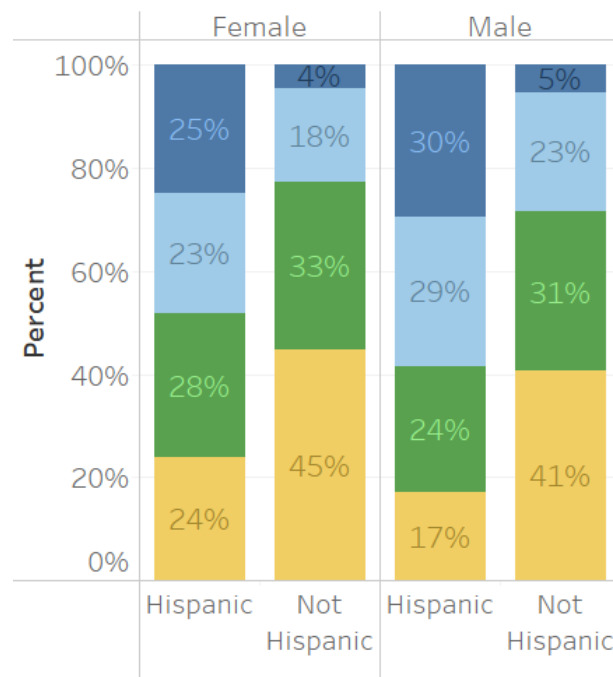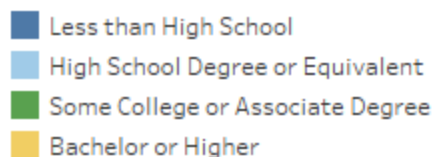
Educational Attainment by Disability

The percentage of people with a disability who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher is less than half of those with no disability; only 20% of people with a disability have earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 43% of people without a disability. 37% of people with a disability have some college or an associate degree. Around 1 in 7 people with a disability have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent.

College enrollment is growing for students with disabilities; however, their rates of completion are low. Students have a harder time adjusting socially and academically to a college environment; institutional policies (course requirements, attendance policies, etc.) are structured around the expectations of past college students. These structural inequities add to the difficulty in integration for student groups (like those with disabilities) who have historically not been represented on college campuses. [13]

2021 Educational Attainment by Disability

Less than High School
High School Degree or Equivalent
Some College or Associate Degree
Bachelor or Higher

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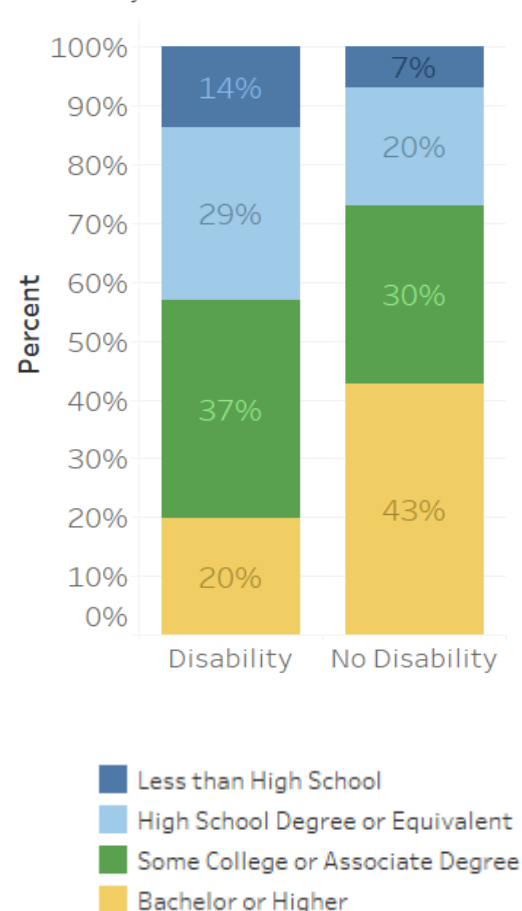
[13] Barriers to Bachelor's Degree Completion among College Students with a Disability. https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121420908896

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Median Earnings in Washington

Median earnings are a good way to analyze and compare differences; it is the divide where half of people earn more, and half earn less. In Washington, median earnings increased from $48,335 in 2012 to $58,886 in 2021.[14]
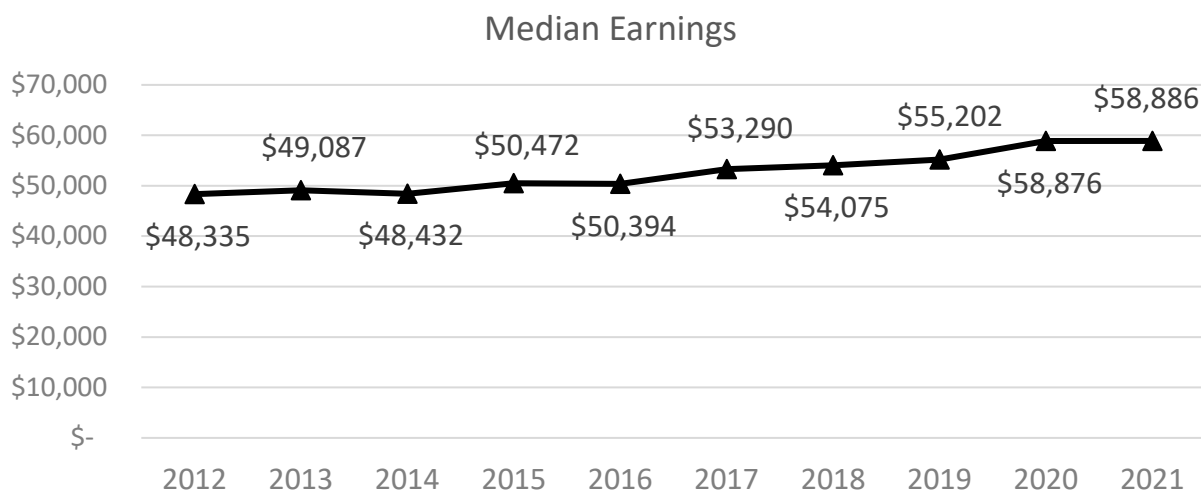
Median Earnings

Median Earnings by Race

Racial disparities in earnings are increasing. While Asian and white earnings have increased, Black, American Indian, and multiracial workers' earnings have stagnated. Asians have the highest median earnings in 2021 at $80,466, followed by whites at $64,265. The other three races' median earnings are between $40,000 and $50,000. For American Indians the increase in median earnings was only 7% between 2012 and 2021, compared to 48% for Asians and 27% for whites.

Median Earnings by Race
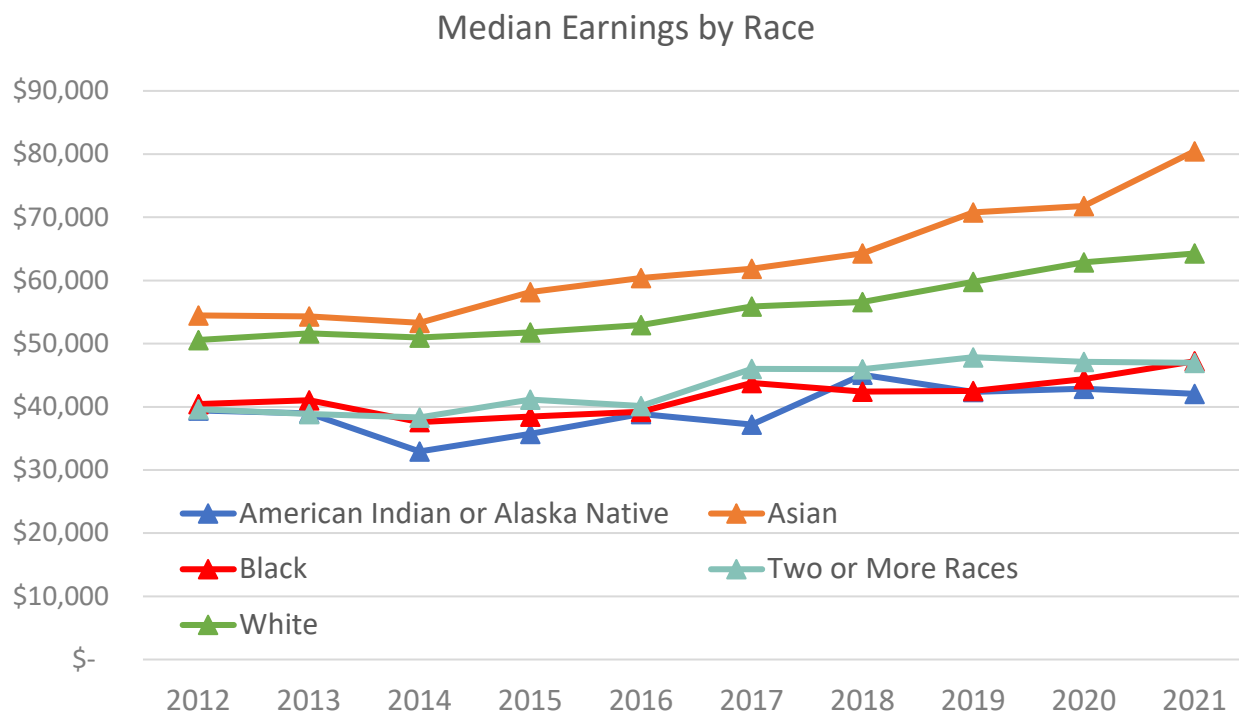
Median Earnings by Sex

Men's median earnings have been higher than women's median earnings during the last decade; women's median earnings were around 70% of men's. In 2012 women's median earnings were $39,486 compared to men's $59,068. In 2021 women's median earnings were $48,692 compared to men's at $70,190. Additionally, the pay gap on a nationwide level has not changed very much over the last two decades, but when looking at younger earners the gap has narrowed. Educational attainment, occupational segregation, and work experience have historically explained the pay gap, but women have made gains in each of these dimensions. In a survey from Pew Research 61% of women say a major reason for the gap is that employers treat women differently.[15]

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[15] https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/03/01/gender-pay-gap-facts/

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Median Earnings by Sex

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Ages 18-65 in the workforce
Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars
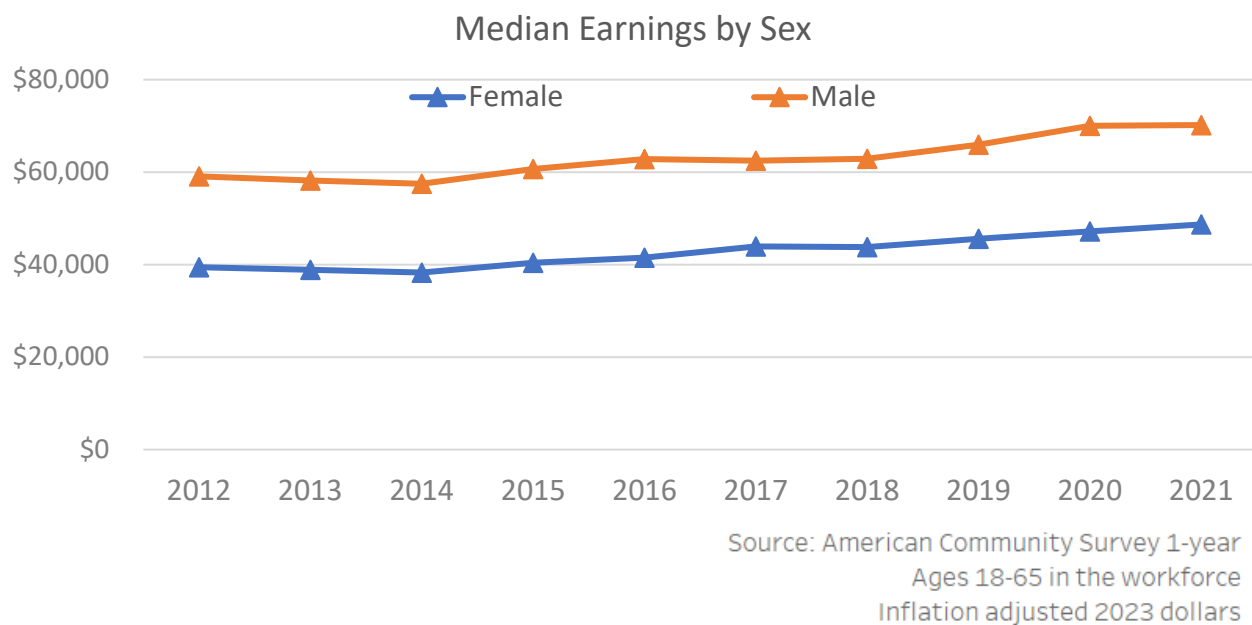
Median Earnings by Sex and Race

Source: American Community Survey 1-year
Ages 18-65 in the workforce
Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

There are also differences in median earnings by sex in each race category. In 2021, within each race, men had higher median earnings than women. The most profound divergence in one race is between Asian men's median earnings of $106,415 and $60,544 for Asian women. White males out earned their female counterparts by nearly $25,000 ($76,874 versus $52,164). The smallest difference was $52,061 for Black males, compared to $43,867 for Black females – only a $7,000 difference.

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Median Earnings by Ethnicity

The gap in median earnings between Hispanic and non-Hispanic people exceeded $20,000 in 2021: Hispanic median earnings were $40,622 and non-Hispanic $64,301. The gap between Hispanic men and women is not as pronounced as the gap between the sexes of non-Hispanic people. Hispanic men have median earnings that are about $11,000 higher than Hispanic women. Meanwhile, non-Hispanic men out earned women by $25,000.

Median Earnings by Ethnicity

Hispanic	$40,622
Not Hispanic	$64,301
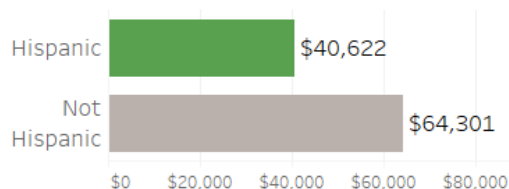
Median Earnings by Hispanic Ethnicity and Sex
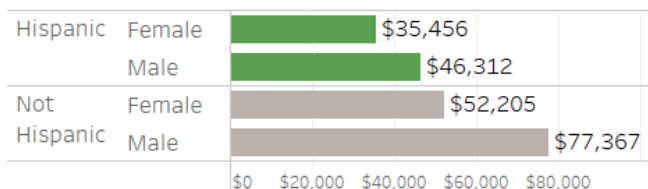
Hispanic	Female	$35,456
	Male	$46,312
Not Hispanic	Female	$52,205
	Male	$77,367

Source: American Community Survey 1-year (2021) Ages 18-65 in the workforce Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

Median Earnings by Disability Status

People with a disability have median earnings of $46,425 compared to $60,277 for people without a disability. Some of this difference may be explained by the fact that there is a

Median Earnings by Disability Status

Disability	$46,425
No Disability	$60,277
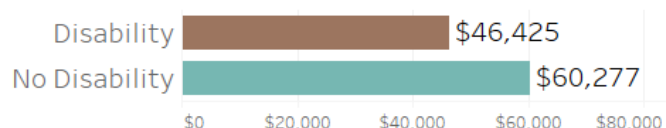
smaller percentage of the disabled population that has earned a bachelor's degree or higher. For those ages 25-65, 20% of those with a disability have earned a bachelor's compared to 43% of people without a disability (see page 23). However, people without a disability have higher median earnings at every level of educational attainment than people with a disability.

Median Earnings by Disability Status and Educational Attainment

Less than High School	Disability	$28,832
	No Disability	$35,342
High School Degree or Equivalent	Disability	$40,294
	No Disability	$42,826
Some College or Associate Degree	Disability	$46,385
	No Disability	$49,808
Bachelor or Higher	Disability	$71,575
	No Disability	$93,908

Median Earnings

Source: American Community Survey 1-year (2021) Ages 18-65 in the workforce Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

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Median Earnings by Geographic Location

The urban west has the highest median earnings at $68,100, followed by the rural west at $51,754. The eastside's urban and rural communities are lower at median earnings of $46,233 and $41,433 respectively.

Median Earnings by Geographic Location
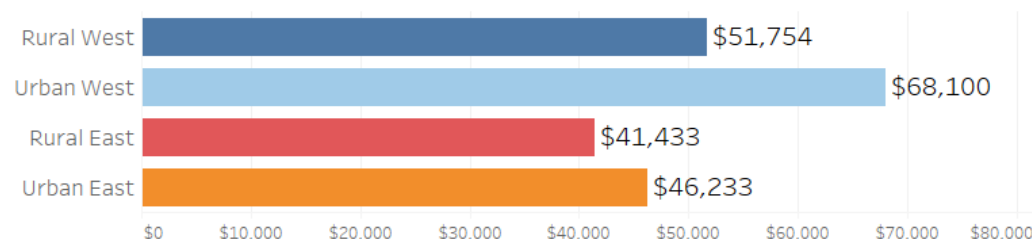
Location	Median Earnings
Rural West	$51,754
Urban West	$68,100
Rural East	$41,433
Urban East	$46,233

Source: American Community Survey 1-year Ages 18-65 in the workforce
Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

In 2021, in each geographic area, men have higher median earnings than women. There are two groups that are outliers: At the high end, men in the urban west have median earnings over $80,000, while women in the rural east are under $35,000. These two areas also have the highest disparity in earnings for men and women; in the urban west women earn .69 cents on a man's dollar, and in the rural east it is .67 cents. In the rural west women earn $44,950 compared to men's $58,143, or .77 cents per dollar. In the urban east women earn $40,055 to men's $53,578 (.75 per dollar).

Median Earnings by Geographic Location and Sex
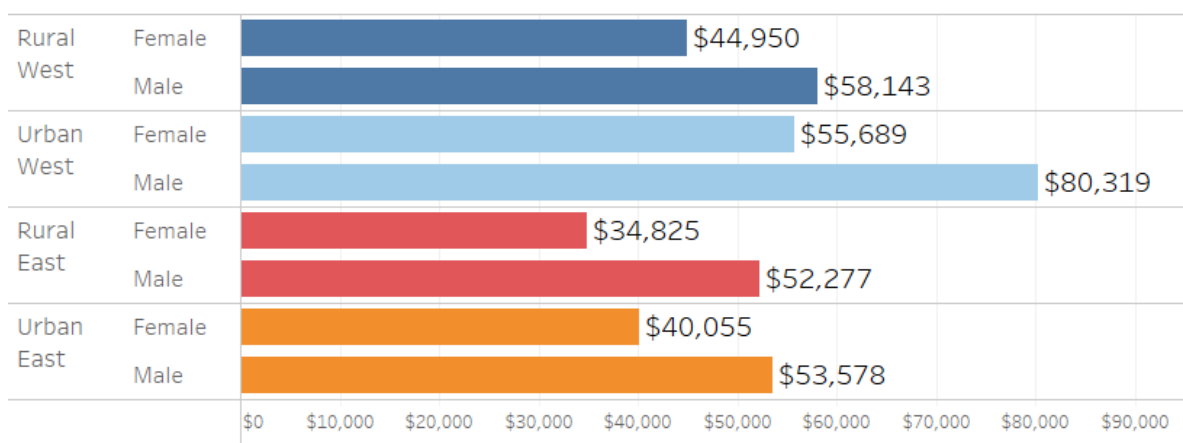
| Location	Sex	Median Earnings
Rural West	Female	$44,950
	Male	$58,143
Urban West	Female	$55,689
	Male	$80,319
Rural East	Female	$34,825
	Male	$52,277
Urban East	Female	$40,055
	Male	$53,578

Source: American Community Survey 1-year (2021)
Ages 18-65 in the workforce Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

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Median Earnings by Educational Attainment

In 2021, people who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher have the highest median earnings, at $98,581. People with some college or an associate degree have median earnings of $57,888, followed by people with a high school diploma or equivalent at $47,728. With the lowest median earnings, people with less than a high school diploma have median earnings of $39,835.
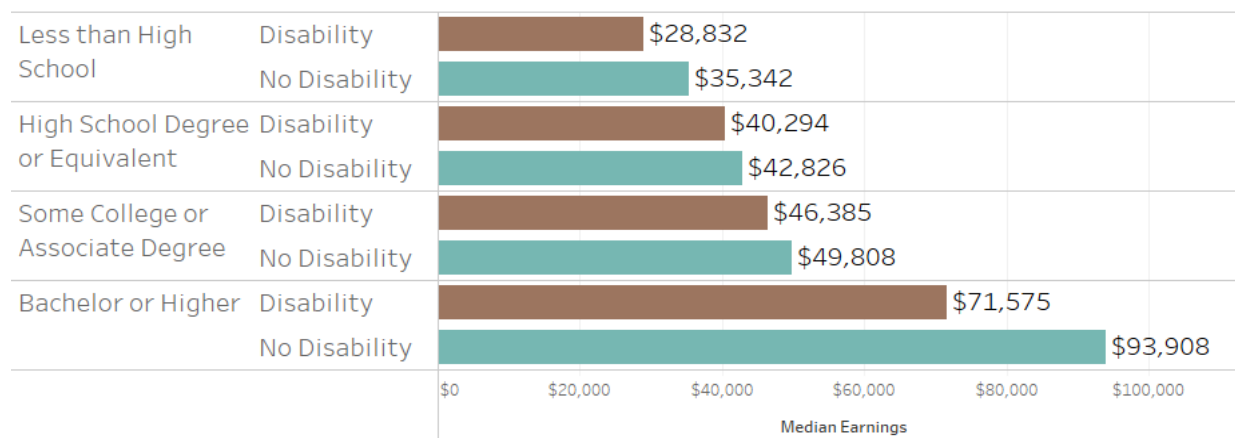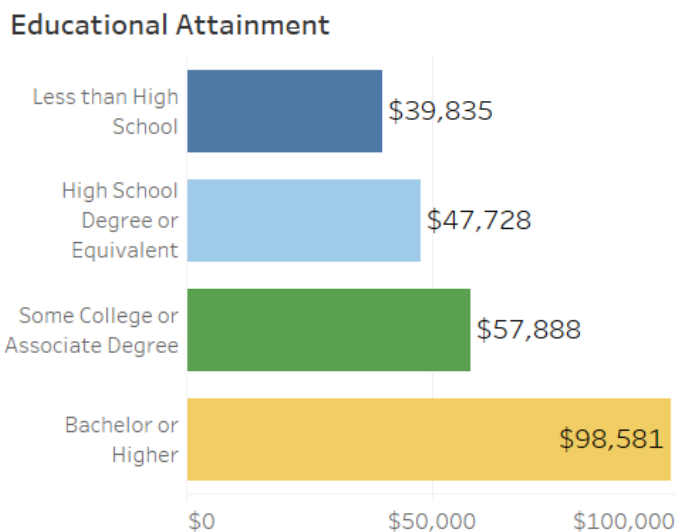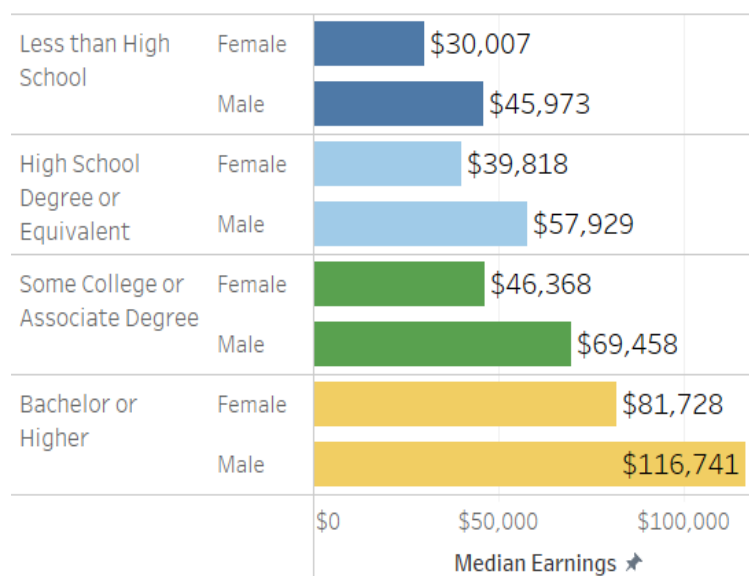
Educational Attainment

Less than High School	$39,835
High School Degree or Equivalent	$47,728
Some College or Associate Degree	$57,888
Bachelor or Higher	$98,581

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment and Sex

Less than High School	Female	$30,007
	Male	$45,973
High School Degree or Equivalent	Female	$39,818
	Male	$57,929
Some College or Associate Degree	Female	$46,368
	Male	$69,458
Bachelor or Higher	Female	$81,728
	Male	$116,741

Median Earnings

Source: 1-year American Community Survey (2021)
Ages 25-65 in the workforce. Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

Men's median earnings are higher than women's at every level of educational attainment. The difference in median earnings ranges from $15,000 for those with less than a high school diploma to $35,000 for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Men with less than a high school diploma have median earnings that are higher than women with a high school diploma. Men with a high school diploma have median earnings higher than women with some college or an associate degree.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) men with bachelor's degrees earn approximately $900,000 more in median lifetime earnings than high school graduates (1.5 million more for graduate degrees.) Women with bachelor's degrees earn $630,000 more than women with high school degrees (1.1 million more for graduate degrees). These findings confirm the significant long-term economic benefits associated with college education.[16]

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[16] https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/research-summaries/education-earnings.html

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Median Earnings by Education and Race

The range of median earnings by educational attainment is different for each race for different levels of educational attainment.

American Indian/Alaska Natives have the lowest median earnings ($29,122) for those whose highest level of education is less than a high school diploma. Earning a few thousand dollars more are Blacks ($32,137) and Asians ($34,676). There is another gap to multiracial ($39,566) and another to whites ($46,486).

Whites have the highest median earnings for those whose highest education is a high school diploma or equivalent – at $52,036. Asians, American Indian/Alaska Natives, multiracial people and Blacks have median earnings between $40,000 and $45,000.

There are continuing differences between races when looking at those who have some college or an associate degree. Whites make $58,634 compared to Blacks at $46,782 – a 20% difference. Both multiracial people and Asians have median earnings of around $52,000. American Indians with an associate degree or some college earn around $50,000.

The most obvious differences come with those who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Asians with a BA+ earn $125,688, whites $96,440, and multiracial people earn $92,262. Blacks and American Indians with a BA+ have the lowest median earnings at around $80,000.

2021 Median Earnings by Educational Attainment and Race
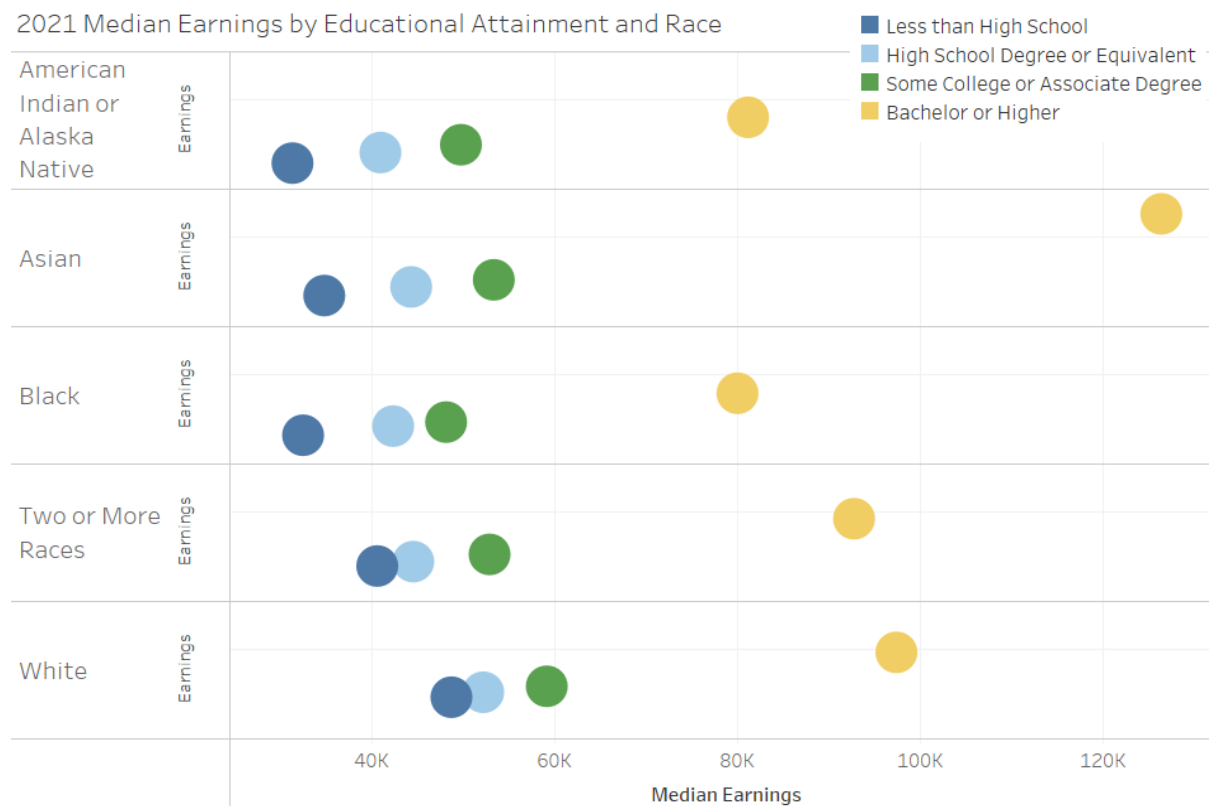
Source: 1-year American Community Survey(2021) ages 25-65 in the workforce. Inflation adjusted 2023 dollars

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Conclusion

Washington's economy is strong on average, with considerable differences among geographic areas and different industries. This chapter shows that considerable differences also exist between many demographics such as gender, race, ethnicity, and educational attainment. The complex relationship and interdependencies of these disparities drive the guiding principles and strategic priorities of the Talent and Prosperity for All four year strategic plan.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The following data shows the number of people served, funds spent, and providers that are part of Washington state's Workforce Development System, with services provided with federal funds via one-stop WorkSource career centers, including comprehensive and affiliate sites. This analysis does not include all aspects of the system, nor all programs included in this TAP plan. The following information focuses on the 12-month period that ran from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

WIOA Title I Adults: There were 8,800 persons served and $15,474,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included contracted colleges, community-based organizations, and local government agencies through Local Workforce Boards.

WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers: There were 6,200 persons served and $15,191,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included contracted colleges, community-based organizations, and local government agencies through Local Workforce Boards.

WIOA Title I Youth: There were 2,300 persons served and $15,669,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included community-based organizations, educational service districts, school districts, and city/county government through the Workforce Development Councils.

Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange: There were 46,600 persons served and $11,905,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department.

Trade Act – Trade Adjustment Assistance: There were 1,900 persons served and $11,526,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department.

Basic Education for Adults: There were 26,000 persons served and $9,036,000 in federal funds and $83,582,000 in state funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges and community-based organizations.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: There were 17,300 persons served and $42,547,000 in federal funds and $15,713,000 in state funds expended. Providers included local divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation units and contracted community partners.

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Department of Services for the Blind: There were 1,000 persons served and $7,891,000 in federal funds and $3,514,000 in state funds expended. Statewide services are provided through offices located throughout the state.

TANF/WorkFirst Education and Training Services: There were 2,000 persons served and $10,630,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges, private career schools, and community-based organizations.

TANF/WorkFirst Community Jobs/Career Jump: There were 1,000 persons served and $8,050,000 in federal funds expended and $106,000 in state funds expended, provided by community-based organizations throughout the state.

TANF/Community Works: There were 62 persons served and $363,000 in federal funds expended and $7,000 in state funds expended, provided by community-based organizations throughout the state.

TANF/WorkFirst Employment Services: There were 1,400 persons served and $10,626,000 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department and some community services offices.

Participant numbers are rounded to the closest 100 while fiscal numbers are rounded to the closest 1,000. It should be noted that there is duplication of individuals across programs and it is hard to get a true count of the number of unique individuals served by the system. It is however possible to look at patterns of co-enrollment across these programs. In the most recently available data, the following co-enrollment patterns were observed:

- The highest program co-enrollment was that 99% of WIOA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker (DW), & Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) were also Wagner-Peyser participants.
- The next highest was 44% of DW were also in WIOA Adult.
- 42% of TAA were in DW.
- 31% of Training Benefits participants were in CTC Worker Retraining.
- 13% of TAA were in CTC Worker Retraining.
- 12% of DW were in Private Vocational Schools (PVS)
- CTC Worker Retraining participants were also in Wagner-Peyser (10%), Training Benefits (6%), DW (3%), TAA (2%), WorkFirst (2%), and Adult (2%).
- 8% of DW were in TAA.
- 7% of Adult participants were in PVS.
- 8% of WorkFirst participants were also in Wagner-Peyser.
- CTC Professional-Technical Education participants were also in WorkFirst (2%), Wagner-Peyser (2%), and PVS (1%).
- Secondary CTE had no co-enrollment with other programs.
- Basic Education for Adults showed no co-enrollment.

Work that will be undertaken within Strategic Priority 1: Integrated Service Delivery, will better inform system partners about patterns of program participation and the outcomes for customers.

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Introduction

The *Talent and Prosperity for All* (TAP) *Plan*, Washington State's strategic workforce plan for 2024-2028, champions long-term economic success for workers, employers, and communities and recognizes that a strong and stable workforce is critical for our state's economy and quality of life. The plan provides vision and direction for a system that covers over $1.4 billion in operations and supports close to 500,000 Washingtonians. Importantly, the plan articulates the commitment of system partners and stakeholders to work together for collective impact—to ensure Washington's workforce development system can respond to the needs of our economy today and well into the future. (See the spotlight at right and below for two exemplary models of successful collaboration across system partners to fill identified service gaps.)

TAP is our state's response to new findings about our workforce system uncovered during the pandemic and post-pandemic years, and lessons learned during the Great Recession. Findings were also affirmed through extensive community outreach and input-gathering during the plan's year-long creation:

- An urgent need exists for many businesses seeking talent for their open positions, and for workers seeking sustainable wages in positions where their skills are fully utilized and they have the support needed to stay in the workforce.
- Data "averages" mask a true understanding of the relationship between historically marginalized communities and the state's economy, and on our system's ability to close economic disparity gaps. We must dig deeper, disaggregate data in multiple ways, and ensure we are addressing the needs of all current and potential workers.
- We are facing a growing paradox of employers using traditional hiring practices to recruit workers and potential workers choosing non-traditional pathways to employment.

Spotlight: Career Connect Washington

A comprehensive initiative designed to connect young people in Washington to a wide array of career opportunities. It operates through a collaboration of businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and community leaders. CCW focuses on work-based and academic programs that allow individuals to explore various career paths, prepare for the workforce, and launch into meaningful college and career trajectories. This innovative program integrates education with on-the-job experiences, aiming to build a strong workforce that can support Washington's growth and innovation.

Spotlight: Economic Security for All

State EcSA is a poverty reduction model in Washington state supporting low-income residents in achieving equity, dignity, and self-sufficiency.

EcSA's strategic framework, which encourages partnerships and co-enrollments, aligns with the state's broader "System Integration" strategic priority, and reflects our guiding principles.

See Appendix B for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan

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- Businesses are undertaking initiatives outside their core operations to meet their urgent workforce needs. It is a sign of both opportunity and urgency when health care and other industries get into the education business to develop the workforce they need.
- We have a growing number of Washingtonians struggling with issues such as childcare, affordable housing, and transportation who are in need of comprehensive support to fully participate in the workforce.
- Youth are an underserved component of our workforce system that was significantly impacted by the pandemic. We must address the specific needs of youth and prepare them for an economically successful future.
- The economic success of industry and workers are inextricably bound together. We must do a better job of connecting employers with the workforce system. This is a pivotal moment to make this happen.

The Governor and the Legislature have created a strong environment for both businesses and workers to thrive. By investing in a system of services and supports for workers and employers, Washington has been recognized nationally as one of the top states for business and the top state for supporting both businesses and workers.

Washington has maintained a culture of using the "balanced scorecard" approach to create a strong and resilient workforce that meets the skills needs of businesses. In fact, this culture drove the creation of Washington's unique state workforce board, with equal voting seats for business, labor and government—the only one of its kind in the nation.

Businesses do not succeed without workers, and workers do not succeed without businesses. And all communities across the state benefit when businesses and workers are sharing in economic prosperity.

Some of the more recent business and worker support initiatives enacted by Gov. Inslee and the legislature include:

- ➢ Health care and the care economy for a health workforce— expansion of Apple Health, behavioral health expansion, Paid Family Medical Leave, state long

Spotlight: Reentry and Justice-Involved Populations

Workforce development for reentry and justice-involved populations is rooted in our guiding principles: closing economic disparities for marginalized populations and providing comprehensive support for those facing barriers to employment.

In alignment with Governor Inslee's Executive Order 1605, we are focused on building safe, strong, economically robust communities through successful reentry and continued support. Our strategic framework targets the creation of equitable training and employment opportunities, recognizing the unique challenges and barriers individuals face as they reintegrate into society and overcome biases, including housing discrimination, homelessness, and systemic racial disparities. Efforts to end these disparities are critical. Our strategy is to employ a multi-pronged approach that leverages federal funding, provides comprehensive support services, evaluates and builds on existing programs, creates customized employment pathways, fosters collaboration among various stakeholders, and involves the community in supporting the reintegration of justice-involved individuals. This approach will not only help individuals successfully reenter society but also contribute to their continued success and the overall economic and social wellbeing of our communities.

See Appendix C for more details in IV. **Coordination with State Plan Programs**.

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term care Insurance, and the health workforce sentinel network.

➢ Financial, service, and structural supports to close economic disparities for marginalized, and underserved populations– Working Families Tax Credit, Governor's Poverty Reduction Work Group, Economic Security for All (EcSA), enhanced immigrant and refugee resettlement support, creation of the Office of Equity, Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) framework, Washington State Women's Commission, creation of the Business Resiliency Network to support underrepresented entrepreneurs; and new, equitable protocols for state hiring and purchasing.

➢ New investments and extensive policy reform in state financial aid programs has made Washington the most generous financial aid state and the most widely accessible. State financial aid goes well beyond traditional higher education to include registered apprenticeship programs, short-term training, and even non-credit courses. Washington's financial aid system is described in more detail in the section titled, "Postsecondary Financial Assistance— Washington Tops U.S. List."

These investments have collectively brought strong returns to all corners of Washington. Yet, many communities have yet to realize the full benefits of this success. There is an urgency to reach marginalized communities and other untapped labor pools as employers struggle to find necessary talent, and too many workers are unable to access living-wage jobs that use their full skills and abilities. The state workforce plan over the next four years builds on these successes, aiming to make better use of existing resources, fill service gaps, build new on-ramps and support new investments to help all communities to thrive. TAP 2024-2028, the state workforce plan over the next four years builds on these successes, aiming to make better use of existing resources, improving and streamlining services, fill service gaps, build more accessible on-ramps, and create wrap-around and support services for the workplace and economic realities of today and tomorrow. TAP is outlined by three guiding principles and five strategic priority areas, each described below.

Planning Process, Guiding Principles and Strategic Priorities

The planning process for the Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan began with a letter in the spring of 2023 from Gov. Jay Inslee to the Workforce Board, describing his vision for the future of the comprehensive workforce development system in Washington. This vision included stronger cross-agency collaboration and enhanced outcomes for all Washingtonians, businesses, and communities, especially those historically and structurally marginalized from economic success. The letter also reflects the urgency experienced by many stakeholders involved in Washington's workforce system.

"Today, workforce challenges are one of the top concerns for both employers and workers here in Washington and across the country," Inslee wrote to the board. "Our extraordinary workforce challenges limit the ability of businesses to expand and grow, stifle economic opportunity for Washington families, and hinder our work to create a Washington where everyone can thrive." The Governor's message underscores a central theme of this plan: a strong and stable workforce, accessible to all, is critical for Washington's future economic success and quality of life.

The Governor's vision supplied the foundation for discussions at the Workforce Board's May 2023 retreat, where Board members and more than 60 stakeholder and partner representatives created a planning framework comprised of three guiding principles and five strategic priorities. Interviews were

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then conducted with each collaborating agency to learn how these principles and priorities resonated within the agency's vision and mission, short- and long-term goals and operating plans. These conversations helped shape impact statements connected with each priority area of the TAP plan.

Guiding Principles:

➢ Close economic disparities for marginalized populations.

Too many Washingtonians do not share in the state's economic prosperity. To ensure no one is left behind, this plan focuses on those farthest from opportunity. Our goal is for more people to share in this broader prosperity rather than relying on statewide averages that can mask the financial realities of many of our neighbors.

➢ Deliver comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment.

Washingtonians are disconnected from the workforce for many different reasons, including the need for skill development, caring for their children or aging family members during work hours, a lack of affordable housing that makes it difficult to move to a new job or retain a current position, and the rising cost of transportation that makes owning a car, even a used one with many miles, economically out of reach. Needs are not bound by the eligibility and service limitations established in federal and state statutes. Success over the next four years will be determined at least in part by how well we support workers, not just with access to education and training, or help getting hired into open positions that fit their skills, but through wrap-around support that provides basics, from healthcare to childcare to transportation. Success also requires closer alignment with industry to help ensure Washington's businesses have the work-ready talent they need to succeed. This may require statutory and administrative reforms that help incentivize the hiring of employees with barriers, along with financial and other support to help keep them on the job. This makes good business sense for employers, and it makes good economic sense for our state as a whole when we help our workers keep working.

➢ Provide systemwide performance metrics and accountability.

Data is critical for understanding how the workforce system is operating as a whole. Are public investments in workforce development making a meaningful difference to the state's economy and to ensure equitable benefit to all Washingtonians? This goes beyond the performance of individual programs—although those measurements also hold value. Employment rates, earnings, common skill

Spotlight: Small Business Resiliency Network

The Department of Commerce has partnered with 30 trusted community organizations across Washington State to form the Small Business Resiliency Network (SBRN). This Network removes barriers and obstacles often encountered by business owners from historically underserved communities. Simply put, SBRN provides small businesses the support they need from people they trust. Highlights of SBRN ongoing small business support include:

- Translation assistance
- Accessing resources and capital
- Digital literacy support
- Workforce support
- Culturally-appropriate outreach & education

In FY23 SBRN partners provided* 20,000 businesses direct technical assistance, and reached 2.7 million people via the networks collective outreach efforts.

See Appendix D for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

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gaps, persistent hiring challenges, and the demographics of those doing the work—including race, age, gender, disability, education level, and more—need to be looked at more holistically so we have a big picture of our workforce system and its impact. Transparent performance tracking is central to engaging more businesses and Washingtonians in helping us understand what is working and what isn't. We will need to be more expansive and collaborative in our data collection and analysis to identify and more fully address the disparities that still exist.

Strategic Priorities:

1. System: Integrate system services, data, accountability, and resources with clearly identified partners and roles to expand, improve, and streamline customer outcomes.

Impact statements: A simplified and common intake; improved data sharing; data-informed integrated service delivery.

2. Industry: Support business development and competitiveness by aligning with economic development and growth efforts.

Impact statements: Support sustainable and equitable industry growth; build and expand career pathways for critical industries; expand the definition of worker and business supports.

3. Youth: Improve opportunities for young people to transition to an economically successful adulthood.

Impact statements: Increase youth awareness of services and programs; broaden access and shorten the time to gain industry-valued credentials.

> **Spotlight: Poverty Reduction Work Group**
>
> Governor Inslee's Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) was created via Directive in November 2017. PRWG is co-led by the state departments of Commerce, Employment Security, and Social & Health Services, in partnership with tribal and urban Indians, state racial and ethnic commissions, employers, community-based organizations, legislators, advocates, and philanthropy. A steering committee made up of 22 people reflecting the demographic and geographic experience of poverty provides critical oversight to PRWG and contributed substantially to the development and prioritization of recommendations.
>
> **See Appendix E for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.**

4. Credential Transparency: Explore credential transparency and expansion to improve equitable access, mobility, and long-term economic success.

Impact statements: Create a common definition of credentials using a single dictionary of terms; put learners at the center of credential pathway reforms.

5. Job Quality: Develop a job quality framework to guide decisions and key investments in the delivery of business services.

Impact statements: Ensure access to pathways to living-wage jobs that are critical to communities; expand registered apprenticeships to more fields.

The 2024-2028 TAP Plan aims to harness the collective energy of the full complement of publicly funded programs and services to expand our reach and enhance our impact. By working together, across

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program and funding silos, we can better identify what is working well and what isn't, and innovate improvements together. The plan encompasses the work of 55 programs across many state and local agencies, including 12 local workforce boards covering every region of the state. It also leverages support from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board); a critical leadership infrastructure comprised of business, labor, and government representatives that ensures and maintains collaborative momentum in addressing workforce issues. The tri-partite Board is an alternate entity under WIOA, established in state statute in 1991.

Over the next four years, the Board will focus on ensuring support for the TAP plan's strategic priorities, identifying and applying tangible and measurable goals and metrics to track progress, and create a culture of continuous improvement. The Board's mix of business, labor, and government representatives makes it well suited to maintain focus on Washington's strategic workforce priorities, using a "balanced" scorecard" to ensure all Washingtonians, businesses, and communities are benefitting equitably from the state's economic prowess.

The Board will adopt the following procedures to help ensure that momentum continues:

- Assign Board members to each strategic priority to serve as sponsors for the work. Include strategic priority review in each Board meeting agenda.
- Create a dashboard to track progress on the strategic priorities.
- Work closely with agencies and other partners to garner support for necessary workgroups, advisory councils, and other activities.
- Commit to an environment of continuous improvement including the ability to fail, regroup, and try again.
- Hold to rigorous systemwide performance accountability including cross agency evaluation and research.

This Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan builds on the successes and customer-focused culture of Washington's current workforce system. We have worked hard to create a holistic system where residents can find support in almost every stage of their life and career journey – be it a student on a new path, a worker seeking new opportunities or as a business owner in pursuit of growth and talent. Our youth are provided a wide range of educational opportunities using multiple pathways to career success, such as work-based or career-connected learning, the cross-crediting of CTE and academic programs, and dual-crediting to accelerate attainment of postsecondary credentials. We support workers in upskilling and transitioning into new careers, whether they are pivoting to new positions and opportunities, returning to work after time away, or simply working longer as they age. Moreover, our agencies and organizations work hard to enable all Washingtonians to utilize their full skills and abilities and help employers realize and tap into this potential.

Yet, within those successes, there is also increasing awareness about the supportive services and programs needed to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce, helping Washington workers to access and afford childcare for their young children, long-term care for their aging family members, along with housing, transportation, health care, behavioral health services, food assistance, and more. Recruitment, retention, and job performance are impacted by the support people receive in all other aspects of their lives and we are striving to find the most effective policies and supportive infrastructure to embed into Washington's workforce system.

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to place greater emphasis on helping those working in service professions such as health care, child care, and hospitality—essential workers who are integral not only to our daily lives but also to our state's economic growth. This evolving perspective is fostering new partnerships, programs, and a more robust and connected workforce system.

Recent shifts in the economy, adoption of new technologies, the nature of work, and the relationships between employers and employees, and between workers and their communities have all contributed to new thinking about the need for continuous skill development in our workforce. The landscape of postsecondary and industry-recognized credentials has changed dramatically over the past decade. In their *2022 Counting Credentials* report, national think tank, Credential Engine reported over 1 million different credentials available nationally. According to Credential Engine, the largest increase has been in online courses and industry-developed credentials. As increasingly more credentials become available, it is important that the workforce development system be able to help workers and employers make good decisions about how to invest time and money for the highest workforce returns. We must also create accessible, easily navigable talent development pathways that result, equitably, in high-wage employment opportunities.

- ## Postsecondary Financial Assistance—Washington Tops the U.S. List

Washington is a national leader in making postsecondary education and training affordable and accessible for everyone. The state offers some of the most generous financial aid support in the country intended to help low- and middle-income families afford the cost of postsecondary education, no matter the learning venue. The state's diverse range of programs and policies ensures that nearly everyone has a financially supported pathway to success, regardless of their chosen path (traditional degrees, apprenticeships, non-degree programs, part-time, etc.).

Despite these options, many Washington residents don't apply—either because they are unaware of or have trouble navigating among these financial supports or don't recognize their value in helping afford postsecondary education and training. This is a real miss for our state, as it reduces the number of residents who go on to education after high school, limiting their economic mobility, while also hindering the state's goal to increase the number of residents with postsecondary credentials and training. In the Exploring Challenges in Postsecondary Access report, the Washington Student Achievement Council in partnership with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges conducted a study to better understand the barriers to postsecondary education. In the study, 80% said that it would cost too much to go back to school despite the fact that nearly all would qualify for a full Washington College Grant. Grant awards vary based on income, family size, and school or program cost. For 2023-24, an eligible student from a family of four with income of $73,000 or less per year would get a full award, for example.

Notable financial aid and postsecondary support options within Washington's current system are included below:

- **The Washington College Grant (WCG):** A state-funded grant program helping Washington residents pay for tuition and fees at approved public colleges, universities and licensed

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private career schools in the state. The eligibility requirements support a broad set of life experiences including undocumented Washington residents pursuing approved certificate programs, job training, apprenticeships, as well as part and full-time college two-year and four-year college degrees. Recent legislative actions are aimed at furthering postsecondary accessibility:

- o Legislation in 2022 created the [Evaluation of Apprentices Receiving Credit Towards Higher Education Degrees (SB](#) 5764), initiating a five-year collaborative process led by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center at Washington State University to evaluate opportunities for apprentices to earn credit toward a higher education degree. The aim is to remove barriers for students enrolled in state registered apprenticeship programs to access the Washington College Grant, and to set the same grant amount for students in apprenticeships as for those attending two-year institutions for tuition and fees, supplies, equipment and other educational costs.

- o House Bill 2214, 2024 legislation passed by the legislature further enhances access opportunities for the WCG by proposing automatic eligibility for the grant for participants in the TANF or SNAP food assistance programs. This move is designed to simplify the application process, defer or even bypass the FAFSA process, and extend the grant's reach to more students in need, thereby reducing the hurdles for low-income residents of Washington to pursue higher education and secure better economic opportunities.

- **Opportunity Scholars:** This program offers financial assistance along with mentorship and career training. It supports students as they build their pathways to high-demand careers, with a particular focus on tackling barriers to education and training that many face in Washington. The program targets high-demand fields like trade, STEM, and healthcare, and has seen its scholars graduate into these fields with impressive success, such as most Baccalaureate graduates earning close to $100K a year and Career and Technical Scholarship graduates earning four times what their families earned at the time of their application.

- **Opportunity Partnership:** Links community and technical colleges with local workforce development councils to provide mentorship and other career connected learning opportunities to low-income students who lack social capital in their chosen career field. Program also provides emergency financial support to eliminate unforeseen barriers to program completion.

- **College Bound Scholars**: Program, paired with the WCG, designed to inspire and encourage Washington middle school students from low-income families to prepare for and pursue postsecondary education. The early commitment of state funding for tuition is intended to alleviate the financial barriers preventing students from considering education or training beyond high school.

- **Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE):** This merit-based scholarship celebrates top Career and Technical Education (CTE) students at both high schools and community and technical colleges, providing up to two years of postsecondary tuition

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assistance. The WAVE scholarship sends a clear message that CTE can be a pathway to postsecondary credentials and high-demand, high-wage occupations.

- **Apprenticeships:** Apprenticeships offer a structured "earn as you learn" model that is a proven method to strengthen the workforce by providing workers with hands-on training, skills and credentials while making a living and providing businesses direct access to a growing pool of skilled workers. Apprenticeships have a 10-year taxpayer return of $7.80 for every tax dollar invested. The last several years have seen modernization of the state apprentice system, and expansion into more industry sectors, and increased accessibility to more historically underserved populations.

- **Aligning Workforce Development and Education Systems for the Future of Work**

Technology has a tremendous impact on our workforce and plays a role in nearly all aspects of the TAP Plan. The increased adoption of technology is profoundly reshaping the workplace, altering fundamental aspects of how work is performed, managed, and perceived. Automation and artificial intelligence are revolutionizing industries by streamlining processes, augmenting productivity, and transforming job roles. The rise of remote work facilitated by digital communication tools is blurring geographical boundaries, enabling greater flexibility in work arrangements and challenging traditional notions of office culture.

The increased adoption of technology is not merely altering workflows, it is reshaping the modern workforce development system. Remote work and education have transformed the concepts of the classroom and the workspace. Automation has changed the nature of many jobs, altering the skillsets needed to perform them and educational pathways to achieve them. Most recently, artificial intelligence is being used by students, teachers, workers, and employers in ways unimaginable by most only a decade ago. The unprecedented pace of AI adoption necessitates increased flexibility and adaptability, continuous learning, and innovative approaches to workforce management.

In an effort to get ahead of these changes and challenges, Washington initiated the first of its kind Future of Work Task Force in 2018. This legislatively mandated initiative brought together business, labor, and legislative representatives from both major parties to address some of the biggest challenges to our workers and businesses. After more than a year of research, debate, and stakeholder engagement task force members found common ground in supporting five general policy areas to help prepare Washington's communities and economy for the future:

- Enhance worker training, so employees can be "upskilled" as technology evolves.

- Understand and set guidelines on the deployment of advanced technology in state agencies.

- Examine and seek opportunities to modernize public worker support and protection systems to enhance work flexibility and benefits

- Reimagine career and credentialing pathways, validated by improved labor market data, to provide continuous momentum for workers, and a reliable talent pipeline for employers.

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- Deploy economic development and other state resources to support small and midsize businesses and create family-sustaining jobs in every region of the state, and ensure equitable access to those jobs.

The Task Force developed 17 recommendations within these five priorities, many of which proved prescient and warrant continued exploration. These included assessment of advanced technology use in state government, including artificial intelligence (AI); expanding credential transparency and competency-based credentialing; analyzing and enhancing worker support systems; and utilizing technology to provide greater and more equitable access to economic development resources. A recommendation to modify employer Unemployment Insurance reporting passed the state legislature in 2019. The bill requires employers to report the job titles of each covered employee, which will allow for deeper understanding of employment trends into the future, and enables more granular performance tracking of workforce development investments.

The TAP 2024-2028 workforce development plan builds on these earlier efforts, aiming to design systems that can adjust to current changes and those ahead. In little more than four years since the Task Force submitted its recommendations, much has already changed. COVID-19 accelerated many of the trends predicted by the group, and the pace of technological adoption has only accelerated as remote work intensified and normalized during and after the pandemic. Less than a decade ago, disruption in the workplace was largely focused on the risks and rewards of automation in manufacturing, retail, and other hands-on fields. Creative work once thought to be immune to machine competition such as fiction writing, acting, storytelling, art, and music are undeniably threatened by synthetic competition. AI also threatens to displace workers in fields as varied as marketing, law, and even health care, with AI able to see beyond the range of the human eye, and to comb through and summarize huge volumes of information in seconds. At the same time, AI has provided office workers and other professionals with faster ways to synthesize their thoughts, pull together complex pieces of information, and generate outlines and ideas to speed up more labor-intensive work processes.

TAP's strategic priorities each encompass a review of the impact of AI and other advanced technologies on system customers. Employers are increasingly turning to AI and other technology to fill needed positions that are otherwise left open too long. From a workforce development perspective, AI adoption will need to be closely monitored to mitigate risk and foster competitiveness for both businesses and workers.

TAP activities align with broader state, national, and international efforts overseeing AI. Washington is proactively addressing AI to both foster innovation and safeguard its population against potential risks. This includes ongoing legislative efforts and the Governor's executive order on AI, released in January 2024. This executive order calls for state agencies to develop guidelines and best practices for how to adopt generative artificial intelligence into systems to ensure ethical and transparent use. Implementation of this order highlights a number of implications for workforce development systems, including the need for: assessing the impact of AI on the state workforce, creating research and partnership opportunities at the state and federal levels to enhance innovation, building workforce pathways into the AI industry, ensuring ethical and equitable use of AI, and developing AI training programs for government workers.

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There are similar national and international policy efforts to address the technological disruptions affecting multiple aspects of the economy, education system, and workplace. The European Commission proposed the first regulatory framework for AI in 2021 and amended it in June 2023 to address new challenges. Rather than relying on blanket regulations, the EU AI Act calls for rules and obligations to be enforced depending on risk levels to health, safety, or rights of an individual. The U.S. followed with an executive order issued by the White House in October 2023. This order established new AI safety and security standards in the U.S., with similar goals for privacy protection, promotion of equity and civil rights, and protection for workers and consumers while at the same time promoting innovation and competition. While these efforts differ in their approach and scope, they do retain a common thread: to safeguard citizens while promoting innovation and prosperity.

Rather than restricting the use of technology and AI in workforce development and the workplace, the TAP Plan will maximize its potential by aligning with the opportunities and adaptations that AI necessitates. Instead of trying to predict jobs and skills of the future, the strategic vision of this TAP plan will assess what knowledge, skillsets, and abilities best align with the adoption and use of AI and other technologies. Changes to the education and training system will be explored to meet these rapidly changing skill demands. A thoughtful and deliberate approach to technology adoption in learning and workplace settings could usher in an educational renaissance that amplifies rather than replaces human productivity.

Spotlight: Health Care

High quality health care is critical for maintaining our quality of life, and it provides a diverse set of high-quality jobs in all communities in our state.

Washington faces a health care workforce crisis—with too few workers, too much turnover, and increasing numbers of people leaving the field entirely, even as a growing and aging population puts increasing pressure on our health care system. We need to not only recruit and retain more workers, but also update the staffing models and career pathways to meet the changing needs of our state.

See Appendix F for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

Health Care is an example of an Industry working to positively apply AI to their industry, allowing them to expand their reach to patients, support/improve diagnostics, and accelerate the creation of new treatment options. Yet, this industry has been hemorrhaging talented workers, and the pipeline of new workers is far below the level needed to support adequate, high-quality delivery of healthcare across the state. The system will maintain a laser focus on meeting the needs of this critical industry. See Spotlight to the right for more information.

AI is also being explored through the lens of the TAP plan's guiding principles:

Closing Economic Disparities: Potential AI regulations can include provisions that promote equitable access and opportunities in the workforce. By actively monitoring AI applications in hiring processes, training programs, and job placement algorithms, states can ensure that these technologies do not inadvertently perpetuate biases or discriminate against marginalized populations. Regulations can

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mandate fairness and transparency in AI systems, helping to create a level playing field for all individuals seeking employment opportunities.

Comprehensive Support for Individuals with Barriers to Employment: AI can be used to tailor support services for individuals facing barriers to employment. Monitoring AI applications in workforce development can identify areas where technology can enhance accessibility, provide personalized training resources, and assist with job matching for individuals with disabilities or other challenges. Regulations can guide the responsible and ethical use of AI to ensure that these technologies contribute to, rather than hinder, inclusive workforce development.

Improving System-Wide Performance Metrics and Accountability: AI can analyze large datasets to identify trends, assess program effectiveness, and measure outcomes in workforce development initiatives. Monitoring and regulating the use of AI in these systems can improve the accuracy and reliability of performance metrics. Additionally, regulations can establish standards for accountability, ensuring that AI-driven decision-making aligns with the goals of equitable workforce development, and that there are mechanisms in place to address any disparities that may arise.

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Implementation Timeline

We have the partners and knowledge; now we take action. The next four years will build on our strong, existing coalitions. The knowledge and experience of our coalition partners will allow us to start work in 2024. In fact, you will see sprinkled through this plan "spotlights" on where the system has already done work on a particular topic, or we see promise in the results of innovative programs. New partners and new thoughts are always welcome as we move forward. Taking transformative action includes listening to new voices. The importance of the workforce drives us to keep pushing forward with innovation even as we incorporate feedback and build bigger coalitions. We are fueled by the sense of urgency expressed by our industry partners, such as those from the healthcare industry highlighted in the spotlight to the right.

We envision that each of the five strategic priorities will follow a similar implementation trajectory over the next four years:

Year 1: July 2024 -June 2025: ***Getting to work on the strategic priorities.***

A working group will lead each strategic priority by July 2024. This team will work closely with Board sponsors to drive work forward. This leadership team and Workforce Board staff will develop the workplans, identify the pilot projects, research existing successes, and coordinate the full resources available from across the partner organizations. Measures for success of each project will be identified that will guide ongoing assessment and formal review. Regular reports will be provided to the Board as summarized in the Board commitments section. The following table summarizes the organizations and agencies that have committed members of those teams:

System	Industry	Youth	Credential Transparency	Job Quality
- WA Dept of Services for the Blind - DSHS - ESD - LNI - OSPI - State Board for Community & Technical Colleges - Workforce Board	- Building Industry Association of Washington - WA Retail Assoc - WA State Medical Assoc - NW Maritime Trade Assoc - WA Film Works - IMPACT WA - WA Hospitality Assoc - WA Office of Financial Mgmt	- Dept of Corrections - State Board of Community & Technical Colleges - DSHS - ESD - Workforce SW - OSPI	- State Board for Community & Technical Colleges - WA Student Achievement Council - WSU - Dept of Licensing - DSHS - Community Colleges of Spokane - DOH - WA State Council of Presidents	- Workforce SW - Seattle-King WDC - DSHS - Commerce - MLK Labor Council - Employment Security Dept - Workforce Board

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Year 2: July 2025 – June 2026: ***Transition, framework development, and implementation***

The second year will capture the learnings of the first year and build those learnings into the strategic priority projects. This work will include identifying the aspects of each initial project that can scale across the network, and establishing mechanisms for shared learning. Those learnings will also drive the next round of pilot projects in each strategic priority.

Year 3: July 2026 – June 2027: ***Expansion, integration, and pilot testing***

The third year will be led by evaluating the first-year projects against the identified success metrics. Each pilot will have had at least a year's worth of operational data for this evaluation. All projects will also be assessed for integration into existing operations. If project elements require more analysis, additional pilot projects will be identified.

Year 4: June 2027 – June 2028: ***Implementation, expansion, and strategic planning***

This fourth year will be focused on assessment of the entire plan against success criteria. The results of that assessment will lead the planning for the next four years, 2028 – 2032.

Each partner agency has committed to the plan and is responsible for assigned activities within their organizations. Partners have also committed to a collective impact structure and have accepted responsibility to work across agency walls and funding silos towards the group's goals. The general timeline and reporting calendar will be overseen by the Workforce Board, supported by Board staff. Regularly scheduled presentations, Board-sponsored workgroups, and an interactive performance dashboard will make TAP implementation transparent to partners and the general public. Each strategic priority section (below) provides more details on the timeline and process.

Current State

On average, Washington's workforce looks strong. We have relatively high wages, low unemployment, a robust training and education system, and substantial levels of postsecondary education attainment. However, this enviable statewide average does not ring true across all regions and communities. For example, while Washington has the fourth highest average wage[17] in the country, that rank falls to 24th when excluding King County, the highest earning and most populated county in the state. In addition, one third of Washington households live below a financial level where they can readily afford housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, and other necessities.

The same holds true for industry. Both labor and business also look strong on average. Over 650,000 Washingtonians (or one in five workers) are represented by labor unions, for the 3rd highest percentage

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[17] Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics – May 2022 - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm

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in the country.[18] However, the benefits of the relatively high-wage, high-skill jobs provided by unions are concentrated in a few industries and are not equitably accessed by all communities in Washington.

This strategic plan summarizes priorities over the next four years to go from our current state of average "success" to our future state of success for all. That path also includes the Workforce Board's statutory role to inform the Governor, the Legislature, and Congress for the changes outlined in this plan that are necessary to build the strongest workforce.

Washington's Workforce Board, anchored by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28C.18, is committed to a strategic, collaborative approach in supporting the priorities outlined in the Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Plan. This plan is a manifestation of our dedication to a systematic approach to workforce development, ensuring effective allocation of resources across the critical strategic priorities: system integration, industry support, youth opportunities, credential transparency, and the development of a robust job quality framework. In accordance with RCW 28C.18.080, one of the Board's primary mandates is the development and implementation of a comprehensive state plan for workforce training and education. This plan is designed to align with labor market trends and Washington's evolving economic landscape, ensuring that investments are strategically directed towards areas of high impact and need. The process emphasizes a rigorous, data-driven approach, involving extensive collaboration with key stakeholders including state agencies, educational institutions, and industry partners to identify and prioritize areas of critical need for funding and program development.

Building on a strong foundation is key. Understanding and prioritizing existing strategic efforts from various agencies ensures we leverage past successes and challenges, like those from current navigator models. This valuable data will inform the plan, allowing progress.

The Board's responsibilities also extend to the meticulous evaluation of workforce training programs ensuring that our interventions are both effective and responsive to the needs of workers, employers, and communities. These evaluations are pivotal in guiding our funding requests and in shaping initiatives that demonstrably advance skills development and employment opportunities. Moreover, our role encompasses a significant focus on legislative advocacy. We are committed to presenting well-researched recommendations to policymakers, in coordination with our system partners, advocating for the allocation of funds that will support and actualize the TAP Plan's strategic priorities. This advocacy is integral to securing the resources necessary for the implementation of the plan over its four-year span, with a specific focus on initiatives that promote system integration, workforce equity, and the nurturing of a skilled and nimble workforce.

Achieving A More Responsive Future State

The next four years will build on past learnings as well as wisdom gained from our colleagues both nationally and internationally. We know that positive change will require new thinking, new approaches, and new strategies. Improvement doesn't necessarily mean doubling down on a current strategy. It can also come from a new approach that reaches a community we are not yet serving in the best way that

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[18] Union members in Washington — 2021 - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/2022/pdf/unionmembership_washington_20220322.pdf

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we can. This plan was developed to help all members of the workforce—including rural and historically marginalized and underserved communities—keep pace with the opportunities and broader gains that are typically confined to the greater Puget Sound region. We want to ensure that people who are currently struggling are not left behind as our state pulls farther ahead in post-pandemic recovery. It was informed by and aligned with other state initiatives that are on a similar trajectory, including those led by the Governor's Poverty Reduction Work Group[19], the Health and Human Services Coalition Master Person Index[20], and the Washington Technology Solutions (WaTECH) State Plan.[21]

To achieve the desired future state, the TAP Plan 2024-2028 was developed with a 10-year outlook. The first four years will focus on the five strategic priorities listed above, governed by the three guiding principles. These "guard rails" were used to frame discussions with partners and stakeholders, and to frame the questions for statewide input-gathering.

Community Feedback

A critical part of developing the TAP Plan was gathering community input on the current state and future direction of the state's workforce system. Guided by the TAP Plan's mission to empower all Washingtonians, the state embarked on a statewide outreach effort to gather valuable insights using various methods. Washington State made a concerted effort to collect feedback from a diverse range of perspectives across the state to ensure the 2024-2028 TAP Plan accurately reflects the workforce needs of all distinct communities. To accomplish this, the state utilized surveys, in-person Community Forums, Virtual Feedback sessions, one-on-one interviews, and attended third-party hosted events. Local Workforce Development Councils, whose deep understanding of their communities' unique strengths and challenges proved essential partners. Through this comprehensive outreach, connections were made with a remarkable array of passionate individuals statewide who harbor a profound love for and belief in their communities and a commitment to the expansion and fortification of the state's workforce. The diversity of voices and breadth of feedback gathered provides a strong foundation upon which an impactful, equitable TAP Plan can be built.

Several strong themes emerged that informed the TAP Plan:

- **Employees are an investment not an expense.**
The workforce system achieves its greatest success when employees and job seekers are seen as investments that will pay off over time, with the right levels of support and training, rather than a drain and an expense.

- **A watershed moment requires change from all parts of the system.**
While current collaborations were celebrated, the feedback highlighted more areas for engagement, including expanding beyond existing partners and forming new partnerships. No one recommended a smaller workforce system or reducing the number of partners involved.

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[19] Washington State Poverty Reduction Work Group, "Blueprint for a Just and Equitable Future: The 10-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty in Washington," 2020,
https://dismantlepovertyinwa.com/wpcontent/uploads/2020/12/Final10yearPlan.pdf.
[20] https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/IB-MasterPersonsIndexExpansion.pdf
[21] Washington Technology Solutions (WaTECH), "Statewide Information Technology Strategic Plan 2021- 2025," 2021, https://ocio.wa.gov/strategy

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- **Industry engagement is critical.**

Community feedback reinforced the importance of respecting businesses as customers. The ongoing voices of both employers and workers are needed to shape the success of our investments. Better outreach to and sustained engagement of a broader range of industry partners was identified as a clear need.

- **Culture needs to evolve along with the system.**

All forums had enthusiastic support for the cultural changes that complement the strategic priorities including those at the agency level and at the industry level to support the workforce.

- **Regional intermediary organizations are needed to ensure equitable access to services.**

Regional differentiation in service design and delivery is required to best serve customers throughout the state. However, these differences can inadvertently lead to slow adoption of best practices and some constituencies being disconnected from the larger vision. Strong support was voiced for a coordinated, regionally based navigation or concierge service that would facilitate achieving common outcomes from different areas.

- **Expansion beyond the hub and spoke model is needed.**

The current one-stop-shop model has achieved strong results for those who have used the services. However, potential customers are frequently prevented from receiving services because they cannot reach the one stop location and are unable to use online services. Many forums suggested using the full scope of public sector resources such as libraries, community halls, and school buildings to provide appropriate workforce services.

- **Increased data utilization and analysis**

Strong support for the guiding principles of closing economic disparities and comprehensive supports resulted in requests for data to help fully understand the issues and undertake evidence-based problem-solving. Suggestions included better use of existing data and collecting new data. Noted as an example is the recent passage of a bill requiring employers to report the job titles of their workers. ESD has begun collecting standard occupational classification (SOC) data from employers with their quarterly unemployment insurance forms, which should allow for more granular, meaningful program evaluations and performance tracking.

Strategic Priorities

Community input helped shape the plans for each of the five strategic priorities. Priority overview, planned activities, timelines, and areas of focus for each are described below.

• Priority 1: System Effectiveness

Washington's workforce development system is broad and complex and is at a pivotal crossroads, grappling with the dual challenges of economic shifts and technological advancements while adapting to evolving labor market demands. Five state agencies – the Department of Commerce (COMM), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Employment Security Department (ESD), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

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(SBCTC) - manage or coordinate 84 percent of the workforce funds, but there are many additional agencies and partners providing public workforce services. Currently, the system, managed by these multiple state agencies and partners, presents a complex and fragmented array of programs and services. This disjointed nature often leads to inefficiencies and challenges for both staff and customers. Job seekers face repetitive and inconsistent procedures, encountering barriers to service, while businesses struggle to navigate a diverse network to create or tap into the education and training pipelines necessary to connect with skilled talent. This situation breeds frustration and hampers effective service delivery, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups such as BIPOC communities, individuals with disabilities, justice involved individuals, and rural populations. In response, the WTECB, in partnership with public state workforce agencies and partners, is spearheading a move towards systemic integration, and enhancing customer experiences and outcomes.

To address the system's complexity and fragmentation, there is a need for a strategic focus on creating methods of shared governance across stakeholders. Resource sharing and leveraging will be emphasized to efficiently utilize resources by aligning funding, staff, and services among workforce partners. This will involve a focus on adopting shared processes and practices, such as data sharing, to avoid duplication and ensure high-quality service. This approach will align objectives and strategies for system integration, providing clarity and cohesion in the system's operation. The system must be sufficiently flexible and comprehensive to accommodate the varying needs of participants and employers. Effective coordination of service delivery and employer engagement are essential to system success.

Career Connected Washington Example

An essential element of this effort is ensuring all participants benefit, especially those facing barriers. Career Connect Washington (CCW) exemplifies this

Spotlight: TAP in Action – Veterans & Military Family Transition Collaboratives

The System Integration strategic priority is evident in the joint efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Washington State Military Transition Readiness Council (WSMTRC), and Employment Security Department (ESD), who are creating a seamless and supportive environment for military families, service-members and veterans.

These entities established a WorkSource Affiliate Site within the Career Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) to help ensure a smooth transition for service members and their families. This model includes robust data-sharing initiatives and credentialing efforts to validate and translate military skills into the civilian workforce, aligning perfectly with the system strategic priority for seamless service delivery. Other programs have also emerged from this collaboration including YesVets and Hire-a-Vet which are designed to incentivize employers who hire military-affiliated talent. These agencies have also developed a comprehensive workforce integration plan that caters to the distinctive needs of over 79,000 active-duty members, National Guard, and reserve forces in Washington. Governor Inslee's [Executive Order 13-01](#): Veterans Transition Support, and [Executive Order 19-01](#): Veteran and Military Family Transition and Readiness Support, further solidified this commitment, underpinning the deployment of employment and training opportunities that are both accessible and relevant to military spouses and veterans.

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focus on equity by integrating data on program participation and completion in partnership with ERDC and State education agencies, including OSPI, SBCTC, and WSAC. CCW student data is disaggregated by key demographic measures to measure progress against CCW's equity goals and to ensure programs prioritize students furthest from opportunity. For additional information on CCW, please see Appendix A for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

System Integration: The objective of the system strategic priority is to integrate system services, data, accountability, and resources with clear partners and roles in the state's public workforce development efforts. Our goal is to transform the workforce system into a cohesive, customer-focused ecosystem, by breaking down silos and fostering collaboration to achieve enhanced results. We aim to deliver services seamlessly and efficiently, employing a "no-wrong-door" approach by focusing on the following three areas:

- **Simplified, Common Shared Intake.** Reduce the amount of duplication for our customers through technology enhancements and process changes. This will be achieved through the following activities:
    - o Develop and execute pilot projects that test common shared intake processes and forms and data-sharing pipelines; assess their impact in real-world settings for a more unified and customer-centric approach; refine the process based on feedback and performance metrics to ensure efficient service delivery.
    - o Expand the scope of shared intake processes and systems to additional partners and agencies. Aim for broad participation and a culture of continuous feedback and adaptation.
    - o Launch technology initiatives like the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) to enhance shared intake, assessments, service tracking, and referral processes between WorkSource programs.
- **Improved Data Sharing.** Enhance coordination and customer experience through sharing customer data, operational data, and evaluation data between agency partners. This will be achieved through the following activities:
    - o Formalize and stand-up the state workforce data governance council to oversee a portfolio of technology projects to enable secure and as-needed data sharing among service-providing partners.
    - o Migration to cloud-based enterprise solution to meet data warehousing, integration, and analytic functions.
    - o Implement identity resolution technology to triangulate across distinct data systems while honoring the agency and autonomy of partners in their technology operations.
    - o Establish a data lookup portal to break down data silos in the state's workforce system and equip operational staff with needed information to assess customer needs and effectively and efficiently support jobseekers.
- **Integrated Service Delivery**. Streamline how services are provided and account for the different experiences of our customers. This will be achieved through the following activities:
    - o Formalize a Data Governance Council to include advisory bodies that guide the priorities and direction of operational service delivery and processes, and research and evaluation objectives, from a foundational data and technology perspective. Focus areas include

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requesting legislative changes, memorandums of understanding between programs to clarify roles, responsibilities and collaborative efforts, statewide reporting and evaluations, restructuring program procedures or practices, and other programmatic change management.

- o Enhance accessibility by using inclusive design practices and creating materials in multiple formats, working towards equitable digital access for all. Prioritize individuals with disabilities.
- o Compile a broad and adaptable menu of services that caters to the diverse needs of both businesses and job seekers and includes a range of services beyond traditional education and training, designed to support businesses in their growth and job seekers throughout their lifetime.

Operational Planning Elements

The establishment of the Workforce Data Governance Council is at the core of system integration efforts and will form the foundations for management of this strategic priority (see Timeline below). This Council, made up of a steering committee and specialized subcommittees as advisory bodies is slated to be formalized in July 2024, and will facilitate the coordination of data sharing technology projects across state agencies to champion the vision of shared service delivery models and integrated systems, thereby fostering a customer-centric, data-driven, evidence-based structure for the workforce system. Further, it will ensure data security and maintain the autonomy of data-owning agencies to oversee how their information is used and shared.

The subcommittees, informed by recommendations on membership and roles from the Steering Committee, will draw expertise from key partner agencies such as the Department of Services for the Blind, Department of Social and Health Service, Employment Security Department, Labor and Industries, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Board which will further lay the foundation for a cohesive state-level approach to system integration built on foundational data-sharing. Additionally, Washington Technology Solutions (WATech) and Washington State Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) will offer their expertise as consulting partners, reflecting their unique roles in the state.

Since 2016, the Board has laid the foundation for the System Strategic Priority. Noteworthy milestones include:

- 2016: Formation of the *Common Intake Committee, with pilots in 2 workforce regions.*
- 2018: Establishment of the *Integrated Services Delivery* workgroup to craft a vision and strategies based on earlier findings.
- 2019: Report outlining integration dimensions such as governance, funding, data sharing, and service delivery.
- 2021: Hiring of a contractor to build a governance structure to foster partner collaboration and innovation.
- 2022: State funds allocated for development of a potential workforce system data solution, with a report submitted to the legislature recommending a collaborative governance framework.

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- 2023: Appointment of a Data Integration Manager by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, marking a significant move towards developing data integration strategies.

As a result of these prior milestones, the Workforce Board's Data Integration Manager and Workforce Service Integration Manager can focus on securing detailed operational-level alignment on workforce system enhancements in year one. This includes working with the subcommittees outlining programmatic needs and setting the scope for a common shared intake and frontline data lookup portal needs assessment. This strategic approach, including the consideration of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and data-sharing agreements, ensures a clear understanding of formalized processes and partnership frameworks among the involved agencies.

In September 2024, a pivotal milestone will be to present a decision package to the legislature, aimed at securing support for the subsequent phases of the project. This approach is designed to align resources effectively with the project's objectives and to provide a transparent and structured roadmap for the ongoing integration efforts. This request will be based on the foundation laid by the data-integration working group, and a means of solidifying and resourcing the work identified by the Data Governance Council to realize the system integration strategic vision across the four years of the TAP Plan.

In addition, recent technological upgrades across different workforce agencies present opportunities for modernizing data-sharing and shared service delivery methods, including:

- **WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) Replacement Project:** Launched in 2023 by the ESD, the WIT project is set to transform the state's WorkSource case management system by fall 2025. It will replace the existing Efforts-to-Outcomes (ETO) system and facilitate a more seamless enrollment and service path for WorkSource programs, including adult education, dislocated worker services, and youth programs. The new system aims to improve case management, expense tracking, and performance reporting, enhancing the operational efficiency of Washington's American Job Center staff.
- **ctcLink Technology Project:** The ctcLink initiative by SBCTC represents a significant upgrade from the 42-year-old HP Legacy system to a suite of Oracle PeopleSoft products. This transition, completed in May 2022 for all 34 community and technical colleges, provides a modern, centralized system for managing college operations, allowing anywhere access to a more efficient way of conducting college business. Beyond software, ctcLink harmonizes business practices across the college system, emphasizing standardized procedures and responsive customer support.
- **Washington Connection Benefit Portal:** This portal used by DSHS is a model of integrated service access, enabling Washington residents to apply for over 35 different services, including food, cash, childcare, and medical assistance. As a collaborative effort, it streamlines application processes, allowing for easier benefit renewal and assisting residents in overcoming barriers to accessing benefits. The portal exemplifies system integration by providing a unified platform for diverse services, supported by the guidance of the Washington Connection Advisory Committee.
- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) System Transition: As part of DSHS, the** DVR's shift to the WAVES platform marks a strategic move to update its case management system. This new platform enhances DVR's service delivery, offering a more user-friendly interface and improved functionality for case management and reporting. The transition supports

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DVR's strategic objectives to modernize operations and deliver seamless services to its clients.

Additionally, in the rapidly evolving landscape of AI and technology, integrating these advancements into our strategic priority is imperative. By leveraging AI, we can enhance data analytics, improve predictive modeling for workforce trends, and consider ways to automate routine tasks, thereby increasing operational efficiency and enabling more personalized service delivery. The adoption of AI-driven tools, supported by more accessible, high-quality data will also facilitate better decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring that our workforce system is responsive and adaptive to the needs of both employers and job seekers. This requires not only technological upgrades but also a commitment to training and upskilling our workforce to work collaboratively with AI systems, addressing legal, ethical, cultural and organizational challenges to foster an adaptable, AI-ready culture. This strategic integration of AI and technology will not only streamline operations but also better position us to proactively address future labor market challenges, supporting our system's agility and resilience in the digital age.

Timeline & Milestones

Year 1: Foundation Establishment

- Formalize the Workforce Data Governance Council, and establish the Programmatic, Data & Technology, and Evaluation subcommittees made up of members from key partner agencies, and based on the Steering Committee's recommendations, to validate and prioritize business needs, analyze options, and create an incremental roadmap that delivers value towards system integration early and often. This is a collaborative governance structure starting in an advisory capacity and shifting to a decision-making entity. This phase involves defining the roles, responsibilities, and governance structure of the Council, setting the stage for an integrated data system and collaborative efforts across various state agencies and stakeholders.
- Submit a legislative report on the programmatic, regulatory, and technical feasibility of a data integration project in Q3 2024.
- Submit a decision package in September 2024, which will aim to fund and reinforce the subsequent phases of the integration project.
- Develop a transparent mechanism for pilots and project proposals, allowing agencies to put forth initiatives that would benefit from broader collaboration and advance the development of integrated service delivery frameworks that support a system viewpoint rather than siloed programs, such as functional teams.

Year 2: Framework Development and Pilot Planning

- Establish a roadmap for upcoming work such as shared intake and determinations of statewide workforce system evaluations and studies.
- Dedicate resources for structured pilot testing of proposed solutions and to enhance shared data systems and infrastructure.
- Launch the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) system in Q3 2025 with improvements on shared intake processes and technology in One Stop Centers for various core programs.
- Implement identity matching software and data accessibility initiatives to facilitate statewide data integration and analysis.

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- Migrate to a cloud-based data warehousing architecture for improved analytical and modeling functionality. Explore the creation of a document repository and data pipelines for shared agency customer data on an as-needed basis.

Year 3: Expansion and Testing

- Conduct a regulatory, technical, and fiscal feasibility study for common intake and a frontline data lookup portal to include technology solution advisement.
- Promote shared learning and the development of cross-program trainings for partner staff focused on providing support in using new technologies, understanding the value of a more integrated system, fostering a greater understanding of various program requirements and operations, and delivering customer-centered services.
- Develop a secure data lookup portal as a tool for frontline staff to see a holistic picture of workforce services and jobseeker insights.

Years 4 and 5: Modernization and Evaluation

- Pilot the common intake form, including testing automated eligibility and referral systems.
- Deploy more advanced technologies to automate analytics, reporting, and operations like eligibility determinations.
- Focus on refining intake processes and aligning strategies, emphasizing a feedback-driven culture for continual system evolution.

Priority 2: Industry

Industry input to the plan has been clear: workforce is critical, and it continues to be challenging to hire and retain skilled employees. Industry has demonstrated the urgency by developing training and upskilling programs in-house to supplement the work of the workforce system. Industry would prefer to use the workforce system where possible, but the urgency often requires industry move faster than the traditional speed of the system. A strong and stable workforce is critical to Washington's economic health and future success. Workers must be able to access high-wage, quality jobs to support families and communities. Employers need skilled workers to stay competitive, expand and grow in a global economy.

For many years, Washington employers have consistently listed workforce challenges as one of their top concerns. Workforce challenges are often listed as the No. 2 concern in surveys from the Association of Washington Business, topped only by issues like inflation, Covid-19, or supply chains. This concern is noted across the state, in urban and rural communities. Recent surveys and outreach associated with the TAP Plan development confirm this finding. For many employers, they report that it's difficult to hire – and retain – the workers needed to help industry expand and grow.

Over the next four years, the impacts of our work will focus in the following three areas:

- **Support sustainable, equitable industry growth**.
- **Build and expand career pathways for critical industries**.
- **Expand definition of workforce development system support**.

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The state's ongoing work to double the number of women and minority-owned manufacturing firms over the next decade is an outstanding example of equitable industry growth. This targeted effort to support small businesses – and more living wage jobs in marginalized communities – can be replicated with other industries, including clean energy, construction and more.

Washington would also benefit from additional career pathways in critical industries such as long-term care, information technology, aerospace and others. Many employers report a mismatch between the jobs they need to fill, and the skills of those who apply. This issue is compounded by an overall workforce shortage nationwide. And some employers have begun their own internal training programs.

Workers and employers also face new challenges in recent years that have sparked discussion about the definition of workforce support. Many workers face logistical challenges around affordable housing, child care, long-term care and transportation that keep them out of the workforce. A recent report from the Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force estimates the state economy loses $6.5 billion a year due to employee turnover, missed work, and lost productivity and opportunity.

Washington's overall economy is relatively healthy, but this success depends on a strong workforce. Focusing on these strategies over the next four years will support a robust foundation for all communities to thrive.

Career Connected Washington Example

An example of addressing these challenges include Career Connect Washington (CCW) Sector Leaders engage employers and provide strategic guidance to career connected learning efforts in 10 high demand industries in Washington, ensuring industry voice guides workforce investments and that employers play the lead role in developing talent training solutions. For additional information on CCW, please see Appendix A for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

Economic Overview

Washington's economy has been ranked as the best or among the best in the nation in recent years by U.S. News and World Report and CNBC. The state ranked No. 10 in the nation for employment growth in 2022, adding 145,800 jobs over a year. Washington ranked No. 7 in the nation for per capita personal income in 2021 at $71,889. And exports per capita ranked fifth in the nation, reflecting the Evergreen State's long history as an international trading partner.

This success was built on a strong foundation over many years, especially in areas of natural resources, agriculture and manufacturing,

Spotlight: Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our state today. Climate change impacts workforce in many ways including where certain industries can locate, where people can live, and the changing requirements for electricity, water and other natural resources. The Washington legislature created the Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee to develop workforce opportunities for climate-ready communities.

See Appendix G for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

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The forest products industry is the state's third largest manufacturing industry, the state Department of Commerce reports. This sector supports 42,000 workers and generates $36 billion a year in business income. Notably, 25 percent of the nation's log and lumber exports come from Washington, which is the second largest producer of lumber in the United States. The forestry and wood products sector supports 1,700 businesses and more than 102,000 workers, generating nearly $6 billion in wages annually. This industry also provides mitigation and adaption to climate change, including:

- Carbon sequestration
- Renewable energy
- Alternative to energy-intensive building materials
- Preventing deforestation
- Contributing to a circular economy / industrial symbiosis
- Further developing the cross-laminated timber industry

Agriculture also plays a pivotal role in the state economy. More than 300 crops are grown in Washington, home to a diverse range of crops and livestock, from tulips, berries and dairy herds in Western Washington to beef cattle, apples, wheat and hops in Eastern Washington.

More than one-third of Washington crops are exported all over the world, the Commerce Department reports. And food manufacturing, including potato and onion processing in Central Washington, is a $12 billion industry. Agriculture employs more than 144,000 Washingtonians with average wages of $55,000 per year. The agriculture and food processing industries generated $8.8 billion in earnings and $17 billion to the state's Gross Regional Product in 2022.

Manufacturing also plays a key role in the state and regional economy. The Boeing Co. hired 10,000 workers nationally in 2023, including many in Washington, as the company increases jetliner production. More than 60,000 Washingtonians worked at Boeing at the end of 2022. Boeing also supports many suppliers and contractors throughout the state and region. Many of these are small, family-owned firms that create jobs, generate tax revenue and generally support the communities where they are based. There were nearly 266,000 manufacturing workers in Washington in 2022, the state Employment Security Department reports. The average annual salary was $88,402.

The information technology sector has also made extraordinary contributions to the state. Washington's technology industry ranked No. 1 in the nation for both median wages and share of total employment in 2021, according to the CompTIA: Cyberstates 2021 report.

Many other Washington-based companies have made impacts on the national and world economy, including Amazon, Microsoft, Starbucks, Costco and others. These high-profile firms, in addition to a strong base of small businesses in each of the state's 39 counties, have contributed greatly to the state's overall positive trajectory in recent years.

Exports are also a critical component to the state, and nation's, economic strength. Washington ranked No. 8 in total value of exports among the states in 2022, totaling more than $61 billion. Transportation equipment came in first at $17.7 billion, followed by agricultural products at $17.5 billion.

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Additionally, Washington's state budget has benefitted greatly from this economic expansion. The state operating budget went from about $35 billion in 2013 to $76 billion in 2023. A strong economy creates more opportunities for a well-balanced workforce system.

Washington clearly has outstanding opportunities for workers, employers and investors. However, ongoing workforce shortages and turnover in a variety of industries pose significant challenges for continuing this progress.

Challenges

Several converging challenges have emerged in recent years to pose major barriers for a well-balanced workforce for Washington.

First, there appear to be missed opportunities between the publicly funded workforce system and employers. A significant portion of Washington employers remain disengaged with the workforce system. This system offers many services to help employers succeed. Examples include job fairs that match job seekers and employers; job marketing and recruitment services; access to labor market data and forecasts; tax incentives; worker training; programs that help avoid layoffs and help companies remain competitive; research so employers can offer competitive wages; help writing job postings; and information about apprenticeships and internships.

Second, it is clear that many Washingtonians are left out of the economy, encountering structural hurdles along traditional pathways to career success. The resulting economic disparities across population groups are fully depicted in the Workforce Demographics section of the plan. The state's workforce development system is well-suited to helping employers access these untapped labor pools. This includes robust and multi-faceted tuition support system, deemed the most generous in the U.S., customized training options, and a network of service providers that offer needed wrap-around supports.

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Spotlight: Child Care Collaborative Task Force (C3TF)

Washington's lack of affordable, accessible child care restricts workforce participation and impacts industry through employee turnover and absenteeism. A 2022 report to Legislature on The True cost of quality Childcare in Washington estimated the lack of affordable access led working parents into forgoing 14 Billion in lost wages. A survey of parents showed that nearly 30% of survey respondents declined a job or promotion, reduced hours, or left school or training because of a lack of child care. These concerns disproportionately affect women, particularly women of color, who already face systemic barriers to high wage careers. The other side of the issue is the child care workforce itself. Licensed child care programs face significant challenges recruiting, retaining, and supporting staff in a tight labor market amid rising inflation and wage competition from other industries.

The Child Care Collaborative Task Force (C3TF) jointly convened by the Department of Commerce and the Department of Children Youth and Families, was created by the Washington State Legislature in 2018 to develop policy recommendations to incentivize employer-supported child care and improve child care access and affordability for employees. The work of the task force reinforces the need for other Commerce programs that provide funds for increasing child care capacity in communities such as the Early Learning Facilities (ELF) Program and Child Care Partnership Grants (CCPG). Commerce has also recently launched the Family-Friendly Workplaces program which provides no-cost business consultations to help employers reduce workplace barriers for current or future employees with children.

Supporting the child care workforce and helping industry with operational changes to support workers with children are equally important and interdependent issues. Not doing so will result in a less inclusive workforce, shallow talent pools, and ultimately, a more vulnerable economy.

Additionally, employers and job seekers are faced with these basic questions as Washington's economy expands: Where will the workforce live? Who will take care of young children, the elderly and those that need extra care? And crucially, how will people get to work? The state's workforce development system is most often viewed as a skill-development and labor matching system. Over the years, the system has had to broaden its scope, usually through organizational partnerships, to offer a wide variety of needed wrap-around support services. A holistic view is clearly needed to achieve long-term, equitable and inclusive economic success for Washington's people, businesses, and communities. The workforce development system must be brought into partnership with the state's other agencies that are struggling to address business and community needs.

Artificial intelligence may also disrupt the labor market in the coming years. Washington would be best served by a strategic approach to this challenge, as discussed earlier in this document.

Additionally, Early retirements, an aging workforce, low migration, new business starts and a lack of childcare also impact the nation's workforce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports. Washington had 77 available workers for every 100 open jobs in Sept. 2023, the chamber reports. The state's labor force participation rate was 64.6% and the unemployment rate was 3.6%. Even if all unemployed Washingtonians filled open jobs, a significant labor shortage would still exist.

There are several factors keeping workers on the sidelines:

Child care has emerged as a major challenge for Washington workers and employers. Child care shortages cost Washington's economy $6.5 billion annually due to employee turnover, absences, lost productivity and missed opportunities for business and consumer spending according to the Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force. Washington has 5 percent fewer childcare slots today than in 2014 even as Washington's overall population and economic growth have expanded significantly over the past nine years. The industry faces a 43% annual turnover rate. These factors helped Washington's childcare costs increase by 220% since 1990, outpacing inflation, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The average yearly cost of sending a toddler to daycare in Washington is more than $14,000, Axios reported in July 2023 -- more than a year's tuition at the University of Washington. Those costs can approach $30,000 per year in Seattle.

Long-term care also poses challenges for working families. Washington's age 65 and older population will grow 30% by 2030, compared to just 5% for the state overall. And more than half of these seniors will need paid long-term care for an average of 3.2 years, a recent Workforce Board report shows. These services will cost from $1,700-$9,000 a month. Like child care, long-term care responsibilities drive many working people to drop out of the labor force and transition to caring for family members. The long-term care workforce also faces its own challenges. Turnover averages 50% a year for direct care workers, and nearly half of home care workers received public assistance in 2020.

Despite the challenges, Long-Term Care (LTC) offers a chance to make a real difference in the lives of Washington's growing senior population. With the need for LTC workers projected to rise significantly according to the Workforce Training Board's 2023 Direct Care Workforce report these in-demand jobs provide a stable career path. The Washington State Multi-Sector Plan on Aging, due in 2025, is expected to further solidify LTC's role in the state's future. LTC employees across Washington can find opportunities with benefits like union representation, healthcare coverage, retirement plans, and paid

training programs that allow you to earn while you learn. These positions require dedication and compassion, but also offer the chance to develop valuable medical skills and gain relevant credentials.

Employers, workers and policymakers have also highlighted housing as a workforce challenge. Washington housing prices have appreciated 6.3% per year on average over the past 25 years, the second highest in the country, according to federal data cited in the 2023 AWB Competitiveness Redbook. The statewide median home price was $654,900 in the second quarter of 2023, according to the University of Washington's Center for Real Estate Research. In King County, home prices averaged $913,200.

Washington's Housing Affordability Index (available online) was recorded at 57.2 in the second quarter of 2023, which means housing affordability continues to decline. The index, tracked by the Center for Real Estate Research, measures the ability of a middle-income family to make mortgage payments on a median priced home. A score of 100 means a household pays 25% of its income to principal and interest. A state and national housing shortage also impacts renters. An estimated 23.5% of renters spent 50% or more of their income on housing in 2022, Census data shows.

An aging transportation infrastructure and transportation policy decisions have contributed to challenges for the workforce. The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metropolitan area had the 9th worst average commute times in the country at 29.2 minutes, according to Census data highlighted in the 2023 Redbook report. State and local policymakers have invested heavily in road maintenance, planning and public transportation in recent years. But for 80% of commuters in the Seattle metro area, a single occupancy vehicle – often on Interstate 5 – is how they get to work. Washington workforce development leaders have highlighted other transportation challenges. Some employment experts have noticed a lack of viable public transit options between high poverty, high unemployment areas and manufacturing centers. Others noted public transportation routes that prioritized retail centers and urban cores over routes between residential areas and employers, including manufacturers that provide quality jobs. These experts stressed the need for local transportation authorities, including county governments, to adjust transportation routes to be more inclusive of working people who need to travel to employment centers for a variety of shifts. Others noted a lack of public transit options in many parts of Eastern Washington.

Spotlight: Washington State's Tech Hubs: Aerospace, Hydrogen, and Timber

Washington State is emerging as a key player in the national innovation landscape, with the establishment of significant Tech Hubs in aerospace, hydrogen, and timber technologies. These hubs are part of a broader strategy to bolster the state's economy, create high-quality jobs, and advance technological leadership in critical sectors. These hubs have gained momentum through federal funding opportunities like the CHIPS and Science Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). By securing these investments, Washington is not only reinforcing its technological and economic competitiveness but also ensuring the creation of a future-ready workforce equipped to handle the demands of these advanced industries.

See Appendix H for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

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Opportunities

There are numerous opportunities to address these challenges, which impact millions of Washingtonians.

President Biden and the Congress have passed historic legislation to rebuild our country's aging infrastructure and invest in the future. The American Rescue Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act and Inflation Reduction Act represent an extraordinary opportunity for Washington state, and our nation.

Our infrastructure needs are well-documented in Washington. In 2017 the Association of Washington Business, Washington State Association of Counties, Association of Washington Cities and Washington Public Ports Association commissioned a report on the state's infrastructure. Key findings include:

- Infrastructure is the foundation of a strong, competitive economy and thriving communities.
- Washington's diverse economy makes it uniquely situated to leverage federal investments.
- Washington's trade driven economy contributes more than $300 billion a year to the U.S. economy.
- The state's total infrastructure needs were estimated at more than $222 billion. This investment would create more than 700,000 jobs.

Recent federal investments are already making an impact. Washington will receive more than $8.2 billion for transportation, clean energy, climate change, clean water, broadband, energy and healthcare projects, the White House reports. Additionally, private companies have announced investments of $2 billion for semiconductor, electric vehicle, manufacturing and clean power projects.

Many of these projects will create high-paying union jobs. Many other jobs will be created across the workforce as a result of these major investments.

Focusing Washington's workforce development system on these once-in-a-generation opportunities stands out as one of the top priorities for the 2024-28 TAP plan. We recommend strong partnerships focused on better alignment between the

Spotlight: Job Skills Program (JSP)

Washington's Job Skills Program (JSP) bridges the skills gap between employers and workers in a rapidly changing economy. It offers customized training for current Washington workers (incumbent workers), helping them adapt to new technologies and economic shifts. JSP prioritizes projects that support strategic industry clusters and upgrading employee skills to avoid layoffs and works collaboratively with businesses and educational institutions. Through matching grants and varied training options (New Employee, Retraining, Upgrade), JSP equips workers with in-demand skills, making them more productive and businesses more competitive. The program has a strong track record, training thousands of workers across various sectors since 1983.

The JSP program reflects the state's commitment to:

- Foster collaboration between businesses/industries and educational institutions.
- Expand skills training programs aligned with current employment needs.
- Ensure skill training programs are regionally accessible and benefit diverse business sectors.

See Appendix I for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

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state workforce system and the state and federal agencies associated with these projects, including agencies focused on transportation, commerce, labor, education and more.

Notably, several recent Washington success stories offer insights and best practices as we move forward.

Career Connect Washington helps students and younger workers access classroom learning and on-the-job training to successfully launch new careers. This program has reached more than 16,000 young people since 2019.

Registered apprenticeships continue to serve as an outstanding example of good workforce investments. Research shows 21,506 participants in 2021-22. The employment rate for those that completed the program was 92%, with median annual earnings of $104.600. Notably, the 10-year economic impact was projected at $4.9 billion, for a taxpayer return on investment of $7.80 to $1.

The Workforce Board continues to research challenges and opportunities in the state's healthcare and long-term care workforce, and make policy recommendations to take action to support this critical sector of our economy.

Finally, Washington continues to offer outstanding postsecondary education and training options, including 34 community and technical colleges, for example. Washington also offers generous financial aid and other supports for students to access their education.

Additionally, Gov. Jay Inslee and the Washington Legislature have also made significant investments in transportation, housing reform, child care and long-term care needs in recent years. These investments represent tremendous progress, but challenges remain.

Recommendations for Action:

Increase the number of industry-recognized credential programs with stackable credentials. Programs that allow people to earn while they learn have shown great potential to create more skilled employees, and have those employees achieve quality jobs. These programs can also reach people experiencing barriers to receiving the training by collaborating with local CTE educators and utilizing existing local resources such as local schools, libraries, and businesses. This aligns closely with the credential strategic priority detailed later in the document.

Encourage the development of more housing options, as well as programs that help people access stable housing. This includes additional investments in the Washington State Housing Trust Fund; homelessness prevention; foreclosure fairness and mobile and manufactured home relocation assistance. Other strategies worth exploring include more support for missing middle housing; backyard cottages; splitting home lots to make way for new housing; more dense housing around public transit; single room occupancy apartments; rent stabilization and parking requirements for new apartments.

Explore additional solutions to address the state's child care crisis. Consider additional subsidies and grants for child care providers; subsidies for working families; and accelerated training and education programs for workers seeking to enter this field.

Create additional apprenticeships and training programs designed to address key industry shortages. An example to follow is the establishment of a new licensed practical nurse apprenticeship by the

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Workforce Board that will ease the workforce shortage by increasing the supply of critical healthcare workers, and also create new career opportunities for frontline workers in this industry.

Invest in transportation infrastructure. In Washington's trade-driven economy, trucks need efficient access to ports; workers need access to jobsites and students need access to campus to improve their education and training. Increased road maintenance, alternative routes, public transit including buses, light rails and ferries, as well as incentives to walk and bike to work remain worthwhile investments of tax dollars. The addition of a few bus lines between high-unemployment areas and manufacturing firms would have a tremendous impact on both jobseekers and industry. The state should continue to work with local transportation providers to support new options for working families and bring in local workforce development boards to support their analysis and solution-finding.

Consider supporting employers as their new hires transition from public assistance. These job seekers often face child care and transportation challenges, especially when beginning a new job. Notably, several employers have been highlighted in state and national media for creating their own internal programs to address these issues, including onsite health centers; onsite childcare facilities; childcare benefits to pay providers directly; internal training and apprenticeship programs; and more.

Build better relationships and communication channels between state government and private industry. For example, there may be a benefit to a single point of contact to act as a liaison between state agencies and employers. Small businesses are often communicating with several different state employees at the same time. One employer ambassador to help guide the business owner through various government incentives and regulations could help employers succeed and meet expectations.

Encourage local Workforce Development Councils and employers to continue strong partnerships. In addition, consider expanding local workforce development councils and the state Workforce Board by adding more labor and business representatives.

Invest in the relationship between state government and the private sector. Solutions include more liaisons to manage relationships between employers and state agencies; liaisons that represent various programs, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and other major funding streams; and better paid liaisons, similar to neighboring states. Business liaisons have more flexibility to connect job seekers with quality, living-wage jobs rather than low-paid work with limited career advancement.

Employers have also suggested better connections between industry and Washington's schools and colleges. Business and industry liaisons at the high school level were previously funded. Restarting this program is worthy of exploration.

The next four years represent an opportunity to recreate the relationship between state government and Washington's private sector employers. Washington's economy is expanding, but a number of challenges may limit these opportunities for workers and employers. These challenges are significant enough to warrant new strategies, and a new approach to workforce development.

Timelines and Milestones

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Year 1: Organize stakeholders to focus on industry challenges

- Establish an industry advisory committee to inform and help evaluate the direction of TAP implementation.
- Prioritize overall effort on new opportunities from federal infrastructure investments, and strengthen and create partnerships among the workforce system and state and federal agencies associated with new grant funding. The workforce needs are challenging now; new projects will amplify this concern.
- Define roles and scope, recruit members from industry, labor, state agencies, local workforce boards and small businesses. Prioritize challenges and opportunities for workers and employers.

Year 2: Launch pilot projects and advocate for policy changes

- Support business navigators to help more employers access workforce system. Business navigators are funded at the local level for two years. This presents a tremendous opportunity to learn about future employer outreach. Aim to increase employer participation in the workforce system by 25 percent.
- Launch business liaisons to serve as a single point of contact between state agencies and employers. Aim to connect twelve newly created business liaisons – one for each Washington region -- with 100 businesses each over the course of a year.
- Invite existing or create new employer groups as advisors to state and local workforce boards.
- Invest in additional marketing and outreach to advertise business services to employers in select markets.
- Support local governments to add new public transit routes along major employment corridors.
- Evaluate the success of employer sponsored child care.
- Advocate for additional affordable housing near employment centers.
- Advocate for additional long-term care support for Washington workers.

Year 3: Evaluate pilot project results.

- Evaluate success of business navigators and liaisons.
- Analyze marketing campaigns focused on services for employers.
- Analyze and make policy recommendations based on successful child care programs supported by employers.

Year 4: Expand successful initiatives and plan for next four-year plan.

- ## Priority 3: Youth

Youth were disproportionately affected by recent economic disruptions including the COVID pandemic and the great recession of 2008-2011. Many industries that typically employed young individuals, such as hospitality, retail, and entertainment, faced significant challenges, leading to fewer opportunities for employment, job losses, and reduced working hours. Additionally, disruptions in traditional education

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settings, including remote learning and school closures, affected youth skills development, mental health, and access to internships or work experience, further hindering youth employment prospects.

Overall, the pandemic created significant obstacles for youth seeking employment; both new challenges and the exacerbation of existing challenges in entering the workforce. Addressing the needs of all youth is critical to ensuring a more inclusive and equitable job market, especially those facing barriers to continued education and employment, including youth with disabilities; justice- and foster-involved youth; youth experiencing poverty and homelessness, racism, family disharmony, gender identification, and other socioeconomic challenges. Partnering with businesses is essential, as it helps tailor training programs to meet industry demands, fostering a symbiotic relationship between education and employment. Raising awareness of youth work opportunities not only empowers young individuals but also bridges the information gap between employers and potential employees and allows businesses to tap into crucial underutilized labor sources. By investing in comprehensive education and vocational training programs, we can equip youth with the skills and knowledge needed to secure stable employment and financial independence.

Increased adoption of technology in the workplace and the classroom will also continue to have outsized impact on young learners as they prepare for a rapidly evolving job market. Artificial intelligence is challenging traditional education models, and students, educators and other workforce development stakeholders will need to be empowered to capitalize on these benefits while safeguarding against risks. Students will need to employ this technology in the classroom to build skillsets needed by employers, while at the same time bolster developing durable skills such as critical thinking and collaboration. At the same time, educators and workforce professionals enhance their effectiveness by utilizing AI to perform tasks such curriculum development, assessment, job matching, labor market analysis, standards and certification, and other supports. Over the next four years of this workforce development plan, the usage and regulation around AI and other technology for youth will need to be aligned with other ongoing state efforts, including the 2024 Executive Order on AI, and other legislative efforts.

The guiding principle of comprehensive supports for individuals with barriers to employment has heightened importance for youth populations. Effective support services for youth are designed within the core tenets of positive youth development and trauma-informed care. Such evidence-based, youth-centered services play a pivotal role in enhancing their educational attainment, training opportunities, and future productivity in the workforce. These services address various barriers that young individuals often face, enabling them to succeed in their educational pursuits and transition effectively into the workforce. Such supports enable many young workers to take advantage of training and education opportunities that may not be otherwise available.

Many young people lack confidence and self-awareness and when coupled with structural barriers, such as a lack of transportation or child care, food and housing insecurity, age caps on aid programs etc.,. many young adults are unable to utilize Washington's financial aid programs for postsecondary education and vocational training. This is especially true for historically marginalized populations, who are often as likely to enroll but less likely to persist to program completion, leading to fewer certificates, diplomas, and industry-valued credentials for this priority population.

The objective of this strategic priority is to improve opportunities for young people, especially those kept furthest from opportunity to transition to an economically successful adulthood by way of reinforcing the existing and bolstering new areas of impact, including:

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- **Increasing youth awareness of workforce services and programs.** Connecting youth to the appropriate programs equips them with the knowledge and tools to build successful and fulfilling careers. We can achieve this impact by remaining youth-centered and focusing on:
  - Strengths-based, person-first programming. When we recognize that youth already possess skills, abilities, and strengths, we can build on and amplify these opportunities when we prioritize what is already going well for that youth.
  - Supporting co-enrollment in youth-opportunity and re-engagement programs , when appropriate, such as WIOA Youth and Open Doors. Such efforts will require the removal of barriers to co-enrollment in multiple programs.
  - Aligning youth programs with the needs and interests of young people in a geographic area.
  - Connecting business with formal education programs to create continuous pathways from education to employment to career.
  - Supporting the use of workforce and peer navigators with youth-serving programs.
  - Expand career-connected learning and exploration to in-school youth, starting as young as elementary and middle school.

- **Broadening access to and shortening the time required to achieve credentials.** Increasing rates of youth credentialing not only enhances the qualifications and employability of our future workforce, but also enables youth to embark on a pathway to economic stability, boosting long-term career prospects and contributing to overall economic growth in society. Shortening this transition period from secondary education to career will make them competitive candidates for quality jobs earlier in life and should decrease the unemployment rate of this demographic. We can achieve this impact by focusing on:
  - Exploring dual credit programs in secondary schools
  - Strengthening and increasing available apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and pathways
  - Supporting Career and Technical Education (CTE) widely, across all occupational sectors
  - Support CTE building trade and industrial arts programs to prepare for jobs created under new federal investments (IIJA, IRA, CHIPS Act).
  - Enhancing Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services for young people with disabilities, including by using the strategies described above.

We've learned from prior investments in helping youth transition to successful careers. The following programs and services have proven successes to build upon:

Skill Centers are regional secondary schools that serve high school students from multiple school districts. They provide instruction in preparatory programs that are either too expensive or too specialized for schools or districts to operate individually. Currently, there are fourteen (14) skill centers in Washington state.

The **Running Start Program** allows 11th and 12th grade students to take college courses at Washington's thirty four (34) community and technical colleges. Students earn both high school and college credits for their successful completion of these courses.

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Career Connect Washington (CCW) offers work-based and academic programs for young people to explore, learn, and/or earn money or college credits while learning. CCW was created by a partnership of business, labor, education, government and community leaders. Started in 2017, CCW bridges the gap between employers and educators by providing the connection, funding, and support they need to deliver high quality academic and work-based experiences for Washington students, especially those who have been kept furthest from opportunity.

CCW's primary focus is growing career connected learning opportunities for youth and young adults up to age 29. But all students and job seekers can participate in CCW programs. CCW prioritizes programming for students kept furthest from opportunity, such as BIPOC youth, low-income youth, youth with disabilities, and youth for whom English is a second language. CCW Career Launch programs include both a paid, work-based learning experience with an employer and postsecondary academic education (resulting in an employer-verified credential or 45 credits toward a postsecondary degree). These Career Launch programs help to level the playing field for students furthest from opportunity, by offering real pay, real employment experience, and postsecondary credentials of value in Washington's labor market. For additional information on CCW, please see Appendix A for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

Core Plus uses the power of hands-on learning to better integrate academic and career-based education. Core Plus is an industry-validated, skills-based manufacturing and industrial arts curriculum, with standardized certificate systems to document attainment of learning goals and objectives. It originated as a grassroots program led by industry to re-emphasize CTE in schools with Boeing collaborating on Core Plus Aerospace. It has now expanded to include construction and maritime curricula, as well.

Elective Credit for Paid Work Experience As of the 2023-2024 academic year, high school students are able to earn up to two, elective, high school credits for paid work experiences and/or employment.

High School and Beyond Plan This plan guides students' high school experiences and to prepare them for transition from K-12 to a successful career in the workforce. Students begin developing the plan in middle school and update it annually, with the support of educators and guidance counselors. In 2023, the legislature required a statewide universal platform for the plan. This continuous improvement will guide the use of the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) over the next four years.

Background

Historically, the workforce education system has been split into two parts – secondary (seventh through twelfth grade) and postsecondary. In the secondary system, learning focused on preparing students for future career training and was not student-centered. Emphasis and encouragement focused on entering a four-year college degree program after high school graduation. Little effort was spent developing student interests, capabilities or learning styles, especially beyond formal college education. By not making concerted efforts to place students on continuous learning pathways leading to careers of interest to them, most students are not set up to make meaningful progress towards entering the workforce. More career guidance, counseling, and navigator resources can help students to align their future goals with their current education pathways. Focusing on the learner, including how one learns, and embedding education and skills (advanced math and science) throughout K-12 courses, including CTE can also support students as they navigate their career path and transition to adulthood.

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Historically, only in the postsecondary system could students continue their studies along more focused career pathways and earn degrees, certifications, and other types of recognized credentials. By undervaluing the education of those K-12 years and not making concerted efforts to place students on continuous learning pathways leading to careers, this system did not set up the majority of students to make meaningful progress towards entering the workforce. More career guidance, counseling and navigator resources can help students to align their future goals with their current education pathways. Furthermore, the additional high school graduation requirements added over the years can have the effect of making coursework less meaningful and relevant for students and restricting the responsiveness of schools. The process of transitioning from high school into postsecondary education is also in flux, as the education system moves away from standardized testing. Additionally, transcript evaluation and translation are not consistent across institutions. As a result, there are questions as to whether dual credit and CTE courses taken in high school will result in the intended credits awarded by postsecondary entities. These issues compound missed opportunities that are systemic, structural barriers and no fault of the youth nor the educators within these systems. Youth participation in the workforce is crucial for the future of the state's economy, providing a skilled talent pipeline for businesses, addressing labor market demands, and bringing fresh perspectives leading to adaptation and innovation. As such, we must proactively move to dismantle the harmful impacts of these systems, however unintentional, to create more holistic, supportive, and responsive pathways from education to credential attainment to self-sustaining employment.

Another key challenge facing the youth labor market is the mismatch between the skills and competencies of young workers and the demands and expectations of employers. At the same time, internships and apprenticeships are valuable forms of work-based learning that can enhance the employability and skills of youth workers, as well as the productivity and innovation of businesses. However, many employers face regulatory and administrative barriers that discourage them from hiring and employing youth workers in these programs.

To address this gap, it is essential to streamline policies and procedures that facilitate the hiring and employment of youth workers in internships and apprenticeships. These forms of work-based learning can provide valuable opportunities for young people to acquire relevant skills, experience, and networks, while also benefiting employers by enhancing their productivity, innovation, and social responsibility. However, many employers face barriers and disincentives to engage with young workers, such as complex regulations, administrative burdens, and lack of information and support. To address this, the workforce development system will explore options to facilitate employer engagement with young people such as establishing a statewide governance structure and vision that supports and coordinates apprenticeship programs available to youth across different sectors and regions, establishing workplace business liaisons with the K-12 education system, reducing logistical, regulatory, and financial barriers to employer participation and inviting business representatives to the youth strategic priority work group. These interventions aim to foster collaboration and communication between employers and educators, as well as to align the goals and strategies of the youth workforce development system with the needs and interests of the business sector.

Aligning programs and credentials to be responsive to student and industry needs must be supported. Industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) are crucial for students entering the workforce; leveraging partnerships between business and education can help create clearer pathways to employment. Apprenticeships are a proven model of attaining IRCs, while simultaneously earning money and

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embarking on a path towards a lifelong career. Yet, pre-apprenticeship programs face significant administrative hurdles; consequently, many of these programs restrict access to youth aged 18 or older, to comply with certification requirements, such as OSHA, forklift safety, etc.

Providing youth and young adults with opportunities to make meaningful strides towards IRCs and with job opportunities that allow them to earn and learn simultaneously, is crucial to their self-sufficiency. By engaging in the workforce during ages fifteen through eighteen youth are much more likely to remain in the workforce and advance in their careers. If students graduate from high school with no IRCs and little idea of what type of work they would like to do, they are more likely to forgo college and vocational training opportunities and have more limited prospects for participation in the workforce. They are more likely to have entry-level jobs with fewer prospects for career advancement. Such stop-gap employment, where wages are unlikely to increase over time, can lead workers towards a "lost decade," in which such workers drift in and out of similarly low-paying jobs with few prospects for advancement. As such workers age, they become less and less likely to attain additional education credentials and complete trainings due to multiple factors such as limited time and money, familial and dependent responsibilities due to a lack of adequate caregiving infrastructure in our society, and additional barriers to accessing support systems.

This strategic priority has significant interaction with Priority 1: System and Priority 4: Credential Transparency. For example, a youth-specific online portal to consolidate relevant youth-related resources would directly support system integration for youth. This could include services for youth with disabilities and other systemic barriers such as foster- and justice-involvement, federal definition language and requirements, and others. The portal could also serve as a data-sharing opportunity for support programs such as SNAP and TANF, as well as information and access to wrap-around services such as those noted in the youth support services section. In addition, a Learning and Employment Record (LER) could enable Washington to map available resources and launch a collective impact campaign to connect the most economically vulnerable jobseekers with clear, navigable routes to livable wages in high-demand, high-wage fields. It is envisioned as a key strategy for ameliorating systemic inequity and poverty and assisting workforce system customers achieve true self-sufficiency through the integration of diverse workforce, education, and supportive services and resources. The LER would employ a no-wrong-door approach, linking student academic records with the workforce and social support systems, in alignment with FERPA and other such safeguards for confidential information. Individuals would own their data and control access to it.

Critical Steps for Success

Dual Credit

Dual credit programs play a pivotal role in fostering youth employment and career pathways by offering high school students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. By completing college-level courses in high school, students develop a solid foundation for further education or immediate entry into the workforce with advanced skills and qualifications. Such opportunities not only enhance their employability but also reduce the time and financial barriers often associated with traditional postsecondary education. To maximize these benefits, stakeholders need to explore how to

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better support and align dual credit and other credentialing opportunities for youth, including partnering with skill centers and other community-based organizations that support such pathways.

Dual credit programs in Washington include:

- Advanced Placement
- International Baccalaureate
- Cambridge International
- College in the High School
- Running Start
- Career and Technical Education

Opportunity youth

Youth who have historically been kept furthest from opportunity have the most to gain from engagement with education and employment supports. Current existing supports for such youth include the WIOA Youth program and Open Doors education reengagement programs. When state systems that support youth are better integrated and efforts are aligned to provide comprehensive, wraparound supports, youth are better prepared to complete secondary credentials, such as attainment of a high school diploma or an equivalent credential. Secondary credential attainment is a necessary pre-requisite to supporting youth towards their goals of employment, self-employment, and/or postsecondary education. We will continue to pursue alignment of overlapping program efforts that serve this vulnerable population, as well as seek to create more rigorous systems of measurement around upstream progress indicators, such as secondary credential attainment.

WIOA Youth prioritizes service delivery to youth and young adults aged 14-24 who identify as low-income, with emphasis on youth who have disconnected from formal education pathways and who experience additional barriers such as disability, homelessness, foster- and justice-system involvement, parenting, and English as a second language. WIOA Youth service providers partner with shelters, drop-in centers, transitional living centers, food banks, juvenile court systems, tribal partners, and others to provide warm hand-offs and referral pathways for youth with significant barriers.

Partnership between workforce pathway providers and the Open Doors program is a continual process of refining and iterating on existing state and local policies to ensure we are continuing to remove barriers at the administrative level so youth do not experience disconnection or disruption in engagement with education and workforce preparation activities. Washington State Employment Security Department is working in close partnership with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to remove and reduce policy barriers that limit co-enrollment in these two programs. Additionally, this state agency partnership is collaborating to ensure practitioners have awareness of and access to all relevant resources to support co-enrolled populations.

Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship

Registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs are a valuable resource for many young people that don't thrive in traditional, formal education programs. Registered apprenticeship programs and their supporting feeder programs are seeing increased support at all levels – from federal funding

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infrastructure strategies to on-the-ground awareness and engagement from youth and young adults in reengagement education pathways.

There is renewed interest in Washington to coordinate career-connected learning pathways with apprenticeship opportunities. Career Connect WA (CCW) is an umbrella initiative that has invested in expanding apprenticeship and has grown to more than 30 programs across the state, creating more pathways to middle class jobs through apprenticeship. To continue this work, CCW, the Employment Security Department (ESD), Labor and Industry (L&I), and other partners worked together to apply for the Apprenticeship Building America grant (ABA) from U.S. Labor Department to expand registered apprenticeship and recognized pre-apprenticeship programs in high-growth and high-demand industry sectors. This grant was awarded in 2022 and ESD issued an RFP to award $3,751,236.00 to Program Builders ready to build and expand programs statewide. The ABA grant program aims to increase equity and accessibility in program delivery to apprentices and bring the Registered Apprenticeship model to more industries. ESD looks to use their ABA funds to bolster the already established CCW network and the established sector intermediary partnerships such as: clean energy, healthcare, advanced manufacturing and aerospace, technology, and cybersecurity, maritime, and construction.

In 2023, in partnership with The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), CCW received $23 million in support from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's Good Jobs Challenge grant to create the Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI). WJI is helping Washington residents, including youth and young adults, to connect to good jobs through registered apprenticeships and other technical training programs. The initiative leverages CCW's existing system to coordinate efforts across the state and ensure a focus on equity and diversity. Eight sectoral partnerships were awarded funds totaling nearly $17 million to train and place nearly 3,000 Washingtonians into good jobs with a family-sustaining wage in five key industries: construction; healthcare; advanced manufacturing and aerospace; clean Technology and energy; and information technology and cybersecurity.

Increasing supports for youth

Better aligning youth programs with WIOA eligibility requirements

Aligning youth education programs with the WIOA funding eligibility requirements is one way to enable more young people to tap into and combine training programs and funding streams. WIOA provides limited federal funding to support youth workforce development initiatives; aligning youth education programs with WIOA requirements can help to leverage and maximize financial support for initiatives aimed at preparing youth for the workforce. Eligibility requirements help service providers prioritize youth and young adults most in need yet are flexible enough to ensure that even the most highly barriered youth can still access the program.

WIOA funding comes with federal and state-required performance and accountability reporting. In an integrated system, partner providers should look to system-wide metrics that track progress to mutually negotiated, cross-agency goals. Service integration should be responsive to the performance requirements of each participating partner. WIOA metrics may add value to non-WIOA programs. For example, WIOA outlines guidelines and standards for program quality and effectiveness that are aligned to the principles of youth development through fourteen (14) youth program elements. Aligning youth education programs with these requirements helps ensure that programs are developmentally appropriate for all young people. Other WIOA components that align with the workforce plan priorities

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include increasing youth wraparound supports, especially mental health supports, creating seamless pathways from education and employment through high school into adulthood, enhancing collaboration and coordination within the workforce development system, and addressing the workforce needs of business.

Another program that could better align with WIOA eligibility is the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program. This program is an important part of Washington State's comprehensive workforce development system serving the needs of low-income individuals from ages sixteen to fifty-nine (16-59), displaced workers, and employers. This program is committed to assist Basic Food recipients by encouraging economic well-being through skill acquisition and gainful employment. The program offers job search, training, education, and job readiness activities to improve BFET participant's employment prospects and wage-earning potential.

For example, the BFET program partners with several community-based organizations and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges that also receive WIOA funding. When a partner is unable to support a participant under BFET due to program restrictions, WIOA support is available and vice versa. The partnerships and alignments continue to develop to ensure youth are served and not left behind.

Connecting business and education
Connecting businesses and educational institutions is crucial for enhancing youth outcomes in workforce training. Businesses can provide insights into the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed in the workforce. This information helps educational institutions tailor their programs to align with current and future job market demands, ensuring that youth receive training relevant to industry needs. Collaboration facilitates increased access to experiential learning opportunities like job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and informational interviews. These experiences offer valuable hands-on exposure to the workplace, allowing youth to gain practical skills, understand industry expectations, and build professional networks. Providing such opportunities, especially to historically marginalized communities that may have limited access, creates a more equitable playing field for entry into the workforce. These efforts could also align with CCW efforts, which specifically bridge training and support gaps for youth entering the workforce.

Transition and Pre-employment Transition Services

For youth with disabilities, enhancing Transition and Pre-employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS) significantly contributes to better youth support for workforce training by focusing on preparing students for successful transitions from school to the workforce. Coordinating work-based learning experiences for pre-employment transition students with employers through the workforce system is a crucial component of these services. Facilitating awareness and accessibility to such credentials – including some credentials as fundamental as a driver's license - can seem simple but remain a primary barrier for many youth in accessing postsecondary education and employment opportunities. For WIOA Title IV partners, the following credentials count and could be supported through the workforce partners:

- High school diploma or Washington State recognized equivalent

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- Secondary and postsecondary report card and transcript continuity
- On-the-job-training for specific employment
- Registered apprenticeship training program
- Passage of exam(s) for industry or employer-recognized credentials (HVAC, Accounting Specialist, etc.)
- Development of career pathways with industry, vocational, and postsecondary training for pre-employment students and young adults, leading to employment

Workforce navigators

Using workforce system navigators significantly reduces barriers for youth entering the workforce preparation and employment systems by providing personalized guidance, support, and resources. Navigators act as advocates and mentors and help youth navigate the complexities of the job market, educational opportunities, and support services. By offering individualized assistance, addressing specific challenges, and connecting youth to relevant programs and resources, navigators empower young individuals to overcome barriers such as lack of information, limited access to opportunities, or uncertainty about career pathways. There is little funding explicitly for youth navigators. However, system partners could consider working across funding streams to redesign navigation services, carving out funds specifically for youth. For example, co-funding WIOA PRE-ETS navigator services with WIOA Title I funds, might create a direct point of contact for other WIOA-eligible youth to assist with work-based learning experiences, pre-internships, and internships.

Timeline and Milestones

This strategic priority follows a similar timeline to the other priorities:

Year 1: Establish partnerships across Workforce System

- Establish a leadership work group with Workforce Board Sponsor.
- Link to other workgroups focused on improving youth outcomes, such as the Career Connect Washington Inter-Governmental Work Group.
- Conduct an environmental scan of existing efforts.
- Gather feedback from Youth through survey.
- Identify the most pressing barriers.
- Identify most relevant metrics for evaluating outcome performance.

Year 2: Pilot efforts for impact statements

- Identify and implement pilots for achieving impact and removing barriers.
- Track evaluation metrics.
- Write two-year update.

Year 3: Evaluate pilots and progress

- Evaluate pilots for impact and effectiveness.
- Identify pilots for expansion.

Year 4: Expand on best practices

- Develop the next iteration of pilots and innovations.

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- Develop the next four-year strategy.

- ## Priority 4: Credential Transparency

The Workforce Board's philosophy is that all learning is valuable and needs to be recognized. It doesn't matter *where* you learn, it's how and what you learn. More broadly, all learning that can be validated, should be able to be credentialed.

Washington is on the path to increase access to and attainment of postsecondary credentials for all residents, and to strengthen the connection between industry and education to improve economic outcomes for students and the competitive stature of businesses. We've received national recognition for the gains we've made over the last decade. In particular, successful advancements have been made in articulating and accelerating pathways from high school to postsecondary credentials, including registered apprenticeships, and two and four-year degrees.

As in other areas of workforce development, credential transparency is being impacted by advances in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. Linked, open data, for example, enables information to instantly move between different platforms, keeping consumers better informed about education and training opportunities through frequent, real-time updates—making data more reliable and credible. Credential Transparency Description Language, as outlined below, is one strategy we are exploring to help make this happen.

AI-driven credential systems can also enable individuals to securely store and manage their credentials in digital wallets or platforms. This facilitates easier sharing and verification of qualifications across different institutions and organizations, promoting greater transparency and efficiency in credential verification processes.

But more broadly, the focus of credential transparency strategic objective is to explore expansion to improve equitable access, mobility, and long-term economic success.   This will be achieved through the following impact statements:

- Create a common definition of credentials by:
    - Restarting and expanding the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee
    - Evaluating Credential Transparency Description Language
- Put learners at the center by:
    - Exploring and enhancing skill-based hiring
    - Creating and maintaining a statewide Learning and Employment Record
    - Analyzing and applying data from the Eligible Training Provider List

Both of these impact statements would benefit from the establishment of a credential transparency framework that:

- Is learner-centered, and meets a learner's needs throughout working life.
- Views diverse cultures, lived experiences, and learning styles as an asset. Diversity of experience is accommodated and supported.
- Deconstructs student learning by commonly defined knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Provides momentum, mobility, and permeability along educational and career pathways.

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- Identifies ways to award credit for prior learning to demonstrate that valid skills and knowledge can be gained outside of a college classroom.
- Is reliably evaluated.
- Is part of a single taxonomy.

Background

Credentials span a wide range of topics, time, and investment. They can be anything from micro-certifications to badges to registered apprenticeships and bootcamps. They can be associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, master's, and doctoral degrees. They can be occupational licenses and accreditations. Training can take a few days to a few months to many, many years in the case of your local pediatrician or post-doctoral microbiologist.

Credential transparency deconstructs student learning by commonly defined knowledge, skills, and abilities. If I get a certificate in cybersecurity, what exactly do I learn? How can we break this down so it's understandable and has a common understanding between and among educational institutions and employers?

We need to evaluate different credentials and what earnings and employment outcomes result. You can see some of this work already on the Workforce Board's Career Bridge, the state's public facing career and education portal. On Career Bridge, a consumer report card can be seen for many credentials. The report card shows completion rate, employment rate, and median annual earnings and the industries where graduates were employed. We also need to make sure that credentials are interoperable and that you can view them among different computer systems and technologies. They must be truly portable among different online platforms.

We also want credentials to be learner centered. If you learned how to fix a motorcycle in your garage, why should you retake this learning? Can you build on what you already know? We need to make sure that folks get credit and recognition for what they can already do, and easily build on that.

Finally, we want credentials to provide momentum and mobility along educational and career pathways. Let's get people moving forward with their education and training. When credential transparency is working, students can readily track their progress, and get inspired to keep pushing ahead.

There are a lot of credentials in the marketplace and the number of credentials keeps growing. Credential Engine, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit estimates the U.S. alone now has over 1 million credentials. That's a lot of choices for consumers—good, bad, and in between. Whether it's a project management certificate from Google or a coding boot camp, there are all kinds of credentials. But customers, including disadvantaged populations, don't know the content of these credentials or if they have real value in the labor market.

We want people to be able to access all kinds of credentials and understand them. What skills, competencies, and abilities are contained in each credential? What are people really learning and how do those skills translate into the marketplace, especially as businesses increasingly do skills-based hiring? Which skills does someone gain from a credential? And do they produce real return on investment in the form of higher employment rates and higher earnings? Do they lead to actual jobs? How much do those jobs pay?

Career Connected Washington Example:

CCW Career Launch programs align academic credentials to employers' hiring needs. Through the Career Launch Endorsement Review process, developed by the CCW Cross-agency Work Group and administered by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, employers directly verify that the credentials students will earn upon program completion are, in fact, the credentials they require of new hires. Through this direct employer verification, CCW ensures all Career Launch programs provide high-quality creden

ials which meet employers' needs and lead to placement into good jobs.

The [CCW Directory](#) provides all students, families, and educators up-to-date information about all Career Launch, Career Prep, and Career Explore programs in the state, which include Registered Apprenticeships and Recognized Pre-apprenticeships. By browsing the free directory students and job seekers can explore programs and learn more about credentials earned and expected wages. For additional information on CCW, please see Appendix A for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

- **Skills-Based Hiring**

Employers are facing tighter labor markets and traditional hiring metrics are coming up short. Skills-based hiring is increasing. But moving away from degree-based hiring to skills-based hiring can be a significant culture shift. It also requires more effort to break apart a traditional resume and work experience into discrete and verifiable skills.

Even so, Wal-Mart, the largest U.S. grocery chain in the U.S., is in the process of rewriting hundreds of job descriptions so that for many of its corporate titles, applicants can show they have the skills they need through experience and other pathways, not just via a traditional college degree. A couple of forces are at work in this shift, according to a September 28, 2023, Forbes Magazine article—shrinking college enrollment and fewer working-age applicants. Wal-Mart not only hopes to find more qualified candidates through skills-based hiring, but also to diversify its workforce.

Several companies, including Google, Accenture, and IBM, have shrunk the number of jobs at their firms that require a traditional college degree. A 2022 report by the Burning Glass Institute, a national nonprofit that focuses on labor market research, found that nearly half of all middle-skill occupations and close to a third of high-skill occupations slashed degree requirements between 2017 and 2019. Through the first half of 2023, 13 states (Washington was not included) had removed degree requirements from many state government jobs, according to the Brookings Institution. In addition to skills-based hiring, many companies are also training their workers while they're on the clock— essentially becoming education and training providers to enable their employees to learn targeted skills. In Washington, this is happening in several hospital systems, including Providence, which is training some of their own staff to become certified nursing assistants through a targeted, skills-based approach.

Perhaps the next big challenge on the skills-based hiring front is to see whether removing degree requirements has made a difference in hiring and employing a more diverse, less traditional workforce. Hiring practices will need to substantially change and those changes will need to be measured to

uncover whether these shifts are leading to successful outcomes for less traditional, often marginalized, job candidates.

Learning and Employment Records (LERs)—Digital Wallets Help Advance Credential Transparency
Right now, when a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) customer completes training, the WIOA case manager must rely on the participant hand delivering their credential or transcript in order for the training provider to get credit. If the participant doesn't bring it in, providers do not get credit for their customer's credential attainment via the Participant Individual Record Layout or PIRL, as required by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. This inability to upload credentials for data validation in the current statewide case management system is true for any credential—from high school diplomas to GEDs to the Open Doors Program, to degree and industry credentials.

Because LERs can record any verifiable skills, competencies, and even job experiences, they can be particularly valuable for people who stop and start their education and career pathways. Owning and having agency over one's credential information can help motivate individuals to stay on track, especially if their credentials give them a leg up on a pathway and shorten the time to a higher order credential and higher wages (credit for prior learning). LERs, often called digital wallets, can track their progress and provide information to potential employers not only about a range of credentials, including micro credentials and badges, but also provides a place to validate and verify skills, competencies and abilities learned at home, in the workplace or through mentorships with professionals or friends and family members.

We acknowledge that it's difficult for many populations to wade through the processes necessary to receive a credential, or even a copy of the credentials they worked hard to earn. Creating and maintaining a statewide Learning and Employment Record (LER) that is portable and verifiable would make this new concept and new technology accessible and easy to use for jobseeker-learners, and also help state caseworkers and training providers get credit for helping their customers.

The implementation of LERs would also add value to the data-sharing and service integration priority of TAP. The recent enactment of a bill requiring ESD to obtain job title information for all UI-covered workers, will provide more granular data to help us understand if participation in specific training or obtaining a specific credential pays off in terms of employment and earnings.

These digital platforms come in a variety of formats and are offered by a range of national vendors who are working to achieve market share in this new but important arena.

Restarting and expanding the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee
The Credential Transparency Advisory Committee—representing Washington's public and private higher education institutions, registered apprenticeships, K-12 education, the workforce development system, and policy makers—was convened by the Workforce Board beginning in 2019 to explore the role that credentialing plays in the educational and economic mobility of Washingtonians, and talent development for the state's businesses. The Committee determined that reliable, meaningful information about credentials can have significant impact on a consumer's decision-making process, including how they might invest in credential attainment, and in how far they might travel along an educational or career pathway. The Committee also saw the value in adopting a credential taxonomy

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(based on knowledge, skills and abilities attained), to facilitate ongoing communication channels with industry.

By deconstructing credentials into knowledge, skills, and abilities, there will be greater agreement about what is contained in each credential, and about a credential's value to the learner. With credential transparency, each credential—whether it's a PhD or a short-term certificate—will verify and validate that certain skills and competencies have been achieved and are meaningful and high value.

The Credential Transparency Advisory Committee formed immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and met virtually during 2020 and into early 2021. The Committee viewed their exploration through an equity lens. This includes building awareness of how current credentialing practices might impact the career decisions of marginalized populations, as well as how/whether folks choose to access education and training in preparation for their desired careers or progress within their desired careers. A focus on equity is critical as Washington continues to address disadvantaged populations and create solutions for success. These populations often come from struggling socio-economic backgrounds and include communities of color as well as immigrants and refugees. Many are rural, and often they are women. These populations have historically been most negatively impacted when credentials do not include life skills and work experience to "count" toward credentials. The focus on equity and reaching out to underserved, disadvantaged populations featured prominently in the committee's final report and recommendations. Visit the full [Credential Transparency report](#) online to Access additional details.

Both the report and its recommendations were part of a larger grant-funded project with Credential Engine, a Washington, D.C. based nonprofit. The project ended in early 2021 and the report was distributed to the funders and through the Workforce Board via a statewide newsletter that's delivered to over 3,000 stakeholders. The Committee is now officially inactive, although some members continued to weigh in, as warranted, on credential transparency policies and trends.

Now that credential transparency is one of the state's strategic workforce plan's top priorities, the Committee should be reactivated, with the addition of new committee members. By including new members representing employers, policymakers, and represented labor we would strengthen the committee work and begin to tackle the systemic issues of credential transparency.

Creating a permanent committee as part of the TAP plan, will help ensure that timely, trusted information about credential transparency is a long-term effort with deep buy-in from a broad coalition of partners. It will keep Washington's credential transparency efforts on a surer path to success as disagreements and sometimes tough conversations are hashed out in a safe space.

- **Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL)**

As credential transparency gains momentum in the U.S., and in the world, a variety of languages have been created to provide clear technological pathways for linked, open data. One leading language is known as Credential Transparency Description Language (or CTDL) and is used by the national nonprofit Credential Engine to build its national credential registry, of which Washington state is a partner. When the Workforce Board partnered with Credential Engine through a grant project to publish Career Bridge's 6,500 postsecondary credentials to the national registry, this work was done in CTDL. By publishing in this language, it enables any changes on Washington's education and career platform

Career Bridge to automatically update the national registry at the same time—reducing the hassles of re-inputting information every time a credential is updated or changed.

As more states have joined the national registry, CTDL use has increased and now is considered a dominant language in many states. In Washington, the Workforce Board's investment in CTDL through Career Bridge means that the state is ahead of others in identifying a common language that can move information swiftly and securely between multiple IT interfaces. As the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee restarts, members will need to evaluate whether to continue building out IT systems in this increasingly dominant language to better capture larger pieces of the credential marketplace and keep credential descriptions up-to-date, accurate, and actionable across many platforms.

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)

For true credential transparency to flourish, there needs to be a more objective way to assess a credential's performance outcomes. Right now, the Workforce Board does this work through the federally required Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor. Each year, agency research staff independently and objectively evaluate thousands of Washington postsecondary programs by matching Unemployment Insurance wage records with student-level data contained in secure data warehouses.

This data is not self-reported as it is in some states. Washington's ETPL is held up as a national model for being both rigorous and accurate. But the ETPL, which qualifies programs on the list for potential federal WIOA funding, along with some state training dollars, can only go so far. For one, ETPL participation is completely voluntary. For the most part, education institutions are not required to provide their program data for evaluation—unless they seek to have their programs join the list and qualify for federal funding. (One notable exception is that the 300-plus private career schools licensed and regulated by the Workforce Board, must submit their student-level data each year through the agency's secure, encrypted Student Data Portal.)

Washington's ETPL shows that at least some pieces of credential transparency are already possible—and are being pushed out through the public-facing career and education platform, Career Bridge. But many, many more credentials and programs are under-scrutinized and can potentially mislead students and employers because no one is accurately and independently tracking their performance.

Also, employment and earnings rates (along with completion rates as measured on the ETPL) are not the complete picture when it comes to performance. Currently, Washington's ETPL also provides a snapshot of the industry where recent graduates went to work. But that only tells part of the story. A worker at Amazon shows up in the retail industry regardless of whether they are a software engineer or a warehouse worker. This will change soon when the state's Employment Security Department collects sufficient job title information from Washington employers to evaluate the job or career people are actually in—not just the industry where they work. This data collection is happening right now, with the first mandatory collection of occupational codes/job titles from employers starting in the fourth quarter of 2022. This required data collection is the result of the 2020 passage of an occupational data bill that had its genesis in the Workforce Board's Future of Work Project report, just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Washington is just the third state in the U.S. to require employers to identify what their employees do as part of quarterly wage reports collected by our state's Employment Security

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Department. As that data is collected and analyzed, students, employers, jobseekers and policymakers will have a much more granular view of whether a particular credential or education pathway resulted in the career for which students were training. Those performance results will be added to Career Bridge in the coming years.

- **Potential Metrics**

In an enhanced, transparent state credentialing system, skills, competencies, and mastery levels will become the coin of the realm for both individuals and employers to navigate credentialing and occupational pathways. Right now, there can be a disconnect between the way credentials are described by education and training institutions and the language employers use in seeking skilled candidates. As credential transparency advances, job listings and descriptions will better align and be made visible in real-time with the common credential language, CTDL. It will be immediately evident when additional learning is required. By using the same description language, courses will be easier to find, as will other details including cost, likely skill gains, and whether courses are offered online or in person.

Career exploration, education planning, and personal investment are all enhanced by the availability of reliable data about the performance of credentials in the economy.

- Do people with the credential get jobs in a position for which they trained? How much do they earn when hired? How do they earn more— additional credentials, time on the job, etc.?
- Which employers value the credential in terms of hiring and promotional preference and pay?

Disaggregating performance data by population groups, geographic regions, occupational sectors, and other elements, provides even more clarity for users. For example, do older, mid-career changers do as well economically as younger students? A user might ask, "Do people who look like me and share my lived experience benefit from this program?" or "Do completers find jobs in my area or do they have to move?" Disaggregated data will also help policymakers understand who is being left behind economically. They can and should establish goals on economic equity and charter a system of checkpoints with benchmarks that lead to those goals. A data dashboard can and should be public facing.

Community feedback on where to start

During conversations with stakeholders and partners two groups rose to the top when speaking about the need for greater credential transparency. These two groups—immigrants & refugees, and Veterans—were not the only populations mentioned, but they came up with greater frequency and fervor as needing particular focus right now.

• Immigrant Case Study

Ruben is an immigrant from Argentina. When he moved to the U.S. in his early 30s, he had completed a masters-level architecture program in Spanish. Because he struggled with English, it was very challenging for him to find work in the small community he lived in. He was passed over for dishwashing jobs. A construction firm eventually hired him at minimum wage, and he spent a year or so sweeping construction site floors. As he was able to navigate very basic English, he was asked to draw up

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blueprints for sites, with a wage increase of about $2 per hour (total wage at that time was about $10/hour in Oregon). This was a great deal for the employer and a slight increase for him, but it did not adequately value his skill. His language challenges made it difficult for him to pass the architectural exam, so eventually he worked with an engineer who signed off on every project and received a portion of the payment, even though his additional oversight was not needed. If we can create better pathways for immigrants and refugees to document their skills, perhaps with the assistance of multi-lingual navigators, they would be able to advance to higher-skilled positions and earn significantly higher wages much more quickly.

- ## Veterans Case Study

The transitioning service member who is 24 months from retirement or 12 months from separation and the service member who has recently released from military service both face the challenge of adequately describing or translating what they accomplished during their military service in terms that a civilian employer will understand and value. This is also a challenge for wounded or ill service members who are separating due to service-connected injuries, or the veteran who is experiencing a Reduction in Forces (RIF). They may come into the WorkSource employment center and when asked what they did in the military, the service member will respond with something like "Eleven Bravo" or "Aerographer's Mate 2nd class." For staff serving this customer, they too, may be at a loss to understand how to assist in translating this experience.

About a third of military spouses work in jobs that require a license, yet the barriers to transferring professional licenses into each state the military sends their family have historically contributed to the high unemployment rate (up to 21%) military spouses face. In 2023, Washington and the federal government passed legislation to ease this burden. However, each state has a different set of laws, policies, and requirements that military spouses must navigate and understand. While the recently passed legislation should eliminate the burden military spouses have historically faced, it is important that military installation staff, employment support staff (including at WorkSource centers), licensing agency partners, and members of licensing boards and commissions understand the new laws to help implement and communicate them to military spouses. In four years, our hope is that military spouses surveyed report that licensing is not a barrier to employment in Washington.

Timeline and Milestones

Year 1: Build a Level of Understanding

- Relaunch and expand the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee. Gather stakeholders to hold conversations on credential transparency.
- Establish a regular cycle of meetings and collaboration across workforce system.
- Forge agreements on common concepts.
- Establish a common vision.

Year 2: Test Ideas through Pilots

- Encourage and track pilots across Washington.

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- Convene stakeholder groups to evaluate.
- Discuss more broadly with entire Credential Transparency Advisory Committee.
- Brainstorm new ideas and/or leverage existing projects.
- Discuss which projects can or should be brought to scale.
- Recommend funding opportunities - both legislative and philanthropic.

Year 3: **Take Stock and Prioritize**
- Leverage the existing credential database, Career Bridge
- Explore common taxonomy for an industry/sector/occupational area.
- Identify potential system partners.
- Gather feedback from higher ed/other training providers.
- Include this new taxonomy in certain sections of Career Bridge.
- Prepare mid-cycle TAP plan update.

Year 4: **Expand on best practices**
- Continue working with stakeholders on taxonomy and other improvements on Career Bridge.
- Continue regular check-ins with the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee.
- Brainstorm ideas for further credential transparency work for the state's next strategic workforce plan in 2028-2032.

• Priority 5: Job Quality

The Job Quality strategic priority shows up here as Priority 5 but underpins each of the other four strategic priorities. Economic, societal, and ecological changes over the past few years, including rapid-fire technological advancements, have disrupted many industry sectors and caused modifications to workplace practices and the nature of work across occupations. In developing this strategic plan, there has been widespread agreement that the next generation of Washington's workforce development services should be focused on job quality. Public investments in workforce development should help workers access quality jobs and should support businesses to develop and maintain quality jobs.

While quality is in the eye of the beholder, there are some givens, such as livable wages, worker safety, supportive benefit packages, and an opportunity to advance one's career and/or earning potential, among others. This priority represents a commitment among partners to work with workers, employers, job seekers, community-based organizations, economic developers, advocates, and the state and local public sector to define, support and promote quality jobs. Like all workforce board initiatives, Job Quality strategic planning will use a "balanced scorecard" approach, ensuring that results benefit the workforce system's three customers: workers/jobseekers, employers, and communities.

The impact of this work over the next four years will be seen in part in the following two areas:

1. Ensure pathways to living wage jobs critical to communities by:
   a. Considering elements from the Quality Jobs Framework to identify implementation strategies in order to close economic disparities for populations who have been marginalized by the Workforce Development system

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      b.   Establishing partnerships with industry to explore sector strategies that offer comprehensive supports for individuals with barriers to employment

2. Expand registered apprenticeships to more fields. Expanding registered apprenticeship programs can have a significant positive impact on job quality in our state. We can achieve this by exploring:
   a. Preparatory apprenticeship programs
   b. Community Workforce Agreements
   c. Matching existing jobs with existing apprenticeship programs
   d. Apprenticeship navigators that support potential employer sponsors and apprentices.

Background

Washington State has identified two existing models of defining job quality, one regional model and one federal, to help speed the early stages of this priority. The regional model was developed by the Southwest Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB). The federal Good Jobs Principles model was created by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Commerce.

In mid-2021, Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) was the first LWDB in WA to initiate this work, along with its Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative partners (a joint Washington-Oregon partnership of seven counties spanning both sides of the Columbia River). The Collaborative convened 19 cross-sectoral participants representing businesses, workers, labor, service providers, and government agencies located in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan area to develop and adopt a regional approach to creating quality jobs. The purpose of the Council was to (1) define a quality job for the region, (2) provide guidance on standards employers can adopt, (3) identify resources to help employers implement in accordance with their workplace needs, and (4) develop a roadmap—a framework of actions and implementation steps.

The Collaborative's Quality Jobs Framework, a guide for advancing quality jobs in the region, was developed in close collaboration with the Regional Collaborative partners and informed by: (1) a multipronged research approach which included a review of existing regional case studies; (2) a nationwide scan of best practices; and (3) a series of interviews with relevant organizations and leaders throughout the region to identify core components of a quality job. They have launched this regional effort and have built a public/private coalition to advance an equitable economic recovery. Through this Initiative, they hope to increase job quality by supporting strategies that lead to self-sufficiency wages, workplace safety, worker engagement, comprehensive benefit programs, predictable scheduling and hours, accessible hiring and onboarding, and training and advancement opportunities.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Commerce have developed Good Jobs Principles. These principles establish the groundwork for more concrete strategies to achieve high quality jobs for all workers in our economy. There are eight principle categories:

1. Recruitment and Hiring
2. Benefits
3. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
4. Empowerment and Representation
5. Job Security and Working Conditions
6. Organizational Culture

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7. Pay
8. Skills and Career Advancement.

Critical Steps for Success

Partners discussed many options for exploration during TAP implementation. Job Quality strategies often cross over into other priorities. Some recommendations have been tried and others will be new. A point of consensus among partners is that we must find ways to measure whether or not more quality jobs are being developed and who is getting those jobs.

It will be critical that we pay very close attention to equity and inclusivity to ensure the framework benefits all workers, especially those who have experienced longstanding inequities and exclusion from quality jobs. The framework should acknowledge and address systemic inequities that create barriers to accessing quality jobs and create room for individuals to meet and exceed their economic needs so they can grow and create generational wealth, regardless of their background. This involves recognizing and actively working to dismantle discriminatory practices based on race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. To ensure inclusivity, the framework should actively engage communities who have been marginalized by the workforce development system, including Black, Indigenous and People of Color, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with a low socioeconomic status and others who have experienced longstanding discrimination in employment. Their perspectives and needs must be considered in the design and implementation of job quality policies. Community organizations, local leaders, and advocacy groups can offer valuable input on how to best communicate, educate, and engage with the framework to ensure its successful adoption. The support of communities across the state and employers is instrumental in the successful implementation of a job quality framework. Their involvement ensures that the framework is responsive to local needs, enjoys widespread acceptance, incorporates diverse perspectives, and leads to lasting positive changes in the world of work.

Policies within the framework should focus on removing barriers to entry; ensuring fair recruitment, hiring, and promotional practices; jobs that offer living wages to all workers; providing job security and good working conditions; organizational cultural alignment; promoting equal access to training and postsecondary education opportunities, career advancement, and benefits.

We must also ensure that the framework is sustainable and adaptable. It will be important to look at how technological changes may impact job quality, both when developing effective solutions to workforce challenges and when technology is viewed as a replacement for workers. Technologic change can be shaped and subsequent impacts to workers can be shaped as well.

It is important that there is statewide agreement on definitions and opportunities within the framework. Involving a wide array of stakeholders ensures diverse perspectives. This diversity can include representatives from various industries, workers' unions, professional organizations, community organizations, government agencies, academia, and more. Each stakeholder brings unique insights and experiences to the table, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of job quality issues from multiple angles leading to a shared vision for the state.

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Different stakeholders have different priorities and concerns related to job quality. By involving a broad range of stakeholders, the framework can be designed to address a wider spectrum of issues comprehensively. For instance, input from workers' unions might emphasize fair wages and working conditions, while employers might focus on meeting their specific industry standards for quality, productivity and competitiveness. A holistic approach that considers these diverse viewpoints leads to a more balanced and effective framework. Various stakeholders possess unique resources, expertise, and networks that can be leveraged for effective implementation. For example, involving community organizations can help in reaching out to marginalized or underrepresented groups, while businesses might offer insights into practical implementation strategies within workplaces. Utilizing these resources maximizes the chances of successful implementation and adoption.

Some of the recommendations brought forward during the TAP planning process included:

Sector Strategies and Industry Partnerships
One well-regarded option to create more career pathways to quality jobs is through sector strategies. This approach incorporates a partnership of multiple employers within a critical industry that brings together education, economic development, workforce systems, and community organizations to identify and collaboratively meet the workforce needs of that industry within a regional labor market. Sector strategies are not new, and in fact were pioneered in Washington as Industry Skill Panels in the mid-1990's.

Evaluations of Skill Panels and other sectoral programs from across the country demonstrated how this model moves workforce agencies from a restrictive "program administration" focus to a more strategic role building regional talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps, and creating meaningful career pathways for a range of workers in important regional industries.

The strategy is encouraged throughout the WIOA and Carl Perkins Acts. However, no new funds were added for this purpose and there is no longer an ongoing fund source in Washington state.

Industry/sector partnerships related to in-demand sectors and occupations can play a significant role in defining and improving job quality. Some strategies that may be considered for fostering such partnerships and creating pathways for individuals include:
- Develop sector-recognized credentials and certifications in partnership with industry stakeholders to ensure that workers are well-prepared for high-quality jobs.
- Offer pathways for workers to earn credentials while working, enabling career advancement and higher wages. While some entry level jobs may not fit the job quality framework, demonstrating a clear path in which an individual could advance in their career is key.
- Support stakeholders in fostering strong relationships with employers in in-demand sectors, involving them in curriculum development, job placement, and career services.
- Identify evidence-based promising practices created by employers to improve the quality of their jobs and their workplaces. Establish channels to share promising practices and lessons learned with the state's employers, making certain to reach small and midsize businesses with limited resources.

Career Connected Washington Example:

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All CCW Career Launch programs include both a work-based and academic component. The work-based component includes a fully paid and supervised work-based learning experience with an employer. The academic component results in an employer-verified postsecondary credential of value or at minimum 45 credits toward a postsecondary degree. All Career Launch programs are designed with employers to meet their specific hiring needs. Braiding academic instruction with work-based learning produces experienced and high-qualified job candidates that employers are ready to hire into living wage careers. Investments into this quality framework have generated more than 19,000 completions since 2019. For additional information on CCW, please see Appendix A for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

Prescribed Procurement for State and Local Contracts

Another way to enhance job quality in daily work is to encourage Local and State Workforce Development Boards and other agencies to incorporate job quality requirements into their procurement and subcontracts. They can support businesses who already provide quality jobs and prioritize people who have been left out of quality jobs. Another example is to prioritize funding for small businesses owned or operated by BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Veterans, women, and people with disabilities.

Marketing and Outreach

Through a dynamic communications and educational outreach campaign, in partnership with other state agencies and groups, we hope to gain public support of using statewide quality job metrics to increase the number of good jobs in our state. Communities have a nuanced understanding of their local needs and challenges. Engaging with them helps in tailoring the job quality framework to address specific regional requirements. Their insights can ensure that the framework aligns with the realities of the community, making it more relevant and effective. When communities are involved in the development process, there's a higher likelihood of buy-in and support for the framework. This participation can range from providing feedback on proposed policies to actively engaging in implementation efforts.

By educating employers and the public about the benefits of job quality, a raised level of awareness can encourage participation, and may create a culture of support for the overall initiative. Through engagement with marginalized communities to gather input and involve them in the development of the framework this can help create move inclusive strategies for implementing data collection and analysis tools to track job quality metrics, assess economic disparities, and identify areas for improvement.

In addition to community engagement this campaign will include involving system partners and the Washington employer community. Having the support of these groups will be key as we devise effective strategies for implementing the job quality framework. Employer perspectives and buy-in is critical to the success of a Job Quality initiative. Employers will help identify progress metrics that are meaningful to them, such as: by creating quality jobs has my company seen a reduction in recruitment and hiring costs? Have we reduced the amount of time that critical vacancies are open? Have we cut the cost of temp hiring because we've improved retention rates?

Data Collection, Analysis, and Policy Recommendations

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After the framework is set by the group and metrics are determined, it will be critical to start collecting data and research so that we can start to see evidence-based insights into the current state of job quality within the state. It is unclear which relevant administrative data sets will be available to the work group. Funds may have to be secured to survey for important trend information and other insights. Analysis of relevant data can help policymakers gain a clearer understanding of existing challenges, trends, and areas that require improvement, and therefore make informed decisions about service and policy reforms.

The group will aim to create a relevant baseline data set that will allow us to track progress over time. While we may not achieve the robust data collection we desire right from the start, regular reporting of relevant available data can provide signals about our collective progress and help us understand where the important data gaps might be. Stakeholders may be more inclined then, to uncover additional data collection opportunities.

Metrics to Consider:

- Compensation /wages can be measured to show the average increase in wages over time and analyze gender and racial pay gaps.
- Career Development can be measured by employee participation in training programs, tracking the number of internal promotions and assessing the acquisition of new skills and competencies.
- Diversity and Inclusion can be monitored for the increased representation of underrepresented groups within the workforce using job quality framework dimensions and metrics.
- Increased job quality
- Fewer people in poverty
- Employers having the talent they need
- Increased engagement on job quality from legislators, state agencies, and the Governor's Office
  Increased worker economic mobility and stability

Employer Liaisons
A focus on working with employers to help them make changes to make their jobs good jobs. Working with employers to acknowledge the importance of flexible work hours, remote work options, or part-time positions can all contribute to a larger number of quality jobs across the state.

Spotlight: Community Reinvestment Project

Washington State Legislature has allocated $200 million to be distributed 2024-2025 to communities disproportionately harmed by the historical design and enforcement of state and federal criminal laws and penalties for drug possession. Washington State Department of Commerce collaborated with the Office of Equity and other community partners to build the Community Reinvestment Plan which sets out the strategy for distribution.
The plan includes ways to promote job creation/ retention, partnering with LWDB, ESD and "By and For" organizations to allocate resources such as:

• Career Accelerator Incentives - $10 million

•Business Support - $15 million

•Individual Development Accounts - $25 million

 The grant programs funded will work to grow economic development, violence reduction, reentry services and legal assistance, building a more equitable future for all Washingtonians.
See Appendix J for more details in IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.

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Comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment

Many individuals face barriers to employment that can include access to child care, transportation, affordable housing, educational opportunities, etc. Providing comprehensive support for individuals facing these barriers is vital to an inclusive workforce. The following components are important to consider as part of a quality jobs framework:

- A focus on awareness of training programs that can help individuals acquire the necessary skills for specific job roles or to advance in their current roles. This can include technical skills, soft skills, and job-specific certifications. Additionally, mentorship is a great way to support individuals with barriers. Mentors or job coaches can work with individuals to provide ongoing guidance, feedback, and support as they look for their next opportunity or adapt to a new role.
- Inclusion of wrap-around services like transportation services or subsidies to help individuals with limited mobility access the workplace, especially if they have difficulty with public transportation are key. Offering childcare and elder care support by assistance or subsidies for individuals who have caregiving responsibilities, enabling them to balance work and family obligations effectively.
- The inclusion of mental health and counseling services: When systems offer access to counseling or mental health services to support employees dealing with mental health challenges or other emotional issues, this can break down barriers to employment. Job placement services can provide personalized job matching services that take into account an individual's skills, interests, and specific employment barriers. This may involve working with local employers who are open to hiring individuals with diverse needs.
- A focus on partnering with vocational rehabilitation agencies that specialize in assisting individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment in finding suitable jobs.
- A commitment to equal access for all employees to similar benefits, advancement opportunities, and professional development programs.

Expanding registered apprenticeship programs to more fields

Apprenticeship program expansion is another important component of a quality jobs framework. Registered apprenticeship programs come with a progressive wage scale, which means that as apprentices gain experience and skills, their wages increase. This can lead to higher earnings compared to non-apprenticeship entry-level positions in the same field. Many registered apprenticeship programs offer benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off, which contribute to overall job quality. Apprenticeships can help reduce income inequality by providing individuals with a pathway to well-paying jobs without requiring a traditional college degree.

The development of preparatory apprenticeship programs is one of the best ways to formally create a connection between people who are interested in a field and the industry that needs people. One of the requirements for a preparatory apprenticeship program is to have a Memorandum of Understanding or other written agreement with an apprenticeship program that spells out a specific benefit to the preparatory participant. Apprenticeship preparatory programs also create inroads for women and people of color who want to pursue a career in construction. 81% of Washington's Registered Apprenticeship programs are in the Building and Construction Trades.

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Community Workforce Agreements or Project Labor Agreements are another tool in expanding apprenticeships. In these agreements contractors must have a certain percentage of apprentices on the job in order to successfully bid on a given project. Of those apprentices that are hired there are also priority hire requirements that give preference to applicants who are preparatory program graduates.

In developing new preparatory programs, one strategy to consider is matching existing jobs with existing apprenticeship programs. Existing examples include the AJAC Manufacturing Academy or the Machinist Institute Career Accelerator preparatory programs, and also manufacturing jobs within Correctional Industries. Credit for work experience could be given and a preparatory apprenticeship certificate could be issued with direct or preferred placement into existing apprentice eligible positions. As another example, there is a robust textile industry within Correctional Industries and there is an "Industrial Sewing Machine Operator" apprenticeship in Mukilteo who may be a willing training or employer partner.

Expanding existing partnerships is another good way to increase registered apprenticeship opportunities. Community-based organizations like Apprenticeship and Non-traditional Employment for Women, Seattle Urban League, the Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaboration, and other preparatory apprenticeship organizations can be great partners to create consistent training standards, and equitable processes.

Year 1: Launching the Job Quality Initiative

A strategic work group will be established in year one and will be led by workforce board staff. Staff plan to collaborate with Washington's Job Quality Academy team who have been working with Jobs for the Future (JFF) on a plan to utilize the Good Jobs Principles developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Commerce. This team has representation from MLK County Labor Council, Washington State Employment Security Department, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State Department of Commerce and several Local Workforce Development Boards. The team represents a wide reach across Washington state and has been networking with similar teams from across the country. This presents a unique opportunity to help the workforce system focus on enhancing good jobs and opportunities for workers. The Academy seeks to provide teams with the knowledge and expertise to build the principles of a good job into their policies and programs.

<div align="center">Timeline and Milestones</div>

Year 1 - Establish statewide framework and metrics

- In year one we will establish a work group and engage with various stakeholders via the development a statewide survey, including workforce associations, employees, employers, education leaders, unions and industry associations to gather input on job quality issues. The work group will have a board member sponsor from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board as well.   By the end of year one, the dimensions/components/indicators that will be used for Washington's statewide job quality framework will be determined. In conjunction with the determination of dimensions/components/indicators, metrics will also be developed to measure each dimension/component/indicator of job quality. It will also be

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important at this time to establish benchmarks or standards for each metric to provide a basis for comparison. One metric that should be included is wages as we need to be able to determine how many jobs are paying a family sustaining wage or above and how many are not and if these numbers shift over time as we expand the state's knowledge of the quality jobs framework. It will also be important to acknowledge that workforce culture has changed, and it will be important to work with stakeholders to explore and innovate around how this new culture can be embraced.

Year 2 – Communication/Rollout:

- A milestone activity to occur in year two is communication of the state's commitment to job quality and the actions being taken to improve it. A roll out of the framework to local entities for adoption and use encouraging them to assess, validate and implement the framework for their use will also occur. This rollout may include a job quality toolkit to assist local entities with implementation. It is also our goal to use the framework at this point to prioritize policy changes, investments, and initiatives that will have the most significant impact on improving job quality.

Year 3 – Data Collection:

- In year three we aim to be able to start collecting relevant data to assess the current state of job quality across the state. This data may come from surveys, employee feedback, HR records, or external sources.

Year 4 – Formal assessment:

- A formal assessment is targeted to take place in year four.
- The overarching goal that we would like to see met by the end of year four is more quality jobs across the state.

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III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

In alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 101(d), the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (the Board), created under Chapter 28C.18 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) in 1991, is recognized as a designated alternate entity pursuant to WIOA Section 101(e). This status, confirmed by Governor Inslee in 2014 after an independent consultant review of the Board and its processes, leverages the Board's longstanding structure predating the enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, established by RCW 28C.18 and Executive Order 99-02 in 1991. The Board meets the alternate entity criteria by its pre-WIOA existence, adherence to a structure substantially similar to the state board outlined in WIOA sections 101(a) through (c), and the inclusion of key business and labor representatives within its unique tripartite composition that includes business, labor, and crucial state agency representatives.

The Board adopts a comprehensive and integrated approach to fulfill its state board functions. It champions the coordination, strategic direction, and continuous improvement of Washington's workforce development system, while providing informed advice and advocacy on workforce development policies to the Governor and Legislature. Furthermore, the Board is designated by the Governor and Legislature with the oversight of funds for the federal Carl D. Perkins Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act of 2018 (Perkins V), positioning it as a pivotal entity in the integration of Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with the state's broader workforce development strategy, ensuring the alignment of CTE programs with current and emerging labor market needs.

The Board's initiatives include assisting in the development of state workforce and labor market information systems, identifying strategies for addressing workforce needs through career pathways and sector strategies, and aligning workforce development programs to form a coherent system. Through collaborative efforts, the Board ensures that the state's workforce services and programs coalesce effectively, while also conducting evaluations of Washington's principal workforce programs in partnership with the agencies and entities that form the workforce development system. It continually evaluates and recommends improvements for the system, informed by performance accountability measures, and advances youth workforce investment activities.

Governor-appointed members representing business and labor serve staggered four-year terms, with some initially appointed to two and three-year terms to ensure continuity. Ex officio members, including the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Employment Security Department, serve by virtue of their respective positions. In addition to the core voting members, the Board benefits from the

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participation of a range of non-voting members who provide additional expertise and perspectives. These members represent key state agencies including the Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Commerce, which are integral to the state's economic and social fabric. The Board also includes a non-voting representative for local elected officials and targeted populations, enhancing its inclusive and representative structure.

Meeting at least six times a year, the Board offers strategic guidance, engages in policy development, and maintains an active role in system oversight. These regular meetings are pivotal for deliberating on workforce strategies, assessing program efficacy, issuing policy guidance in line with the state's economic and labor market trends, engaging with employers to understand and respond to their needs, and leveraging technology to improve service delivery and access. In these gatherings, decision-making is anchored in inclusivity and leverages data-driven methodologies for assessing training needs and aligning resources. The Board's process promotes transparency, making information about its activities and meeting minutes available to the public on its website and through its monthly newsletter, and is committed to fiscal responsibility in managing workforce development funds.

The Board's transformation from discrete subcommittees, initially established in 2016, to a more integrated governance structure with specialized ad hoc or topical committees marks a commitment to dynamic responsiveness. The creation of Data-Sharing Governance Council and targeted advisory committees, driven by consensus on key objectives, showcases a unified approach to service delivery and data utilization, crucial for a modern workforce system. These entities will continue to work in concert to ensure data sharing enhances the system's efficacy and accessibility.

In tandem with these developments, the Interagency Committee, as stipulated in the Board's bylaws, plays an essential role in preparing Board members for informed decision-making. This Committee reviews upcoming agendas, gauges stakeholder impacts, and addresses administrative matters to ensure meetings are productive and reflective of stakeholder needs. It is a vital link, fostering open channels for stakeholder communication, thus reinforcing the Board's commitment to transparent and participatory governance.

2. <u>IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY</u>

See earlier section – STATE STRATEGIC VISIONS AND GOALS (pg. 40).

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STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

1. <u>THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF–</u>

Titles I and III are using a data system designed by Monster Government Solutions, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) and WorkSourceWA.com, which combines the prior Wagner-Peyser job matching system with Monster.com's resume and job-matching database. Title IV agencies use WAVES as their Case Management/MIS. The Title II Case Management/MIS system is WABERS.

For Job-matching, the WorkSourceWA.com job-matching system.

For Career Planning, consumer information and training options, the Workforce Board maintains the extensive CareerBridge.wa.gov website which allows for searches for training programs, by occupation and area, with outcome results and ETPL status indicators.

For identifying training options, the State Board for Community Colleges has developed Start College Now, a system for identifying Integrated Basic Skills and technical training options (I-BEST). SBCTC was awarded a grant from College Spark to develop an application for guiding students in course selection for efficient completion of short-term programs of study. Many workforce programs at community colleges across the state also utilize a student survey called Start Next Quarter to direct students to workforce programs they may be eligible to enroll in, and get connected to program advisors for BFET, WorkFirst, and state-based programs such as Worker Retraining and the Opportunity Grant at their local campuses. Also, as of May 9, 2022, all 34 community and technical colleges and SBCTC have deployed ctcLink PeopleSoft as a centralized system of online functions to give students faculty and staff anytime, anywhere access to a modern, centralized, efficient way of doing their college business.

For cross program eligibility pre-screening, there is an existing web-based tool for prescreening for referrals to Title IV programs. In addition, the Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) has a system (Washington Connections) for eligibility screening for several programs included in WIOA. This system, and the related Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment Modernization Program being built and utilized by Washington's Health and Human Services Coalition is a model for the workforce development system and data integration efforts. Additionally, DSHS utilizes the Electronic Jobs Automated Systems (eJAS), a web-based client data/information system, for the TANF/WorkFirst and BFET programs.

For five of the six core programs, there is an annual process by which the Workforce Board collects records for cohorts of exiting participants, matches them to administrative records of employment and education outcomes, and reports standardized outcomes metrics that are similar to some of the WIOA measures. Some of the non-core WIOA partners have also been included in that annual process. Of note, some of our workforce agency partners are moving towards cloud-based solutions such as Databricks, Azure, and AWS, at the direction of

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Washington Technology Solutions, which may assist with the collection and sharing of data and outcomes.

In addition, some of the participant records for workforce systems and administrative records of employment and education outcomes are collected, unduplicated, and matched in the state's preschool to grade 20 to workforce (P20W) longitudinal research data base, which is operated by the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). However, neither of these systems is designed to provide operational data sharing between agencies. ERDC processes are designed for longitudinal research, and there may be mild lag in getting the latest quarter's data. So, while some of the ERDC processes can be utilized for WIOA analysis and reporting purposes, and the Workforce Board currently performs similar annual and quarterly reporting, there is no existing system that can provide comprehensive WIOA data reporting without significant modification. A comprehensive system for cross agency case management for all the WIOA partners will likely be an iterative process over many years of significant investment.

Titles I and III data collection is handled by the Employment Security Department. The data is extracted from ETO and then combined with information from ESD's Unemployment Tax and Benefits (UTAB) system, the Next Generation Tax System (NGTS) and the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to create the PIRL.

Title II AEFLA-funded program data collection processes are coordinated by SBCTC and reported through their WABERS+ online application (MIS). SBCTC provides training on all WIOA requirements to all levels of program staff, publishes and maintains policy and procedure manuals, including a comprehensive data dictionary, Assessment Policy, and documents that define all WIOA measures and data elements. Data verification and further technical support is offered through SBCTC's WABERS+ Helpdesk, frequent contact with providers, and regular desk audits and on-site monitoring visits. The data collected through the WABERS+ application is able to be disaggregated by subpopulation (e.g., student, age, race, and sex) and program (e.g., ABE, ESL, ASE, correctional education, distance education) and the application supports many reports to find missing and erroneous data.

Title IV program Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation data is collected using WAVES, a newly launched case management system for data collection needs. This system allows for collection of information consistent with WIOA and RSA reporting requirements.

Additionally, this data is collected in a way that allows the agency to use the data for program improvement efforts. This data is then made available to the Workforce Board researchers.

ESD in partnership with the Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) and the twelve Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are in the process of replacing the existing Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) platform with a new WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) platform. Sprint development is underway and is currently focused on the self-service and intake registration flows with launch scheduled for 2025. Specifically, how this will occur will be in partnership with other agencies noted here. The ETO platform currently

serves as the state's case management and labor exchange for employers and job seekers. The replacement system will further support the workforce administration statewide to ensure adoption of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) integrated service delivery model and program performance reporting requirements for the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal grants. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs require an electronic and business operations system that supports an integrated service delivery model so that opportunities for job seekers and employers are maximized across the workforce system. The workforce system is made up of Employment Security Department's (ESD) employment connections, twelve Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), community colleges, and other partnerships with employers and programs to promote education, training, and employment.

2. <u>The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (for example., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system and any additional guidance for one-stop partner contributions.</u>

The Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board work together to proactively revise and develop policy guidelines to ensure effective implementation of statewide workforce activities. These policies encompass updates in local board membership responsibilities, regional and local workforce development planning, and criteria for one-stop center certification. A focal point of our efforts is to ensure all policies align with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) principles, guaranteeing adherence to both federal and state workforce legislation. This alignment is demonstrated by the co-location of Wagner-Peyser funded services within all Washington WorkSource one-stop centers.

A key objective in our integrated service delivery methods is providing customers with a streamlined intake process, swiftly connecting them to relevant services and comprehensive support tailored to individual needs. This customer-centric approach encourages staff to think holistically about each individual's goals and skills upon entering the system, promoting an asset-based perspective. By focusing on the strengths and positive experiences of the customers, it facilitates their progression along self-designed career pathways. Efficient customer intake involves gathering targeted information from the outset, ensuring immediate needs are met, particularly for individuals facing employment barriers. Emphasis is placed on the importance of staff acting as 'navigators', guiding individuals in crafting and pursuing sustainable career paths and reducing duplication of efforts. Effective partnership collaboration is vital, including during transitions between organizations (hand-offs), co-enrollment instances (participants receiving multiple services from multiple organizations at the same time), and in managing and braiding combined funding and services across programs.

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In Washington, local workforce areas are encouraged to implement co-enrollment policies, enabling participants to access a wider range of program services and funding to address specific barriers to employment or education. Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) with co-enrollment is a voluntary approach to the delivery of WorkSource services. A group of LWDBs worked with ESD and the State Workforce Board to develop this approach. Each local workforce area decides whether and when to implement ISD with co-enrollment to support the enrollment of job seekers into Title IB and Title III funding streams, as well as other state and federal programs for which they're eligible. We are committed to ongoing policy updates and the development of WorkSource System guidelines in response to the evolving landscape of workforce development under WIOA.

WorkSource offices utilize the ETO case management system to capture and store customer information in a single point. Customer information is properly secured in accordance with personally identifiable information guidelines and facilitated, as appropriate, with the necessary MOU or other forms of confidentiality and data sharing agreements consistent with federal and State privacy laws and regulations. Data, however, would be shared with other programs, for those programs' purposes, within the one-stop system only after the informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required. Regardless of which service delivery model is implemented in a local area, each one-stop delivery system must adhere to the criteria outlined in the [WorkSource System Policy Employment System Administration Policy 1016, Revision 1](#), [WorkSource Memorandum of Understanding WorkSource System Policy 1013, Revision 4](#), and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and State Funding Mechanism WorkSource System poli[cy 1024, Revision 2](#).

Visit [Workforce Professionals Center - WorkSource System Policies & Standards (wa.gov).](#) website to view details of the most current policies supporting implementation of state strategies and the full text of each policy, and additional policies relating to state and federal requirements.

Examples of guidance and policies that support state strategy implementation include, but are not limited to:

- [0128](#) - WIN: Gubernatorial designation of additional populations with barriers to employment under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

- [1003](#) (Rev5) - Data Element Validation

- [1009](#) (Rev3) - Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses

- [1010](#) (Rev1) - WorkSource Initiative Integrated Front-end Services Policy

- [1016](#) (Rev1) - One-Stop Assessment and Certification

- [1019](#) (Rev8) - Eligibility Policy and Handbook

- [5609](#) (Rev1) - Local Workforce Development Area Designation

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- [5610](#) (Rev1) - Local Board Member Appointment Criteria

- [5611](#) (Rev2) - Governor's Procedures for Determining Training Provider Eligibility

- [5614](#) - Local Workforce Development Board Certification

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) Guidelines

In alignment with the WIOA, Washington requires local boards, with the agreement of the Chief Elected Official, to develop and execute MOUs with one-stop partners concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local service delivery area. In accordance with the WIOA at Section 121(c) and the WIOA Final Regulations at 678.500 thru 678.510, the MOUs must also include an IFA, which details how infrastructure costs for the one-stop delivery system will be funded in the local area. The IFAs must adhere to the provisions outlined by the WIOA at Section 121(h) and the WIOA Final Regulations at 678.700 thru 678.755. WorkSource System Policies [1013, revision 4](#), and [1024, revision 2](#), governing One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements and State Funding Mechanism, respectively, were updated in June 2022 to communicate the requirements of and guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards and Partners regarding the development of MOUs and IFAs.

In 2017, the state Workforce Board convened representatives from all local workforce development councils and all administrative agencies responsible for one-stop partner programs to design a model memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Washington's one-stop system. Partners did not execute a "state-level" MOU, but the principles expressed in the model MOU have informed the development of local memoranda developed by local boards in the first infrastructure funding agreement negotiation cycle and beyond. Parties to this process included: Employment Security (Adult, DW, and Youth Title I; Title III; Jobs for Veterans Programs; UI; TAA); State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (Basic Education for Adults – Title II; Workforce Education programs including Perkins); Department of Social and Health Services (Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation – Title IV; TANF; SCSEP); Department of Services for the Blind (Title IV); and the Department of Commerce (CSBG; CDBG/HUD Grants). The model MOU was designed to provide a foundation for state program representatives to participate in the collaborative development of local MOU and infrastructure funding agreements (IFAs) with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) that relate to the operation and funding of the One-Stop Service Delivery System in each local Workforce Development Area. Each local one-stop service delivery system is unique and presents a different set of circumstances within which costs are allocated among partners. It is important to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the different partners with the MOU to ensure transparency and accountability in the one-stop system.

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The MOU also provided a model for guiding decisions on cost sharing among programs, which were undertaken locally. To aid in the allocation of costs among one-stop service delivery system partners, a detailed methodology should be incorporated. The model MOU provided guidance that the total operating budget for the WorkSource site should be the basis for determining the amount that a state-level program contributes to Infrastructure Costs and Shared Services Costs. The budget should specify a 12- month timeframe, aligned to the program year and itemized by: Cost Category; Cost Pool; Cost item; and Cost Dollar Amount.

Any cost sharing formula must have a clear justification for how proportional use and relative benefit were determined by the local partners. Since 2017, additional guidance and resources have been issued by USDOL, and all parties are encouraged to utilize this information including the Sample MOU and Infrastructure Costs Toolkit, available from the federal Department of Labor as a foundation for developing local MOUs and IFAs. Per guidance from TEGL 17-16, in selecting a method to allocate Infrastructure and Additional Costs, partners are guided to consider the additional effort and expense required to achieve a greater degree of accuracy.

Enhanced Local Autonomy and Flexibility: Emphasis is placed on the importance of local autonomy in decision-making for MOUs and IFAs. Agreements should be adaptable to local needs and circumstances, recognizing that local boards are best suited to understand their unique challenges and opportunities.

Enhanced Collaboration and Partnership: It is essential to foster a culture of collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders. Ongoing dialogue and joint decision-making processes among local boards, state-level programs, and other partners are encouraged to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the One-Stop Service Delivery System.

Infrastructure Costs: Those, non-personnel, costs are those that are necessary for the general operation of the one-stop center, including, but not limited to applicable facility costs (such as rent), costs of utilities and maintenance, equipment (including assessment related products and assistive technology), and technology to facilitate access to the one-stop center, including technology used for the centers planning and outreach activities. Defined in 20 CFR 678.700 and TEGL 17-16.

Additional Costs: Those described in 20 CFR 678.760 and TEGL 17-16 that are funded by a state-level program to provide its applicable career services (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(2)) at a one stop site including agreed upon shared operating costs and shared services costs that do not constitute infrastructure costs.

Each state-level program that provides its applicable career services, as described in 20 CFR 678.425, at a WorkSource site will determine the dollar valuation of those services to be included in the site's operating budget as a non-cash contribution.

Shared Operating Costs and Shared Services Costs: A state-level program's contribution to locally agreed shared operating costs and shared services costs should be based upon its

proportion of customers at the WorkSource site who were reportable customers during the previous 12-months, including WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services, WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Services, and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program.

Example: Customers of State-Level Program XYZ comprised 20.0% of all individuals who were reportable customers during the past 12-months at WorkSource ABC, so the program will contribute an amount equal to 20.0% of shared operating costs and shared services costs for the coming 12-month budget period.

When a state-level program contracts with a LWDB to provide career services exclusively to its customers at a WorkSource site, the amount of the contract should be factored into the program's contribution of shared operating costs and shared services costs.

Further, all parties reaffirmed mutual understanding that the amount and type of funds or non-cash contributions that each State-Level One-Stop Service Delivery System Partner Program contributes to the operating costs of specific WorkSource sites shall be determined at the local level through MOUs and IFAs with individual LWDBs. The amount of contribution is relative to the program's benefit and proportion of usage by the identified factors described in Section IX, based upon the Federal Cost Principles Contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, 2 CFR Part 200.

Cost Allocation: The specific methodologies used to allocate costs among one-stop service delivery system partners are not prescribed in WIOA, the law's implementing regulations, or related guidance. When developing the local MOU and IFA, local workforce development boards and state partner agencies may choose from a number of methods, provided they are consistent with the law, regulations, and the Uniform Guidance, including the Federal Cost Principles.

Because of the need to provide maximum flexibility to accommodate various organization structures, costs and budgets in local areas, there is no single method prescribed for allocating costs, but in general the methodology should include allocation bases, inputs, and outputs.

The MOU parties agreed that local representatives of each state-level program will be directly involved in the development of MOUs and IFAs with LWDBs, and should use the following elements to negotiate their program's contributions to Infrastructure Costs and Additional Costs on a site-by-site basis.

A state-level program's contribution to these costs should be calculated by adopting one, or a combination of, the following factors: either actual or proportional expenses, including the cost of occupied square footage by staff assigned to the site and other space dedicated for sole use, utility expenses associated with staff occupancy, proportion of shared or common space and equipment/technology costs, and the costs associated with virtual service delivery through direct linkages within a WorkSource center when program staff are not physically present. Additionally, a cost-per-participant rate can be negotiated based on the actual or projected use of facilities or infrastructure. Local representatives of state-level programs may negotiate

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alternative, "innovative" methods of determining a partner's contribution of costs, with the written authorization of their respective agency leadership.

ESD Monitoring teams ensure compliance with the WorkSource System Policies 1013 and 1024 on an annual basis. MOUs are federally mandated agreements managed by LWDBs, with the concurrence of the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) and WorkSource Partners. MOUs address the operation of the WorkSource system in local Workforce Development Areas (WDAs), and each partner outlines its role in the delivery of services to individuals within the integrated WorkSource system.

MOUs offer flexibility for LWDBs and WorkSource partners to collaborate in providing programs and services to meet local needs. MOUs also support statewide goals for the WorkSource system to provide high quality employment and training services that strengthen the state's businesses and industries and increase the skills of job seekers that will result in employment. MOUs also support the WorkSource Framework Initiative.

LWDBs must ensure there is an MOU in place reflecting overall strategies and partner commitment to the WorkSource system. The development of an MOU is an important part of LWDBs' responsibility for convening local WorkSource partners and stakeholders, planning the area's workforce development strategy and overseeing effective working relationships of partners in WorkSource Centers and WorkSource Affiliates.

Each LWDB, with the agreement of the CLEO(s), must develop and enter into an MOU between the LWBD and the WorkSource partners concerning the operation of the WorkSource centers and affiliate sites in their WDA.

The MOU can be a local WorkSource system wide agreement (i.e. one umbrella MOU) or it can consist of several agreements within the WDA (i.e. multiple umbrella MOUs or per individual partner with an overall agreement that describes partners' roles and contribution in the local WDA). It is understood by the partners to the MOU that each will fulfill its responsibilities under the MOU in accordance with the provisions of law and regulations governing their activities.

Nothing in the agreement is intended to negate or otherwise interfere with any such provisions or requirements.

The MOU shall, at a minimum, incorporate the following information:

i.   Services to be provided through the WorkSource system including methods of referral of individuals between the WorkSource partners for the appropriate services and activities (WIA Sec. 121(c)(2)(A)(i)):

LWDBs are encouraged to consider developing separate descriptions for individual WorkSource Comprehensive Centers and Affiliate Sites. This approach will likely result in a more accurate and detailed depiction of the strategy and each partner's role. The inclusion of these descriptions in the MOU is necessary to ensure partners are aware of their expectations.

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The MOU must clearly describe the area's combined strategy and each partner's roles and responsibilities involved in the following activities:

1. Responsibility of each partner for customer service delivery;

2. Customer flow through the local WorkSource center(s) and their affiliated site(s);

3. Integrated Service Functions:

4. Customer referrals

NOTE: Roles of WorkSource system partners that are not involved specifically in any of the above functions must also be clearly defined in the MOU.

Funding the services and operating costs of the system: The MOU must outline how the costs of such services described above and the operating costs of the system will be funded. A more detailed cost sharing plan is contained in the Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA), which is a separate document to the MOU and need not be attached or referenced.

The MOU will identify the duration of the MOU and the LWDB's established procedure for amending the MOU (including the timeframes for these changes).

The MOU is a living document that should serve WorkSource partners by establishing consistent and cooperative operations. Routine operations with continuous improvement changes normally will not require modifications; however, the term of the MOU shall be no longer than five years.

Partners that suggest a significant modification to any element in the MOU must bring these recommendations forward in a participatory manner in coordination with the LWDB.

Disputes should, wherever possible, be resolved at the local level. The LWDB must have a dispute resolution procedure in place that covers steps to be taken to resolve disputes, including those regarding specific provisions of language within the MOU or amendments to the MOU. All local actions to resolve the disputes must be documented. If LWDBs fail to reach consensus with all of the required partners on the amount that each partner will contribute to the one-stop delivery system's infrastructure costs, the State Funding Mechanism (SFM) process in Section 4.b of Policy 1024.2 is triggered as a "fail-safe" mechanism, though the application of capped levels of funding under the SFM may restrict the amount available for infrastructure funding in a given local area. The local area will be subject to the SFM for the program year for which consensus was not met and for any subsequent program year that all partners do not reach such agreement. LWDBs must provide the WTECB an assessment of their status of negotiations each year in accordance with the process and timelines laid out in Policy 1024.2.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

(A) STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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Our state's workforce system helps Washington residents find jobs, re-enter the workforce, or move ahead in their careers. The system also helps Washington's businesses get the skilled workforce they need to succeed. Discrete workforce programs are administered by a half-dozen state agency partners in Washington state, while program delivery is largely coordinated at the local board level as described below. The state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, in coordination with the state workforce agency the Employment Security Department, is responsible for performance accountability, planning, and policy advocacy related to the following programs and administrating agencies:

- WIOA (Titles I Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs & III administered at Employment Security Dept. [ESD], Title II by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and Title IV by Dept. of Services for the Blind, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation)

- Trade Adjustment Assistance (ESD)

- WorkFirst/Basic Food Employment and Training (Dept. of Social and Health Services)

- Secondary and Postsecondary Career and Technical Education

- Registered Apprenticeship (Dept. of Labor and Industries)

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Dept. of Social and Health Services)

- Community Services Block Grant (Dept. of Commerce)

- Community Development Block Grant (Dept. of Commerce)

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (ESD)

- Unemployment Insurance (ESD)

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Dept. of Social and Health Services)

The state Workforce Board also monitors and evaluates the state's 12 largest workforce programs supported federal fund and publishes those results in an annual Workforce Training Results report. The [Workforce Training Results report which can be reviewed on online](#) outlines how much workforce participants earn, their employment rate, and taxpayer return on investment, among other items.

Washington's 12 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), which are listed on the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating [Board Regional Workforce Plans webpage](#), direct federal activities centered on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), connect with local employers, and oversee the state's employment center system, WorkSource. Each local board develops a local strategic plan centered on regional economic and workforce conditions, that aligns with goals outlined in [Talent and Prosperity for All Plan](#), the state's strategic workforce plan. Each LWDB is a business majority led board that also has

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representation from labor, economic development, government agencies, and education partners. Local decision on service integration and leveraging of resources are made independently in each local area, though recently several local areas have banded together to explore tighter integration of services and are working directly with state partners to create policy that supports further braiding of service delivery.

Additionally, by Washington state law, career and technical education is considered an element of the state workforce system, including Perkins-funded programs. The state Workforce Board simultaneously serves as the state's Perkins-eligible entity and state vocational education board, bringing CTE stakeholders to the center of the conversation on developing the state workforce system, even at the state Board level.

(B) STATE BOARD

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (the Board), serves the State Workforce Development Board for Washington through Executive Order and governed by Chapter 28C.18 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). The Board, established in 1991, is acknowledged as an alternate entity under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 101(e), a designation made by Governor Inslee in 2014, leveraging its pre-existing structure in line with state and federal requirements. The Board's tripartite composition consisting of representatives from business, labor, and state government agencies, including ex officio members from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Employment Security Department and the Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, reflects the Board's comprehensive approach to workforce development, ensuring a diverse representation of Washington's economic and social fabric. Non-voting members provide additional expertise, embodying the Board's inclusive and collaborative governance model.

A list of board members with affiliations can be viewed on the agency's website, www.wtb.wa.gov. All new board members are provided with an orientation on the background, purposes, and activities of the board.

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION/TITLE	REPRESENTING
Gary Chandler, Co-Chair	Former Vice President of Government Affairs, Washington Association for Business	Business
Larry Brown, Co-Chair	Past President, Washington State Labor Council	Labor

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Kairie Pierce	Workforce Development Director, Washington State Labor Council	Labor
Jane Hopkins	Executive Vice President, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW	Labor
Todd Mitchell	Business Manager, Heat & Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 7	Labor
June Altaras	MultiCare	Business
Dr. Wade Larson	Chief Human Resources Officer, Wagstaff, Inc.	Business
Vacant	Vacant	Business
Chris Reykdal	Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction	Workforce Agency Partners
Paul Francis	Executive Director, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Workforce Agency Partners
Cami Feek	Commissioner, Employment Security Department	Workforce Agency Partners

Additionally, the following serve as participating ex officio, non-voting members of the Board:

NON-VOTING MEMBER	ORGANIZATION/TITLE	REPRESENTING
Vacant	Vacant	Barrier Populations
Jilma Meneses	Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services	Workforce Agency Partners
Mark Mattke	Chief Executive Officer, Spokane Area Workforce Development Council	Chief Local Elected Officials
Michael Fong	Director, Department of Commerce	Workforce Agency Partners

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2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a Governor-appointed tri-partite structure of nine voting members from business, labor, and government. Non-voting members also participate.

The Workforce Board:

- Advises the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy.

- Ensures the state's workforce services and programs work together.

- Evaluates the performance of Washington's key workforce programs.

Two-thirds of voting seats are held equally by business and labor representatives. Remaining seats are held by major state agency service providers. This means customers have a direct, influential voice in all decision-making. With business and labor at the table, we get a real-world view of our challenges and opportunities--and take action on them. Our workforce customers have a broad range of ages, abilities, and backgrounds--from high school students who require relevant, applied learning to stay in school, to low-skilled working adults who need more education to earn a living wage, to the recently laid off retooling for new careers. We advocate for lifelong learning, so all workers become better educated and better skilled--keeping our workforce, and our state, competitive.

The Workforce Board coordinates 16 workforce programs (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV WIOA Programs; Postsecondary Professional Technical Education, Worker Retraining Program, Job Skills Program, Customized Training Program, Secondary Career and Technical Education Programs, Training Benefits Program, Apprenticeships, Perkins Act programs, and the Private Vocational Schools Act), administered by seven agencies. We measure the performance of programs accounting for about 95 percent of federal and state dollars spent on our workforce system--or roughly $1.4 billion per year.

Researchers, policy analysts and managers prepare and analyze our detailed reports on everything from worker skill gaps to how effectively our state's programs train workers to fill jobs. Staff members have expertise in a wide range of disciplines but specialize in outreach and building partnerships.

Washington state law provides an explicit list of the Board's functions at RCW 28C.18.060. The board, in cooperation with the operating agencies of the state training system and private career schools and colleges, shall:

- Concentrate its major efforts on planning, coordination evaluation, policy analysis, and recommending improvements to the state's training system;

- Advocate for the state training system and for meeting the needs of employers and the workforce for workforce education and training;

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- Establish and maintain an inventory of the programs of the state training system, and related state programs, and perform a biennial assessment of the vocational education, training, and adult basic education and literacy needs of the state; identify ongoing and strategic education needs; and assess the extent to which employment, training, vocational and basic education, rehabilitation services, and public assistance services represent a consistent, integrated approach to meet such needs;

- Develop and maintain a state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, including but not limited to, goals, objectives, and priorities for the state training system, and review the state training system for consistency with the state comprehensive plan. In developing the state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, the board shall use, but shall not be limited to: Economic, labor market, and populations trends reports in office of financial management forecasts; joint office of financial management and employment security department labor force, industry employment, and occupational forecasts; the results of scientifically based outcome, net-impact and cost-benefit evaluations; the needs of employers as evidenced in formal employer surveys and other employer input; and the needs of program participants and workers as evidenced in formal surveys and other input from program participants and the labor community;

- In consultation with the student achievement council, review and make recommendations to the office of financial management and the legislature on operating and capital facilities budget requests for operating agencies of the state training system for purposes of consistency with the state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education;

- Provide for coordination among the different operating agencies and components of the state training system at the state level and at the regional level;

- Develop a consistent and reliable database on vocational education enrollments, costs, program activities, and job placements from publicly funded vocational education programs in this state;

  o Establish standards for data collection and maintenance for the operating agencies of the state training system in a format that is accessible to use by the board. The board shall require a minimum of common core data to be collected by each operating agency of the state training system;

- Develop requirements for minimum common core data in consultation with the office of financial management and the operating agencies of the training system;

- Establish minimum standards for program evaluation for the operating agencies of the state training system, including, but not limited to, the use of common survey instruments and procedures for measuring perceptions of program participants and

employers of program participants, and monitor such program evaluation;

- Every two years administer scientifically based outcome evaluations of the state training system, including, but not limited to, surveys of program participants, surveys of employers of program participants, and matches with employment security department payroll and wage files. Every five years administer scientifically based net-impact and cost-benefit evaluations of the state training system;

- In cooperation with the employment security department, provide for the improvement and maintenance of quality and utility in occupational information and forecasts for use in training system planning and evaluation. Improvements shall include, but not be limited to, development of state-based occupational change factors involving input by employers and employees, and delineation of skill and training requirements by education level associated with current and forecasted occupations;

- Provide for the development of common course description formats, common reporting requirements, and common definitions for operating agencies of the training system;

- Provide for effectiveness and efficiency reviews of the state training system;

- In cooperation with the student achievement council, facilitate transfer of credit policies and agreements between institutions of the state training system, and encourage articulation agreements for programs encompassing two years of secondary workforce education and two years of postsecondary workforce education;

- In cooperation with the student achievement council, facilitate transfer of credit policies and agreements between private training institutions and institutions of the state training system;

- Develop policy objectives for the workforce investment act, P.L. 113.128, or its successor; develop coordination criteria for activities under the act with related programs and services provided by state and local education and training agencies; and ensure that entrepreneurial training opportunities are available through programs of each local workforce investment board in the state;

- Make recommendations to the commission of student assessment, the state board of education, and the superintendent of public instruction, concerning basic skill competencies and essential core competencies for K-12 education. Basic skills for this purpose shall be reading, writing, computation, speaking, and critical thinking, essential core competencies for this purpose shall be English, math, science/technology, history, geography, and critical thinking. The board shall monitor the development of and provide advice concerning secondary curriculum which integrates vocational and academic education;

- Establish and administer programs for marketing and outreach to businesses and

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potential program participants;

- Facilitate the location of support services, including but not limited to, childcare, financial aid, career counseling, and job placement services, for students and trainees at institutions in the state training system, and advocate for support services for trainees and students in the state training system;

- Facilitate private sector assistance for the state training system, including but not limited to: Financial assistance, rotation of private and public personnel, and vocational counseling;

- Facilitate the development of programs for school-to-work transition that combine classroom education and on-the-job training, including entrepreneurial education and training, in industries and occupations without a significant number of apprenticeship programs;

- Include in the planning requirements for local workforce investment boards a requirement that the local workforce investment boards specify how entrepreneurial training is to be offered through the one-stop system required under the workforce investment act, P.L. 105-220, or its successor;

- Encourage and assess progress for the equitable representation of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities among the students, teachers, and administrators of the state training system. Equitable, for this purpose, shall mean substantially proportional to their percentage of the state population in the geographic area served. This function of the board shall in no way lessen more stringent state or federal requirements for representation of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities;

- Participate in the planning and policy development of governor set-aside grants under P.L. 97-300, as amended;

- Administer veterans' programs, licensure of private vocational schools, the job skills program, and the Washington award for vocational excellence;

- Allocate funding from the state job training trust fund;

- Work with the director of commerce to ensure coordination among workforce training priorities and economic development and entrepreneurial development efforts, including but not limited to assistance to industry clusters;

- Conduct research into workforce development programs designed to reduce the high unemployment rate among young people between approximately eighteen and twenty-four years of age. In consultation with the operating agencies, the board shall advise the governor and legislature on policies and programs to alleviate the high unemployment rate among young people. The research shall include disaggregated demographic

information and, to the extent possible, income data for adult youth. The research shall also include a comparison of the effectiveness of programs examined as a part of the research conducted in this subsection in relation to the public investment made in these programs in reducing unemployment of young adults.

4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

(A) ASSESSMENT AND EVALATUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

Washington has been evaluating workforce training programs for many years, and was gratified that many of the approaches used were adopted by WIOA. The state will continue to evaluate performance by provider and by area (as required for Title I programs) based on its current practices – as described below.

The broadest and most regularly occurring program performance effort is the annual state Workforce Training Results (WTR) process. The WTR assesses performance of eleven public workforce programs, using measures of employment, employment and/or further training, earnings, credentials, industry of employment, hours worked, and hourly wage. These measures can be calculated for sub-state areas. For training providers, the state annually updates performance data on over three thousand public and private training programs for its Eligible Training Program List for use by Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and some state programs. The measures used include: completion rate, employment rate, and median earnings. This information is also used for the "consumer report" function of the award-winning career information website, CareerBridge.wa.gov.

Employment, earnings, industry worked in, and hours worked measures are based on wage records collected by the state unemployment insurance (UI) system for employer payroll taxes. Washington's federal and state measures use UI wage records from the Employment Security Department (ESD). In addition, Washington participates in the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS), which provides UI wage records from 49 other states and the District of Columbia.

Further training information is provided by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in addition to the information in the PIRL.

Washington state has successfully developed a [Data Explorer's Dashboard](#) that tracks the participant profile and labor market outcomes for the state's largest workforce development programs. The programs included account for the majority of the federal and state dollars spent on our state's workforce development system. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is Washington's workforce system performance accountability agent, working on behalf of the state's citizens and employers. Among the Board's Duties spelled out in RCW 28C.18.060 we have that the Board must:

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"(10) Every two years administer scientifically based outcome evaluations of the state training system, including, but not limited to, surveys of program participants, surveys of employers of program participants, and matches with employment security department payroll and wage files. Every five years administer scientifically based net-impact and cost-benefit evaluations of the state training system; …"

One example of a combined evaluation approach is the WorkFirst Program. The program is jointly operated and administered by the state's Commerce, DSHS, and ESD Departments. It is part of our WTR annual evaluation as well as our intermittent Net Impact Study.

The partner programs will be assessed each year in a more comprehensive manner by gathering outcomes data as noted above, convening partners to discuss any issues of concern and best practices as noted by monitoring.

LWDBs are the local leaders, conveners, and managers of the WorkSource system through which WIOA and non WIOA-funded programs are accessed. They are the strategic visionaries for local implementation of WIOA funds. There are 12 LWDBs in Washington, and each is private industry led and locally focused. Council members are appointed by Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), and councils are certified by the Governor. CEOs are the local area WIOA Title I grant recipients. CEOs direct their WDC's staff to administer the funds and oversee the area's workforce development system to most effectively respond to the local economy and the needs of local citizens. LWDBs convene with regional partners and stakeholders to assess skill gaps, identify emerging and future employment possibilities, and collaborate with economic developers and other partners to develop and implement the region's workforce development plan. LWDBs are the system's portal into the business community and are responsible for facilitating multiple interagency projects and programs. Moving forward, Washington state will convene an annual state meeting specifically to support promotion of LWDB's stated goals with program targets.

(B) PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Year	Program Name	Employment Rate *1	Full-Time Employment *2	Median Quarterly Hours	Median Hourly Wage *4	Median Annualized Earnings *4
2022	Basic Education for Adults*3	35%		-	-	$33,400
2022	Dept. of Services for the Blind	39%	45%	360	$21.07	$31,000
2022	Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation	50%	31%	260	$18.34	$17,100
2022	WIOA Adult	69%	55%	420	$23.72	$39,100
2022	WIOA Dislocated Workers	71%	64%	450	$26.43	$48,800

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2022	WIOA Youth	69%	34%	320	$17.85	$20,500
2022	WorkFirst	56%	38%	340	$19.47	$25,200
2023	Basic Education for Adults*3	-		-	-	-
2023	Dept. of Services for the Blind	40%	45%	370	$21.25	$32,100
2023	Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation	56%	31%	260	$18.44	$17,000
2023	WIOA Adult	70%	59%	440	$26.15	$45,200
2023	WIOA Dislocated Workers	72%	62%	450	$26.68	$47,300
2023	WIOA Youth	68%	34%	330	$18.21	$22,100
2023	WorkFirst	57%	43%	360	$20.14	$28,300

Program cohorts cover 4 quarters with outcomes those of the fourth quarter after exiting the program. Year points to the latest year of outcome measure.

*1 Employed or in Further Education for WIOA Youth

*2 Full time employment as share of participants with employment.

*3 Data made available to the Workforce Training Board does not allow tabulation for all measures.

*4 Dollars adjusted to 2022 Q1

State evaluation efforts for workforce programs have been coordinated through the Workforce Board since implementation of the 1991 legislation which created the Board. Cross-agency research projects can and do come from our Board as it has agency representation (in addition to business and labor). An example of this is the employer dashboard effort that originated from our business representatives (with labor support) but has been moved forward and is staffed by agency personnel. Additionally, agencies may identify a research priority, which in our case would go through Board approval. Moving forward, Washington state will be implementing the Evaluation Design and Implementation Assessment (EDIA) tool. The tool will assist the state in highlighting the major design and implementation issues that should be considered when planning an evaluation project. It will also help identify challenges, potential opportunities, and areas where technical assistance or additional resources may be needed. The states plan will include Evaluation Design and Research Questions, Data Collection and Analysis Plan, Evaluator Selection, Participant Rights and Reporting sections.

(C) EVALUATION

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Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

State evaluation efforts for workforce programs have been coordinated through the State Workforce Development Board (Workforce Board) under WIOA and subsequent to that under WIA.

The net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of Washington state's workforce development programs: While most evaluations of workforce system programs track average participant outcomes like earnings and employment, this net impact study takes it a step further by using a quasi-experimental design to estimate the causal relationship between programs and participant outcomes. The findings produce the estimates of program effects on employment, earnings, and social assistance outcomes that are attributed to program participation by isolating other influencing factors, such as prior employment history, education, gender, or race. This makes it possible to calculate the average net benefit of these programs for individual participants and a return on investment to society and taxpayers.

The most recent net impact studies have been conducted in-house by the Workforce Board. Bringing the study in-house was made possible by increased staff expertise and technical know-how in econometric research design, statistical programming, and project management. An independent review was conducted on the 2021 net impact study to validate its evaluation methodology. This new approach yields several advantages: cost-savings, standardization of research design and evaluation methodology, study repeatability, and increased research unit capabilities.

Next, the Workforce Board plans to conduct the study more frequently, possibly as often as annually. The net impact study has two parts: 1) the effect of program participation on employment and earnings and 2) the costs of program participation. The first part is derived from administrative datasets and can be done more often. The second part on program cost is difficult and onerous to assess and will remain a once every 4- or 5-year effort. Therefore, there will likely be a comprehensive study done every 4 or 5 years with more frequent updates using updated employment and earnings data.

Additional research and evaluations: In 2024-2028, the state of Washington will explore the possibility of conducting additional research projects and evaluations on activities under WIOA-related programs and services. Additional studies may include implementation, outcome, or net impact evaluations. These are contingent on availability of funding and the initial research exploration phase.

The initial exploration phase will aim to determine which projects the State will pursue. The State will go through the project selection process to identify and prioritize research and evaluation

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projects based on their feasibility, impact, and potential value. The process of project prioritization will be done collaboratively across state agencies and state and local boards. This process will determine which studies the State pursues.

Depending on the project prioritization and selection process, in 2024-2026, the State will aim to conduct implementation evaluation(s) to explore how WIOA-funded programs and services are delivered and implemented in practice. Implementation evaluations can be accompanied by customer experience studies to examine the experience of customers and program staff. Examples of potential implementation studies include:

- An implementation study of co-enrollment to examine how co-enrollment practices have been implemented across different locations.

- An implementation study of training services to document operations of classroom- and work-based training service opportunities used by WIOA Title I-B participants and describe how these training services are implemented in practice.

- An implementation study of different service delivery approaches to document the operational aspects of different WIOA-funded service delivery approaches (in-person, virtual, or hybrid). This study can also explore the experiences of program participants and providers with different service delivery approaches.

- An implementation study of different outreach strategies to describe how organizations delivering different WIOA-funded programs and services reach out to and engage with their potential and existing customers. This study can also explore the experiences of program participants and providers with different outreach strategies.

- An implementation study to explore the process of implementing WIOA-funded programs serving youth and determine whether these programs are implemented as intended.

- A study to examine a job quality framework. This study will aim to develop a job quality framework in the context of Washington state. It will examine existing definitions and frameworks to measure job quality; conduct an exhaustive literature review of economics, including the research that quantifies job quality; outline the benefits and drawbacks of each of these definitions and frameworks; and conduct quantitative or qualitative research to improve understanding or definitions and measurement of job quality in Washington state.

Outcome and net impact evaluations: Depending on the project prioritization and selection process, in 2025-2028, the State will be able to implement outcome evaluations to examine whether WIOA-related programs and services achieve their objectives or success measures and net impact evaluations to examine whether programs and services have positive causal impacts on the main outcomes. Each of the evaluations assumes to have at least a six-month feasibility study prior to the actual evaluation to determine whether a study in question is achievable.

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Study feasibility depends on several factors, including timeframe, data reliability and accessibility, sample size, and the ability to satisfy econometric assumptions for a given research design. When feasible, the research staff will prioritize net impact evaluations over outcome evaluations and employ rigorous econometric methods. Examples of potential studies include:

- An impact evaluation of co-enrollment practices to answer the following question: What is the impact of automatic co-enrollment of eligible individuals into the WIOA Title I-B adult and/or dislocated worker programs on employment and earnings outcomes? Do the impacts differ by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, or location?

- An impact study of different service delivery approaches to answer the following question: What is the effect of different service delivery approaches (e.g., in-person, virtual, or hybrid) on program participation, service receipt, as well as other career-related outcomes? How are these effects different by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, or location?

- An impact study of different outreach methods to answer the following question: What outreach efforts are most effective at increasing customer engagement at the one-stop centers or via virtual services? How do these effects differ by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, or location?

- An outcome evaluation of co-enrollment practices to answer the following question: What are the outcomes of individuals who are automatically co-enrolled into the WIOA Title I-B adult and/or dislocated worker programs? What are the outcomes of individuals who are co-enrolled into the programs in a discretionary way or are not co-enrolled at all? Does this relationship differ by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, or location?

- An outcome evaluation of training services to answer the following question: What are the outcomes of WIOA Title I-B participants who receive work-based training (e.g., on-the-job training, registered apprenticeship)? What are the outcomes of those who receive classroom-based training (e.g., occupational skills training, customized training, class-size contract training)? Are there differences by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, or location?

- An outcome evaluation of different service delivery approaches to answer the following question: How do different service delivery approaches (e.g., in-person, virtual, or hybrid) are associated with program participation, service receipt, and other career-related outcomes? Are there differences by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability status, or location?

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Coordination across partners and stakeholders. The preliminary ideas for additional research and evaluations were developed through a process that included multiple stakeholders. This process included:

- Development of ideas through the Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (Eval PLC);

- Prioritization of topics through the Workforce Board;

- Review by program partners and state agencies that administer the core and required programs under WIOA;

- Review by several local workforce development councils; and

- Feedback from the state Workforce Board.

First, the Eval PLC is a technical assistance initiative sponsored by the Employment and Training Administration within the U.S. Department of Labor. The initiative aims to build research and evaluation capacity across the WIOA programs, with an emphasis on adult and youth activities. Washington took part in Eval PLC in 2022-2023. The group of participants from Washington included representatives from the Workforce Board, WIOA Titles I-III (Employment Security Department and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) and local workforce development councils (Workforce Snohomish and Olympic Workforce Development Council). Eval PLC participants developed some of the initial questions. Second, the Workforce Board has prioritized several topics to be considered for evaluation initiatives. Lastly, multiple state agencies that administer WIOA programs, several local workforce development councils, and the Workforce Board reviewed the proposed plan.

Additional research and evaluations are contingent on availability of funding, as well as the initial research exploration process. As noted, the initial exploration phase will aim to identify and prioritize research and evaluation projects based on their feasibility, impact, and potential value. The process of prioritization and selection will be done collaboratively across state agencies and state and local boards. This process will determine which studies the State decides to undertake.

Evaluation plan details and feasibility will be explored and determined during the period of performance in coordination with the state and local workforce boards and with state agencies responsible for the administration of respective programs.

5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

(A) For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for:

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(i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

(ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

(iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

WIOA law gives the Governor one opportunity a year to change the WIOA Title I (sub-state) local formula allotment methodologies used for the youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs. Under WIOA, the state workforce development board is directed to assist the Governor to develop the allotment formula.

1. Current Methodologies

The State's current methodologies for determining local area WIOA Title I formula allotments for the youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs are articulated below.

Local Area WIOA Title I Formula Allotment Methodology for Youth

After the state's Youth program allotment is divided into state administration, state set-a-side, and local funds in accordance with the appropriate Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), local area allotments are determined by three county-level factors:

1. The average number of unemployed individuals for Areas of Substantial Unemployment for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

2. The number of excess unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

3. Share of economically-disadvantaged youth (American Community Survey identified in the program year funding TEGL) (33.3% of the allocation)

If a county qualifies for any one of the factors, its percentage of the whole is calculated for that factor. If a county does not qualify for any one factor, its client data will be excluded from the calculation for that factor. Once that has been completed for all three factors, the average percentage of the three factors is calculated at the local area level. If, for example, Olympic

WDA's average is 4 percent, 4 percent of the Youth funding would go to Olympic WDA.

Once the total amount of Youth funds have been divided amongst local areas within the state based on their county data, ESD ensures that no local area receives an amount of funding less than its hold-harmless level or greater than its stop-gain level.

The hold-harmless amount is determined for each local area by calculating 90 percent of the average allotment share for the two prior program years and multiplying that share by the total local Youth allotment.

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If a local area's initial award is below its hold-harmless level, funding adjustments are necessary. Funds will be given to local areas whose pre-hold-harmless amounts are less than the calculated hold-harmless amount in order to raise their total Youth allotment to match their calculated hold-harmless level. The offsetting reduction to the balance of local areas (those at or above hold-harmless) is based on their percentage of the total pre-hold- harmless amount less the amount surrendered to local areas that were funded below the hold-harmless level.

After all adjustments are made, a final award is issued to each local area, 10 percent of which is local administrative funding and 90 percent of which is local program funding.

Local Area WIOA Title I Formula Allotment Methodology for Adults

After the state's Adult program allotment is divided into state administration, state set-a-side, and local funds in accordance with the appropriate Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), local area allotments are determined by three county-level factors:

1. The average number of unemployed individuals for Areas of Substantial Unemployment for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

2. The average number of excess unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

3. Share of economically disadvantaged adults (American Community Survey identified in the program year funding TEGL) (33.3% of the allocation)

If a county qualifies for any one of the factors, its percentage of the whole is calculated for that factor. If a county does not qualify for any one factor, its data will be excluded from the calculation for that factor. Once that has been completed for all three factors, the average percentage of the three factors is calculated at the local area level. If, for example, Olympic

WDA's average is 4 percent, 4 percent of the Adult funding would go to Olympic WDA.

Once the total amount of Adult funds has been divided amongst local areas within the state based on their county data, ESD ensures that no local area receives an amount of funding less than its hold-harmless level.

The hold-harmless amount is determined for each local area by calculating 90 percent of the average allotment share for the two prior program years and multiplying that share by the total local Adult allotment.

If a local area's initial award is below its hold-harmless level, funding adjustments are necessary. Funds will be given to local areas whose pre-hold-harmless amount are less than the calculated hold-harmless amount in order to raise their total Adult allotment to match their calculated hold-harmless level. The offsetting reduction to the balance of local areas (those at or above hold-harmless) is based on their percentage of the total pre-hold-harmless amount less the amount surrendered to local areas that were funded below the hold-harmless level.

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After all adjustments are made, a final award is issued to each local area, 10 percent of which is local administrative funding and 90 percent of which is program funding.

<u>Local Area WIOA Title I Formula Allotment Methodology for Dislocated Workers</u>

After the state's Dislocated Worker (DW) program allotment is divided into state administration, state set-a-side, statewide rapid response, and local funds in accordance with the appropriate Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), local area DW allotments are determined by three county-level factors that have been assigned certain weights:

1. The average number of unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending September 30 (weight of 1 = 33.3% of the allocation).

2. The number of excess unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending September 30 (weight of 1 = 33.3% of the allocation).

3. The average share of long term unemployed (Unemployment Insurance claimants with 15+ weeks of benefits for the 12-month period ending September 30) (weight of 1 = 33.3% of the allocation).

After the funding has been divided between the factors, it is spread amongst the counties based on the percentage of individuals that reside in that county per that factor. For example, if 4 percent of the state's long term unemployed participants live in Clallam County, 4 percent of the long-term unemployed funding would go to Clallam County. If a county does not qualify for any one factor, its data is excluded from calculation for that factor.

Once the total amount of DW funds has been divided amongst local areas within the state based on their county data, ESD ensures that no local area receives an amount of funding that is less than its hold-harmless level or greater than its stop-gain level.

The hold-harmless amount is determined for each local area by calculating 90 percent of the average allotment share for the two prior program years and multiplying that share by the total local DW allotment.

The stop-gain amount is determined for each local area by calculating 130 percent of the allocation percentage of the prior program year and multiplying that share by the total local DW allotment.

If a local area's initial award is below its hold-harmless level or above its stop-gain level, funding adjustments are necessary. Funds will be given to local areas whose pre-hold-harmless amounts are less than the calculated hold-harmless amount in order to raise their total DW allotment to match their calculated hold-harmless level. The offsetting reduction to the balance of local areas (those at or above hold-harmless) is based on their percentage of the total pre-hold-harmless amount less the amount surrendered to local areas that were funded below the hold-harmless level.

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The same process is used to determine the stop-gain amount for each local area.

After all adjustments are made, a final award is issued to each local area, 10 percent of which is local administrative funding and 90 percent of which is program funding.

2. Revising the Methodologies

The process for revising the State's methodologies for determining local area WIOA Title I formula allotments for the youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker programs is as follows:

1. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) will consult with Employment Security Department and the 12 local workforce boards, through the Washington Workforce Association on the alignment of fund distribution with the state's strategic priorities, within statutory limitations. Requests to explore changes to any of the WIOA Title I formula allotment methodologies (youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker) must be communicated, in writing, to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) by July 31 preceding a program year (e.g., by October 31, 2022 for PY22/FY23 allotments covering April 1, 20123-June 30, 2024).

2. The request must detail the alternate variable(s) proposed and program (youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker) methodology to which the variable(s) would be applied; the existing alternate variable(s) proposed for elimination and program (youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker) methodology from which the variable(s) would be eliminated; or both.

3. Pursuant to a request, the SWDB will, having delegated operational development of local formula methodologies to the State Workforce Agency (SWA), direct the SWA to convene a state-local work group comprised of SWA and Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) representatives between November 1 and January 1 to research and develop local area allotment scenarios based on the alternate variables proposed to be added or eliminated. Based on the information, the work group may recommend that one, two, all, or none of WIOA Title I formula allotment methodologies be revised.

4. If the work group recommends revising program methodologies, a recommendation will be prepared as an agenda item for the regularly scheduled February meeting (or special meeting, if necessary) of the SWDB for consideration and action.

5. The SWDB, in acting on the work group recommendation, represents the Governor.

6. Changes to any WIOA Title I formula allotment methodology will be communicated to the SWA for the purpose of aligning allotment calculation worksheets and this state policy.

7. Formula calculation worksheets reflecting approved methodologies will be provided by the SWA to LWDBs after issuance of this policy and future revisions of this policy so local areas are able to research impacts of prospective methodological changes and inform decisions on whether or not to request changes.

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8. Formula calculation worksheets reflecting local area allotments for the coming program year will be provided by the SWA to LWDBs at least five business days before the SWA issues local formula grant packages.

9. If the SWDB does not receive a written request to explore changes to the formula allotment methodologies by October 31 preceding a program year, the methodologies referenced under Section 3.a of this policy will remain in effect and be applied to that program year.

(B) For Title II:

    (i) Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.

Eligible Providers

An eligible provider to apply for the multi-year grant is defined as an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities. Eligible providers for grant funding may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Local education agency;

2. Community-based organization or faith-based organization;

3. Volunteer literacy organization;

4. Institution of higher education;

5. Public or private nonprofit agency;

6. Library;

7. Public housing authority;

8. Nonprofit institution that is not described in 1) through 7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to eligible individuals;

9. Consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1) through 8);

10. Partnership between employers and an entity described in 1) through 8)

Notice of Availability

SBCTC announces the availability of funds through the internet via the SBCTC website.

Process

Those interested in applying for SBCTC Adult Basic Education Funding must:

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- Submit a letter of intent;

- Access the SBCTC Online Grant Management System (OGMS) and develop a formal response to each section of the application; and,

- Submit fully completed applications electronically to the SBCTC through (OGMS) by the designated submission date.

Evaluation of Applications

Proposals for the 4-year application are reviewed by a team of experts from SBCTC and/or other partner organizations. The review of applications is based on the completion of the requested information in the narrative, budget, and assurances as well as completion of required forms and comprehensive implementation of all WIOA requirements, both state and federal. Criteria for scoring proposals is based on the following AEFLA requirements:

- The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals;

- The degree to which the eligible provider has the ability to place and navigate all students along a clearly defined, comprehensive, guided college and career pathway;

- The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families and, after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 161 of WIOA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy;

- The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills and those individuals with barriers to employment, access to opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services they need to succeed in the labor market;

- Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains and uses research-based instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, reading strategies and comprehension, numeracy, solving problems in technology rich environments, and employability skills;

- Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice;

- Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers and blended learning resources;

- Whether the activities provide learning in real life, college, and career contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the

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rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

- Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;

- Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;

- Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as childcare and transportation) as needed to enable all students, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

- Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and

- Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs.

In addition, to ensure that providers meet the WIOA requirements, multi-year proposals are evaluated by evaluation teams on their ability to:

- Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

- Develop individual career and education plans for each individual served that includes funding available to support educational goals;

- Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to living-wage jobs. Plans must include:

  o Implementation of the CCR Standards in all programming;

  o Integration of employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels;

  o Implementation of integrated employment and training activities (IET) such as I-BEST into all IELCE instruction;

  o Expansion of the teaching of numeracy, speaking, and listening into all levels of both ABE and ELA programming; and

  o Integrate problem solving in technology rich environments at all levels of instruction;

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- Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding;

- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development;

- Improve labor market relevance;

- Improve the structure of service delivery; and

- Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

Teams comprised of two adult education and workforce leaders and one SBCTC policy associate/program administrator rate applications. The applications are reviewed and independently rated by each member of the team to determine an average score. In order to be considered for BEdA Master Grant funding, BEdA Master Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 102 or higher. In order to be considered for IELCE funding, IELCE Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 17 or higher. Final recommendations for approval are determined based on ratings ensuring support for Title II services is available across the state.

In addition, in February 2017, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) met with all WDC directors across the state to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners in the review of Title II AEFLA grant applications and to train WDC directors and board leads on the feedback process. Feedback forms were developed and jointly agreed on and a conflict-of-interest agreement was completed for all reviewers. As a result, all Title II applications were approved for alignment with local industry sectors. Subsequent MOUs and collaborations continued throughout 2018-2019. The same process will be followed for the multi-year 2023-2027 competitive grant process.

PURPOSE and Methodology for Distribution of Federal ABE/IECE Funds

Washington's Federal ABE/IELCE funding formula aligns with the BEdA and the governor-appointed Adult Education Advisory Council's (AEAC) visions, missions, values, and goals in support of Governor Jay Inslee's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Ten-Year Roadmap, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Strategic Plan, the Council of Basic Skills, Washington State Council for Basic Skills Work Plan 2017-2020, the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) and Washington State Basic Education for Adults' (BEdA) Shared Vision, Principles, and Goals for Collaboration Guidance Agreement, and Washington state's Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP): Washington's Operational and Program- Specific Workforce Plan Components and Key Strategic Priorities. The intent is to serve more students and serve them more efficiently in order to transition them as quickly as possible to postsecondary education and living-wage careers.

In 2014, the Washington state WIOA Title II funding methodology shifted the funding formula from a regional need based demographic methodology (based solely on census data) to a

service and performance-based formula giving equal weight to service/access and to performance. The past state plan and federal funding formula did not recognize providers that expanded service to serve more students, nor did it include any metrics on performance. The multi-year FY17-FY22 and the FY23-27 formulas shift funding from regional demographics towards providers enrolling more students and increasing the numeracy, literacy and college and career readiness skills of participants. This service and performance-based formula is focused on increasing the number of students being served and the quality of that service.

FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The following funding principles were developed as a result of comprehensive input from all stakeholders through statewide forums, online surveys, and provider groups in FY13 and FY14.

- Funding needs to be transparent and credible;

- Formula should be based on objective criteria (not local negotiations or regional need);

- Formula should incent transitions to postsecondary education;

- Formula should be data-driven, focused on increased access (FTEs) and increased success for students (Student Achievement Points [SAI]). Both total points and points per student should be considered; and,

- Providers must have the capacity to spend allotted performance money effectively.

METHODOLOGY*

Funds are distributed based on a pro rata share among providers for the following (3-yr avg. of data):

- 50% Performance based

    o 10% Transitions

    o 20% Total Student Achievement Points

    o 20% SAI points per student

- 50% FTE Enrollment

Providers seeking funding for the first time will be awarded base funding calculated only on the proposed number of students to be served (enrollment). In years 2-5 funding will be awarded based on both performance and enrollment.

Special Rule

If SBCTC implements any rule or policy relating to the administration or operation of a program that imposes a requirement not demanded by Federal law, SBCTC shall identify the rule or policy as being imposed by SBCTC.

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Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) Adult education; Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities; Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities; Integrated English literacy and civics education; Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

- *Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and*

- *Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.*

All services provided under Title II of this multi-year plan accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary certificates/degrees and life-sustaining jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington.

In Washington state, Basic Education for Adults (Title II) has been integrated as a foundation of the state's guided pathways development and implementation. In the above model, when a student tests into basic skills, they are assessed for skill levels, and whether or not a high school credential is needed. Their goals, interests, and meta-major (or broad industry sector or career pathway--like healthcare or business) are identified and a Title II and/or Workforce Development Council navigator assigned. Funding and support services are then identified, and an educational plan created. The earliest English language acquisition and basic skills learners are placed in foundational programming that are based in contextualized instruction and contextualizes college and career readiness to the different meta-majors available at the college. Then, when students are ready, they move into the college-level certificate or degree program within that meta-major. I-BEST is offered as a core of each meta-major at this level, providing the added academic and navigational support students need to be successful.

Students in need of a high school credential are co-enrolled for dual credit in HS+ or receive their HS diploma upon completion of their two-year degree. Job search support is then provided by the local WorkSource center.

Description of Allowable Activities Overview

Washington's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners as they strengthen local communities and businesses. Adults who lack the skills and knowledge to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from Washington's postsecondary education system and economy are eligible to access adult education services in a variety of settings across the state. Core services are offered at all locations to adult learners who meet the federal eligibility requirements for enrollment. These learners:

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- Have attained 16 years of age;

- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law;

- Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society;

- Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and/or,

- Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

Beginning in July 2015 under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.

Comprehensive interventions are designed to address skill and knowledge deficits across the levels defined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

Vision and leadership for this system of services comes from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). SBCTC is advised about issues related to students' career pathway goals by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB).

SBCTC is also advised and supported by the Washington State Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), which meets four times each year. This body was created by the legislature in 1991, and its members are appointed by the state governor to represent agencies, partners, and sectors.

Represented entities include: a current or past Title II student, an Adult Basic Education provider, community-based organizations, employers, libraries, unions, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Corrections, community and technical Colleges, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Employment Security Department, the Governor, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Washington Workforce Association (WIBs), and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state WIB). The AEAC was the first officially certified state advisory council when it was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in March of 1997. Building on policies and initiatives created through this comprehensive system of advisement, coordination, and support, providers leverage success using innovative processes recognized in formal research among colleagues and funders across the nation as well as from former President Barack Obama. These processes unify and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English Language Acquisition (ELA) instruction, and high school credential programs. Following are examples of research-based innovative practices that support the implementation and scaling of college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth.

Demonstrated Effectiveness: Applicants for Title II funds must demonstrate past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, especially those individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the application for funds. Applicants must also provide data on outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training. Applicants may demonstrate effectiveness in serving target populations using either federal data (performance data required under section 116 of WIOA generated by current providers) or comparable data submitted by new applicants demonstrating past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes noted above. Applicants are required to complete a Data Chart that identifies data sources, demonstrates stability in meeting program outcomes over the past 3 years, and shows that proposed targets meet the state's minimum level of performance. Applicants cannot move forward in the application process without completing the data chart. Application reviewers examine the data chart, and it must meet a minimum passing score to move on for consideration.

> *(ii) Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.*

Title II: The SBCTC ran an open competition on March 5, 2017, to identify providers for the 2017-2022 grant period and will follow the same process to run an open competition for 2023-2027. Each eligible organization desiring a continuation submits a Grant Continuation Application annually containing required information and assurances, including:

- A description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently with workforce training and employability skills. All activities identified in Section 203 WIOA are eligible for funding.

- A description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one-stops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities.

- A plan detailing the implementation of the required WIOA Activities as listed in section 4.1.

The SBCTC will spend no less than 95 percent of the funds for carrying out adult education and literacy activities, and the remaining amount will be used for planning, administration, personnel development, and interagency coordination.

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Description of Activities under Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

Washington's SBCTC Office of Basic Education for Adults ensures equal opportunities to participate for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in any project or activity carried out under the applicable program, such as adult basic education, and promotes the ability of such students, teachers, and beneficiaries to meet high standards.

The office also ensures equitable access to, and participation in, all projects and activities conducted with federal adult education funds. Programs address the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to programming and participation, including those based on race, gender, sexual orientation, color, national origin, disability, and age.

Eligible Providers

An eligible provider is defined as an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities. Eligible providers for grant funding may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Local education agency;

2. Community-based organization or faith-based organization;

3. Volunteer literacy organization;

4. Institution of higher education;

5. Public or private nonprofit agency;

6. Library;

7. Public housing authority;

8. Nonprofit institution that is not described in 1) through 7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to eligible individuals;

9. Consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1) through 8);

10. Partnership between employers and an entity described in 1) through 8)

Notice of Availability

SBCTC announces the availability of funds through the internet via the SBCTC website.

Process

Those interested in applying for SBCTC Adult Basic Education Funding must:

- Submit a letter of intent;

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- Access the SBCTC Online Grant Management System (OGMS) and develop a formal response to each section of the application; and,

- Submit fully completed applications electronically to the SBCTC through (OGMS) by the designated submission date.

Evaluation of Applications

Proposals are reviewed by a team of experts from SBCTC and/or other partner organizations. The review of applications is based on the completion of the requested information in the narrative, budget, and assurances as well as completion of required forms and comprehensive implementation of all WIOA requirements, both state and federal. Criteria for scoring proposals is based on the following AEFLA requirements:

- The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals;

- The degree to which the eligible provider has the ability to place and navigate all students along a clearly defined, comprehensive, guided college and career pathway;

- The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families and, after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 161 WIOA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy;

- The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills and those individuals with barriers to employment, access to opportunities for employment, education, training and support services they need to succeed in the labor market;

- Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains and uses research-based instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading strategies and comprehension, numeracy, solving problems in technology rich environments, and employability skills;

- Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice;

- Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers and blended learning resources;

- Whether the activities provide learning in real life, college and career contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

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- Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;

- Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;

- Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation) as needed to enable all students, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

- Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and

- Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs.

In addition, to ensure that providers meet the WIOA requirements, proposals are evaluated by evaluation teams on their ability to:

- Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

- Develop individual career and education plans for each individual served that includes funding available to support educational goals;

- Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to living-wage jobs. Plans must include:

    o Implementation of the CCR Standards in all programming;

    o Integration of employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels;

    o Implementation of integrated employment and training activities (IET) such as I-BEST into all IELCE instruction;

    o Expansion of the teaching of numeracy, speaking, and listening into all levels of both ABE and ELA programming; and

    o Integrate problem solving in technology rich environments at all levels of instruction.

- Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding;

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- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development;

- Improve labor market relevance;

- Improve the structure of service delivery; and

- Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

Teams comprised of two adult education and workforce leaders and one SBCTC policy associate/program administrator rate applications. The applications are reviewed and independently rated by each member of the team to determine an average score. In order to be considered for BEdA Master Grant funding, BEdA Master Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 102 or higher. In order to be considered for IELCE funding, IELCE Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 17 or higher. Final recommendations for approval are determined based on ratings ensuring support for Title II services is available across the state.

In addition, in February 2017, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) met with all WDC directors across the state to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners in the review of Title II AEFLA grant applications and to train WDC directors and board leads on the feedback process. Feedback forms were developed and jointly agreed on and a conflict of interest agreement was completed for all reviewers. As a result, all Title II applications were approved for alignment with local industry sectors. Subsequent MOUs and collaborations continued throughout 2018-2019. The same process will be followed for the 2023-2027 competitive grant process.

PURPOSE and Methodology for Distribution of Federal ABE/IECE Funds

Washington's Federal ABE/IELCE funding formula aligns with the BEdA and the governor-appointed Adult Education Advisory Council's (AEAC) visions, missions, values, and goals in support Governor Jay Inslee's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Ten-Year Roadmap, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Strategic Plan, the Council of Basic Skills, Washington State Council for Basic Skills Work Plan 2017-2020, the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) and Washington State Basic Education for

Adults' (BEdA) Shared Vision, Principles, and Goals for Collaboration Guidance Agreement, and Washington state's Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP): Washington's Operational and Program-Specific Workforce Plan Components and Key Strategic Priorities. The intent is to serve more students and serve them more efficiently in order to transition them as quickly as possible to postsecondary education and living-wage careers.

In 2014, the Washington state WIOA Title II funding methodology shifted the funding formula from a regional need based demographic methodology (based solely on census data) to a service and performance-based formula giving equal weight to service/access and to

performance. The past state plan and federal funding formula did not recognize providers that expanded service to serve more students, nor did it include any metrics on performance. The FY17-FY22 and the FY23-27 formulas shift funding from regional demographics towards providers enrolling more students and increasing the numeracy, literacy and college and career readiness skills of participants. This service and performance-based formula is focused on increasing the number of students being served and the quality of that service.

FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The following funding principles were developed as a result of comprehensive input from all stakeholders through statewide forums, online surveys, and provider groups in FY13 and FY14.

- Funding needs to be transparent and credible;

- Formula should be based on objective criteria (not local negotiations or regional need);

- Formula should incent transitions to postsecondary education;

- Formula should be data-driven, focused on increased access (FTEs) and increased success for students (Student Achievement Points [SAI]). Both total points and points per student should be considered; and,

- Providers must have capacity to spend allotted performance money effectively.

METHODOLOGY*

Funds are distributed based on a pro rata share among providers for the following (3-yr avg. of data):

- 50% Performance based

   o 10% Transitions

   o 20% Total Student Achievement Points

   o 20% SAI points per student

- 50% FTE Enrollment

Providers seeking funding for the first time will be awarded base funding calculated only on the proposed number of students to be served (enrollment). In years 2-5 funding will be awarded based on both performance and enrollment.

Special Rule

If SBCTC implements any rule or policy relating to the administration or operation of a program that imposes a requirement not demanded by Federal law, SBCTC shall identify the rule or policy as being imposed by SBCTC.

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Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) Adult education; Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities; Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities; Integrated English literacy and civics education; Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

- *Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and*

- *Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.*

All services provided under Title II of this plan accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary certificates/degrees and life-sustaining jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington.

In Washington state, Basic Education for Adults (Title II) is being integrated as the foundations of the state's guided pathways development and implementation. In the above model, when a student tests into basic skills, they are assessed for skill levels, and whether or not a high school credential is needed. Their goals, interests, and meta-major (or broad industry sector or career pathway--like healthcare or business) are identified and a Title II and/or Workforce Development Council navigator assigned. Funding and support services are then identified, and an educational plan created. The earliest English language acquisition and basic skills learners are placed in foundational programming that are based in contextualized instruction and contextualizes college and career readiness to the different meta-majors available at the college. Then, when students are ready, they move into the college-level certificate or degree program within that meta-major. I-BEST is offered as a core of each meta-major at this level, providing the added academic and navigational support students need to be successful.

Students in need of a high school credential are co-enrolled for dual credit in HS+, or receive their HS diploma upon completion of their two-year degree. Job search support is then provided by the local WorkSource center.

Description of Allowable Activities Overview

Washington's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners as they strengthen local communities and businesses. Adults who lack the skills and knowledge to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from Washington's postsecondary education system and economy are eligible to access adult education services in a variety of settings across the state. Core services are offered at all locations to adult learners who meet the federal eligibility requirements for enrollment. These learners:

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- Have attained 16 years of age;

- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law;

- Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society;

- Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and/or,

- Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

Beginning in July 2015 under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.

Comprehensive interventions are designed to address skill and knowledge deficits across the levels defined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

Vision and leadership for this system of services comes from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). SBCTC is advised about issues related to students' career pathway goals by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB).

SBCTC is also advised and supported by the Washington State Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), which meets four times each year. This body was created by the legislature in 1991, and its members are appointed by the state governor to represent agencies, partners, and sectors.

Represented entities include: a current or past Title II student, an Adult Basic Education provider, community-based organizations, employers, libraries, unions, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Corrections, Community and Technical Colleges, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Employment Security Department, the Governor, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Washington Workforce Association (WIBs), and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state WIB). The AEAC was the first officially certified state advisory council when it was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in March of 1997.

Building on policies and initiatives created through this comprehensive system of advising, coordination and support, providers leverage success using innovative processes that have gained recognition in formal research among colleagues and funders across the nation as well as from then President Obama. These processes unify and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English Language Acquisition (ELA) instruction, and high school credential programs. Following are examples of research-based innovative practices that support the implementation and scaling of college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth.

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Equitable access: SBCTC manages grant applications through the Online Grant Management System (OGMS), a secure online system. It is a rigorous and clear, transparent application process that allows eligible organizations a step-by-step method to apply for and track grants. Applicants using the online system can apply for grants and track the status of grant requests at OGMS. Also, whether applying for Basic Education for Adults, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education, Corrections Education, Early Achievers Grant, Job Skills Program, Worker Retraining, WorkFirst Delivery Agreement, Basic Food Employment & Training or Perkins.

SBCTC has experienced staff to support all applicants. These staff can be reached via the OGMS Help Desk.

(C) Vocational Rehabilitation Program:

DVR and DSB split the distribution of funds to the VR agencies with 86% going to DVR and 14% going to DSB. This has been the long-standing split between the agencies and is based on factors such as: caseloads, case costs, length of cases, etc.

6. PROGRAM DATA

(A) DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

The state has up to twenty years of experience integrating program data from five of the six core programs (and some other partners and potential partners as well) with unemployment insurance data on employment outcomes and education system data on further education and training outcomes for reporting, evaluation and assessment purposes. Integration of data at the operational level of Case management or MIS systems in near real-time is far less developed, outside of some programs operated by the same agency and organizations (e.g. Title I and Title III). Integration within operational systems is a much more complicated and expensive task, requiring formal design and cost analysis, with resulting substantial lead time before implementation.

(i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of   common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

 The state of Washington I.T.'s Transparent: Project Dashboard provides an overview of the steps being taken to replace Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) with the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) system. The ETO platform currently serves as the state's case management and labor exchange for employers and job seekers. The replacement system will support the workforce administration statewide to support adoption of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) integrated service delivery model and program performance reporting requirements for the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal grants.

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs require an electronic and business operations system that supports an integrated service delivery model so that opportunities for job seekers and employers are maximized across the workforce system. The workforce system is made up of Employment Security Department's (ESD) employment connections, twelve Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), community colleges, and other partnerships with employers and programs to promote education, training, and employment. ESD in partnership with the Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) and the twelve Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) are replacing the existing WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) platform. Phase one has been completed. Upon completion, expected in 2025, more of the core titles, will be able to more efficiently use the new system.

Washington will evaluate the core programs workforce training programs by provider and by area. Evaluation will be based upon administrative wage records obtained from ESD, using reports such as the QPS and data from the PIRL.

Employment and earnings measures are based on wage records collected by state unemployment insurance (UI) systems for employer payroll taxes. Washington's federal and state measures use UI wage records from the Employment Security Department (ESD). In addition, Washington participates in the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS), which provides UI wage records from 49 other states and the District of Columbia.

B. III. b. 6. A. iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals

The State board will advise the governor on the desirability of aligning technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs to facilitate common intake, collection of federally required or otherwise key date in order to improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals, while balancing the desirability and cost of such improvements against other requirements and improvements that implement or enhance the effectiveness of WIOA, including staff curriculum and training, training services, modifications of facilities, assistive technology, required public information dissemination, self-service enhancements, collection of new data elements, new data validation procedures, and expanded and modified reporting systems.

The Board is working with the governor, as part of the establishment of the Data Governance Council, to smartly align our technology and data systems where possible across the one-stop partner programs. This includes looking at how we can make our intake processes simpler and ensuring we're collecting important data efficiently and maximizing customer consent for data

sharing. Our goal is to make getting help from our programs as straightforward as possible for everyone.

We're being practical about this, knowing that completely overhauling our tech systems from the ground up isn't always feasible due to cost and other constraints. So, we're focusing on enhancing what we already have in place. This means making sure our different programs can talk to each other better digitally, so we don't have to ask people for the same information over and over. It's about making our services more connected and responsive.

For example, by updating the WorkSource Integrated Technology system, we're not just bringing in new software; we're eventually through the creation of a new labor exchange making it easier for job seekers and employers to find each other. We're also exploring ways to share data more effectively among our partners, without compromising privacy or security. This could mean something as simple as ensuring that when someone needs help, their information can be quickly and safely shared with the right program through an established shared referral practice, without them having to fill out multiple forms.

In short, we're trying to be innovative within our means, improving how our programs work together to make things smoother for those we serve. It's about practical steps that make a real difference in making our services more user-friendly and efficient.

C. **III. b. 6. A. iv. Describe the State's data systems and procedures to produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).**

Washington State's approach to producing reports required under Section 116 of the WIOA involves an interplay of data systems and manual validation procedures. Washington evaluated the core programs workforce training programs by provider and by area. Evaluation is based upon administrative wage records obtained from ESD, using reports such as the QPS and data from the PIRL, and educational records from eligible training providers.

Employment and earnings measures are based on wage records collected by state unemployment insurance (UI) systems for employer payroll taxes. Washington's federal and state measures use UI wage records from the Employment Security Department (ESD), enriched by participation in the State Wage Interchange System 2.0 (SWIS 2.0). This upgraded system allows Washington to access UI wage records from other states, enhancing the state's ability to measure program outcomes accurately and comprehensively.

(B) ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

To assess post-program success for core programs, Washington uses the WIOA performance indicators, focusing on employment rates in the 2nd and 4th quarters post-exit, median

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earnings in the 2nd quarter post-exit, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. This approach, refined over WIOA's 8-year implementation, leverages ESD's administrative wage records and the Education Research and Data Center's longitudinal data system. Longer term follow-up is available through the Education Research and Data Centers P-20 Workforce longitudinal data system (SLDS). The state also conducts periodic net impact and cost benefit econometric comparison group studies of many workforce system. This approach aligns with the state's commitment to evaluating workforce programs' effectiveness comprehensively, ensuring participants' progress in education and employment is accurately captured and reported. For detailed information, please refer to the Board's website on Common Core Data: WTB WA Common Core Data.

(C) USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Washington utilizes quarterly UI wage records to fulfill performance accountability and evaluation requirements and to enhance workforce and labor market information. This is done in compliance with both Federal and State laws, ensuring that data privacy and security standards are strictly adhered to. This includes leveraging the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) data, which enhances the ability to track employment outcomes across states, providing a more comprehensive understanding of workforce program effectiveness and labor market dynamics. This approach ensures accurate and robust performance evaluation and labor market analysis, adhering to data privacy and security standards.

(D) PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Washington's Workforce Board is statutorily authorized as both a workforce agency and an education agency. It has a statutory state mandate to evaluate both education and workforce programs and is a designated PACIA under WIA. With twenty years of experience in program evaluation and assessment using education and employment records, the agency has routinely and securely handled substantial volumes of personal information. The agency is familiar with, and keeps up to date on, data security issues, non-disclosure requirements (FERPA, WRIS, and FEDES, NSC), and aggregation procedures to avoid disclosure in reporting.

Washington's workforce development system incorporates rigorous privacy safeguards in line with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (also known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA) and other relevant Federal laws. These measures ensure the protection of personal and sensitive information within the system, safeguarding participant data against unauthorized access and misuse.

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(E) PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

To implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans, Washington adheres to a structured policy framework and comprehensive approach, as outlined in the WorkSource System Policy 1009 Revision 3 and WorkSource System Policy 1022 Revision 1. These policies ensure that veterans and eligible spouses are given precedence in accessing employment, training, and placement services, as mandated by the Department of Labor and consistent with the Jobs for Veterans Act codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C.

Washington State ensures priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses through clear point-of-entry procedures across its WorkSource system. Upon entry, individuals are asked about their military service to identify veterans and eligible spouses who are then informed about their priority status. This process is facilitated through various channels, including in-person visits, telephone inquiries, and online interactions via the WorkSource website. The policy mandates that all DOL-funded programs within the state, regardless of the level of funding, adhere to this priority of service.

Implementation of Priority of Service:

All qualified programs in the one-stop system, including WIOA Title I-B and Title III services, adhere to this policy. Priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses, allowing them access to services earlier or in place of non-covered individuals if resources are limited. The policy also outlines the need for local policies at WorkSource Centers and WIOA one-stop system providers, ensuring that veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement, and informed about available programs and services.

Monitoring Priority of Service:

Monitoring the implementation of Priority of Service is a shared responsibility. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs) and staff involved with the Consolidated Veteran Services Representative (CVSR) are key in providing training and identifying areas for improvement in delivering Priority of Service. WorkSource office Administrators and local supervisors are tasked with the operational implementation and monitoring of the priority of service, ensuring that veterans and eligible spouses receive the benefits they are entitled to. The effectiveness of the priority of service delivery is assessed through quarterly reports submitted by LVERs and DVOP staff.

Triage and Referral Process:

At the point of entry, whether in-person or virtually, veterans and eligible spouses are identified and informed about their Priority of Service. This includes a comprehensive explanation of their entitlement and the range of programs available to them. Those eligible for Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) services are referred accordingly for individualized career services,

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with the process ensuring that they can also access basic employment preparation skills, workshops, and other eligible programs within WorkSource in the interim. Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) identified through the WorkSource system are referred to DVOP specialists for intensive services, as outlined in Policy 1022-1. This includes a wide array of eligible populations such as homeless veterans, those with disabilities, and recently discharged veterans facing unemployment. The referral process ensures that veterans with SBEs are directed to the most appropriate services tailored to their needs, enhancing their reintegration into the workforce.

This structured approach, backed by the policy and its operational requirements, ensures that veterans and eligible spouses in Washington State receive the support and priority they are entitled to under federal law, reflecting the state's commitment to serving those who have served the country.

(F) ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

<u>System-wide Commitment to Improving Accessibility for All Participants</u>

Fundamental to the Workforce Board's vision for the workforce system is the concept of affirmative outreach: Washington's workforce system must be prepared and able to serve

jobseekers from all kinds of backgrounds, who face a variety of barriers. Affirmative outreach encompasses both physical accessibility of all facilities, as well as programmatic accessibility— considering customers' particular access needs. System integration of service delivery and better coordination among workforce system partners will allow services and delivery approaches to be customized to particular access needs. This also considers the dynamic shifts of the workforce post-pandemic, and the technological advancements that have transformed work and service-delivery.

 In the wake of the pandemic, we recognize the increased reliance on digital platforms and remote interactions, making virtual service delivery not just an option but a necessity for many. This shift demands our system to be more adaptable, ensuring that services are not only accessible but also equitable and inclusive, particularly for those from underserved communities. Fortunately, WIOA acknowledged the technology improvements that made those digital platforms and remote interactions possible, and opened the door to virtual service delivery even before it became a necessity.

We acknowledge the need for innovative and bold actions in workforce development, as highlighted by the Department of Labor's "Yes, WIOA Can!" initiative. This involves integrating job quality and equity requirements in programs, enhancing support services, and ensuring that

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success is measured not just by job placement but by connecting vulnerable workers to quality jobs.

Our approach to accessibility and inclusion is also informed by lessons from digital accessibility challenges faced during the pandemic. For instance, the importance of accurate digital media captioning and transcription has been underscored, highlighting the need for high-quality, human-assisted captioning services alongside machine captioning. This reflects a broader commitment to universal design principles, considering diverse user needs, including those with bandwidth issues or disabilities.

The development and renewal of advisory committees on barrier solutions, informed by local advisory committees and the voice of the customer, will continue to play a critical role. The State Board will continue to encourage and support efforts to assess accessibility at the community level, sharing best practices, and advocating for policy development to improve services for all populations facing barriers. The Board recognizes the importance of identifying barrier removal projects and best practices for statewide scalability. We will work with the LWDBs and statewide partners to engage real customers facing barriers, including those from physically, sensorily, and cognitively diverse backgrounds, economically disadvantaged communities, and those needing English language acquisition.

Gathering and reviewing annual progress reports from state and local advisory groups on barrier solutions will be critical in outlining issues, accomplishments, and future strategies related to accessibility goals. These reports will also help in tracking progress and integrating local best practices into statewide strategies.

One-Stop Certification and Ensuring Accessibility

All one-stops ("WorkSource" centers in Washington) must be certified pursuant to WorkSource System Policy 1016, Revision 1: One-Stop Assessment and Certification, promulgated by Washington's Employment Security Department. In accordance with WS System Policy 1016, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) must use a certification tool with an objective scoring method to evaluate the one-stop delivery system for effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement, to determine whether to certify a one-stop site.

The SWDB, in consultation with local Chief Elected Officials and LWDBs, must review and update the one-stop certification objective criteria embodied by Attachment A, detailed in the ESD Worksource System Policy Employment system Administration and Policy 1016, Revision 1, every two years as part of the review and modification of the WIOA State Plan.

LWDBs can establish additional criteria and set higher standards for service coordination than those set by the State. If they do, they must also review and update those additional criteria and standards every two years as part of the WIOA Local Plan update process. Additional criteria

must be clearly identified in addenda to the One-Stop Site Assessment and Certification Tool or the designated local tool.

One-stop sites will be evaluated and certified no less than once every three years. LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one-stop operator) may direct "for-cause" site evaluation and certification as determined appropriate and warranted. In support of the goal of continuous improvement, each certified site will provide an annual report to the LWDB detailing the progress toward reaching higher standards set forth in the certification criteria.

One-stop certification teams will be established by LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one-stop operator) and are responsible for conducting independent and objective evaluations of one-stop sites and making certification recommendations to LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one-stop operator). One-stop certifications teams are comprised of LWDB members and staff and individuals who represent local partners with specific expertise serving populations with barriers, such as team members with expertise in accessibility and universal design. Certification team members should be free of conflicts of interest. Per 20 CFR 678.800(a)(3), the SWDB, rather than local one-stop certification teams, must certify one-stop sites if LWDBs are the one-stop operator.

One-stop certification teams will render written determinations to the LWDB within 30 days of conducting one-stop site evaluations. There are three possible determinations: (1) certification, (2) provisional certification with a requirement that one-stop operators provide action plans and timelines for meeting certification standards, and (3) non-certification.

A provisional certification is to be in effect for no more than 180 days and must be accompanied by a detailed description of the issues/concerns identified so the one-stop operator or one-stop leadership, in coordination with one-stop system partners, have sufficient information around which to develop a required action plan and timeline. A determination to not certify a one-stop site must be accompanied by a detailed description of the deficiencies, including an explanation as to why the certification team believed the deficiencies could not be addressed or resolved provisionally.

Operators of sites that are not certified may choose to appeal those determinations, in writing, to the LWDB (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one-stop operator). Those appeals will be subject to the processes and procedures outlined in locally required dispute resolution and appeal policies (or [WS System Policy 1025: One-Stop System Dispute Resolution and Appeals](#) in those cases where the SWDB is the certifying body). In addition, a copy of the appeal must be forwarded to the SWDB. If an existing comprehensive one-stop site is ultimately not certified following a standard or "for-cause" evaluation, the LWDB, one-stop site staff and leadership, which may include the one-stop operator, must have a plan to ensure continuity of service in the local area. This plan must also include a timeline to shutter or revise services and redesignate the comprehensive one-stop. If a comprehensive one-stop in the local workforce area (LWA) is not certified or loses its certification, immediate steps must be taken to assure

another comprehensive, affiliate, or specialized one-stop in the local area will assume the services and responsibilities of a comprehensive one-stop in the LWA (and be certified as such within 90 calendar days)

The success and accountability of Washington's one-stop delivery system – WorkSource – depends on the values that local Workforce Development Boards and their partners use to guide their planning and operations:

- Integrated – Think and act as an integrated system of partners that share common goals with services delivered by various organizations with the best capabilities for a seamless customer experience.

- Accountable – Commit to high quality customer services with regular program performance review based on shared data and actions that enhance outcomes.

- Affirmative outreach – Meet the needs of customers by ensuring affirmative outreach to programs, services, and activities for all eligible individuals.

- Continuous Improvement – Create a delivery system that uses feedback from employers and current and future jobseekers to challenge the status quo and innovates to drive measurable improvements.

- Partnership – Align goals, resources, and initiatives with economic development, business, labor, and education partners.

- Regional Strategy - Work with counterparts to address broader workforce needs of the regional economy and leverage resources to provide a higher quality and level of services.

WIOA requires that there must be at least one physical comprehensive one-stop career center in each local area. Additional locations may also provide access to workforce system services and may include specialized centers serving targeted populations, such as youth, dislocated workers, or basic skills deficient individuals, English language learners, or industry-specific centers. In Washington, LWDBs certify all types of one-stops: comprehensive, affiliate, and specialized sites. In addition, Washington has also identified WorkSource connection sites as a service delivery option. Sites need to follow the certification expectations detailed in [Policy 1016: One-Stop Assessment and Certification](). Improved availability, a welcoming atmosphere, inclusive settings, and high-quality customer service benefits all customers. WorkSource extends services and outreach not just to individuals who walk in the door, but also to those who have become disengaged in the labor force. Integrated, quality services are provided to all customers within the center and via technology. Principles of universal design are considered which designs inclusive space and materials to be available to individuals regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level. During certification, each one-stop site must:

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- Describe how the site works cooperatively with WIOA core partners to provide quality services to all customers. Describe your outreach to populations with barriers in the community and relationship with core program and community partners to effectively serve them.

- Provide evidence that basic ADA requirements have been met.

- Describe initiatives or strategies in developing affirmative outreach and provide tangible evidence of implementation or solution driven plan development, and address the following four specific areas of access:

  o Physical: Architectural or building

  o Information: All paper, printed or posted materials

  o Digital: Software, web-based programs, and alternatives to print

  o Communication: Verbal and non-verbal access for services, phone, and other

- Describe their wireless internet infrastructure.

- Address how the needs of populations with barriers are met through staff-assistance and other means.

- List any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

(G) ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English Language Learners (ELLs) face unique challenges in accessing workforce development services. These include language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of familiarity with the U.S. job market and educational system. Additionally, the complexity of navigating various programs and services can be overwhelming for ELLs.

To address these challenges, the One-Stop Delivery System in Washington has implemented several strategies:

1. **Professional Training with Focus on Cultural Competency**: Throughout the Plan the importance of professional development is emphasized in order to equip our staff with the support they need to make the system successful. A key component of Professional Development is training on "Cultural Competency" and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all sectors of our community in particular those facing the barrier of limited English proficiency. This includes how to best conduct targeted outreach and collect feedback to improve services from English Language Learners.

2. **Translation and interpretation services**: WorkSource centers provide translation and

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interpretation services to help ELLs communicate with employers, coworkers, and other professionals. These services can help ELLs overcome language barriers and succeed in the workplace. WorkSource offices also strive to provide information in multiple languages to ensure that ELLs can access services and understand the information provided. This includes the use of tools like Google Translate for immediate translation of materials.

3. **Customers with Limited English Proficiency Receive Integrated Services that Lead to Employment and Careers**: WorkSource collaborates with community organizations and other partners to develop approaches that focus on transitioning to jobs and career pathways for individuals with Limited English proficiency. This means Washington's richly complex system will help these customers move beyond program specific solutions to make informed choices that pull from a full menu of services. WorkSource centers can refer ELLs to community resources that can help them with housing, transportation, childcare, and other needs. These referrals can help ELLs overcome barriers to employment and achieve their career goals. These services will be designed and delivered with the worker being the focal point. The system is promising to combine all resources to help each individual learn how to find and keep the right job and receive continued support to advance their careers.

4. **Agencies Providing Direct Services to Individuals with limited English Proficiency in One-Stops**: A number of system partners provided general services to individuals with limited English proficiency across Washington. However, the addition of Department of Social and Health Services DSHS (contains the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Assistance), as a One-Stop partner significantly increases the resources that are available across the workforce system. Added to this resource is the participation of our Adult Basic Education services team located within our Community and Technical College system, which also has a strong history of supporting individuals with limited English proficiency. As a result, job seekers with limited English will more effectively connect with the wrap-around services of the plan from I-Best Training and on-the-job work experiences to training funds, food assistance and housing assistance. In addition, there will be an enhanced ability to communicate effectively through a wide array of media from written to online information.

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IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

The many partners of Washington's workforce system chose to submit a robust Combined Plan to federal partners—one of two options under WIOA, and the third consecutive WIOA combined plan the state has submitted. This decision was made with a clear eye towards improving the breadth and depth of services to workers and businesses across the state. By submitting a "Combined Plan," partners are committing to working toward a seamless, customer-driven system that will not differentiate between programs and agencies whether local, state, or federal. The Combined Plan unites six core programs and the nine programs under the combined state plan partner programs with any number of workforce services across the education and training system. Once included as "Combined Plan" partners, these programs will be aligned with the mission, goals, and priorities within the combined state plan submitted to federal agencies by April 2024.

Soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Inslee directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

- *Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.*

- *Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including through registered apprenticeships.*

- *Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.*

Those original goals still resonate today in this plan for 2024 to 2028.

A key strategy for joint planning and coordination among the core programs is the existence of an active Workforce Board. A tripartite board composed of equal representatives from business, labor, and government, the Board helps to guide the necessary collaborations among core programs and partners and supports implementation of the Combined Plan's strategic priorities. The Board will adopt the following methods to achieve success over the next four years:

 Assign Board members to each strategic priority to serve as sponsors for the work. Include strategic priority review in each Board meeting agenda.

Create a dashboard to track progress on the strategic priorities.

Work closely with agencies and other partners to garner support for necessary workgroups, advisory councils, and other activities engaged in the strategic priorities.

Commit to an environment of continuous improvement including the ability to fail, regroup, and try again.

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Hold to rigorous systemwide performance accountability including cross agency evaluation and research.

Governor Inslee initiated this strategic plan by directing the Workforce Board to focus on the following principles.

1. Improved access and outstanding customer service for people who rely on our public workforce system to move them into new jobs, education opportunities and career pathways. This includes expanded hours beyond traditional work schedules; simplified intake and eligibility determination; more individualized case management and job placement services, and accelerated attainment of credentials of value.

2. Stronger ongoing supports for people seeking to sustain and improve their economic circumstances. Develop and advocate for budget and policy proposals that minimize challenges workers face in accessing social safety net programs that are critical to maintaining economic stability and connection to the workforce, such as unemployment insurance and paid leave.

3. A robust and seamless referral system that ensures customers receive and benefit from the services they need, when they need them. Apply the "no-wrong-door" approach to connecting individuals to services. This includes career and education counseling, health care, scholarships and training grants, cash assistance, legal aid, childcare, supplemental nutrition benefits, transportation, housing and more. Seamlessly connecting our fellow citizens with these services will improve their chances to gain and keep meaningful employment and eventually improve the quality of life in our communities.

4. Create a system-wide management information system to help us understand the real value of our collective services, not just the performance of individual programs. Track a customer's experience from the minute they encounter the workforce system through their participation in a variety of supports and services offered by Washington state agencies and share data in ways that facilitate customer success.

5. Stronger connections and meaningful participation with workers and labor unions and with employers throughout the state. Washington is fortunate to have strong unions and innovative employers. Both have been grappling with the dramatic changes we've been experiencing. It is critical that we listen to and partner with the people that make our economy work.

Reaching underserved and/or economically underrepresented populations in all corners of the state to eliminate economic disparities: Rural, urban, communities of color, workers with disabilities, immigrant communities and others who have been marginalized or disenfranchised from full economic participation. We must be better at reaching people where they are and providing services in ways that are enticing to and beneficial to the populations that have been historically left behind.

These Governor-directed goals and initiatives have been part of the planning process and are reflected in this report.

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The Washington State Workforce Board (WSWB) will strategically position its vision to maximize the transformative potential of federal investments provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS), and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This alignment will catalyze advancements across critical sectors including infrastructure, digital equity, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing, ensuring that the workforce development initiatives are responsive to the contemporary needs of these industries and are in sync with our mission to foster a robust, inclusive economic environment.

III. Strategic Goals and Sector-Specific Focus

Goal 1: Infrastructure Enhancement for Workforce Development

- Develop training programs in collaboration with transportation and infrastructure sectors, focusing on upskilling workers in sustainable construction methods, smart infrastructure maintenance, and transportation logistics in response to IIJA opportunities.

- Align workforce development initiatives with the surface transportation funding provided under IIJA, identifying new job roles and creating targeted training modules that support the construction and maintenance of green infrastructure projects.

Goal 2: Digital Literacy and Inclusion

- In accordance with the Digital Equity Act (DEA), create a statewide initiative to improve digital literacy, focusing on bridging the technology skills gap and enabling access to digital resources for marginalized communities.

- Enhance digital literacy and inclusion in workforce training programs, integrating digital skills across all levels of workforce education to ensure that all Washingtonians can participate fully in a digitally driven economy.

Goal 3: Clean Energy and Manufacturing

- Leverage CHIPS and IRA investments to build a talent pipeline for the semiconductor manufacturing industry, developing specialized training programs in microelectronics, nanotechnology, and related fields.

- Emphasize apprenticeship and skills training in alignment with IRA requirements, focusing on renewable energy sectors, battery technology, and energy efficiency industries to meet the growing demand for a skilled clean energy workforce.

IV. State Strategy and Actionable Steps

Strategy 1: Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

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- Establish sector partnerships with key industries vital to Washington's economy, such as infrastructure, technology, and clean energy, fostering collaboration between employers, labor groups, educational institutions, and government agencies.

- Design comprehensive career pathways in coordination with federal investment strategies, ensuring that these pathways provide clear, attainable steps for individuals to secure employment in high-demand sectors, with a special emphasis on transitioning workers and underserved populations.

Strategy 2: Aligning Education and Training

- Align educational and training curricula with the needs of industries poised to benefit from federal investments, ensuring that programs are relevant, competency-based, and lead to recognized credentials.

- Develop inclusive training strategies to support individuals with barriers to employment, integrating support services such as career counseling, job placement assistance, and connections to social services to facilitate equitable access to emerging job opportunities.

Strategy 3: Stakeholder Collaboration

- Cultivate robust collaborations with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, tapping into local expertise, resources, and networks to create a synergistic workforce development environment.

- Establish Sector Partnership Committees that will serve as advisory and action-oriented bodies, driving the integration of strategic initiatives across workforce programs, and ensuring program alignment with state economic goals and federal investment opportunities.

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Many programs and initiatives   amplify, reinforce, and support the workforce system operations.   The following appendices provide details on several of these programs.

Appendices: Spotlights

     A.   Spotlight: Career Connect Washington
     B.   Spotlight: Economic Security for All (EcSA)
     C.   Spotlight: Reentry and Justice-Involved Populations
     D.   Spotlight: Small Business Resiliency Network
     E.   Spotlight: Poverty Reduction Workgroup
     F.   Spotlight: Heath Care
     G.   Spotlight: Clean Energy Taskforce Advisory Committee (CETWAC)
     H.   Spotlight: Pacific Northwest Technology Hubs
     I.   Spotlight: Job Skills Program (JSP)
     J.   Spotlight: Community Reinvestment Project
     K.   Workforce Development System Stakeholder Survey
     L.   Open Ended Survey Responses from TAP Survey

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Appendix A. Career Connect Washington (CCW)

Career Connect Washington (CCW) is a statewide network of business, labor, education, and community leaders creating work-based and academic programs for young people in Washington to explore, prepare, and launch themselves into college and careers. Every student deserves a future filled with purpose and self-sufficiency — and the support necessary to achieve it. Over the next decade, Washington state will generate thousands of new career opportunities to help us stay on the cutting edge of global innovation and influence. We are confident the talent to fill those opportunities is right here at home. By seamlessly integrating education and onsite work experiences, we are cultivating a stronger workforce, improving lives, and helping build a better Washington.

Career Connect Washington makes it possible for every student to learn and earn—preparing for a career while earning money and college-level credit. By linking the many people, programs, and resources across Washington state as well as offering high-quality, unique pathways to learning, college, and career, students can begin to explore, prepare for, and launch into careers of purpose and impact. Career Connect Washington bridges the gap between employers and educators by providing the connection, funding, and support they need to deliver high quality academic and work-based experiences for Washington students, especially those furthest from opportunity.

Washington state expects thousands of job openings over the next five years, 70% of which will require a credential beyond high school. However, only 40% of our young people accomplish this today. To keep employers growing here and to enable our young people to achieve their highest potential, we need to connect more Washington students to the in-demand high potential careers right here in our state.

The vision of CCW is that every young adult in Washington will have multiple pathways toward economic self-sufficiency and fulfillment, strengthened by a comprehensive state-wide system for career connected learning. In order for every young adult to succeed, we must intentionally focus on populations furthest from opportunity especially students of color, Indigenous students, low-income students, rural students, and students with disabilities. We acknowledge that systemic racism has held students back, especially Black and Indigenous students, and we aspire to build an anti-racist system for career connected learning.

CCW's 10-year goals are for 60% of the class of 2030 to participate in a Career Launch program and 100% of the class of 2030 to participate in a Career Prep and Career Explore program. Reaching these goals will indicate that we successfully integrated career connected learning into the educational system, providing multiple pathways to career and college advancement. This goal is aligned with Washington state's overall goal of 70% postsecondary attainment for the class of 2030.

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Through a strategic planning process in 2018, which included research with students and parents, CCW developed a strategy to achieve a cohesive career connected learning system in Washington state, instead of individual heroic efforts. This system, which was passed through legislation in 2019, would grow and scale career connected learning opportunities for students in Washington state and fundamentally change the way we educate students in Washington state by making career connected learning pathways to college and career a reality for students. The key elements of this strategy were:

CCW would be comprised of a coalition of partners, including government agencies, the K-12 system, higher education, employers, labor, and nonprofit organizations. CCW would not be a new, centralized intermediary. This would mean that each partner in the coalition would need to take on new responsibilities to play their role in the system.
A small CCW advisory team would help partners build the capacity necessary to take on these new responsibilities.
Regional networks would play a key role in the new system serving as a hub to connect employers, educators, and program intermediaries. These networks would also share best practices with each other and help scale successful programs across regions.
Program Intermediaries across the state would build programs for students. These programs would be organized into three levels, Career Explore, Career Prep, and Career Launch, with Career Launch being the most intensive program.
Career Launch would have a state endorsement process to ensure high quality throughout the system.

The most successful learning opportunities in place in Washington are built based on employer need on pathways with long term opportunity. The Career Connect Washington strategy builds on the model, allowing the sharing of programs through networks across the state, ensuring credential and credit transfer and portability for students, and developing new programs where none exist. The ten-year vision will enable choices for students across a learning continuum in all industry sectors.

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Appendix B. State Economic Security for All

The state Economic Security for All (EcSA) program is a poverty reduction model in Washington state that supports low-income residents in achieving equity, dignity, and self-sufficiency. It was launched in 2019 with four pilot areas and has expanded to include all 12 local areas. This year, the Legislature passed a bill to codify the EcSA program in law and make it a permanent feature of our state's workforce system. EcSA operates through partnerships at the local level and is run by community service providers and convened by Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). It is characterized by a high level of coordination among existing services at the Department of Health and Social Services (DSHS), Employment Security Department (ESD), and the Department of Commerce. The program has a strong equity focus and prioritizes serving people of color and those living in rural communities. It also includes the voices of people with a lived experience of poverty as part of the planning process.

As of March 2023, EcSA has enrolled 949 customers who had a median annualized earning of $46,800 upon exiting the program—a significant increase from their initial earnings. The program also placed 379 customers in training for self-sufficiency earnings and helped 166 customers obtain employment.

EcSA collaborates with DSHS to facilitate data sharing and potential waivers. This helps prevent potential pitfalls of the otherwise positive economic impacts from EcSA, which sometimes pushes up salaries only to have participants potentially fall off the "benefits cliff," reducing their access to food assistance and other public benefits. The Washington Student Achievement Council, which administers state financial aid, is another partner, ensuring EcSA participants are automatically eligible for the Washington College Grant as a way to pay for postsecondary education and training, thereby reducing the need to rely on WIOA funding for individualized training and increasing the ability to leverage those funds to better serve more participants. EcSA also partners with the Department of Commerce and its Community Reinvestment Fund. This is a $24 million investment that supports individuals making progress on their college and career plans.

The program's strategic framework, which encourages partnerships and co-enrollments, aligns with the state's broader "System Integration" strategic priority, and reflects Washington's guiding principles and efforts to maximize the available resources among our partners. This strategic collaboration and integration of services can lead to tangible improvements in the lives of individuals and families striving to overcome poverty. It also demonstrates the state's commitment to creating opportunities for all citizens to achieve economic stability and success.

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Appendix C. Re-Entry and Justice Involved Populations

In Washington State, the economic integration of individuals with arrest or conviction records is a critical concern, given that approximately 2.14 million residents—nearly a third of the adult population—have such records, with 1.9 million no longer involved with the criminal legal system. A disproportionate number of people impacted by criminalization and mass incarceration are Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) who experience collateral consequences that impede their ability to obtain an education, secure housing or find employment. This demographic represents a vast and untapped workforce, essential for addressing current labor shortages and meeting the ambitious goals set by federal funding initiatives such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

The Workforce Board's approach to workforce development for reentry and justice-involved populations is rooted in our guiding principles: closing economic disparities for marginalized populations and providing comprehensive support for those facing barriers to employment. Our strategic framework targets the creation of equitable training and employment opportunities, recognizing the unique challenges and barriers individuals face as they reintegrate into society and overcome biases, including housing discrimination, homelessness, and systemic racial disparities. Efforts to end these disparities are critical. In alignment with Governor Inslee's Executive Order 1605, we are focused on building safe, strong, economically robust communities through successful reentry and continued support. Our strategy is to employ a multi-pronged approach that leverages federal funding, provides comprehensive support services, evaluates and builds on existing programs, creates customized employment pathways, fosters collaboration among various stakeholders, and involves the community in supporting the reintegration of justice-involved individuals. This approach will not only help individuals successfully re-enter society but also contribute to their continued success and the overall economic and social well-being of our communities.

This involves enhancing representation, inclusion, equity, and prosperity in the workforce. Over the next four years, we aim to provide pathways for success and opportunity, recognizing the strengths and areas for improvement within our current system. This includes creating more accessible employment opportunities that were historically unavailable to marginalized groups. We will focus on developing person-centered pathways for justice-involved individuals. This approach recognizes a lack of readily available and easily accessed resources and assistance programs for marginalized individuals. We also emphasize the importance of job coaching, mentoring, and training for sustained employment success.

Strategic Framework and Objectives (2024-2028):

- **Data-Driven Employment Initiatives**: Utilize the depth of data available to inform targeted employment programs, aligning with the inclusive goals of IIJA and other

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federal acts to bolster our workforce with qualified individuals who have been historically marginalized.

- **Promote Equity and Economic Mobility**: Implement strategies that address the disproportionate impact of overcriminalization on BIPOC communities, leveraging the support and vision of the Washington State Reentry Council to ensure these strategies translate into equitable opportunities.

- **Integrating Services for Holistic Support**: Central to our strategy is the integration of services spanning employment, health, housing, and family connections. This approach, guided in part by the work of the Washington Statewide Reentry Council, ensures that policies and programs across state agencies are harmonized to address the multifaceted needs of justice-involved individuals.

- **PROWD Grant Utilization and Partnership Enhancement**: Leveraging the Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) grant, in partnership with the Employment Security Department (ESD) and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, is vital. This $10 million grant is dedicated to linking individuals exiting corrections custody in King County with essential re-entry and employment services.

- **Collaborative Agency Approach**: Agencies such as the Department of Corrections, Health Care Authority, DSHS, DCYF, and SBCTC play instrumental roles in providing comprehensive support. Our plan is to strengthen these collaborations, ensuring a cohesive support system.

- **Evaluation and Enhancement of Current Programs**: Over the next four years, we will continuously evaluate and enhance existing programs. For example, the PROWD grant's success will be measured by employment outcomes and public safety impacts, focusing on tailored job training and skills development initiatives to respond to the evolving labor market and specific needs of participants.

- **Development of Customized Employment Pathways**: Customizing employment pathways to meet individual needs, including addressing housing, mental health, and legal financial obligations, is a priority. These pathways will be aligned with current labor market demands.

- **Public Awareness and Community Engagement**: Increasing public awareness and community engagement is essential. This involves working with employers to encourage inclusive hiring practices and engaging community organizations in support of reintegration efforts.

- **Yearly Milestones and Progress Evaluation**: Each year, we will set specific milestones and evaluate progress in meeting these objectives, adapting strategies as needed to ensure the most effective support for re-entry and justice-involved populations.

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Customer Story: A Journey of Transformation and Resilience

Meet John, a justice-involved individual whose journey encapsulates the essence of our system strategic priority and its profound impact on the reentry population. Incarcerated for over two decades, John's story is one of resilience, transformation, and a relentless pursuit of a second chance at life.

Early Years of Incarceration: During his initial years in prison, John navigated the complexities of his case and the intricacies of prison life. However, he soon realized that to forge a better future, he needed to invest in himself.

Transformation in Incarceration: Early in his incarceration, John embraced educational and treatment programs, through The Evergreen State College. His drive for self-improvement led him to initiate a permaculture program at the Monroe Correctional Complex. What began with just 200 worms expanded into a thriving project, managing over 10,000 lbs. of food waste and encompassing partnerships with local organizations such as the Snohomish Boys and Girls Club, and the DSHS Fircrest residential habilitation center. This initiative not only demonstrated his leadership but also his ability to contribute positively to the community.

Navigating Reentry: As John prepares transition to a reentry center in King County, his goals include securing employment and launching a non-profit in the environmental sector. Despite his progress, concerns about societal reintegration and being marginalized due to his past persist.

Evolving Needs: John's incarceration journey highlighted changing needs—from initial focus on personal growth and relationship repair to later stages requiring advanced education, vocational training, and mental health support to combat long-term incarceration effects.

Conclusion: John's journey underscores the necessity of a comprehensive support system that addresses the diverse needs of justice-involved individuals throughout their incarceration and reentry. His story is a compelling illustration of our strategic priority's role in facilitating successful societal reintegration, serving as a powerful reminder of the potential within each individual to transform their life.

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Appendix D. Small Business Resiliency Network

The Small Business Resiliency Network (SBRN), a shining example of how guiding principles translate into tangible results, is supported by the Washington State Department of Commerce. In FY2023 SBRN partners provided approximately 20,000 businesses with direct technical assistance and reached 2.7 million people via outreach efforts. Their dedicated efforts are demonstrably closing economic disparities for marginalized populations, paving the way for a more equitable and prosperous future.

Commerce has partnered with 30 trusted community organizations across Washington State to form the Small Business Resiliency Network (SBRN). This network removes obstacles by providing culturally and linguistically relevant assistance, ensuring all business owners including historically underserved small businesses get the support they need from people they trust.

Over half of Washington business establishments have less than 10 employees. The needs of small business are vast and varied. State agencies must do more to break down barriers to services and support. While many business owners have connections and resources that help them tap into government and philanthropic aid programs, enormous barriers prevent many minority-owned and historically underserved businesses and nonprofits from accessing those same programs. Commerce established the Small Business Resiliency Network to ensure business owners from all communities could be informed about important resources and programs available to them.   The Network's ongoing support includes:

- Navigating resources: Guiding businesses through local, state, and federal support programs.
- Digital Tools support: Helping businesses access technology
- Workforce support: Helping businesses retain talent.
- Culturally-appropriate technical assistance: Connecting businesses to vital resources in familiar languages and contexts.
- Financial Empowerment: Launching a access to capital pilot program in 2024 to build credit for small business owners and foster inter-generational wealth within historically excluded communities.

In addition, the Network's feedback supports Commerce's efforts to equitably administer its business support programs by reducing barriers to access:

- Simplified applications: Replacing essay questions with checkboxes for easier understanding.
- Extended timelines: Allowing more time for outreach and technical assistance
- Expanding business eligibility: Including businesses with ITIN or a tribal license

With all the businesses served and millions reached, SBRN is a powerful example of how targeted support can empower equitable economic growth.

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Appendix E. Poverty Reduction Work Group

Washington's state strategic plan for workforce development, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP), is designed to align with and amplify the Poverty Reduction Work Group's (PRWG) 10-Year Plan. This alignment underscores our shared commitment to dismantling poverty and building a just and equitable future for all Washingtonians.

At the heart of our strategies is the goal of preparing an educated and skilled workforce. This encompasses a commitment to making education and training programs accessible to everyone, especially among certain populations of youth and adults who are traditionally marginalized or face employment barriers. By integrating programs that span from early childhood education to postsecondary training and adult education, the TAP plan aims to build a robust talent pipeline that is responsive to the dynamic needs of Washington's economy. This is in sync with the PRWG's vision of eliminating systemic barriers to economic opportunities and ensuring that foundational needs are met for all citizens.

Washington's TAP Plan, administered by the state's Workforce Board, is explicitly aligned with three core strategies from the PRWG's blueprint:

- **Strategy 2**: Commit to fostering an inclusive decision-making environment, ensuring that those affected by poverty and inequality have equal power and influence.

- **Strategy 3**: Focus on enhancing economic opportunities through equitable income growth and wealth-building, specifically targeting people with low incomes.

- **Strategy 8**: Prepare Washingtonians for the future of work with a just transition, acknowledging and adapting to the evolving economic landscape.

The TAP Plan stands as a solid commitment to PRWG's overarching goals. By integrating PRWG's core strategies into the plan's operations, we ensure that efforts towards economic empowerment and workforce development are not just aligned but are actively contributing to a state-wide effort. Our plan is a proactive approach to creating an environment where every Washingtonian has the opportunity for economic success and empowerment, paving the way for a prosperous, equitable, and resilient state for all.

Goals

(A) Goals for an Educated and Skilled Workforce

Our educational goals are designed with inclusivity at the forefront:

1. **Inclusive Leadership and Engagement**: Diverse voices are at the center of program development, particularly those from marginalized communities, allowing them to shape and influence the workforce strategies that affect their lives.

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2. **Accessible and Inclusive Education**: Education and training programs are broadened to be accessible to all, with a deliberate focus on certain populations of youth and adults who are traditionally marginalized or facing barriers to employment.

(B) Goals for Meeting the Skilled Workforce Needs of Employers

Aligned with PRWG's objectives, including:

1. **Industry Collaboration for Growth**: Engage with industry leaders to align training programs with the dynamic needs of the job market, emphasizing diversity and agility in the workforce to stimulate innovation and productivity.

2. **Advancement Pathways**: Create clear pathways for career advancement, ensuring that training and education are directly applicable and valued by employers.

Appendix F. Health Care

Many Washingtonians struggle to receive necessary health care. There are not enough workers in critical positions across the health care system—particularly in rural areas of the state. Too few health care workers has burdened the existing workforce with higher patient loads, along with more individuals with complex conditions that require greater attention. Recruiting, retaining, and expanding Washington's health care workforce is critical. At the same time, innovative staffing models will be needed to meet current and future challenges.

While many Washingtonians are interested in healthcare careers, educational opportunities for some key occupations, such as nurses, remain limited with many more qualified applicants than seats available. Other roles, while in high demand from employers, are lower paying and experiencing lower student enrollments. That's partly due to strong labor market for entry-level positions in other industries, including retail, that pay the same amount, but with fewer education requirements and other barriers to entry as health care.

In the 2022 Behavioral Health Workforce Assessment created by the Behavioral Health Workforce Advisory Committee highlights low wages and high student debt as key factors behind a shortage of behavioral heath workers like counselors and social workers. This shortage has made access to care difficult for many Washington State families, as the demand for drug and alcohol counseling and mental health services has increased since the pandemic. The report recommends addressing these two barriers, helping clinics attract and retain staff, improving access to mental health services especially in underserved areas.

As the population ages, Washington residents will require more health care services—and more health care workers. The lack of front-line, and other types of trained health care workers, will only worsen as demand grows. The state needs to continue to actively recruit, train, and ultimately, retain workers in this sometimes high-turnover field. The youth strategic priority in the Talent and Prosperity for All plan supports the next generation to find a strong, sustainable

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future in the health care workforce. The credential transparency & expansion strategic priority contained within this plan can help remove barriers and create new pathways to necessary credentials in less time.

The health workforce faces persistent challenges in retention, working conditions, and for some professions, wages – creating an environment where holding onto current healthcare workers can be difficult. Due to the interconnected nature of the health sector, staffing challenges in one area or facility can quickly lead to cascading impacts on other facilities and providers as well as patients not receiving timely care and experiencing worse health outcomes.

Health Workforce Council History and Role

More than two decades ago, the Workforce Board gathered a group of healthcare stakeholders to address growing concerns about personnel shortages in Washington's healthcare industry. Former Governor Gary Locke directed the Workforce Board to create the Healthcare Personnel Shortage Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force developed a statewide strategic plan to address severe personnel shortages in the healthcare industry, and in January 2003, the Task Force released an action plan to tackle the growing gap between the number of trained healthcare professionals and the needs of Washington residents. The report, *Healthcare Personnel Shortages: Crisis or Opportunity*, was presented to the Governor and Legislature.

In 2003, the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1852, directing the Workforce Board to continue gathering stakeholders to address healthcare workforce shortages. The intention of the plan was to provide a framework to help ensure a sufficient supply of trained personnel, with an emphasis on increasing diversity to better reflect the demographics of Washington's residents, along with efforts to ensure that healthcare services were available everywhere, including rural and underserved communities. The bill also required an annual report to the Governor and Legislature, including updated recommendations to address healthcare occupations facing the most acute workforce shortages. In 2014, Task Force members voted to change their name to the Health Workforce Council to better reflect a new focus on the overall health of Washingtonians instead of just healthcare delivery.

Health Workforce Council Provided Staff Funding

In 2019, the Workforce Board received funding from the Legislature to staff the Council along with increased administrative support. The Workforce Board also received ongoing funding to support the Health Workforce Sentinel Network, which provides frequent, short surveys of Washington healthcare employers to identify emerging skills and signal changes in health workforce demand. This allowed the Council to take a greater role in connecting the educational community to on-the-ground workforce needs and to more fully explore a wider range of health workforce issues.

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Council's Roles Remain Critical

The Council's main roles continue to be serving as a convening group for cross profession and facility discussions about the workforce, providing updates to policymakers on the number of qualified healthcare personnel (by education program) graduating from the state's education and training programs, occupation-specific licensing data, where available, providing insight on the real-time workforce needs of area healthcare providers, and tracking the progress of newly implemented policy solutions. By bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to develop and advocate for sustainable solutions, the Council can identify key policy and funding priorities for the Governor, Legislature, and other policymakers and stakeholders.

Progress and New Strategic Priorities Areas for 2024-2028

The Health Workforce Council continued its work in 2023 to study and address topics affecting Washington's healthcare workers, employers, and the education system with the goal of selecting key strategic priority areas for work in 2024-2028. The Council identified strategic priority areas that align with the strengths of the Council and fit well with opportunities in the current policy environment. Through multiple meetings, discussions, and a ranked choice voting process, Council members identified two strategic priority areas for work.

> *Council Strategic Priority Area*
>
> **Health workforce data for planning and policy:** Increase collection, ensure reasonable access, and fund ongoing analysis of health workforce data across multiple data sources.

While many programs and efforts aimed at creating a workforce that reflects the demographics of the state have launched over the past 20 years, a foundational piece of this work remains incomplete. Washington has not had a complete understanding of the demographic make-up nor the geographic distribution of its health workforce.

In 2022, as part of addressing diversity in the health workforce, the Council recommended policymakers provide ongoing funding and the necessary authority to the Department of Health to support continuous collection of healthcare licensee demographic information. The collection effort was to include practice location and licensees' racial and ethnic identities as well as other information important to understanding the supply, distribution, and characteristics of the state's health workforce and how those characteristics change over time.

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During the 2023 session the Legislature passed House Bill 1503, sponsored by Rep. Marcus Riccelli, that requires healthcare professionals to provide a set of information to the Department of Health at the time of initial license application and review. The requirement will go into effect in January 2025. The information generated will help workforce planners, researchers, and policymakers understand to what degree Washington is making progress towards the goal of having a workforce that reflects the state's population. These data will also enable better understanding of the distribution and practice characteristics of the workforce.

The Council recognizes rural communities face challenges in the healthcare workforce that are

> ### *Council Strategic Priority Area*
>
> **Rural strategies:** Generate rural-specific health workforce strategies that account for unique needs in those communities and support the adoption of those strategies.

different from those faced by urban communities, and strategies to address these challenges must be tailored to the unique needs of rural areas. Rural communities themselves are not homogeneous, with rural counties representing both the youngest and oldest populations in the state.[22] The Council and its stakeholders also stress the importance of elevating the voices of rural communities to ensure equitable access to healthcare services and address workforce challenges effectively.

Examples of initiatives targeting rural areas might include developing sustainable education and training programs that allow youth and adults to remain in rural areas, examining successful rural-specific innovations implemented in other states, bringing expertise into rural communities, and exploring telehealth solutions that expand access without supplanting local healthcare resources.

2024-2025
Develop two subcommittees and determine goals within the identified strategic priority areas. Determine early strategies and recommendations for report and potential action by Legislators in 2025 session.

2026-2028

Educate policymakers and engage with partners to encourage implementation of initial recommendations. Continue work in subcommittees to develop additional strategies as needed.

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[22] Office of Financial Management. (2022). *Population by age, mapped by county.* Retrieved Dec. 12, 2023.

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Appendix G. Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee

In the Spring of 2023, the Washington legislature passed comprehensive Climate and Clean Energy service and workforce programs legislation which Governor Inslee signed into law. The focus of the legislation, (HB 1176) is to develop opportunities for service and workforce programs to support climate-ready communities.

The legislature and Governor recognized that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the state and the world today, and that we must mobilize Washington's young adults, veterans, and workforce to create the clean energy economy and strengthen our communities and ecosystems in the face of climate impacts.

The legislation acknowledges that service work provides a unique opportunity to mobilize young adults and veterans to build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems. Growing equity-centered, climate-related service programs and addressing critical gaps in service opportunities will broaden access to service, ensuring that young adults and veterans of all backgrounds, especially from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations, can serve. As such, the Climate Corps Network, CCN, was created to adopt an AmeriCorps type program utilizing the existing Serve Washington infrastructure.

In addition, the legislature and Governor Inslee agreed that as our state transitions away from a fossil fuel-based economy, we must do so in a way that fosters innovation, investment, and growth in clean energy technology sectors and jobs so our businesses, workforce, and communities can thrive. As state, federal, local, and tribal governments implement policies to mitigate the destructive forces of climate change, there will be consequences for Washington's businesses, workers, and communities. Accomplishing an equitable transition will require identification of future industry occupations and skill needs, the existing workforce's transferrable skills to meet those needs, and the gaps that need to be addressed through training and education. The state must also provide support in the transition for workers and communities experiencing declining jobs and revenues associated with high-emission technologies. The legislation requires Washington's Workforce Board to establish a clean energy technology advisory committee, (CETWAC or Advisory Committee), and to evaluate clean energy technology workforce needs and make recommendations to the governor and legislature.

The first report of the Advisory Committee to the legislature focused on two recommendations:

> Policymakers fund grant development and grant management capacity at state and local agencies, tribes, postsecondary education and technical programs, as well as registered apprenticeship programs, to best leverage available federal funding opportunities focused on clean energy technology workforce needs. This new capacity will enable local partnerships between government, labor, business, and others to plan, solicit, and implement clean energy workforce activities. CETWAC recommends policymakers at the state, local and federal level act to address delays, and work to

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improve the predictability of the permitting process to help business, labor, and communities plan for their workforce needs.

The Advisory Committee was asked to support incumbent workers, by identifying existing skills possessed by current workers needed in the clean energy economy as well as investigating new skills needed to prepare both new and incumbent workers for clean energy technology careers. As our state moves toward net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, we may find ourselves with workers from high emission sectors with impacts to their careers or the communities in which they live. The Advisory Committee was tasked to conduct a feasibility study of the path to retirement for near retirement workers in the fossil fuel industry to explore pathways to maintain their medical and retirement benefits as they transition to retirement.

In the next biennium the advisory committee will focus on gathering data regarding the capacity of existing education and training programs, including registered apprenticeships, to meet the anticipated increase in clean energy workers in need of upskilling, or additional training, and make recommendations, if needed, for new pathways and programs. The Advisory Committee also seeks to assemble a crosswalk of transferrable skills from traditional industries to clean energy technology careers.

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Appendix H. Washington State's Tech Hubs: Aerospace, Hydrogen, and Timber

Washington State is emerging as a key player in the national innovation landscape, with the establishment of significant Tech Hubs in aerospace, hydrogen, and timber technologies. These hubs are part of a broader strategy to bolster the state's economy, create high-quality jobs, and advance technological leadership in critical sectors. These hubs have gained momentum through federal funding opportunities like the CHIPS and Science Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). By securing these investments, Washington is not only reinforcing its technological and economic competitiveness but also ensuring the creation of a future-ready workforce equipped to handle the demands of these advanced industries.

Aerospace Tech Hub: The American Aerospace Materials Manufacturing Center (AAMMC)

The AAMCr has been designated as a key aerospace Tech Hub, selected as one of the 31 inaugural Tech Hubs across the nation. This hub, part of the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs Program, is set to revolutionize aerospace manufacturing by focusing on advanced thermoplastic composite materials. Its strategic location, the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene aerospace corridor, houses 900 aerospace manufacturers within a 300-mile radius and leverages the regional strength in aerospace manufacturing. The consortium includes significant players like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon and emphasizes upskilling the current workforce and focusing on underrepresented communities, aligning with the broader workforce development goals of the state. Key objectives of the AAMMC include:

- Developing a world-class testbed for manufacturing next-generation aerospace materials and parts.
- Fostering collaboration between educational institutions, industry leaders, and workforce training organizations.
- Driving innovation in high-rate production techniques to ensure the U.S. regains its position as a leading supplier of aerospace components.

Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub

The Pacific Northwest was named one of seven regional hydrogen hubs in the US, receiving a $1 billion grant from the US Department of Energy. to become a leader in hydrogen technology, supported by the U.S. Department of Energy's funding initiative. This Hydrogen Hub aims to leverage the region's abundant clean energy resources, promoting the development and use of electrolytic hydrogen. This initiative will significantly contribute to the decarbonization of heavy industries, fitting into Washington's larger sustainability and clean energy agenda. The Pacific Northwest hydrogen hub is expected to create more than 10,000 jobs – 8,050 in construction and 350 permanent positions. The Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee (CETWAC) at the Workforce Board supports this effort.

Pacific Northwest Mass Timber Tech Hub

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The Mass Timber Tech Hub, led by Oregon State University (OSU), seeks to innovate in sustainable forest products and manufacturing, benefiting Washington's legacy timber industry. A memorandum of understanding between OSU and Washington State University enhances a regional collaboration that extends across state lines, for the use of sustainable manufacture of mass timer products and utilizing low-value timber to produce high value products. The Washington State Workforce Board actively supports the Mass Timber Tech Hub's focus to expand the workforce development pipelines while collaborating with industry to support inclusive access to training in all communities. We've joined the Timber Hub Network to provide workforce assistance.

Collaboration and Workforce Development

Central to these initiatives is the emphasis on collaboration among industry, academia, and government entities. The focus is on aligning education and workforce training with the needs of these emerging industries. The Board's collaborative efforts with various stakeholders - including industry leaders, educational institutions, and government entities - underscore its commitment to fostering inclusive growth and equipping the workforce with future-ready skills and plays a crucial role in ensuring the alignment of training programs with industry needs and supporting the creation of high-quality jobs in these high-demand sectors.

Funding and Future Prospects

These hubs have gained momentum through federal funding opportunities like the CHIPS and Science Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). By securing these investments, Washington is not only reinforcing its technological and economic competitiveness but also ensuring the creation of a future-ready workforce equipped to handle the demands of these advanced industries. The Washington workforce system remains committed to ensuring Washington is in the best position possible to compete for historic federal funding available through the CHIPS and Science Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and other opportunities instituted by the Biden-Harris administration.

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Appendix I. Job Skills Program (JSP)

Washington's Job Skills Program (JSP) provides customized training for current Washington workers (incumbent workers) to help them stay competitive in a changing job market.

JSP prioritizes funding for regions with high unemployment, poverty, and/or new and growing industries. It offers customized training programs to equip workers with the skills they need to adapt and remain employed, even if their current role is impacted by technological advancements or economic shifts.

Washington faces significant workforce disruption. Businesses struggle to find qualified workers, while many job seekers and employees lack some of the specific technical skills employers need. This gap is driven by rapid changes in technology, automation, globalization, and environmental concerns, all impacting workplace practices. The pandemic has exacerbated these issues, leading to unprecedented labor market disequilibrium. JSP helps address this challenge by providing skill trainings customized to meet employer and worker needs and reducing skills mismatches.

JSP offers dollar-for-dollar matching grants to support customized training costs. Partner employers contribute their match through cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both. Wages and benefits paid to employees during their training activities count toward the match. Businesses with reported Gross Business Income of less than $500,000 are exempt from the dollar-for-dollar match but must still contribute an amount equal to the wages and benefits paid during training. In the 2021-23 biennium, the private sector invested $1.29 for every $1 of the state's investment, demonstrating a strong 129% match of state funds.

The JSP program reflects the state's commitment to:

- Foster collaboration between businesses/industries and educational institutions.
- Expand skills training programs aligned with current employment needs.
- Ensure skill training programs are regionally accessible and benefit diverse business sectors.

In partnership with the state's 34 community and technical colleges and other eligible post-secondary institutions, JSP offers three types of training projects to enhance business competitiveness and increase employment opportunities:

1. **New Employee Training:** Provides training for prospective employees before a new business opens or an existing one expands. JSP prioritizes training for unemployed individuals, victims of layoffs, public assistance recipients, and underrepresented groups (women, minorities, older workers, individuals with disabilities).
2. **Retraining:** Offers training for current employees at risk of job loss due to changing skills requirements. This training helps both employees retain their jobs and businesses stay competitive.

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3. **Upgrade Training:** Provides training opportunities for current employees at all levels, based on the training topic. Successful completion should qualify employees for promotions or pay increases, as per company policies.

JSP works to support a wide range of industries based off need. The 2021-23 Job Skills Biennial Report details the 126 projects awarded for that biennium, 82% of which were in Manufacturing (Aerospace, Wood/Paper/Food Production Processing, etc.) and 18% other sectors (Agriculture, Construction, Hospitals & Medical Services, Etc.). Across those projects, nearly 8,200 employees were trained in 1,200 courses. Businesses served ranged from 1-30 employees (26% of projects) to businesses with more than 200 employees (30% of projects). Each JSP project tracks and reports performance information, allowing a comprehensive understanding of impact, and noting that the full impacts of training are not always realized before the reporting period ends.

By equipping Washington workers with in-demand skills, Washington's Job Skills Program (JSP) is directly addressing skill gaps and ensuring a competitive workforce.

Appendix J. Community Reinvestment Project

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature set aside $200 million in the Community Reinvestment Account for the Department of Commerce to invest in communities disproportionately harmed by the historical design and enforcement of state and federal criminal laws and penalties for drug possession (commonly referred to as the "war on drugs"). Before authorizing Commerce to distribute this funding, the Legislature directed the agency to develop a Community Reinvestment Plan (CRP) to guide funding distribution from the Community Reinvestment Account to address racial, economic, and social disparities

The Community Reinvestment Project will back 17 grant programs across four agencies: the Department of Commerce, Office of Equity, Employment Security Department, and Office of Civil Legal Aid. Funds will be allocated to support economic development, legal assistance, violence prevention, and reentry services.

Economic Development: $138 million for asset building Investments: subsidized lending, financial assistance, outreach and support and workforce development.

Violence Reduction: $30 million for prevention and intervention programs, including Community Healers, Youth Sports, and Barber/Beauty Shop health navigation programs.

Reentry Services: $12 million for community-based organization programs to support formerly incarcerated individuals with housing, employment, education, transportation, legal aid and other services.

Legal Assistance: $8 million for outreach and education to support the vacating of criminal records and legal financial obligations relief.

The harm from unjust practices requires healing and action – recognizing the structural racism embedded in the historical design and enforcement of state and federal crime laws and penalties for drug possession. This means being explicit that historical policies targeted Black, Tribal members, and Latine residents of Washington and funding must be prioritized to begin to undo this harm in these communities.

As directed by the Legislature, the Community Reinvestment Plan includes several ways to promote job creation and job retention for long-term economic benefit. In partnership with ESD, Local Workforce Development Boards, and "By and For" organizations, the CRP is allocated the following resources:

- Career Accelerator Incentives $10 million
- Business Support $15 million
- Individual Development Accounts $25 million

By and For Organizations

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To successfully implement the Community Reinvestment Plan in collaboration with By and For organizations who are operated by and for the communities they serve, with a primary mission of catering to specific communities and being culturally based. They are directed and controlled by individuals from the targeted population, embodying the community's central cultural values. The rationale behind engaging with these organizations lies in promoting inclusivity, representation, and community empowerment. Agencies are encouraged to provide evidence of partnerships and endorsements from By and For organizations to ensure authentic community involvement and better address the diverse needs of marginalized communities.

Program Summary:

The Economic Security for All (EcSA) Career Accelerator Incentive provides $10 million in EcSA incentive payments to help low-income individuals stay on a career pathway leading to a living wage career, with a focus on Black, Latino and Indigenous communities and equity. Priority will be given to individuals above 200% of FPL. Those below their self-sufficiency wage are also eligible based on local program justification. Local Workforce Development Boards will develop local policies and leverage their existing EcSA funding to provide additional services, such as navigation, career planning, training, supportive services, paid work experience, and career placement.

The EcSA Business Support grant program supports Black, Tribal, and Latine businesses participate in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) while providing job seekers with the skills and experience to secure long-term employment. With $15 million in funding, business navigators provide businesses with access to existing state systems that can help their company and employees thrive. Our program also provides recruitment of local talent, hourly pay for training, subsidized on-the-job training, equipment purchases, and training by colleges or other providers.

The Individual Development Accounts (IDA) program provides matched savings accounts up to $10,000 to participants, using their savings from earned income for the following qualified purchase: acquisition cost for a first home, postsecondary education expenses, or business expenses for self-employment. To participate in the program, individuals must undergo financial education and coaching to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage their finances and achieve their savings goals. IDAs have the potential to have a significant positive impact on the financial well-being of impacted individuals and communities, promoting economic mobility and stability.

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Appendix K. Workforce Development System Stakeholder Survey

In October 2023 the Workforce Board published an online survey aimed at gathering broad stakeholder input about Washington's publicly funded workforce system.

The survey was announced to the Washington news media and shared frequently with partners and stakeholders, electronically and in person at a variety of public meetings. The survey was also shared widely on the agency's social media accounts, featured prominently on the website, and included in staff email signature blocks.

Survey Goal

The following introduction highlights the connection between the survey and Talent and Prosperity for All:

> The Workforce Board seeks your input as we develop the strategic plan for workforce development services in Washington. Workforce development services help people find, prepare for, and maintain employment. The plan, called "Talent and Prosperity for All" or "TAP," provides the roadmap for improving services over the next four years. It also helps employers find workers with the skills they need to stay competitive. We're interested in learning what you think about the public workforce development system and how it can be improved. This system manages about $1.3 billion in state and federal funds each year to train, educate and support nearly 480,000 workers and students.

Response

The survey received 542 responses as of Jan. 18, 2024:

- 252 respondents have had experience working within the public workforce development system

- 173 respondents currently represent employers

- 33 respondents have accessed public workforce services as a job seeker

Survey Highlights

This survey supports the urgency around hiring and workforce issues frequently discussed by Washington employers.

Results include:

- 93% of employers who took the survey say it is difficult to hire and retain workers

- The severity of the recruitment and retention challenge was reported as 3.9 on a 5-point Likert scale

- 28% of employers hire from the publicly funded workforce system

- 64% of employers found it difficult to navigate publicly funded workforce services in the past

Top services used by employer respondents

Employers reported using the following services:

1. Recruiting Job Seekers

2. Job Fairs

3. Jobs Skills Program

Also, 52% of employers found services ineffective.

Respondents that identified as jobseekers

The survey also captured experiences of job seekers, or those looking for work.

Results include:

- 57% of job seekers know how to find public services to help them find a job or get a better job

- 32% of job seekers have used public services to find a job or get a better job

- 60% found these public services difficult to navigate

- 60% found these services, when accessed, effective

The survey also included several opportunities for open-ended responses to questions. Those responses are included in this attachment.

Two notable highlights from these written comments refer to affordable housing and childcare as challenges facing stakeholders.

There were also comments suggesting the government should not play a role in the workforce system, and there were comments about areas for improvement with specific partner agencies and services.

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V. COMMON ASSURANCES

	Description	Assurance Included:
The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:		
1.	The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member rep- resents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	
2.	The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	
3.	The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	
4.	(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide	

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	services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;	
	(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	
6.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	
7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	
8.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	

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9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	
10.	The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	
12.	Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	

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VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

TALENT AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL
INTRODUCTION

Both Title I-B and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) programs are committed to the effective coordination in each of the states' certified comprehensive, affiliate and specialized WorkSource Centers including developing, improving, and maintaining an integrated service delivery model committed to serving the varying needs of both participants and business/industry. TAP efforts to streamline system integration, common intake, and improved data sharing are essential in meeting the needs of all shared customers and fulfilling state and federal compliance requirements. The WIT and efforts of the Workforce Governance Council are expected to have a measurable and positive effect on this work.

It is imperative that Washington employers have familiarity with and confidence in the state public workforce system to support and sustain industry growth in Washington. Current data suggests most businesses are not even aware of the host of free resources available to them through WorkSource. WorkSource Business Services staff are uniquely positioned to work with local workforce board staff, business/industry, employment department and labor market research professionals, and career and technical colleges to increase outreach and strengthen alliances in efforts to build and expand essential career pathways and workforce support in real time. A natural improvement to the current system is implementing business navigators to help more employers access and find value in the workforce system as well as involve industry in advisory groups to better inform decision-making.

Youth efforts by Title I-B and the WorkSource system are a key component of ensuring that future workers have the appropriate skills and training necessary to sustain industry growth and provide economic stability. Successfully engaging youth has been a consistent challenge. It is essential we find ways to broaden access while shortening the time and methods to credential attainment, all the while ensuring Youth understand the value of the services and programs offered. Title I-B program representatives intend to be involved in the credential transparency strategic priority development efforts at every step, including involvement in the Credential Transparency Advisory Committee where appropriate. Successes can and should be measured both in completion of training programs as well as assisting employers with incorporating skills-based hiring and scaling up current pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship efforts to expand on quality jobs principles.

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A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. <u>REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS</u>

Endeavoring to implement WIOA proactively and aggressively at the state and local levels in Washington, Governor Jay Inslee, in consultation with the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), Local Chief Elected Officials, business, labor, and education, designated 12 local workforce development areas/individual regions under WIOA Section 106(b) and granted initial designation to all 12 local workforce development areas for WIOA as follows:

WDA	WDA Name	Region	Date of Designation
1	Olympic	Olympic Region	April 10, 2015
2	Pacific Mountain	Pacific Mountain Region	April 10, 2015
3	Northwest	Northwest Region	April 10, 2015
4	Snohomish County	Snohomish County Region	April 10, 2015
5	Seattle-King County	Seattle-King County Region	April 10, 2015
6	Tacoma-Pierce County	Tacoma-Pierce County Region	April 10, 2015
7	Southwest	Southwest Region	April 10, 2015
8	North Central	North Central Region	April 10, 2015
9	South Central	South Central Region	April 10, 2015
10	Eastern Washington	Eastern Washington Region	April 10, 2015
11	Benton-Franklin	Benton-Franklin Region	April 10, 2015
12	Spokane Area Region	Spokane Area Region	April 10, 2015

Following the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter 27- 14 (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Transition Authority for Immediate Implementation of Governance Provisions), Washington enshrined the process and procedures, including appeals, for initial and subsequent designation of local workforce development areas in Washington WorkSource System Policy 5609 (Local Workforce Development Area Designation), issued on July 1, 2015. The policy included an application through which local chief elected officials were to request initial designation of existing or new local workforce development areas. For the purpose of initial designation, the application/request was due to the State Workforce Development Board (Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board) by July 31, 2015. The State Workforce Development Board

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reviewed data and information associated with both "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" as consistent with the definitions provided in the Act, Final Rules, and federal guidance. Subsequent revision to this policy also set criteria for subsequent designations.

The appeals process adopted by Washington as it relates to designation of local areas is captured in Section 3.h. of State WIOA Title I Policy 5609, states that a local Chief Elected Official who requests and is denied initial and/or subsequent designation has 10 business days to submit a formal appeal to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) by communicating, in writing, the reason(s) for appealing the Governor's decision and providing evidence or information supporting appeal. Upon receipt of a formal appeal, the SWDB has 10 business days to render a decision on that appeal. If a decision is not rendered within that time frame or if the appeal is similarly denied, the local Chief Elected Official may request review by the U.S. Secretary of Labor pursuant to 20 CFR 683.640. The Secretary may subsequently order local workforce development area designation if the Secretary determines that the entity was not accorded procedural rights under the state's appeals process or finds that the area meets the initial and/or subsequent designation requirements at WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3) and 20 CFR 679.250.

Any disputes and resulting appeals of one-stop infrastructure funding determinations will be addressed first through processes/procedures outlined in local dispute resolution and appeals policies developed by Local Workforce Development Boards per state WorkSource System Policy 1025 (One-Stop System Dispute Resolution and Appeals).

For one-stop infrastructure disputes, local dispute resolution is the sole avenue of appeal. If the dispute cannot be resolved locally, or with technical assistance by the SWDB, the Governor's state criteria and methodology for the state funding mechanism for one-stop infrastructure funding will be imposed as a default as per WorkSource System Policy 1013 and Policy 1024 (WorkSource Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement and State Funding Mechanism).

WorkSource System Policies 1013 and Policy 1024 sets forth the minimum requirements for one-stop memoranda of understanding, infrastructure cost allocation methods, and lays out the dispute resolution methodology in that process.

Disputes should, wherever possible, be resolved at the local level. The WDC must have a dispute resolution procedure in place that covers steps to be taken to resolve disputes, including those regarding specific provisions of language within the MOU or amendments to the MOU. All local actions to resolve the disputes must be documented. As partners participate in the local WorkSource system or discuss the MOU and any amendments to it, disagreements may occur. In such cases, the local WDC dispute resolution procedure must be followed, and all local actions documented. If the dispute remains unresolved and the Local Board and required partner continue to disagree, Section 3.d. ii. of Policy 1013 describes the state level dispute resolution process.

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Additionally, the State created WorkSource System Policy 1024 Infrastructure Funding Agreements and State Funding Mechanism, fully describes the circumstances in which the state funding mechanism is to be implemented, as well as the established appeals process as described in WIOA Section 121 (h)(2)(E).

2. <u>STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES</u>

In Washington, the Governor sets aside 10% of WIOA formula allocations, called the Governor's Discretionary Funds for WIOA Title I Statewide Activities, which allows the Governor unilateral decision-making authority over state funds for workforce investment activities, through the Governor's senior policy advisor for workforce issues, who solicits proposals from workforce development stakeholders.

Economic Security for All (EcSA): EcSA is a poverty reduction and equity program that directly addresses the need for economic recovery, especially for those who have been kept furthest from opportunity. EcSA prioritizes services for people experiencing homelessness, people of color and rural communities. EcSA was launched in 2019 in four pilot areas across the state with the support of the Governor's Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG), multiple state agencies, and LWDBs. In 2021, Governor Inslee expanded EcSA to seven additional regions, covering most of the state. And in 2022, state general funds were dedicated to the program giving additional local flexibility and making EcSA a statewide program.

EcSA brings multiple programs together at the local level to help people move out of poverty. EcSA partners with Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and focuses on serving participants that qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and individuals at risk of experiencing poverty. It began by listening to our living experts – those individuals who have lived experience or are currently experiencing poverty in Washington. Local programs are continually improved from direct participant feedback captured through surveys, listening sessions and conversations happening with career specialists.

Promising developments since July 2021

- **Addressing homelessness** – LWDBs increased partnerships with local housing providers throughout the state to fill the gap that has existed in many areas for customers transitioning from homelessness to stabilization with housing and a career that supports sustainable full self-sufficiency.

- **Investment in equity** – LWDBs are building relationships with organizations and community groups that serve homeless and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities. In Seattle-King County, they include requirements for their service providers to contract directly with organizations that have long-standing relationships in highly impoverished and/or BIPOC neighborhoods.

- **University of Washington Self-Sufficiency calculator** – ESD changed the program outcomes to fully utilize the calculator to set an accurate customized self-sufficiency

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wage goal for each participant that takes into consideration where they live and their total cost of living. The core accountability measure for local providers is the number of people who move from poverty to a career with earnings that exceeds their self-sufficiency goal. Most EcSA completers enter careers that earn $40,000 to $50,000 annually.

- **Breaking down silos** – We are observing momentum with engagement among state and local partners: local relationships with housing, education, and BIPOC communities have strengthened, the state Department of Commerce recently invested over $24 million additional funding into EcSA, and the state agency that provides student financial aid – the Washington Student Achievement Council – has made EcSA participants automatically eligible for state-funded financial aid to cover the full cost of college, apprenticeship, and some shorter-term training programs.

Significant performance milestones

1. EcSA exceeded all statewide enrollment, training, and self-sufficiency goals.

2. Helped 606 people reach self-sufficiency, with a median annualized income of $42,390.

3. Significantly increased recruitment and participation of historically marginalized populations and unhoused individuals. Washington's population is 22% BIPOC and EcSA's participants are 52% BIPOC.

4. EcSA is currently serving 1,171 people across the state to help them achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. 85% of those participants had annual incomes below $9,860 when they enrolled.

5. Total cost for the most recent single year was $8,878,113, including federal and state funding.

6. EcSA has been highlighted as a best practice by the U.S. Department of Labor and featured at the annual convening of the Governor's Office of Equity and the National Association of Workforce Boards.

The Governor has dedicated additional WIOA Statewide Activity Funds to continue expanding EcSA, and the state legislature has dedicated over $10 million per year to expand it with State General Funds. EcSA is on track to serve more than 3,839 households to help them meet or exceed their self-sufficiency goals by March 2025.

Career Connect Washington (CCW): As a continuation of Governor Inslee's 2017 investment of discretionary set-aside funds, Career Connect Washington's work to reach all students providing learning opportunities for youth and adults in regions across Washington, including apprenticeships, is ongoing.

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To date, CCW has invested successfully in expanding apprenticeship and has grown more than 30 programs across Washington, creating more pathways to middle class jobs through apprenticeship. To continue this work, CCW, ESD, L&I, and other partners worked together to apply for the Apprenticeship Building America grant (ABA) from US Labor to expand registered apprenticeship and recognized pre-apprenticeship programs in high-growth and high-demand industry sectors. This grant was awarded in 2022 and ESD issued an RFP to award $3,751,236.00 to Program Builders ready to build and expand programs statewide.

The ABA grant program aims to increase equity and accessibility in program delivery to apprentices, and to bring the Registered Apprenticeship model to more industries. WA ESD looks to use their ABA funds to bolster the already established Career Connect Washington (CCW) network and the established Sector Intermediary partnerships in the following sectors: clean energy, healthcare, advanced manufacturing and aerospace, technology and cybersecurity, maritime, and construction.

In 2023, in partnership with The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), CCW received $23 million in support from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's Good Jobs Challenge grant to create the Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI). WJI is helping Washington residents connect to good jobs through registered apprenticeships and other technical training programs. The initiative leverages CCW's existing system to coordinate efforts across the state and ensure a focus on equity and diversity. Eight sectoral partnerships were awarded funds totaling nearly $17 million to train and place nearly 3,000 Washingtonians into good jobs with a family-sustaining wage in five key industries: Construction; Healthcare; Advanced Manufacturing & Aerospace; Clean Technology & Energy; and Information Technology and Cybersecurity.

Program Builders work with Regional Networks, Career Connected Learning Coordinators at the Educational Service Districts, and industry and education partners to expand the use of current curricula and develop or build new curricula for Career Launch, Career Prep, and Career Explore programs.

To date, CCW has invested $10,096,360 for program development in high- priority industries prioritizing funds for women and BIPOC led serving organizations. 110 program builders have won grants to expand or develop 147 career connected learning programs across the continuum that enable students who participate in Career Explore, Career Prep, and Career Launch to complete programs, attain sustaining-wage entry-level jobs, and reach family-sustaining wage careers (across industries and occupations) at equitable rates across population demographics.

The increase in development of programs across the state has led to increased Career Launch enrollments by 30% (from 14,748 to 19,114), bringing the growth total to 58% since our inception three and a half years ago and providing thousands more young people in Washington with high quality pathways to career, self-sufficiency, and fulfillment.

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We have established a shared program language of the career connected learning continuum that promotes knowledge, co-ownership, and investment in new and existing Career Launch, Career Prep, and Career Explore programs in Washington's secondary and post-secondary education systems this has accumulated to one of our largest ever Career Connected Washington Funding rounds conducted in August 2023. More than $12 million was requested to build, expand, or enhance 74 career connected learning programs. Over the past four years, we've conducted 11 RFPs and we've never seen this level of demand. For the first time, we awarded all $4 million of WIOA Statewide Activities funds in just one RFP round.

Rapid Response: Washington utilizes state Rapid Response set-aside funds in the form of Rapid Response Additional Assistance grants made to local boards that are dealing with extraordinary layoff events that would strain the formula Dislocated Worker program funds if those funds had to be brought to bear. This activity is bounded by [WIOA Title I Policy 5604 (Rapid Response Additional Assistance) which can be accessed online.](#)

Washington continues to collaborate with its business and labor partners on the use of Rapid Response funds for layoff aversion strategies and activities. The Statewide Rapid Response Team, made up of representatives from Washington Workforce Association (WWA), Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), local Rapid Response coordinators, and Employment Security Department's (ESD) Rapid Response Manager, Dislocated Worker Manager, and Trade Operator, coordinate with the state's Shared Work Program, which is codified at [Washington Administrative Code 192-250.](#) Shared Work is a voluntary, flexible Unemployment Insurance (UI) program that offers public and private sector employers in Washington an alternative to laying off skilled employees during periods of general economic downturn by allowing them to reduce an employee's usual weekly hours of work from 10%-50% while the employee receives the same percentage of unemployment benefits to replace a portion of lost wages for a period of up to 52 weeks. Beyond retaining skilled workers, it helps employers avoid the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees when business improves.

The Statewide Rapid Response Team works closely with local partners to align coordination between Rapid Response staff and business engagement/services staff. It is generally recognized that the latter, due to their regular and frequent contact with businesses, is often aware of employer circumstances that could lead to layoffs before decisions are made or actions taken. That business intelligence represents an opportunity for layoff aversion through local Rapid Response staff so they can initiate, for example, discussions around Shared Work.

Washington will also continue to provide Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds, when appropriate, for layoff aversion assistance as consistent with state [WIOA Title I Policy 5604](#) (Rapid Response Additional Assistance). The assistance could encompass any and all of the layoff aversion strategies reflected in [TEGL 03-15](#) and [TEN 09-12,](#) to include incumbent worker, customized training, feasibility studies, etc.

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Washington has a proven track record of sponsoring Rapid Response events and providing WIOA set aside funds in the form of Rapid Response Additional Assistance in response to natural disasters. Rapid Response events and Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds are coordinated with the efforts and resources of local, state, and federal emergency management entities by Local Workforce Development Boards. The provision of Rapid Response funding is accompanied by State outreach to and coordination with local workforce development boards to determine interest in and feasibility of pursuing disaster-related National Dislocated Worker Grants, which Washington did most recently in response to the opioid crisis and COVID19 Pandemic national emergency.

Washington's local boards routinely activate the Rapid Response teams when a TAA petition is filed, in addition to when mass layoff occurs where the workers may be Trade impacted. That approach is directed by state WIOA Title I Policy 5603 (Rapid Response for WIOA and TAA). Washington's State Employment Security Department (the State Workforce Agency) also engages local boards after TAA petitions are filed to determine if "gap" funding in the form of Rapid Response Additional Assistance is needed to serve dislocated workers attached to events for which TAA petitions have been filed between the time those events occur and such time as the events are certified by the U.S. Department of Labor. This approach is enshrined in WIOA Title I Policy 5604 (Rapid Response Additional Assistance). Trade impacted workers are routinely co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program per Policy 5617 to enhance the provision of appropriate career services. Washington's Trade Operator and Trade staff outreach to Trade impacted workers to clearly explain the TAA benefits and services prior to enrollment.

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***B.* ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

1. <u>WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS</u>

Washington pursues, wherever appropriate, alternative, work-based training models in the form of on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and customized training, including the nationally recognized I-BEST program, which is developing enhanced work-based learning opportunities. To that end, the state has issued policies governing on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and customized training. Transitional Jobs will also be pursued, though the State continues to seek guidance as to the fine distinction between Transitional Jobs as a training service and Work Experience as an individualized career services as both are defined as time-limited, paid/unpaid work experience. Additionally, Washington will endeavor to connect alternative training models, where appropriate, to key state and local sectors.

2. <u>REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP</u>

Registered apprenticeship is an important component of Washington's workforce training system. As supported by state core indicator [Results] for 2022, 93% of those who complete a registered apprenticeship are employed 4th quarter after completion with average annual earnings of $94,900. Data shows even those who do not complete the program enjoy 81% employment rate and $70,800 in earnings 4th quarter after participation. This translates to $4.7 Billion economic return over 10 years, due to increased employment, earnings, and reduced government assistance, for a $7.80 to $1 net return on investment to taxpayers.

A key role of workforce system partners is their relationship with registered apprenticeship and how they align across workforce development programs. It is the core business of the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC) and state Department of Labor and Industries' State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) to bolster the apprenticeship training system by developing and monitoring registered apprenticeship programs and promoting apprenticeship as a skill development system for employers as well as a post-secondary training option for workers. Accordingly, SAA partners with public community and technical colleges, WorkSource offices, and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to promote registered apprenticeship. WSATC is expanding apprenticeship training opportunities and recruitment of employers who hire apprentices for traditional and non-traditional programs. The Governor and Legislature annually seek General-Fund state appropriations to support and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities.

Locally, part of the state strategy to continue to better coordinate and align apprenticeship with the WorkSource (one-stop) system is to take full advantage of the workforce-affiliated apprenticeship member requirement on LWDBs under WIOA. LWDBs use the increased profile to ensure there is a voice for apprenticeship as a work-based learning opportunity for customers, both in traditional and non-traditional occupations.

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Additionally, the WorkSource System is represented on the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council (WSATC) through non-voting seats held by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state workforce development board), Employment Security Department (state administrative entity for WIOA Title I), and the State Board for Community and Technical Education (state administrative entity for WIOA Title II). Each quarter, the three state agencies report to WSATC on local apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship activity lead or supported by Washington's WorkSource (one-stop) system. Concurrently, the three state agencies hear about state policy, research, and activities that are communicated to local WorkSource operators and service providers across the state. For more information on apprenticeship in Washington, including the WSATC, see the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries' apprenticeship site.

Of note, two Washington applicants were among those recently awarded American Apprenticeship Grants by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries received $5.6 million to partner with Washington Education Association (WEA), the Office of the Superintendent of Instruction to establish a Certified Teacher Apprenticeship program and expand, diversify, and provide more access to registered apprenticeships in Washington State. Washington State Employment Security Department received $5.6 million to partner with Career Connect Washington to expand registered apprenticeship and recognized pre-apprenticeship programs in these high-demand industries: advanced manufacturing and aerospace, agriculture, clean technology and energy, construction, education, finance, healthcare, information technology and cybersecurity, life sciences, and maritime. Labor and Industries and the WSATC also partners with ESD and CCW in implementing the $23.5 million Washington Jobs Initiative - Good Jobs Challenge project (WJI). The WJI, with a focus on equity, expands career opportunities including apprenticeships for more citizens to secure good-paying- jobs while producing Washington State's skilled workforce.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Washington has a comprehensive policy and procedures for determining training provider eligibility as articulated in state WIOA Title I Policy 5611, Revision 1 (Governor's Procedures for Determining Training Program Eligibility), which may be accessed at:

https://storemultisites.blob.core.windows.net/media/WPC/adm/policy/5611-2.pdf

The state's Eligible Training Provider List, found at:

https://www.careerbridge.wa.gov/Page/aspx?cid=Eligible_Training_Provider_List)

is managed by the State Workforce Development Board and is widely employed by the state and federally funded training programs in Washington as a consumer report tool. In addition to WIOA Title I, other programs that have policies requiring the use of the state's Eligible Training Provider List to identify qualified training providers includes the state's Trade Adjustment

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Assistance (TAA) program, Unemployment Insurance-related Training Benefits program, and Worker Retraining, Job Skills, and Customized Training programs under the public community and technical college system.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM

Priority selection is established for, and local areas must target certain populations in accordance with WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR 680.600 and 20 CFR 680.640 as laid out in WorkSource System Policy 1019 at:

https://storemultisites.blob.core.windows.net/media/WPC/adm/policy/1019-8-1.pdf

These targeted populations must first meet the eligibility requirements for the adult program.

The matrix below describes the order and rationale for prioritization based on the requirements in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), 20 CFR 680.600, 20 CFR 680.640, and TEGL 10-09. For purposes of this section, the term "covered person(s)" refers to veterans and eligible spouses per priority of service for veterans

NOTE: An adult with a disability can be considered a family of one for low-income determinations (refer to Section 5.6.2).

Priority requirements for the WIOA Title I adult program are as follows:

Priority	Mandatory Priority Group	Explanation
First	Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who are low-income, recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.	Guidelines for serving covered persons (WorkSource System Policy 1009 Revision 8 – Priority of Service) apply within the mandatory priority criteria of low-income / public assistance/basic skills deficient recipient.
Second	Individuals (non-covered persons) who are low-income (may include unemployed individuals), recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.	The mandatory priority criteria (low-income / public assistance recipients / basic skills deficient) have preference over covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who do not meet the mandatory priority criteria.

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Third	Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who <u>are not</u> low-income and <u>not</u> basic skills deficient.	Guidelines for serving covered persons ([WorkSource System Policy 1009 Revision 8 – Priority of Service](#)) apply in the third category (individuals who are not low-income / public assistance recipients / basic skills deficient).
Fourth (optional)	Governor and LWDBs (in consultation with LCEOs) may establish additional priority groups beyond minimum WIOA adult eligibility (WorkSource Policy 1019, Revision 8 - Section 3.c – Local Responsibilities).	No additional priority groups to date.

According to 20 CFR 680.120, 680.130, and 680.210, the above priority requirements do not necessarily mean that only the recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals can receive WIOA adult funded career and training services. LWDBs may serve other eligible individuals who are not recipients of public assistance, other low-income, or basic skills deficient after first serving eligible individuals who meet the established priority selection criteria. Unemployed individuals may be considered low-income individuals (refer to Section 5.6.1).

Priority Selection for Career Services and Training Services Funded with WIOA Statewide (10%) Discretionary Grants/Contracts

For purposes of WIOA statewide (10%) discretionary funds, the Governor has determined that these funds will be prioritized as follows:

1. Eligible veterans and spouses;

2. Unemployed individuals;

3. Low-income individuals;

4. Other Washington job seekers.

As indicated by the first priority, recipients of WIOA 10% discretionary grants and contracts will continue to provide priority selection of veterans for career and training services as required under P.L. 107- 288 "Jobs for Veterans Act" and in alignment with [state system policy 1019 Eligibility Policy and Handbook](#). In applying this policy to 10% funded projects, veterans who are unemployed and/or low- income, have priority over all other individuals served under these projects.

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5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

WIOA allows Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), with approval from the Governor, to transfer up to 100 percent of formula funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

The SWDB adopted a motion at its May 28, 2015, meeting to table action on a 100 percent fund transfer policy in order to gather further stakeholder input on the proposed policy. Until such time that a 100 percent fund transfer policy is adopted, the SWDB directed the criteria for the WIA Title I-B policy governing fund transfers of up to 30 percent between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs be applied under WIOA and codified in WIOA Policy 5401: Fund Transfers between Adult and Dislocated Worker Grants.

LWDBs may transfer up to and including 30 percent of a program year base allocation (see

"Definitions") for the adult program to the dislocated worker program or up to and including 30 percent of a base allocation for the dislocated worker program to the adult program.

Before effecting transfers, LWDBs must first obtain written approval from the Employment Security Department (ESD), which has been delegated authority to act on behalf of the Governor.

Transferring funds from the dislocated worker program prevents a LWDB from accessing state Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds for six months following fund transfers. ESD may waive this condition based on extreme or unforeseen local circumstances.

Transfer Request Procedure:

LWDBs must submit requests to transfer adult or dislocated worker funds to ESD's Workforce Initiatives Division. Requests must include the following:

1. The transfer fund source (i.e., from adult to dislocated worker or dislocated worker to adult);

2. The dollar amount of the transfer request, including the percentage share of the base allocation represented by that dollar amount;

3. The reason(s) for the transfer;

4. Signed approval from the full local board or local advisory board (e.g., Executive Committee, Finance Committee, etc.) requesting the transfer;

5. Revised "Participant Planning Forms" for both the adult and dislocated worker programs to accompany a program impact analysis. The program impact analysis must include:

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a. Proposed services and number of participants originally planned to be served by the base allocation compared to the services and number of participants planned to be served after funds are transferred;

b. Justification that the transfer of funds will not adversely impact the provision of services to participants and that necessary services and client-planned activities will be maintained in the program from which funds are transferred;

c. A discussion of the LWDB's past history of transfer requests, including how previous transfers impacted participants and funds; and

d. An assessment of any potential layoffs or closures of which the LWDB is aware and how these events will be addressed using existing funds if funds are transferred from the dislocated worker program.

LWDBs may request fund transfers at any time during the program year. However, LWDBs must confirm that transfers will not lower the obligation rate of the fund source to which the funds are transferred to a degree that jeopardizes their ability to achieve the required 80 percent obligation rate for either the adult or dislocated worker fund source by the end of the first program year.

ESD's Workforce Initiatives Division will make recommendations to the Financial and Administrative Services Division director for approval based on a review and assessment of the requests and accompanying documentation. As part of the review, ESD may request additional information from LWDBs or ESD's Labor Market and Performance Analysis (LMPA) Division. ESD may alternatively deny the request or authorize a partial transfer of funds. Following approval of a fund transfer, ESD will notify LWDBs by e-mail, which will also include the appropriate grant modification packages for LWDBs to complete and sign.

NOTE: Though not a state policy, the following is provided for local consideration in assessing fund transfers from the dislocated worker formula program specifically. DOL has indicated that one consideration in assessing LWDB applications for National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) (WIOA Section 170, Part 687) may be dislocated worker formula fund transfers during that program year. As a general rule, organizations that transfer up to 10 percent of their dislocated worker formula funds during any one program year can still be considered for NDWG funds, but those that transfer more than 10 percent may have difficulty securing approval.

NOTE: During the COVID-19 Pandemic period, the SWDB temporarily suspended the limitation of 30 percent funds transfer to allow more local flexibility during this unique period. The suspension was further extended until June 30, 2024, to allow for renewed stakeholder engagement and discussion as to whether to permanently allow the 100 percent transfer, as per federal law.

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6. <u>DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(i).</u>

The following policy applies to Washington state WIOA and TAA co-enrollment. Policy 5617, Revision 3 - Co-enrollment of Trade Adjustment Assistance Participants into the WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker Program. This policy communicates the requirement to co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-B Dislocated Worker program, if they are eligible, unless they decline. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) must have policies for co-enrolling TAA participants into the WIOA Title 1-B DW program as well and is required to accept referrals of TAA participant from the TAA program in their Workforce Development Area and have a process for doing so.

A referral to WIOA is required for all TAA program participants and the WIOA program is to inform the TAA program of the participant enrollment or if the participant declines enrollment in a timely manner and there must be a process for doing so.

The state is bound to the co-enrollment requirements and has the ability to enforce the co-enrollment requirement at the state and local levels. Employment Security Department (ESD) has a monitoring unit that monitors co-enrollment of TAA and WIOA. Policy 5414 establishes monitoring standards that apply to all partners at all levels of participation in the Workforce System funded by Title I of WIOA. ESD's Workforce Monitoring Until will conduct on-site monitoring of each Workforce Development area (WSA) on an annual basis.

These policies are made available to all Washington WorkSource system staff and one-stop partners on the Workforce Professional Center (WPC) website. An announcement is sent out to the WorkSource System when a policy is developed or revised to inform staff.

The DOL Co-Enrollment requirement and state policies created to adhere to this requirement strengthen the collaboration and integrated service delivery that greatly benefits a dislocated worker. This represents a future service delivery that will be necessary to best service our mutual customer. As resources and funding gets tighter, and the need for additional services to reach more workers and those who are under-served with significant barriers in gaining good jobs, is getting higher increased collaboration with braided services and funding is needed across our one-stop system.

7. <u>DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)</u>

Co-enrollment with WIOA is a requirement TAA program enrollment and service delivery as set forth by the DOL. The TAA program is administered in Washington State by the ESD,

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Employment Connections Division. The state's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services is increased communication, training, and partnership between both ESD and the LWDB's. TAA staff and LWDB staff well versed in the TAA program share co-enrollment information within their teams.

TAA case managers are trained to inform the benefits of co-enrollment to all new TAA participants, not only to WIOA but other programs that would best serve a dislocated worker. This is required during the creation of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). TAA staff have also been trained to identify established TAA participants who may have declined to co-enroll at the beginning but when additional supports are identified during an update to the IEP during the enrollment duration.

The TAA Program keeps a focus on integration and wrap around service delivery by collaboration with other service providers to support these workers in returning to suitable employment. It has been documented by DOL that a higher percentage of workers complete training when co-enrolled with WIOA. The TAA program provides training and income support while in training for dislocated workers who are certified eligible for TAA under a petition. The training funding can be used for classroom training at a training provider, on-the-job training or apprenticeship training. This funding can be braided with other program funding to fully support a dislocated worker enrolled in training.

Continued conversation with TAA and partner programs leadership as well as information sharing is needed to successfully co-enroll TAA workers with necessary partner program supports such as WIOA and others. TAA is required to conduct continuous outreach to workers eligible for the program on previous TAA certifications. Historically, only 25% of workers on certified petitions have enrolled in the program and accessed their benefits and services. This may be a result of eligible workers securing re-employment quickly or may have experienced barriers that prevented them from accessing the program. As we increase collaboration and partnership with WIOA and other programs, we are expecting to increase the amount of TAA dislocated workers that enroll in the program who may be identified by these programs.

The TAA Program team has been attending Rapid Response and other partner coordination meetings and reaching out to partners in our local area development boards and attending meetings with area training providers to inform all one-stop staff and partners about the TAA program and how the program can benefit workers. TAA hosts a monthly coordination meeting, which includes the TAA Program, WIOA DW, Rapid Response and WARN, Training Benefits, Policy, and the Washington State Labor Council to communicate and better align our programs and to work toward continuous improvement.

The TAA program is increasing outreach efforts and has launched large mailings and phone calls to TAA workers who are eligible for the program and have not enrolled or have benefits still available to them. When a TAA worker contacts a TAA Case manager, they are assessed for what they need and not just for the TAA Program. Referrals are made to partner programs to assist.

The plan is to increase training to all one-stop partner staff to know what the TAA program, as well as other programs, to refer dislocated workers to every resource that will assist them in being successful in their re-employment goals.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

The TAA program is increasing its presence and sharing how the program can benefit job seekers to all one-stop staff as part of the program requirement to continue outreach to formerly certified workers that may need to be co-enrolled in WIOA. The TAA program has informed other program leadership such as RESEA about the TAA program and asked them to instruct their program staff to ask questions during RESEA appointments to identify TAA workers. In addition, the team will be meeting more with WIOA providers to inform them of how TAA will benefit their customers and how to identify a TAA worker.

The TAA program will be conducting all-staff training at all WorkSource offices to ensure that both ESD and partner staff have the tools necessary to discuss resources available for trade affected workers and connect those customers to TAA staff. Partnerships will enable the TAA program to reach more workers as other one-stop partners include TAA in their service delivery or assessment discussions as we look at collaboration and sharing information to braid resources and funding. The future implementation of a shared case management system to include a common registration will also help identify every program that benefits a dislocated worker.

All ESD staff are required to complete program trainings to learn about all programs offered in the WorkSource one-stop system. This will enable staff to know the programs and learn how the one-stop partnership collaboration best supports customers. This training is available in the Learning Management System (LMS) and staff will be tracked for completion of the training. Program overview training will also be conducted and provided for senior leadership as well.

Focused TAA Case Management training will be required and available in the LMS system for all new TAA case managers. TAA Case Managers and Supervisors attend regular all staff meetings and attend monthly Technical Training Sessions and discuss co-enrollment and how to work with WIOA partners to increase customer enrollment as well as continuing engagement and service delivery.

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C. **YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA**

1. <u>IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.[11]</u>

Washington is in the process of finalizing state criteria for use by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities via state policy 1015, effective July 1, 2024.

Local boards are directed to establish local policies and procedures to assess the ability of providers to meet performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators of performance for the youth program in Section 3.b.ii.E of WIOA Title I Policy 5404 (Procurement and Selection of One-Stop Operators and Service Providers). Local policies and procedures must ensure that procurements using federal funds are designed in ways to promote racial equity and support for underserved communities, promoting equitable access for vendors and customers.

Additionally, local boards must competitively award grants/contracts for eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities, except in the case of sole-source awards/contracts, and only then if there is satisfactory and demonstrable evidence that there are an insufficient number of providers with the expertise required for serving in-school or out of-school youth. Bid solicitations must include the selection criteria to be used in this process and must be maintained as documentation of the process.

2. <u>EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVEING EQUITABLE RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE THE PROMSIGIN PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THESE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.</u>

WIOA Title I funds that are formula-allocated by the State to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) for youth services are sub-contracted by LWDBs to local service providers who partner with WorkSource, employers, organized labor, school districts, community-based organizations, and other local partners to leverage and coordinate WIOA youth funds and activities, respectively. WIOA youth service providers are responsible for making the fourteen (14) required services elements available to all enrolled youth.

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The fourteen program elements of the WIOA youth program serve as guiding principles to ensure that the needs of youth participants are met. The target population of the WIOA youth program includes both low-income, in-school youth and eligible out-of-school youth; as such, services provided reflect the priorities of each of these unique populations.

Service strategies, developed by local workforce boards and their service providers, prepare youth for employment and/or post-secondary education through strong linkages between academic and occupational learning. The most important aspect is to focus on ensuring participants' basic needs are met so the participant can focus on completing relevant training, education, and work experiences to adequately prepare the participant for employment. The needs of the youth participant are balanced with the needs of local businesses for skilled workers. Washington's public education system is continuing to link academic learning with the world of work through partnerships with local school districts, community and technical colleges, employer partners, and community-based organizations that prepare youth for careers.

To ensure the youth formula program prioritizes service delivery to youth participants kept furthest from opportunity, the state established WorkSource System Policy 1019 Revision 8, which requires LWDBs to serve in-school (aged 14-21) and out-of-school (aged 16-24) youth who meet the federal and state eligibility criteria.

The same state policy includes a requirement that LWDBs maintain local policies that define "individuals who require additional assistance." In addition to state policy, ESD will use a variety of operational approaches to ensure that comprehensive, integrated services are provided throughout the state to eligible youth, including those kept furthest from opportunities.

All youth and young adults, regardless of documentation status, can access WorkSource basic career services that provide them with a wide range of information to help make informed decisions about training opportunities including opportunities for non-traditional employment. Maximum local flexibility is afforded LWDBs in developing a design framework for local youth programs. The State requires that local WIOA plans include a service design framework for youth describing how:

- All 14 required service elements will be available to the WIOA-enrolled youth in the service area.

- All WIOA-enrolled youth will receive an objective assessment and an individual service strategy (ISS) that meets the requirements of WIOA Sec.129(c)(1)(B), including multiple pathways for careers and a consideration of the assessment results for each youth.

Paid and unpaid work experiences must include an educational component, to reinforce basic reading, writing, and math skills. To help young people succeed academically and in employment, service providers offer classes such as "Adulting 101," "Neurodiversity in School and Work," and "Time Management and Organization". Financial literacy, self-employment

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training, and the other youth program elements are offered as is relevant to each participant's ISS.

The State provides technical assistance to local areas at risk of failing to meet youth performance indicators and fiscal reporting requirements. Each quarter, local areas provide quarterly narrative and fiscal reports to the State, discussing activities, performance, and benchmark achievement. The State's youth program manager conducts assessments of each local area's reporting and, in addition to quarterly debriefs with local area staff, provides tailored technical assistance, support the specific needs of local areas in serving youth. Monthly, the State's youth program manager offers resources and relevant funding opportunities to local areas, as well as quarterly WEX technical assistance calls to ensure local areas receive targeted assistance in complying with federal fiscal reporting requirements.

The State continues to monitor local areas to ensure WIOA remains a last-dollar resource and is focusing resources on ensuring existing youth participants receive comprehensive support for ISS's, with the goal of exiting into employment, self-employment, and/or post-secondary education.

A prominent state example of a strategy to engage and support youth kept furthest from opportunity is Career Connect Washington (CCW). By co-creating work-based and academic programs for young people to explore careers, learn, and earn money and college-level credit, the CCW coalition of business, labor, education, government, and community leaders, catalyzes the growth of high-quality career connected learning programs statewide. These programs promote economic opportunity, educational justice, and equitable access for all. More than 19,000 students were enrolled in Career Launch programs (including Registered Apprenticeships) in the last academic year, up 58% from four years ago. Career Launch programs combine meaningful, supervised, paid, on-the job experience with aligned academic instruction. Students who complete Career Launch programs earn an industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credential (or at least 45 credits towards a postsecondary credential) and are competitive candidates for a real job.

Career Connect Washington aims to ensure that 100% of students complete Career Prep and Career Explore activities and that 60% of students complete a Career Launch program before the high school class of 2030 is 30 years old. We measure progress by tracking program enrollment and completion by demographics, region, industry, and other characteristics. We also track employer engagement, registered apprenticeship growth, and the creation of new Career Launch programs. Our theory of change predicts that these programs will lower unemployment rates, increase credential attainment rates, grow registered apprenticeships, increase median earnings, and increase gross domestic product value.

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3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

Please see the previous section.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA

Section 3.e.ii of Washington's WorkSource System Policy 1019, Revision 8 (Eligibility Guidelines and Documentation Requirements) requires local workforce development boards to define local parameters and policy for "Requires Additional Assistance" under Category 7 for In-School Youth and Category 9 for Out-of-School Youth.

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D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).) A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

N/A

4. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

N/A

5. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

N/A

6. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

N/A

7. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF ANDACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

N/A

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E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

The State of Washington did not request or receive any operational waivers.

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F. TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	No
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board,	Yes

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department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

G. ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	63.6	63.6	63.6	63.6
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	62.5	65.0	62.5	65.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,718	8,070	7,718	8,070
Credential Attainment Rate	61.9	66.0	61.9	66.0
Measurable Skill Gains	51.9	51.9	51.9	51.9
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1

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H. DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter	66.6	66.6	66.6	66.6
Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	65.6	67.6	65.6	67.6
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	9,678	9,678	9,678	9,678
Credential Attainment Rate	74.0	75.3	74.0	75.3
Measurable Skill Gains	51.5	51.5	51.5	51.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1

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I. YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	56.5	60.0	56.5	60.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.8	59.0	55.8	59.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,663	3,663	3,663	3,663
Credential Attainment Rate	62.9	63.7	62.9	63.7
Measurable Skill Gains	38.7	50.0	38.7	50.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1

1 "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2024 State Plan

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PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

TALENT AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL
INTRODUCTION

See [Introduction for the Title I-B section](#).

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

In Washington State, Wagner Peyser funding supports state merit system staff only.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

ESD's statewide Wagner Peyser Program Operations team provides training and support to Wagner Peyser funded field staff in addition to any staff serving job seekers and employers via the one-stop system. This training includes a high-level overview of the Wagner Peyser Act and basic labor exchange services and topics such as proper customer registration, overviews of all programs offered within the one-stop system to allow for proper and timey referral to services, Veterans priority of service, Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and bonding options, language interpretation services, and more. In addition, staff can participate in training on topics related to compassion fatigue and other human service challenges to ensure they are taking care of themselves while providing quality customer service.

At the local level, staff collaborate with one-stop system partners to learn about and understand local services delivery priorities and coordination. This allows for daily interaction, expanded knowledge of how to refer customers, professional development through increased learning opportunities, shared group services, and various levels of functional integration for more seamless services. Under WIOA, including amendments to Wagner-Peyser, staff professional development activities focus on the immediate service areas of one-stop offices and extend to the larger communities and regions. For example, in significant MSFW-designated offices, outreach staff spend most of their time visiting places where MSFWs work, live and gather and closely coordinate with other providers to the farmworker population so that high-quality services are equitable and proportionate. As a community of practice, MSFW outreach staff learn and increase their professional development with and across Washington's vital agricultural

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regions through regular program training coordinated through online conferences and with the state monitor advocate.

3. <u>DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION</u>

ESD's WorkSource Information Notice (WIN) 0090 provides guidance on assisting UI claimants in WorkSource Offices. Local Workforce Development Boards and contractors, as well as Employment Security Regional Directors, must distribute this guidance broadly throughout the system to ensure that WorkSource (One-Stop) System staff are familiar with its content and requirements.

ESD's Unemployment Insurance Division has created training in support of this WIN. ES staff are required to complete this training and partner staff are encouraged to complete it. This training differentiates between basic UI services all staff can provide versus Meaningful UI assistance that can only be provided by ES staff with a higher level of training. These staff are designated as Unemployment Insurance Ambassadors (UIA). All one-stop staff can perform functions that are informational in nature and are not directly connected to determining the claimants' initial or continued eligibility for benefits. This includes things like helping individuals understand the claims filing process, explaining work search requirements, explaining how to apply for Training Benefits, directing claimants to online tools and resources, such as the Handbook for Unemployed Workers, eServices or ESD.WA.GOV, and more.

Examples of Meaningful UI Assistance that can be provided by properly trained ES staff include UI basic claims filing assistance, facilitating direct access to the UI Claims Center, escalating hardship requests, reopening basic claims or providing information beyond that which is readily available. This includes coordinating access to the UI Claims Center for claimants who request language assistance or use of auxiliary aids.

Employment Services Wagner-Peyser staff assisting UI claimants are required to notify the UI Claims Center via Report of Potential Issue (RPI) with any information about potential UI eligibility issues such as a claimant's ability to work, availability for work, or the suitability of work the claimant is Page 3 of 6 seeking or being offered (20 CFR 652.210 (b)(3)). RPI's must be submitted the same day the issue is detected.

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B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

One-stops will provide access to claims filing, benefits compliance and reemployment services to UI claimants, especially Limited English Proficient customers, individuals wanting to file a claim and who have apparent disabilities, and some, often older claimants who experience frustration and confusion with online filing, phone, and fax technology.

Assistance provided in filing claims is beyond the usual self-help options online or through the UI Claims Center Claim Centers main phone line. The UI Division has provided training to staff in one-stop offices on basic UI claim filing, weekly claim filing, and general UI topics. Often bi-lingual staff are available to serve customers seeking UI benefits claims assistance who speak limited English. When that is not the case in the one-stop office, staff will access the Language Line for real-time interpretive services. The department established a separate priority direct line to the UI Claim Centers Claim Centers for walk-in, one-stop customers. The department has also made available training to all one-stop staff on how to assist customers in establishing Secure Access Washington accounts so that they can manage their UI claims through self-service.

 Meaningful assistance in filing claims in Washington State will be a departure from any characterization of hurried, standalone UI services at WorkSource offices. UI claims assistance draws a significant percentage of walk-in traffic making this a key touch point for introduction to other career services. While offering substantive UI claims assistance, staff are trained to engage customers whenever possible by personally inviting their participation in the spectrum of career services including training options.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

Reemployment assistance to UI claimants is predicated on the earliest return to suitable and full- time employment. The State's strategy is to assist claimants with timely, accurate benefits to support work search or, when retraining when eligible. ES staff promote participation in a relevant and robust menu of local job search preparation services applicable to the individual's needs. Staff are trained to use open-ended questions and/or assessment tools to connect unemployed individuals to resources of highest potential value based on indicators they have shared about their personal background, situation, and interests. They help customers engage with the systems' job matching tools and often provide individualized staff assistance.

Other unemployed, lower-skilled individuals seeking training who may not qualify for weekly UI benefits might qualify for WIOA Adult services or state retraining resources such as Worker Retraining funds, federal training funds tied to Department of Agriculture BFET programs, or special grants. Although these other programs do not provide weekly subsistence benefits, they can provide for training costs and some support services such as transportation assistance, etc.

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WorkSource customers have no wrong door. Although they may first encounter system entities in different ways, the system partners agree formally through WIOA mandated MOUs to connect customers through referrals. When connected to the local one-stop center, customers are routinely encouraged to attend a system orientation. Individuals may choose to receive career assessment and guidance and ask for assistance on any of several topics related to job search or training options. In the first 7 weeks of receiving benefits, UI claimants may be called in for mandatory reemployment services through the RESEA program. The purpose of the RESEA program is to improve employment outcomes or UI claimants, reduce improper UI payments, promote the alignment with broader WIOA vision of program integration and establish reemployment services and eligibility assessments as an entry point for UI claimants into other workforce system programs. Individuals who may be unemployed and not aware of services, or those who have abandoned searching for work, are also sought out through regular staff outreach or public service announcements. The online marketing of job fairs, employer hiring events and free workshops through websites and social media is also motivating customers to participate in services.

Proportionate and equitable services are targeted for Washington State's sizeable migrant or seasonal farm worker population through outreach.

All eligible veterans receive Priority of Service from WorkSource in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act and 20 CFR 1010. Core DOL programs ensure that, upon entry, covered persons are aware of reemployment services, program eligibility, and Veterans' Priority of Service.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

UI claimants can receive eligibility assessments and referrals to an array of training and education resources through the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program. Staff trained in triage techniques use open-ended questions and/or assessment tools to connect unemployed individuals first to the most likely resources of highest potential value based on indicators they have shared about their personal background, situation, and interests.

UI claimants can create an account and upload a resume to the state's job match system, WorkSourceWA. Once registered, claimants have access to all of the online features, such as: searching for jobs, identifying employment trends and occupational information, using the virtual recruiter to automatically receive alerts of new jobs that match the job skills in their resume, having their resume viewable by employers registered in the system, and accessing local education providers and programs.

In the first 7 weeks of receiving benefits, UI claimants may be called in for mandatory reemployment services through the RESEA program. Individuals who may be unemployed and

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not aware of services, or those who have abandoned searching for work, are also sought out through regular staff outreach or public service announcements. The online marketing of job fairs, employer hiring events and free workshops through websites and social media is also motivating customers to participate in services. UI claimants not selected for RESEA may freely pursue any self-service, facilitated self-help, or staff-assisted services which are supported by W-P funds, or any career services also supported by WIOA Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker funds for those eligible.

2. <u>Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;</u>

Washington Administrative Code WAC 192-180-005 requires UI claimants to register for work with WorkSource. The claim filing process does this automatically. There are exceptions to this rule such as claimants on standby, partially unemployed individuals, or members of a union participating in a union referral program. Occasionally domestic violence issues may exempt claimants worried about the security of their whereabouts and personal data. Also, claimants approved for training are usually registered for work in the WorkSource system, but it is not a state requirement for everybody in this category.

3. <u>Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants;</u>

Statewide RESEA and Wagner-Peyser Program Operations teams support ES field staff with technical training in identifying potential UI eligibility issues and submitting Report of Potential Issues (RPI) to UI adjudicators. Claimants assigned to RESEA receive a single directive which is followed up by staff for compliance. Whenever the directive is not followed, and the reason is deemed not acceptable, staff submit an RPI to the Unemployment Insurance Division.

4. <u>Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.</u>

Claimants whose occupations are not in demand or those who have skill gaps are introduced to possible retraining options and federal funding options such as through PELL grants or the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. All claimants potentially eligible and seriously interested in training are offered assistance in formally requesting Commissioner Approved Training (CAT) and/or the continuation of their UI benefits for up to an additional 26 weeks while in approved training, referred to in Washington State as Training Benefits (TB). For some, Registered Apprenticeship (RA)—earn-while-learning—careers may be the best opportunity. Some WorkSource offices hold apprenticeship orientations in collaboration with labor organizations or employers to promote opportunities in particular RA trades and offer guidance on preparing for the application process. In addition, ES, WIOA Title 1-B or local community and technical college workforce education staff provide information, referrals, guidance, and application assistance.

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E. **AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP).**

Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include an assessment of need.

The Employment Security Department (ESD) is responsible under the Wagner-Peyser grant to prepare an annual Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) guided by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). This plan aligns with questions posed by DOL for ESD and extends to coordination through WorkSource – Washington's one-stop workforce development system – in the provision of employment and training services to Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs). The plan covers the period from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2028, and will remain in effect until updated.

1. <u>ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.</u>

MSFWs are an essential part of our agricultural industry, which serves as one of the top sectors in Washington State. While their contributions to our economy are well recognized, many of these individuals face a myriad of barriers, including access to stable housing, immigration status, educational attainment/access, and access to affordable health care. Over the past several years, there have been a couple of reports that speak to farmworkers needs in Washington State, including:

- In January of 2022, the Washington State Department of Commerce published a report titled, Washington Farmworker Housing Needs Assessment. The report cites that while home values increased 52% and rent increased 57% between 2012 and 2018, farmworkers wages only increased 19% in the same period of time. The report includes a housing gap analysis using 2019 data that shows 30,359 beds available for seasonal farmworkers and 2,657 housing units set aside for year-round farmworker households. Using a figure of 102,304 farmworkers in Washington at the time, this shows a potential 69,288 farmworkers competing for local housing markets for rental or ownership housing options. The 2015 report, "[Farm Work Group Report](#)," which summarized agricultural labor and industry meetings that communicated the needs of agricultural employers and farmworkers related to labor supply, wage complaints and retaliation, sexual harassment, pesticide drift and farmworker housing. In the report, there was consensus on numerous administrative solutions including: 1) the need to find methods to better measure and understand labor shortages; 2) the need to study methods for increasing domestic participation in the agricultural industry; and 3) recommendations that the development of permanent and seasonal farmworker housing be supported through loan programs and other incentives.

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The reports referenced are informative and speak to the needs of farmworkers that likely parallel the needs of farmworkers nationwide. As it relates to national studies that inform our state perspective, The Aspen Institute recently published a report titled, "[Exchange: The Future of Work & Agriculture](#)." The report analyzed current economic trends in agriculture and offered policy recommendations aimed at helping our workforce adjust to the future of agriculture. Key recommendations made in this report include expanding broadband access on U.S. agricultural land to allow for the adoption of precision technologies that make growers more competitive in a global economy and greater availability of training for farm managers and workers to learn how to use new technological tools and navigate increasingly complex regulatory requirements. In Washington State, workforce system partners in agricultural areas are starting to recognize this need and responding by partnering with agricultural employers to develop incumbent worker training and apprenticeship opportunities aimed at upskilling existing adults and youth in mechanized fields in agriculture. One community college in our state has also invested in the development of a certification program aimed at educating orchard supervisors on how to navigate state and federal law requirements while learning best practices.

2. <u>PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE: 1) IDENTIFY THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFY ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE</u>

ESD's Labor Market and Economic Analysis Division publishes an annual agricultural workforce report. In its most recent 2017 report, it stated that Washington remains one of the top states in terms of average annual covered agriculture employment with 97,810 in 2017, a 2.6% annual increase when compared to 75,763 in 2007. According to ESD data, agricultural employment peaked in 2018 at 99,633, and, as per their most recent figures, was at 87,991 in 2022. The agricultural industry's significance to Washington's economy is far-reaching. According to the 2022 USDA/NASS State Agricultural Overview, Washington state has 35,200 farms covering 14.5 million acres with agricultural production valued at $13.02 billion in 2022. The top commodities within our vibrant agricultural industry are led by the apple industry, which accounts for 70 percent of US production. The top 10 crops in Washington based on data reported by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics are: 1) apples; 2) milk; 3) wheat; 4) hay; 5) potatoes; 6) hay; 7) hops; 8) cherries; 9) grapes; and 10) carrots. Of those top commodities, there are several that require the support of a significant seasonal labor force, including apples, potatoes, hops, cherries, and grapes. Other top commodities in the state that are dependent on a seasonal labor force include asparagus, berries, onions, and pears.

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The geographic location of these agricultural activities is illustrated in the map below, which breaks down Washington into 6 Agricultural reporting areas. The majority of the MSFWs congregate in Washington's central region in areas 2, 3, 4, and 5, but regions 1 and 6 have started to attract more MSFWs as the agricultural industry continues to grow and diversify. Like construction, agricultural work is seasonal, with crop activities peaking from June through October, depending on the commodity and activity in question.

Exhibit 6. Agricultural reporting areas in Washington

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, 2019

Agricultural employers in Washington state consistently communicate that their primary concern is access to a legal and stable workforce. The decrease in the agricultural workers in Washington has increased dependency on the H-2A program to meet that need. The number of H-2A applications filed in Washington State in 2007 was 26, and the number of workers requested was 1,688. Those figures have continued to increase dramatically every year, and in 2023 Washington State received 428 H-2A applications for a total of 38,666 workers requested. When compared to 2007, the number of applications submitted in 2017 increased by more than 700 percent, while the total number of H-2A workers requested in the state increased by more than 1,000 percent. The increased demand in H-2A along with the states limited ability to administer this demanding program led to adoption of SB 5438 which creates the Office of Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services intended to implement a field check system that aims to enhance technical assistance to agricultural employers and farmworkers while forming a committee that provides recommendations for strengthening domestic worker recruitment.

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3. <u>PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS BY SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION</u>

MSFWs in Washington State are a diverse population, and their needs are equally different. In this state, the group consists of refugees and asylees from multiple countries, Mexican nationals, and indigenous groups of numerous regions of Mexico and Central America with unique languages and customs. Most speak Spanish, but other languages are prevalent such as Russian and Triqui. The majority are seasonal workers, although migrant workers are still known to travel to our state from states like California to work during peak crop seasons, most commonly in cherries and apples.

For all service providers, including ESD, an ongoing challenge is to adequately enumerate the service population of MSFWs. This has particularly been the challenge for health care providers trying to establish baseline resources for community farmworker clinics. There are several studies that have produced varying estimates of seasonal farmworkers in Washington, strengthening the notion that a precise measurement of the number of MSFWs is difficult to obtain. The Northwest Regional Primary Care Association published a 2011 Farmworker Population Profile showing about a 30-70 split between 71,860 migrant and 157,400 seasonal farmworkers in Washington for a total of 229,260 MSFWs. Meanwhile, the 2012 U.S. Census indicates that there were 199,649 MSFWs in Washington State (workers hired for a term of less than 150 workdays).

4. <u>OUTREACH ACTIVITIES</u>

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(1) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Washington state is classified as an MSFW significant State by the DOL. We are in the top five States in the nation in terms of number of MSFWs served. As a result, regulations require ESD to

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hire specialized staff dedicated to conducting outreach activities to MSFWs on a full time, year-round basis in areas where offices are designated as significant MSFW one-stop centers. Additionally, ESD is required to conduct outreach to MSFWs in every area of the state. ESD meets that minimum expectation by allocating knowledgeable and resourceful outreach staff in all 9 of the areas where our MSFW significant one-stop centers are located, and in Program Year (PY) 2023, ESD allocated additional Wagner Peyser funds to each region of the state to support our WorkSource system's ability to connect with MSFWs that may otherwise not access our services. The table below provides a list of MSFW outreach positions and the offices where they are located. ESD will continue to evaluate and adjust how to best deploy MSFW outreach staff during the performance period given the changing dynamics within the workforce system, the formation of the office of agricultural workforce services and the evolving needs of our agricultural community. Any changes made will be done in consultation with internal divisions, partners, and stakeholders.

Table .... PY 2023 Outreach FTEs by WorkSource Office

WorkSource Office	MSFW Staff
Central Basin	1
Columbia Basin	1
Columbia Gorge (White Salmon) Affiliate	1
Omak	1
Skagit	1
Sunnyside Affiliate	1
Walla Walla	1
Wenatchee Affiliate	1
Yakima	1
Grays Harbor	0.74
Spokane	0.24
Auburn	0.21
Goldendale	0.17
Everett	0.16
Pierce	0.13
Colville	0.1
North Seattle	0.1
Rainier	0.1
Redmond	0.1
Clallam	0.05
Kitsap	0.05
Whatcom	0.02
TOTAL	**11.17**

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ESD's planned outreach targets are set by FTE levels. Each MSFW Significant office has a full-time staff conducting outreach to farmworkers. The targets per FTE are 133 days of outreach per year (8 hours equals 1 outreach day), and 5 MSFWs contacted per day. Staff conducting outreach to MSFWs are expected to report on a monthly basis on their efforts to contact, inform, and educate MSFWs about the full array of services provided at the one-stop center, as well as educate them about their rights. These outreach efforts may include, but will not be limited to, contacts with local public Spanish and English media such as television, radio, newspapers, classroom training sessions, community service agencies and religious organizations, and places where MSFWs live, work or gather. MSFW outreach staff will also visit labor camps, employer sites, public housing, businesses, and educational institutions to locate and provide services to farmworkers that traditionally do not visit WorkSource offices. MSFW outreach staff may work flexible schedules during critical harvest periods to meet the demand for services, or during the winter when contacting MSFWs may be better accomplished in the evening.

WorkSource MSFW outreach staff are expected to partner with our WIOA 167 grantee, OIC of Washington, to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are consistent with ESD's mission of providing communities with inclusive Workforce solutions that promote economic resilience and prosperity.

(2) Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

The Wagner Peyser Program Team meets monthly with outreach workers to provide technical assistance & training on the following elements: Monitor Advocate System, how to properly complete outreach logs, establishing planned vs actual targets, the complaint process, elements of an MSFW contact and the requirement to conduct full-time, year-round outreach.

(3) Increasing outreach staff training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

ESD has developed a unit of program specific leads for all programs overseen and provided through our Employment Connections (EC) Division. Each program has a program operator and program support specialists. These program staff have created training for all EC Division staff that are available in a variety of formats to best meet staff's learning style. Each program has regular, ongoing meetings for field staff to attend and learn about updates to standard operating procedures, changes in the law, etc., as well as having an opportunity to talk directly

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with operators and get their questions answered. Outreach staff attend meetings and access training materials in order to have a broad understanding of the services available to MSFWs in the center.

Each WorkSource office has a staff person identified as a UI Ambassador. These staff are available to help educate outreach staff on basic UI program eligibility and are the staff with enhanced ability to assist customers with more complex UI needs.

(4) Providing outreach staff professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

In addition to internal training opportunities available, outreach workers will attend conferences and training available to all staff and partners. Our outreach professionals participate in an annual agricultural conference aimed at staying current on the ever-changing landscape of the agricultural industry and enhancing partnerships with other organizations.

(5) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

OIC of Washington and the State Monitor Advocate have a full Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place. This MOU ensures continued collaboration between ESD and our NFJP grantee, OIC of Washington. Throughout the state, ESD's outreach personnel and NFJP staff collaborate by assisting each other with outreach. They also participate in various events where information is shared on the services available to the MSFWs at our WorkSource centers. The NFJP grantee is made aware of the monthly Agricultural conference call and is invited to participate by sharing outcomes, challenges, and ways of reaffirming our continued collaboration.

5. <u>SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM</u>

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for: pg. 14

(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

> *(i) How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers; and*

ESD's Employment Connections Division maintains a team of program operators delegated the responsibility for overseeing statewide operation and coordination of key employment programs, services, and populations, including services to MSFWs, served within the local one-stop delivery system. This team provides guidance, in part, through regularly scheduled monthly statewide conference calls, and more often, as needed, during the agricultural harvest season. Our program operator team, in collaboration with our WIOA 167 Title 1 Grantee and field staff, facilitates an annual training session for supervisors and key outreach staff in advance of the agricultural season. As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.101, ESD will ensure that "each one-

stop center must offer MSFWs the full range of career and supportive services, benefits, and protections, and job and training referral services as are provided to non-MSFWs." All MSFWs who visit a WorkSource center will be informed of the various types of employment and training services and social services available in their community and in other parts of the state in alignment with local service delivery standards applied for all customers. Services are enhanced by bi- lingual/bi-cultural staff in significant MSFW WorkSource centers. This staffing model is important because outreach staff in MSFW significant offices are hired as full-time, year-round outreach experts who shall diligently work to create greater awareness of the workforce system in the community. It is critical that at the very minimum, in significant MSFW WorkSource centers, adequate bilingual staff be hired to meet the need of those MSFWs being served. Depending on their individual needs, MSFWs will also be given training options offered through the state-formula WIOA programs, adult and youth, community colleges, and state agency programs. Concurrent enrollments with partner agencies and colleges are assessed for individuals who may benefit. A key partner in these efforts is the WIOA 167 grantee, the National Farmworker Job Program (NFJP), which is currently the OIC of Washington. Their offices are mostly located in significant agricultural areas, and some are co-located in key significant MSFW WorkSource centers. The training pathway for ESL, high school equivalency certificates, and career and technical education (vocational training) is primarily through partnering with the WIOA 167 grantee and community colleges. UI allows claimants to count ESD, ABE, or GED classes as documented in-person job search activities if approved by WorkSource as part of the reemployment plan, and their progress is monitored by WorkSource administrators. Nearly all significant MSFW WorkSource centers offer Spanish computer literacy classes, which have seen higher participation rates every year during the winter months. This experience has introduced MSFWs to digital media and a new world of information – some for the first time in their lives. The computer classes have helped digitally illiterate customers use computers and gain much needed keyboarding skills. Some have progressed to Microsoft Word and Outlook. To strengthen the integrity of services provided to MSFWs within the one- stop system,

> *(ii) How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.*

Our local workforce systems, led through the guidance of our local Workforce Development Councils offer a menu of services that include worker retraining resources, apprenticeship development, outreach, hiring events and job fairs. All this work is done to meet agricultural employers where they are in a manner that does not overburden them with services that they don't need or result in too many workforce system partner touch points. Workforce system partners continue to adopt continuous improvement strategies that are data-driven, with several leveraging customer relationship management systems to capture data for services delivered that may otherwise not be captured for employers that choose not to create a registration in our WorkSourceWA. By adopting such technology, we hope to capture services to agricultural employers who may not be reliant on conducting recruitment through our system but may be interested in other opportunities that allow them to upskill their workforce or enhance the

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operation of their businesses. At a state level, ESD also offers a variety of services to all employers including, shared work for layoff aversion, labor market information, support navigating the H-2A program and tax incentives. ESD continues to work with workforce system partners to maximize our workforce system's services to our employers.

ESD's Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS) office works directly with employers utilizing the H-2A program. Staff assist employers with coordination of their applications and assisting with temporary worker housing certification. Other staff from the office assist employers with compliance issues.

Outreach staff also contact agricultural employers while conducting outreach to MSFWs and identify employment opportunities for farmworkers, assist in resolving issues between employers and workers, and refer employers to other services and agencies based on the employer's needs.

(B) Marketing the Complaint System to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

The State Monitor Advocate and strategically placed outreach staff serve as ambassadors for the Wagner-Peyser complaint system, promoting this process to employers and the general public. They actively promote the complaint system through their outreach efforts with organizations that serve farmworkers and employers. Within WorkSource centers, customers are also informed of their right to file a complaint by staff and through posters and brochures that are displayed.

All ASWS Compliance Specialists have received training regarding the ES Complaint System from the State Monitor Advocate. The ASWS unit is committed to the efficient and lawful processing of apparent violations and worker complaints and concerns. During ASWS field visits, workers and employers receive information pertaining to the ES Complaint System, including contact information for local ASWS and one-stop complaint specialists.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

In Washington State, 100 percent of employers that use the ARS participate in the H-2A program. While ESD has made efforts in the past to promote the ARS, employers not participating in H-2A communicate that they prefer not to be part of a voluntary system that subjects them to more regulatory scrutiny when they can recruit for agricultural workers outside of the workforce system.

As it relates to employers that participate in the ARS as part of the H-2A program, ESD has enhanced operation of the ARS with the implementation of the previously mentioned Office of Agricultural & Seasonal Workforce Services by implementing a robust field check system for participating employers and by enhancing the integrity of the domestic worker recruitment, referral and hiring processes. ESD publicizes aspects of the ARS as part of the implementation of this new office to employers, workers, and stakeholders.

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In accordance with the ASWS committee's recommendation that ESD facilitate a faster connection of workers and employers through process changes, including more direct and ongoing engagement with domestic job applicants, ASWS has contracted for a study aimed at learning more about how domestic workers seek farm jobs. ESD will analyze study findings and plan to implement measures that will facilitate the connection between domestic MSFWs and job openings. Moreover, the ASWS is currently prioritizing improving internal methodology involved in tracking MSFW job referrals and referral outcomes. This will enable the ASWS to better position resources for field checks.

6. <u>OTHER REQUIREMENTS</u>

(A) Collaboration.

Describe any collaborative agreements the State Workforce Agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and establish new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

In addition to the previously referenced MOU with our NFJP provider, OIC of Washington, ESD has three agreements that support our ability to serve MSFWs. Our Data Sharing Agreement with the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) supports ESD's ability to respond to discontinuation of services requirements under the Wagner-Peyser Act and ESD Policy 4060 by allowing L&I the ability to share when an H-2A employer has been notified by a final determination to have violated an employment law. Receiving this information positions ESD to discontinue services to employers that do not comply with employment laws.

Another important contract is our MOU between ESD, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) concerning temporary agricultural worker housing. As part of its administrative duties associated with the H-2A program, ESD is required to verify that a preoccupancy housing inspection occurred, and that housing assured by the employer is, in fact, available and meets the full set of standards set forth in applicable federal regulations. DOH and LNI work in collaboration with ESD to assure verification of licensing and inspection of all participating H-2A housing. Overall, the agreement meets expectations set by DOL while leveraging each agencies' expertise in a manner that enhances worker access to adequate housing. In August of 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration Office of Foreign Labor Certification conducted a compliance review of ESD's management of the state's Foreign Labor Certification grant. As a result of that compliance review, ESD is initiating improvements including updating the MOU between ESD, DOH and LNI regarding inspection and licensing of temporary worker housing. These improvements will increase the safety of H-2A foreign workers and U.S workers in corresponding employment and ensure that Washington State is in full compliance with all Federal and State requirements related to such housing.

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On August 24, 2018, leaders from ESD and the Consulate of Mexico in Seattle signed a Memorandum of Cooperation formalizing their partnership to help Mexican nationals understand their rights to employment and unemployment services in Washington. Through the agreement, ESD and Consulate of Mexico set standards for collaboration so that more Mexicans and Mexican Americans are aware of and benefiting from Washington's workforce programs. Among other things, the agreement is intended to facilitate responses by ESD staff to employment-related complaints or concerns received by the Consulate of Mexico staff. ESD anticipates maintaining both agreements during the planning period.

(B) Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons. therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

> *(i) The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.*

(C) Data Assessment

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser Act data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

ESD has generally met five or six of the eight Equity Ratio Indicators. Those that are normally not met are Received Individualized Career Services and Received Staff Assisted Career Guidance Services. For individualized career services, ESD comes very close to meeting equity. In 2023, ESD's Data Integrity Team created DOL MSFW reports that allow all staff and the public to access performance information down to the local office level. These reports allow local WorkSource staff and their leaders to monitor their performance that impacts equitable services to MSFWs. ESD is confident that having this data available and monitoring this performance on an ongoing basis will lead to improved performance for serving MSFWs.

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(D) Assessment of Progress

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

ESD has provided additional Wagner Peyser funds to all offices in the state to increase outreach to MSFWs in every area of the state. This will increase the number of MSFWs served, and we believe, improve our performance related to equity.

Equity up to this point has not been achieved. Partially, this is due to the number of MSFWs being served continuing to diminish. There are fewer MSFWs in the state as fewer farmworkers migrate into Washington for work, and more and more farmworkers in the state are foreign workers brought in through the H-2A program.

(E) State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

ESD's Acting State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved this plan.

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F. **WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES**

	The State Plan must include assurances that:
1.	The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
2.	If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;
3.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
4.	SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.
5.	The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).

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PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is responsible for administering the adult basic education components of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 – Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The elements of this plan were developed with guidance from the governor-appointed Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC) in support of Governor Jay Inslee's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Ten-Year Roadmap, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Strategic Plan, the Council of Basic Skills', Washington State Council for Basic Skills Work Plan, the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) and Washington State Basic Education for Adults' (BEdA) Shared Vision, Principles, and Goals for Collaboration Guidance Agreement, and Washington state's Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP): Washington's Operational and Program-Specific Workforce Plan Components and Key Strategic Priorities.

In Washington, an estimated 685,000 adults lack basic education or English language skills. Meanwhile, the bar to get a living-wage job is getting higher. Of the 740,000 job openings expected in Washington state in the near future, more than two-thirds will require at least some education beyond high school. Our residents need basic foundational skills to secure living-wage jobs, just as employers need skilled employees to thrive.

Our adult basic education programs collaborate with workforce and social service partners to ensure students gain skills and access resources. Services provided under Titles I, II, III, and IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are integrated to the greatest extent possible to tightly align training and support services to the realities of today's job market and the needs of our students and clients.

Our work is strategically aligned to and informed by our SBCTC Vision, SBCTC Education Division Mission, and the Basic Education for Adults (BEdA) Title II Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals statements.

SBCTC VISION

Leading with racial equity, our colleges maximize student potential and transform lives within a culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and economic justice in service to our diverse communities.

SBCTC Education Division Mission

The Education Division is committed to promoting the rights, welfare, and institutional needs of all students to access equitable educational opportunities. We create inclusive learning environments by advocating for and supporting high-quality, evidence-based, rigorous education and career pathways to prepare a future workforce for a rapidly changing economy.

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BEdA Vision

To advance racial and economic justice, Basic Education for Adults provides equitable programming for all Washingtonians to realize their potential as they launch on a supported college and career pathway to living-wage employment and strengthen the vitality of their communities.

BEdA MISSION

Basic Education for Adults works collaboratively to offer culturally responsive and equity focused college and career pathways that address barriers and enable students to obtain meaningful employment, meet workforce needs, and reduce economic disparities.

BEdA VALUES

Basic Education for Adults' work is guided and informed by our commitment to:

- Students' cultural capital: voice, experience, perspective

- Diversity, equity, inclusion: racial, economic, and social justice

- Quality: collaborative, evidence-based innovative pathways

Our success is measured by the success of our students.

1. Intentionally review, develop, and implement culturally responsive policies and practices that promote racial and economic justice.

2. Implement and scale equity-focused, comprehensive, and innovative college and career pathways to accelerate student completion and advance racial and economic justice.

3. Provide students with the equity-focused navigational and support services needed to create and follow a college and career pathway plan that identifies the funding and resources needed to reach their goals.

4. Create and strengthen inclusive instructional practices that honor and support the diverse needs of all students while maintaining academic integrity that ensures college and career readiness.

5. Guide and support culturally responsive and equity-focused instructional practices that accelerate student completion to certificates, one year of college plus a credential, degrees, and living wage employment.

6. Develop and offer culturally responsive coursework that is contextualized to college and career pathways leading to high school completion, postsecondary education, and living wage employment.

7. Create and maintain strategic partnerships and alliances to leverage local resources and support integrated service delivery.

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8. Create an environment that values and respects the diverse identities and strengths of students and empowers individuals to claim their personal agency.

Washington State has been on the forefront of innovation and acceleration of student success in basic skills instruction, particularly due to our pioneering work in developing uniquely effective and accessible college and career pathways. Our programs continue to be instrumental in creating an educational foundation that places our eligible individuals on clearly articulated and accelerated pathways to success. The 2020-2023 Washington State Adult Education Plan and its integration into the larger Washington State WIOA Plan focuses on foundational practices enabling the design and implementation of exemplary basic skills college and career readiness pathways for the 21st Century.

1. <u>Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).</u>

In October 2014, Washington State officially adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for all Basic Education for Adults programming funded under WIOA. The implementation of the CCR Standards provides clear expectations for students and the guidance needed to improve curriculum and instruction. It also identifies the professional development required to help staff develop expertise to implement the standards. The CCR Standards strategically link basic education for adults, postsecondary education, and the world of work. The standards require the implementation of the critical skills and knowledge expected by employers and are required for success in workforce training, postsecondary education, and employment in the 21st Century.

The SBCTC ran an open competition in 2022 to identify providers for the 2022-2027 grant period. Each provider's grant application included as a minimum the scope, content, and organization of the local activities listed below and provided assurance of alignment with local Workforce Development Council's regional plan and goals.

- Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

- Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs. Plans must include:

    o Implementation of the CCR Standards in all programming;

    o Integration of employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels;

    o Implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST

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into all Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) instruction;

- o Integration of reading strategies instruction at all levels in all courses;

- o Expansion of mathematic, speaking, and listening into all levels of both Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA) programming; and,

- o Integration of digital literacy and digital skill-building into instruction through services and delivery systems

- Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding;

- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development;

- Improve labor market relevance;

- Improve the structure of service delivery; and,

- Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

To support implementation of funded applications, all providers have access to system-wide professional development annually. Providers outline a plan to engage faculty and staff in system-wide program and professional development leadership activities that provide guidance for critical implementation of the requirements of WIOA. The following professional and program development activities are in place:

- Team Teacher Training for all programming (ABE, ELA, HS +, Foundational pathway On-Ramps to I-BEST, I-BEST@Work, and I-BEST) to support integrated employment and training activities for future and incumbent workers;

- Training in distance education;

- Equitable Math Pathways;

- ABC's of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and ongoing trainings with related topics including age, gender, race, and equity-informed leadership;

- Series on navigational services

- Data Disaggregation 101;

- Trauma-informed Andragogy;

- Training in Integrated Digital English Acceleration, a hybrid, flipped classroom ESL program contextualized to the CCRS and digital literacy; and,

- Braided Funding with workforce for co-enrolled ABE students.

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B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

The SBCTC ran an open competition in 2022 to identify providers for the 2022-2027 grant period. Each eligible organization desiring a continuation submits a Grant Continuation Application annually containing required information and assurances, including:

- A description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently with workforce training and employability skills. All activities identified in Section 203 WIOA are eligible for funding.

- A description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one-stops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities.

- A plan detailing the implementation of the required WIOA Activities as listed in section 4.1.

The SBCTC will spend no less than 95 percent of the funds for carrying out adult education and literacy activities, and the remaining amount will be used for planning, administration, personnel development, and interagency coordination.

Description of Activities under Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

Washington's SBCTC Office of Basic Education for Adults ensures equal opportunities to participate for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in any project or activity carried out under the applicable program, such as adult basic education, and promotes the ability of such students, teachers, and beneficiaries to meet high standards.

The office also ensures equitable access to, and participation in, all projects and activities conducted with federal adult education funds. Programs address the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to programming and participation, including those based on race, gender, sexual orientation, color, national origin, disability, and age.

Eligible Providers

An eligible provider is defined as an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities. Eligible providers for grant funding may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Local education agency;

2. Community-based organization or faith-based organization;

3. Volunteer literacy organization;

4. Institution of higher education;

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5. Public or private nonprofit agency;

6. Library;

7. Public housing authority;

8. Nonprofit institution that is not described in 1) through 7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to eligible individuals;

9. Consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1) through 8)

10. Partnership between employers and an entity described in 1) through 8)

Notice of Availability

SBCTC announces the availability of funds through the internet via the SBCTC website.

Process

Those interested in applying for SBCTC Adult Basic Education Funding must:

- Submit a letter of intent;

- Access the SBCTC Online Grant Management System (OGMS) and develop a formal response to each section of the application; and,

- Submit fully completed applications electronically to the SBCTC through (OGMS) by the designated submission date.

Evaluation of Applications

Proposals are reviewed by a team of experts from SBCTC and other partner organizations. The review of applications is based on the completion of the requested information in the narrative, budget, and assurances as well as completion of required forms and comprehensive implementation of all WIOA requirements, both state and federal. Criteria for scoring proposals is based on the following AEFLA requirements:

- The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals;

- The degree to which the eligible provider has the ability to place and navigate all students along a clearly defined, comprehensive, guided college and career pathway;

- The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families and, after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 161 WIOA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy;

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- The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills and those individuals with barriers to employment, access to opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services they need to succeed in the labor market;

- Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains and uses research-based instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading strategies and comprehension, numeracy, solving problems in technology rich environments, and employability skills;

- Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice;

- Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers and blended learning resources;

- Whether the activities provide learning in real life, college, and career contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

- Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;

- Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;

- Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as childcare and transportation) as needed to enable all students, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

- Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and

- Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs.

In addition, to ensure that providers meet the WIOA requirements, proposals are evaluated by evaluation teams on their ability to:

- Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

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- Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs. Plans must include:

    o Implementation of the CCR Standards in all programming;

    o Integration of employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels;

    o Implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST into all Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) instruction;

    o Integration of reading strategies instruction at all levels in all courses;

    o Expansion of mathematic, speaking, and listening into all levels of both Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA) programming; and,

    o Integration of digital literacy and digital skill-building into instruction through services and delivery systems

- Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding;

- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development;

- Improve labor market relevance;

- Improve the structure of service delivery; and,

- Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

Teams comprised of two adult education and workforce leaders and one SBCTC policy associate/program administrator rate applications. The applications are reviewed and independently rated by each member of the team to determine an average score. In order to be considered for BEdA Master Grant and/or IELCE funding, BEdA Master Grant applications must receive a minimum average score. Final recommendations for approval are determined based on ratings ensuring support for Title II services is available across the state.

In addition, in February 2017, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) met with all WDC directors across the state to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners in the review of Title II AEFLA grant applications and to train WDC directors and board leads on the feedback process. Feedback forms were developed and jointly agreed on and a conflict-of-interest agreement was completed for all reviewers. This process was used for both the 2017-2022 and 2022-2027 open and competitive grant process.

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PURPOSE and Methodology for Distribution of Federal ABE/IECE Funds

Washington's Federal ABE/IELCE funding formula aligns with the BEdA and the governor-appointed Adult Education Advisory Council's (AEAC) visions, missions, values, and goals in support Governor Jay Inslee's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Ten-Year Roadmap, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Strategic Plan, the Council of Basic Skills, Washington State Council for Basic Skills Work Plan , the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) and Washington State Basic Education for Adults' (BEdA) Shared Vision, Principles, and Goals for Collaboration Guidance Agreement, and Washington state's Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP): Washington's Operational and Program-Specific Workforce Plan Components and Key Strategic Priorities. The intent is to serve more students and serve them more efficiently in order to transition them as quickly as possible to postsecondary education and living-wage careers.

In 2014, the Washington state WIOA Title II funding methodology shifted the funding formula from a regional need based demographic methodology (based solely on census data) to a service and performance-based formula giving equal weight to service/access and to performance. The past state plan and federal funding formula did not recognize providers that expanded service to serve more students, nor did it include any metrics on performance. The FY17-FY22 and the FY22-27 formulas shift funding from regional demographics towards providers enrolling more students and increasing the numeracy, literacy and college and career readiness skills of participants. This service and performance-based formula is focused on increasing the number of students being served and the quality of that service.

FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The following funding principles were developed as a result of comprehensive input from all stakeholders through statewide forums, online surveys, and provider groups in FY13 and FY14.

- Funding needs to be transparent and credible;

- Formula should be based on objective criteria (not local negotiations or regional need);

- Formula should incent transitions to postsecondary education;

- Formula should be data-driven, focused on increased access (FTEs) and increased success for students (Student Achievement Points [SAI]). Both total points and points per student should be considered; and,

- Providers must have the capacity to spend allotted performance money effectively.

METHODOLOGY*

Funds are distributed based on a pro rata share among providers for the following (3-yr avg. of data):

- 50% Performance based

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- o 10% Transitions

- o 20% Total Student Achievement Points

- o 20% SAI points per student

- 50% FTE Enrollment

*Providers seeking funding for the first time will be awarded base funding calculated only on the proposed number of students to be served (enrollment). In years 2-5 funding will be awarded based on both performance and enrollment.

A temporary 10% cap is instituted due to the pandemic, such that no provider can lose more than 10% of their funding from the prior year. This cap will remain in place until the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years have cycled out of the formula.

Special Rule

If SBCTC implements any rule or policy relating to the administration or operation of a program that imposes a requirement not demanded by Federal law, SBCTC shall identify the rule or policy as being imposed by SBCTC.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) Adult education; Literacy; Workplace adult education and literacy activities; Family literacy activities; English language acquisition activities; Integrated English literacy and civics education; Workforce preparation activities; or Integrated education and training that—
1. ***Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and***
2. ***Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.***

All services provided under Title II of this plan accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary certificates/degrees and life- sustaining jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington.

In Washington state, Basic Education for Adults (Title II) is being integrated as the foundations of the state's guided pathways development and implementation. In the above model, when a student tests into basic skills, they are assessed for skill levels, and whether or not a high school credential is needed. Their goals, interests, and meta-major (or broad industry sector or career pathway--like healthcare or business) are identified and a Title II and/or Workforce Development Council navigator assigned. Funding and support services are then identified, and an educational plan created. The earliest English language acquisition and basic skills learners are placed in foundational programming that are based in contextualized instruction and contextualizes college and career readiness to the different meta-majors available at the college.

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Then, when students are ready, they move into the college-level certificate or degree program within that meta-major. I-BEST is offered as a core of each meta-major at this level, providing the added academic and navigational support students need to be successful. Students in need of a high school credential are co-enrolled for dual credit in HS+, or receive their HS diploma upon completion of their two-year degree. Job search support is then provided by the local WorkSource center.

Description of Allowable Activities Overview

Washington's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners as they strengthen local communities and businesses. Adults who lack the skills and knowledge to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from Washington's postsecondary education system and economy are eligible to access adult education services in a variety of settings across the state. Core services are offered at all locations to adult learners who meet the federal eligibility requirements for enrollment. These learners:

- Have attained 16 years of age;

- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law;

- Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society;

- Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and/or,

- Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

Beginning in July 2015 under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.

Comprehensive interventions are designed to address skill and knowledge deficits across the levels defined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

Vision and leadership for this system of services comes from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). SBCTC is advised about issues related to students' career pathway goals by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB).

SBCTC is also advised and supported by the Washington State Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), which meets four times each year. This body was created by the legislature in 1991, and its members are appointed by the state governor to represent agencies, partners, and sectors. Represented entities include: a current or past Title II student, an Adult Basic Education provider, community-based organizations, employers, libraries, unions, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Corrections, Community and Technical Colleges, the Department of Health and

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Human Services, the Employment Security Department, the Governor, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Washington Workforce Association (WIBs), and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state WIB). The AEAC was the first officially certified state advisory council when it was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in March of 1997.

Building on policies and initiatives created through this comprehensive system of advising, coordination and support, providers leverage success using innovative processes that have gained recognition in formal research among colleagues and funders across the nation as well as from then President Obama. These processes unify and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English Language Acquisition (ELA) instruction, and high school credential programs. Following are examples of research-based innovative practices that support the implementation and scaling of college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth.

The Comprehensive Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Pathway

Professional/technical and academic programs at all 34 colleges provide adults with skills, knowledge and certificates/degrees through innovative education and career pathways that lead to employment, additional education and success in their workplaces, families, and communities– all contributing to a stronger workforce and society.

I-BEST – Foundation for Innovations in Teaching and Learning at Every Level

Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST) is a nationally recognized model that quickly boosts students' literacy and work and college readiness skills, so students earn credentials, get living wage jobs, and put their talents to work for Washington's employers. This innovation successfully challenges the traditional notion that students must complete basic education before starting to earn credits in job-training or academic programs.

I-BEST pairs two instructors in the classroom – one to teach professional and technical or credit-bearing academic content and the other to teach basic skills in areas of reading, math, writing or English language. I-BEST programs develop skills in the contexts of specific jobs and college programs, enabling students to move through college, earn credentials, and get jobs faster.

This research-based program was named a Bright Idea by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2011 and has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as the most significant innovation in the last 20 years. According to a December, 2012 report by the Community College Research Center, I-BEST programs provide benefits that justify additional costs.

 Research conducted separately by the Community College Research Center and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board found that I-BEST students outperform similar students enrolled in traditional basic skills programs. I-BEST students are:

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- 3 times more likely to earn college credits.

- 9 times more likely to earn a workforce credential.

- Employed at double the hours per week (35 hours versus 15 hours).

- Earning an average of $2,310 more per year than similar adults who did not receive basic skills training.

- More than 5,000 Washington students are enrolled in I-BEST programs annually.

I-BEST is being replicated and implemented across the country. Washington's community and technical college system has provided information and assistance to 33 other states seeking to adopt I-BEST and similar programs. These include Minnesota, Indiana, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Maine, and Texas.

In support of expanded access to I-BEST pathways, the SBCTC Website provides all stakeholders including students and workforce partners with 24/7 access to a data base that provides current and detailed information on the I-BEST programs available across the entire state and connects them with the local contacts for additional information.

Contextualized Instruction leading to I-BEST – Increasing Transitions from Levels 1, 2 and 3

Funded providers use key elements of I-BEST programs, e.g., contextualization, team teaching, enhanced student services, and articulated college and career pathways, to increase the speed at which students master basic, ELA, and employability skills at federal levels 1, 2 and 3.

Contextualized Instruction options include, but are not limited to:

- Programs focused on career clusters or pathways;

- Partnership efforts between colleges and community-based organizations and local workforce development councils (WIBs);

- I-BEST@Work projects for incumbent workers that partner providers, employers and WIBs;

- I-DEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration) that delivers ELA instruction using a flipped classroom model with 50% of instruction online.

Students in contextualized instruction classes are able to acquire the skills needed to transition to basic skills education classes at federal levels 4-6 and/or I-BEST pathways. High School + (HS+), Washington's competency-based high school diploma program which awards credit for prior learning, military training, and work experience, functions in combination with I-BEST as a dual credit program, allowing students to earn college credits that count toward Washington state high school graduation requirements.

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Professional/Technical I-BEST – Moving Students from Levels 4, 5 and 6 to Postsecondary Success in Professional/Technical Programs

Students who function primarily at federal levels 4 – 6 can be served in Professional/Technical I-BEST programs that result in recognized certificates leading to progression along a defined educational and career pathway. These programs are available at every Washington community and technical college, often in partnership with local community-based organizations and increasingly as part of the education services at state correctional facilities.

Expanded Professional Technical and Academic I-BEST Programs – Moving Students from Levels 4, 5, and 6 to Postsecondary Success in Academic Programs

Expanded Professional Technical I-BEST and Academic I-BEST programs employ the same strategies as professional technical I-BEST. They apply these strategies to credit-bearing classes along 2-year degree pathways and ensure accelerated student progress through higher levels of adult education and precollege education and transition into 2-year degree programs. Students in Washington state completing a two-year degree also earn a Washington state high school diploma.

Expanding Options for High School Credentials – Diplomas and Equivalencies

In light of changes to options for acquiring high school credentials made by the federal government and the growing importance of these certificates and high school diplomas, Washington state has expanded the options available to adults. Our goal is to ensure that adult learners acquire the necessary credentials by gaining the knowledge and skills demanded in the workforce and required for postsecondary success.

Toward that end, Washington will continue to award state certificates linked to the recognized high school equivalency state exam. In addition, the state will continue to support two pathways to diplomas awarded by colleges that address different populations and have been in place for many years. Adults can earn a diploma through a high school completion program or request a diploma at the time they are awarded a two-year degree.

To ensure that adults have access to a rigorous, affordable high school diploma program that reflects the knowledge, skills, and experience of adults and provides equity pedagogy and curricula, Washington's High School+ (HS+) expands the pathways offered by community and technical colleges and community-based organizations with a comprehensive, competency-based approach tailored to adult learning styles. HS+ is for adult learners (18 years of age and older) who do not have a recognized high school diploma. It is designed to move adults into I-BEST programs or other postsecondary training and education and to provide the skills needed to support lifelong learning. The program awards credit for prior learning, military training, and work experience. Because it's competency-based, students can move quickly as outcomes are met, saving both time and money.

Programs are encouraged to pilot and implement additional evidence and research-based strategies for college and career pathways that meet the goals of this plan.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation has offered the opportunity to create the workforce development system that will serve Washington's employers and current and future jobseekers for decades to come. WIOA further defines and expands targeted services that accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary certificates/degrees and living-wage jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington. All Basic Education for Adults providers are required to develop a grant continuation plan annually to demonstrate strategies for full implementation of WIOA.

To guide this work, Basic Education for Adults continues to partner with the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) established by the Governor as the guiding body for the development of a combined state plan and implementation of WIOA across the four core programs, TANF, and Perkins V. This work continues to be led by the State Workforce Board (WTECB) at the state level and the regional Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) at the local level with representation from all core programs. In addition to guiding the implementation of WIOA, agencies are committed to ensuring that the implementation fully supports Governor Inslee's three fundamental goals:

1. Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.

2. Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

3. Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

Under their guidance, transition efforts for Title II, Basic Education for Adults in Washington has been able to fully implement the requirements of WIOA. In October 2014, Washington State officially adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for all Basic Education for Adults programming funded under WIOA. The implementation of the CCR Standards provides clear expectations for students and the guidance needed to improve curriculum and instruction. Implementation also identifies the professional development required to help staff develop expertise to implement the standards. The CCR Standards strategically link basic education for adults, postsecondary education, and the world of work. The standards require the implementation of the critical skills and knowledge expected by employers and are required for success in workforce training, postsecondary education, and employment in the 21st Century.

Every provider is required to submit a grant continuation transition plan annually that details how the provider has fully implemented WIOA activities. The plan is required to include as a minimum the scope, content, organization of the local activities listed below and provide assurance of alignment with local Workforce Development Councils' regional plan and goals.

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- Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

- Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs. Plans must include:

  o Implementation of the CCR Standards in all programming;

  o Integration of employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels;

  o Implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST into all Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) instruction;

  o Integration of reading strategies instruction at all levels in all courses;

  o Expansion of mathematic, speaking, and listening into all levels of both Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA) programming; and,

  o Integration of digital literacy and digital skill-building into instruction through services and delivery systems

- Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding;

- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development;

- Improve labor market relevance;

- Improve the structure of service delivery; and,

- Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

To support implementation of local WIOA continuation plans, all providers have access to system-wide professional development. They have also been and will continue to be provided with a plan to engage faculty and staff in system-wide program and professional development leadership activities that provide guidance for critical implementation and expansion of the requirements of WIOA. The following professional and program development activities are in place:

- Team Teacher Training for all programming (ABE, ELA, HS +, Foundational pathway On-Ramps to I-BEST, I-BEST@Work, and I-BEST) to support integrated employment and training activities for future and incumbent workers;

- Training in distance education;

- Equitable Math Pathways;

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- ABC's of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and ongoing trainings with related topics including age, gender, race, and equity-informed leadership;

- Series on navigational services

- Data Disaggregation 101;

- Trauma-informed Andragogy;

- Training in Integrated Digital English Acceleration, a hybrid, flipped classroom ESL program contextualized to the CCRS and digital literacy; and

- Braided Funding with workforce for co-enrolled ABE students.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Corrections Education in Washington state is provided by the community and technical college system through a contract by the state Department of Corrections with the Washington Community and Technical Colleges. No Title II funds are spent on corrections education in Washington state. The average justice-involved individual entering a Washington state prison scores at an eighth-grade level or lower in basic literacy skills. Roughly half are unemployed, and nearly a quarter lack a verified high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. In order to meet the educational and employment needs of offenders, the Department of Corrections contracts with the Washington Community and Technical Colleges to provide basic skills, job training certificate and degree programs, and AA/AAS degrees at each of the state's 12 adult prisons, with the goal of making inmates more likely to obtain viable jobs and thus less likely to return to prison. During this past year, nearly 8,587 incarcerated individuals participated in educational opportunities offered by Washington state community and technical colleges.

Students in Washington's College in the Prisons programs have access to the same quality programs as offered on our community college campuses. AFELA Title II funds are not used to fund prison programs. All Correction Education programs in Washington are funded through a contract with the Washington Department of Corrections. In 2011-12, the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model was piloted in the Specialty Baking program at Clallam Bay Corrections Center. Currently four I-BEST programs are up and running in correctional facilities with plans to significantly expand I-BEST and dual credit options in the next year. In addition to I-BEST, Washington's College in the Prisons programs offer the same programming as traditional Basic Education for Adults and workforce training programs in the community and technical college system. Washington state currently has two two-year degree programs operating on private funds at two institutions and three Second Chance Pell Pilots in operation at three institutions.

- Programming in correctional facilities include:

- Adult Basic Education

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- High School+ (HS+) and equivalency

- Vocational programming

- English Language Acquisition/Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I-DEA)

- Limited AA degree programs

- Offender Change programs

- Re-entry navigational services on-site in all facilities and in eight community and technical colleges and one university

On average, inmates who participate in correction education programs have 43% lower odds of returning to prison than inmates who do not, according to a 2013 study by the RAND Corporation.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Since July 1, 2017, full implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST or I-BEST@Work have been required to be implemented into all Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) instruction. This will continue under the 2023-2027 grant. All IELCE Programs are required to be implemented in combination with integrated education and training activities. Programs are monitored on an on-going basis to ensure compliance. IELCE is required to support the development of co-enrolled integrated employment and training activities (e.g., I-BEST, I-BEST@Work, incumbent worker training, etc.). I-BEST is designed for English language learners (and other individuals with basic skills needs) – the team teaching contextualizes English language and other basic skills to training for a living wage, in-demand job. Local programs collaborate with their WDCs to provide joint navigational and wraparound supports and additional employability skills support.

Application for Extension of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education of Current Providers

The SBCTC ran an open competition in 2022 to identify providers for the 2022-2027 grant period. Providers applied for "master" and IELCE grants, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, jointly in a single application. Both master and IELCE grants needed to demonstrate effectiveness in serving target populations (using either federal data generated by current providers or comparable data submitted by new applicants), and applications were sent in full to local boards for review prior to application approval in a process designed in collaboration with the Washington Workforce Association. Each eligible organization desiring a continuation submits a Grant Continuation Application annually containing required information and assurances. In addition to the annual continuation application for the BEdA Master Grant, the SBCTC requires an annual continuation application for IELCE programming. Each eligible organization selected under the open competition in 2022 and subsequent continuation

applications, submitted an application containing required information and assurances, including:

- A description of how Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent;

- A description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one-stops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities; and,

- A continuation plan detailing the implementation of the required Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education WIOA Activities to be provided.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

Washington state's combined plan addresses the activities that are required to be undertaken to meet the requirements of Section 223 of WIOA to promote transitions from adult education to postsecondary education and training through career pathways. Under the combined plan, all Basic Education for Adults providers are required to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the adult education and literacy WIOA activities including the four new required national leadership activities to develop or enhance the adult education system across the state.

All funded providers were required to detail the process that is used to collaborate with all stakeholders and align Basic Education for Adults programming in their 2022-2027 competitive grant. They were required to develop plans with all partners named in the combined state plan. These plans are updated annually in their grant continuation applications. Eligible providers must provide services in alignment with local plans detailing how they will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs and activities in order to meet the state adjusted levels of performance and collect data to report on performance indicators. In addition, all providers are required to describe how they will fulfill one-stop responsibilities in their region. As members of local Workforce Development Boards, local providers participate in ongoing plan development and implementation of WIOA.

The following transition activities have been underway since 2014 in Washington to meet the four newly required state leadership activities requirements of WIOA:

1. The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, to implement the strategy identified in the combined state plan under section 103, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. The following activities have been completed or are underway in support:

- The Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB)

established a highly inclusive committee structure to identify key areas of work and implementation planning. Basic Education for Adults is represented on each of the committees with local providers being engaged as needed. The committees include:

- o Steering Committee: members include WTECB, Business, Labor, all core programs, Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO), TANF, and the SBCTC. This committee's work includes creating the WIOA vision and goals, state and local plan development, state policies and guidance to facilitate integrated services development, funding formula guidance, One-Stop certification and evaluation criteria, oversight of work plans and timelines, facilitation of communication state-to-state, local-to-state, local-to-local, and among WIOA implementation committees, and state legislative issues.

- o Committee for Sector Strategies to Close Skill Gaps in the Workplace: members include WTECB, Educational Service Districts (ESD), Business, Labor, all core programs, Washington Workforce Association (WWA), Commerce, CLEO, SBCTC, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).This committee's work includes regional designation and governance, data analysis, local workforce development council designations, local board configuration, and sector strategy and industry engagement.

- o Committee for Performance Accountability and Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Committee: members include WTECB, BEdA, DVR, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), WWA, business, labor, and all core programs. This committee's work includes alignment of current systems to WIOA for all core programs, establishment of procedures for WIOA performance target setting, alignment of ETPL with WIOA, and the development of performance criteria for Youth and On the Job Training (OJT) programming.

- o Committee for Education and Career Pathways through Integrated Service Delivery Models: members include WTECB, business, labor, all core programs, all relevant DSHS divisions, Commerce, NASCAP, OSPI, SBCTC, L&I/Apprenticeship, WWA, local and state stakeholders, and other industry partnerships.

In addition to Washington's WIOA committee structure, the following activities are in place to meet the alignment requirement. These activities include:

- Annual BEdA system-wide trainings on the development and implementation of college and career pathways. These trainings were developed and expanded to support WIOA and the state plan requirement to implement college and career readiness pathways for all basic skills students;

- SBCTC in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) facilitated work sessions with regional core program partners. Thirteen regional sessions

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were completed in the twelve WDC regions;

- WDCs facilitated work sessions on WIOA collaboration at the summer and fall 2015 Council of Basic Skills (CBS) meetings;

- Washington's Governor appointed Adult Basic Education Advisory Council (AEAC) has worked on an on-going basis to identify, develop, and expand the establishment of local shared navigational support systems to students. This has resulted in a state-wide *Student Aid Funding Guide for Navigators, Advisors, Coaches, & Pathway Planners*.

2. The establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs to improve the instruction... and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs Washington state implements quality programs and professional development to support all BEdA state initiatives through various means. Federal leadership dollars are granted to providers in support of professional and program development initiatives that include:

- Team Teacher Training for all programming (ABE, ELA, HS +, Foundational pathway On-Ramps to I-BEST, I-BEST@Work, and I-BEST) to support integrated employment and training activities for future and incumbent workers;

- Training in distance education;

- Equitable Math Pathways;

- Series on navigational services

- Data Disaggregation 101;

- Trauma-informed Andragogy;

- Training in Integrated Digital English Acceleration, a hybrid, flipped classroom ESL program contextualized to the CCRS and digital literacy; and

- Braided Funding with workforce for co-enrolled ABE students.

3. The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, include:

- The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, IET and IELCE, and staff training. Current initiatives include:

  o Washington's adoption in October 2014 of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards as the basis for all instruction. Full implementation was accomplished as of 2017. Annual training continues with system-wide professional development provided;

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- o Team teaching and contextualized instruction training for I-BEST and any contextualized program of study;

- o Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I-DEA), which is a hybrid instructional model based on the flipped classroom, providing problem solving activities in technology rich environments. Students have access to laptop computers, Chromebooks, or tablets by which they complete 50% of their instruction online prior to attending class. Curriculum including language acquisition, rights and responsibilities of citizens and workforce training is thus available around the clock for ELA levels 1-3. Unlike traditional approaches in which students must learn English before pursuing job-training, I-DEA teaches English in tandem with college and career skills. This program has intensive training and implementation component in addition to on-going program support from SBCTC;

- o Training in distance education instructional tools and strategies;

- o Training in building equitable math pathways with articulations, co-requisite and I-BEST models;

- o Training on DEI including ABC's of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and ongoing trainings with related topics including age, gender, race, and equity-informed leadership;

- o Training in trauma-informed andragogy;

- Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

  - o To enhance system efficiencies, Washington conducts trainings through web meeting tools such as Zoom. Staff have been trained in using the tools.

  - o SBCTC also offers training in the online management system, CANVAS for faculty and staff wanting to enhance instruction with technology in the classroom. SBCTC also offers Accessibility Micro Courses and Open Educational Resources (OER 101) training to faculty and staff to ensure that materials developed are open and accessible.

  - o A major focus is on increasing instruction in problem solving in technology rich environments and digital literacy/digital skill-building. Initiatives currently under way that support this work include:

    - ▪ I-DEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration), which has transformed ELA instruction using a flipped classroom model and 50% online instruction; and,

  - o System-wide training on implementing the flipped classroom model significantly

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increasing access to online learning opportunities.

4. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information:

- Washington state has developed a robust monitoring cycle that reviews programs every year. Programs receive commendations, recommendations, and any corrective actions. Corrective actions require a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) that is submitted with a timeline of actions and dates. BEdA staff monitor each CAP and work in consultation with professional development and pathway development teams for technical assistance and training the provider might need to meet the conditions of the CAP. We discuss as a team and highlight schools either for increased support/risk management or as schools to be referred to when Washington state needs to tap our most innovative and effective adult education programs.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

(e.2) Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The State may use funds on one or more of the following permissible activities of State-wide significance:

- The support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers.

- The development and implementation of technology applications, translation technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology.

- Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults.

- Developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways. H. R. 803—192

- The provision of assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3).

- The development and implementation of a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education.

- Integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers.

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- Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities.

- Identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that— (i) specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and (ii) take into consideration the following: (I) State adopted academic standards. (II) The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State or outlying area. (III) The primary indicators of performance described in section 116. (IV) Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the State or outlying area. (V) Where appropriate, the content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State or outlying area.

- Developing and piloting strategies for improving teacher quality and retention.

- The development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels.

- Outreach to instructors, students, and employers.

- Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

In addition to the WIOA Common Performance Measures, the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the state include the following current efforts in Washington:

- Quarterly desk monitoring by SBCTC to identify coding issues, system reporting and program outcomes;

- Annual focused professional development based on system need, demonstrated through program monitoring visits and provider requests. Professional Development is offered regionally on topics related to the full implementation and continuation of WIOA required programming elements. Each session is followed with participant evaluation, which is reviewed and implemented to improve future training. Also, SBCTC maintains full participant lists for all trainings to review and gauge provider participation and penetration on the topics;

- SBCTC also conducts program monitoring visits for each provider every four years and provides ongoing technical assistance. In addition, regular fiscal reviews are done for all funded programs; and,

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- Washington State has established a nationally recognized, comprehensive Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) and performance accountability system comprised of measures to assess the effectiveness of all eligible agencies in achieving continuous improvement in adult education and literacy activities. The Student Achievement Initiative measures levels of performance against the core indicators in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and builds upon the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board Performance Management for Continuous Improvement (PMCI) system.

Eligible Agency Performance Measures

The primary core indicator for measuring the effectiveness of adult education programs is performance in increasing the basic skills and college and career readiness of participants during each program year.

Federal student functioning level criteria are defined in the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). These describe what the basic skills adult learners need to know and be able to do at each Adult Education and English Language Acquisition (ELA) level. Basic skills providers and WIOA partners use high school credit accrual or CASAS as the instrument to standardize protocols for accurately and consistently measuring substantive gain within and completion of Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs).

Performance measures consist of the core performance indicators that at a minimum measure the following:

- Demonstrated improvement in or completion of EFLs in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;

- Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement; and,

- Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Data is collected and reported through the Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System (WABERS+). This provides valid, reliable, and consistent data for evaluating performance by all providers.

Upon entry into adult education and literacy programs, all basic skills adults participate in orientation and goal-setting and are screened with the CASAS appraisal exam or placed based on the number of high school credits the individual has upon entry. Students' assessed entry levels are rarely the same for each discrete content area. For reporting purposes, each student's entry competency level is their lowest EFL.

Local providers document initial placement, substantive gains, achievements, and completions of basic skills EFLs using mandated standard assessment protocols defined in the Washington

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State Adult Basic Education Assessment Policy. Data on Follow-up Measures (SPLs, HSD/HSE, entered postsecondary education/training, entered employment, and retained employment) as well as wage progression are obtained through data matching and will be available one year or more after an individual student's actual participation in adult education and literacy programs.

The Washington State Legislature requires basic skills providers to calculate and report on a quarterly basis "substantive gains" in basic skills EFLs demonstrated by all participants. Substantive gains are defined as completion of an EFL, completion of a contextualized learning project, and/or the attainment of skills associated with a subject area within an EFL.

The SBCTC Research Department in collaboration with BEdA has developed an extensive series of dashboards that provide data on student and course enrollment, demographics, and student progress and completions customized to the reporting for Title II. The information is available in dashboard formats with multiple years. This provides access that allows Title II providers, students, the public, and workforce stakeholders 24/7 access to program data. Dashboards give system, provider, and program level data in both aggregate and disaggregated formats. SBCTC Research also provides focused analyses on Title II topical issues and conducts policy research on BEdA programming that can be used by both the BEdA Office and local providers to monitor programs.

Optional – Additional Indicators

Moving students up in the world – Washington's nationally renowned Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) rewards colleges and approved community-based organization (CBO) providers for moving all students further and faster in college and increasing student success. Providers earn a portion of their funding based on results, not just enrollments. Providers earn points and funding when students reach key academic momentum points, such as significant basic skills gains, attaining a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, finishing college-level math, completing the first year of college, or earning a degree or certificate. The goal is to propel students to and through the "tipping point" – the level of education that means the difference between struggling in a low-wage job and having a viable career.

Moving students past basic skills and into college – The new approach recognizes that students who have below high school level math, reading and English language skills have a more challenging educational journey. Under this approach, basic skills students who reach academic milestones will be awarded one point more than other students who reach the same levels.

How will momentum points be calculated?

Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, points are awarded each time a college student reaches one of the following momentum points.

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Colleges earn achievement points every time a student reaches a certain level of achievement. These levels of achievement are called momentum points because each achievement is likely to propel students to another achievement.

SAI momentum points work in succession. The steps are:

- Momentum points start with basic skills students. Colleges earn points when basic skills students make nationally recognized level gains in math, English language, or reading as measured by pre- and post-testing or competency-based High School Credit assessments. Students also earn momentum points by earning a high school diploma or equivalency certificate as well as upon completion of six college-level credits.

- The next momentum points are completion of the first 15 and 30 college credits.

- The next momentum point is completion of five college-level credits in English or writing.

- The next momentum point is completion of five college-level math credits in computation, math, or logic.

- The next momentum point is completion of 45 college credits in either an academic transfer or professional-technical pathway, which is one year.

- The final momentum point is completion of certificates, degrees, and apprenticeships.

In addition, the state recognizes the achievement gaps of our historically underserved students and have followed best practice policy recommendations in performance-based funding by providing a focus on these populations. Basic Skills students, low-income, and students-of-color receive additional points when achieving certain milestones. These milestones include the first 15 college-level credits and completion of apprenticeship awards and associate degrees.

If the student reaching this momentum point started in basic skills, an additional point will be awarded.

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G. ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

H. ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing	Yes

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programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

I.   AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

Forms will be submitted to the email address below.

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter information in this column**
First Name	William
Last Name	Durden
Title	Director, Basic Education for Adults
Email	wdurden@sbctc.edu

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J. SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

Washington's SBCTC Office of Basic Education for Adults (BEdA) ensures equal opportunities to participate for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in any project or activity carried out under the applicable program, such as adult basic education, and promotes the ability of such students, teachers, and beneficiaries to meet high standards.

The office also ensures equitable access to, and participation in, all projects and activities conducted with federal adult education funds. Programs address the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to programming and participation, including those based on race, gender, sexual orientation, color, national origin, disability, and age.

BEdA only develops and promotes curricula that are accessible, open educational resources that draw on universal design principles. All of our meeting, training and curriculum materials are made accessible, and we provide support for accommodations in both remote and f2f trainings. Zoom meetings are accessible. We have a staff person whose role is the accessibility coordinator, consulting with other trainers on how to make their materials accessible, and interfacing with the agency accessibility Policy Associate to ensure that BEdA knows the latest in accessible technology and policy.

As part of our RFP process, providers respond to a question targeted to meet the goals of Section 247 and upload a separate assurances doc that includes their institutional GEPA statement.

K. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	27.0	30.1	28.0	31.1
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	27.0	30.1	28.0	31.1
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	4,975.0	4,975.0	5,275.0	5,275.0
Credential Attainment Rate	44.0	44.0	45.0	45.0
Measurable Skill Gains	47.0	40.0	48.0	45.0

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Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1 *"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications*

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PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

[   ] (A) is an independent State commission.
[X] (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

Introduction

This section is developed in partnership between the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSCR) and the Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR). Included are recommendations of the WSRC and the response of DSHS/DVR provided during FYY 2023-2024.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC)

The WSRC partners with DSHS/DVR to provide feedback and advocates to improve vocational rehabilitation services in Washington state.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), updated information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, the beginning dates of each representative's term, and any vacancies.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	Vacant	
Parent Training and Information Center	2	October 2018
Client Assistance Program	2	June 2021
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	2	May 2020
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	2	April 2019
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	October 2021
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	January 2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	2	February 2020
Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	
Disability Advocacy Groups	1	January 2023
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	Vacant	

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Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	2	January 2017
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1	May 2022
State Workforce Development Board	1	May 2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	1	August 2023

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council holds quarterly meeting requirements as indicated in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. WSRC meetings are focused on providing guidance and advocacy to improve vocational rehabilitation services and make recommendations about important or emerging issues.

The WSRC continuously works toward ensuring composition requirements are met through marketing and outreach efforts to fill vacant positions as follows:

- Current or former recipient of services: We have multiple candidate applications that are in the process of scheduling interviews with the WSRC Executive committee. We have identified one candidate to fill this position and are awaiting appointment by the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions.

- Business, Industry, or Labor: Recruitment efforts include outreach to the business and labor community through connections with our current members, meetings with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Business Relations team, and various stakeholder meetings.

- Statewide Independent Living Council: This representative position became vacant at the end of the previous member's term on September 30th, 2023. Council staff is in communication with SILC leadership to fill this position and recently attended their quarterly meeting in October 2023 to share with their members about the scope of this role, time commitment, and application steps.

WSRC's website and marketing materials provide information about representative positions, time commitments and purpose of the council. Council Director is available for informational interviews with community members interested in learning more about the role and commitment involved. The Council also shares recruitment updates at stakeholder meetings we attend with workforce partners, field staff, and community partners.

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In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

WSRC Item 1 – May 2022

The WSRC recommends implementing the Counselor Reassignment Best Practices Checklist as developed by the Policy & Planning subcommittee to support proactive communication with customers when they experience a counselor change. Customers experience significant impacts to the continuity of services when there is a counselor reassignment. The Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation subcommittee has received a significant level of feedback over the years in our Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Focus Groups, and Listening Sessions about this issue. The primary objective of the checklist is to ensure customers are informed when their case is reassigned and that there is continuous case progress. This recommendation is also in support of Goal One in the 2020-2023 State Plan indicating that Customer Service & Outcomes are DSHS/DVR's Highest Priority along with the strategies to identify and address barriers, timely services, and continuous case progress throughout the VR process.

As advocates for DSHS/DVR customers, we believe implementation of a statewide consistent practice will assist in addressing the State Plan goal as well as increase customer satisfaction.

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item 1

DSHS/DVR acknowledges there has been significant staffing shortages that also impact counselor change. In addition to a plethora of other recruitment efforts, beginning the spring of 2023, DSHS/DVR began recruiting and filling VRC Float positions across local offices. These VRCs work with customers in locations with staff capacity concerns. They provide services remotely and in person, traveling within the region as necessary to meet customers' needs. This allows for timely service and continuous progress for customers, as offices are getting new staff onboarded and up to speed. DSHS/DVR also implemented automatic replies to outgoing staff emails, so customers know who to contact when their counselor has left the agency.

Part of the work of implementing a new case management system was to ensure a standard operating procedure for contacting customers when their case is being transferred. While not yet in place, the new database has the capability to automatically produce letters for customers, which can be processed and mailed by support personnel to ensure timely communication. Further, now that the case management system is in place, work is being done to review the

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operating procedures, processes, and checklists with the goal of aligning a non-paper procedure with field practice and the new management system that can be trained to all staff.

WSRC Item 2 – April 2023

The WSRC recommends implementation of Rapid Engagement as a best practice to maximize the likelihood that customers will be active participants throughout the VR process. As part of Council responsibilities, we administer a quarterly customer satisfaction survey to customers in the following case status. One of the questions that we ask in the survey is "DVR moves quickly enough for me", and consistently it is the lowest rated score on the survey. In FFY22 the statewide results for this question range from 58-62%. In support of this recommendation, we encourage technology modernization including implementation of digital and/or electronic signatures as well as advancing records retention technology such as email to text and cell phone to text.

DSHS/DVR Response to WSRC Item 2

In response to the WSRC led Rapid Engagement Listening Sessions, DSHS/DVR authorized and implemented an electronic signature and forms management system called DocuSign in August of 2023. This implementation was an explicit recommendation following these listening sessions. DocuSign allows for filling out forms digitally and digital signature on various DVR forms: Applications, consent forms, Eligibilities, Plans for Employment, and other DSHS/DVR forms to be completed in real time, and facilitates expedited services. This has significantly reduced the administrative burden of gathering physical signatures from staff, customers, partners, and families. We continue to expand these electronic forms management systems to add various forms and are planning the transition and Pre-ETS implementation. At the time of writing 1,491 forms have been signed using the new system. In addition to electronic signature, DSHS/DVR field leadership have also encouraged meaningful engagement and using counselor judgement when applicable for processes like determining eligibility, completing a timely IPE, and determining t the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of these services.

Part of training staff on critical and flexible strategies without compromising responsibilities of VR counselors at key points in the DSHS/DVR process, staff were deployed to conduct statewide Washington Administrative Code Training in-person for all field staff with the goal of providing said staff with autonomy, authority, and consistent practices to contribute to customer retention, timely provision of needed and valued services, along with long-term success and customer satisfaction. These successes could improve agency performance, maximize expenditure of available funds, and increase in provision of pre-employment transition services.

Critical organizational change management and culture shifting has been underway at DSHS/DVR in order to better support the above listed efforts.

Summary of Customer Satisfaction

Between October 1, 2022, and September 30th, 2023, customer satisfaction input was gathered through Customer Satisfaction Survey and Customer Listening Sessions.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

In 2023, we are in our third year partnering with Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center to administer the DSHS/DVR Customer Satisfaction Survey. In effort to ensure we are supporting best practices in language accessibility, we are offering the survey in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, English, Farsi, Korean, Laotian, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrigna, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

Our survey asks customers the following seven questions, allowing them the opportunity to rate their responses on a five-point Likert scale:

1. My counselor does a good job keeping in touch with me.

2. My counselor understands what is important to me.

3. My counselor understands how my disability affects me.

4. My counselor cares about my input.

5. DVR moves quickly enough for me.

6. Overall, I am satisfied with DVR.

    a. Open end comment for dissatisfied customers.

7. Comment box with option to share additional comments with DVR.

DSHS/DVR customers receive an invitation by mail and email to participate in our survey via a web portal or a phone-in option. Customers are surveyed in three of the four phases of the Vocational Rehabilitation process: plan, closed-employed and closed-other.

The council shares survey results and comment highlights with DSHS/DVR leadership and partners at each of our quarterly meetings. We look forward to seeing how DSHS/DVR's adoption of Results, an Enterprise Performance Management System, will elevate staff access and awareness of survey data to support informed decision and discussion to make improvements in service delivery.

The survey is sent to a randomized sample of customers on a quarterly basis. We are reporting results from the question "Overall, I am satisfied with DVR" for FFY22 3rd quarter through FFY23 2nd quarter with a total of 1,647 respondents.

*   FFY22 3rd quarter – April to June 2022 (Response Rate 35%)

    o   Region 1 – 74% (Margin of Error +/- 9%)

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- o Region 2 – 66% (Margin of Error +/- 7%)
- o Region 3 – 58% (Margin of Error +/- 9%)
- o Statewide – 65% (Margin of Error +/- 5%)

- FFY22 4th quarter – July to September 2022 (Response Rate 35%)

  - o Region 1 – 79% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
  - o Region 2 – 70% (Margin of Error +/- 7%)
  - o Region 3 – 72% (Margin of Error +/- 7%)
  - o Statewide – 73% (Margin of Error +/- 4%)

- FFY23 1st quarter – October to December 2022 (Response Rate 44%)

  - o Region 1 – 75% (Margin of Error +/- 7%)
  - o Region 2 – 70% (Margin of Error +/- 6%)
  - o Region 3 – 64% (Margin of Error +/- 7%)
  - o Statewide – 69% (Margin of Error +/- 4%)

- FFY23 2nd quarter – January to March 2023 (Response Rate 39%)

  - o Region 1 – 68% (Margin of Error +/- 9%)
  - o Region 2 – 73% (Margin of Error +/- 6%)
  - o Region 3 – 61% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
  - o Statewide – 68% (Margin of Error +/- 4%)

Customer satisfaction survey results from the question "DVR moves quickly enough for me" for FFY22 3rd quarter through FFY23 2nd quarter with a total of 1,647 respondents.

- FFY22 3rd quarter – April to June 2022 (Response Rate 35%)

  - o Region 1 – 62% (Margin of Error +/- 10%)
  - o Region 2 – 60% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
  - o Region 3 – 43% (Margin of Error +/- 9%)
  - o Statewide – 55% (Margin of Error +/- 5%)

- FFY22 4th quarter – July to September 2022 (Response Rate 35%)

  - o Region 1 – 65% (Margin of Error +/- 10%)
  - o Region 2 – 60% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
  - o Region 3 – 62% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
  - o Statewide – 62% (Margin of Error +/- 5%)

- FFY23 1st quarter – October to December 2022 (Response Rate 44%)

  - o Region 1 – 66% (Margin of Error +/- 10%)
  - o Region 2 – 59% (Margin of Error +/- 6%)

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- o Region 3 – 55% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
- o Statewide – 60% (Margin of Error +/- 4%)

- FFY23 2nd quarter – January to March 2023 (Response Rate 39%)

  - o Region 1 – 55% (Margin of Error +/- 10%)
  - o Region 2 – 65% (Margin of Error +/- 6%)
  - o Region 3 – 51% (Margin of Error +/- 8%)
  - o Statewide – 58% (Margin of Error +/- 4%)

Listening Sessions

Assistive Technology

In October 2022, council members held listening sessions with DSHS/DVR Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners and customers who have received their services. DSHS/DVR currently employs four ATAPs serving customers statewide with their assistive technology needs. Some examples of assistive technology include computer keyboards, laptops, accessibility software, vehicle modifications, etc. Some general themes we heard from customers include that their ATAP providers do an excellent job building rapport with their customers. Several customers expressed that services are provided in a caring and professional way. Customers feel "seen" and understood as a whole person. Their ATAPs understand the many ways their disability affects different aspects of their lives. ATAP providers are very knowledgeable and resourceful. Nearly every customer spoke about the high competencies of their provider, explaining that they felt they were in good hands because the ATAP is knowledgeable about what options of assistive technology would be best for their unique need.

Council members concluded that building awareness of ATAP services with DSHS/DVR staff can include further training for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to increase awareness and scope of ATAP services to support successful rehabilitation outcomes. Additionally, there is a great need for additional administrative support. Seven of the 10 participants spoke to how they can tell that their ATAP provider is very knowledgeable and capable, and how response times are often slow and other steps to receive their assistive technology devices are delayed because the ATAP must manage every aspect of process. Customers expressed their sincere understanding and awareness that staff manage high caseloads, but they pointed out the need for additional support for their ATAP provider.

Rapid Engagement

As the national conversation unfolds about the importance of meaningful engagement of customers throughout the vocational rehabilitation process, the council held listening sessions in March 2023 with executive leadership and field staff on the topic of rapid engagement.

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What is rapid engagement? As defined by the VRTAC-QM, it is "a strategy whereby individuals with disabilities are moved through the rehabilitation process (referral to application, application to eligibility determination, eligibility to IPE development) as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to maximize the likelihood that they will be active and full participants in their rehabilitation plans and achieve successful outcomes."

Why is rapid engagement important? As part of the council's responsibilities, we administer a quarterly customer satisfaction survey to customers in the following case status. One of the questions that we ask in the survey is whether "DVR moves quickly enough for me", and consistently it is the lowest-rated score on the survey. Vocational Rehabilitation programs are talking more about rapid engagement to seek new ways to meet customers' needs and increase engagement and retention of customers in the VR program.

To gather feedback from staff, the Council held a combination of individual meetings with leadership as well as four listening sessions. A total of 38 DSHS/DVR staff participated with representation from each region, and most job classes, including the director, regional administrators, supervisors, counselors, and rehabilitation technicians. DSHS/DVR staff shared best practices they were already utilizing and new ideas to support this effort. The council carefully analyzed all feedback received and categorized it into three main groups: technology, partnerships, and service delivery.

Technology: Staff addressed the need for additional and upgraded technology to allow for efficient service provision. Modern technology could greatly reduce the significant time staff spend tracking down and maintaining documentation, resulting in more time available to provide services to customers.

Partnerships: For rapid engagement to be effective, partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Department of Behavioral Health and Recovery services, workforce system, Tribal VR, the public school system, as well as other agencies, need to be utilized throughout the process—from intake to case closure. Working relationships between DSHS/DVR and CRPs need to be strengthened and restored. Additionally, consistent feedback from field staff supported the importance of strengthening Memorandums of Understanding with DSHS/DVR's partners.

Service Delivery: We heard how simple strategies can increase customer engagement and make work easier for staff throughout each aspect of the process, from application, intake and eligibility, to plan development and case progress.

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B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA)

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. <u>The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing with the State:</u>

Introduction

Washington DSHS/DVR contracted with the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation at the University of Washington, who conducted the comprehensive statewide needs assessment to identify the current and changing vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the state of Washington. Input was solicited from a broad spectrum of stakeholders including current customers, key informants, and DSHS/DVR staff. The data that appear in this report are relevant to the following activities:

- projecting needed services and redeployment of services,
- identifying common and unique needs of specific sub-populations,
- identifying perceived gaps in vocational rehabilitation services, and
- providing data and a rationale for the development of the State Plan and amendments to the Plan.
- Additional Process Details
- The four major activities of this assessment included:
- A review of existing data sources for the purpose of identifying and describing the target population and subpopulations statewide.
- Electronic surveys or individual interviews with DSHS/DVR customers in plan status served within the time frame July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. A total of 688 surveys were completed, including 90 transition aged customers.
- Electronic surveys of staff with 98 surveys completed.
- Key informant interviews with individuals identified as knowledgeable about the needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington. A total of 28 interviews were completed with more than 45 individuals participating.

A comparison of the common themes that emerged from the various data sources (key informant interviews, customer surveys, and staff) was conducted to validate the information gathered. The results of the surveys and interviews with customers, staff, and key informants were organized into seven categories:

- Barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities
- Services and service provision in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington
- Unserved and underserved populations
- Transition services to transition aged youth
- Partnerships with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), and other

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agencies/organizations that serve individuals with disabilities
- Provision of services through WorkSource to people with disabilities
- Business partnerships

Washingtonians Living with Disabilities

According to 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, 12.7% of the population reported a disability in Washington, which is the same percentage reported in the U.S. (12.7%). The percentage of males with a disability in Washington (12.8%) is slightly higher than the corresponding national percentage (12.5%) while the percentage of females with a disability (12.7%) is the same as the corresponding national percentage (12.7%).

When comparing the prevalence of disability for Washington and the U.S. by age, the prevalence of disability by age in Washington is similar to the percentages in the U.S. in all age ranges except the age range 18-34. The percentage of individuals living in Washington with a disability, ages 18-34 (1.6%) is slightly higher than the U.S. population (0.65%).

When comparing the prevalence by race/ethnicity and disability in Washington and the U.S. based on annual estimates of the resident population; April 1, 2020, to July 1, 2021, the prevalence of disability in Washington is higher than the U.S. in three categories, white, Asian, and other. The prevalence of disability for white Washingtonians (15.3%) is higher than in the U.S. (14.6%). The prevalence of disability for Washingtonians who identify as Asian (8.1%) is slightly higher than in the U.S. (7.7%). The prevalence of disability for Washingtonians who identify as Other (14.1%) is higher than in the U.S. (13.8%). The percentage of Washingtonians who identify as Hispanics with a disability is the same (8.9%) is lower than the percentage of Hispanics with a disability in the U.S. (10.1%).

When comparing the employment rates for individuals ages 18-64 who report a disability in Washington by race, ethnicity, and gender, the data for Native American/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander is not available.

The employment rates for people with disabilities in Washington is higher in most instances than the employment rates in the U.S., likely due to the stronger state economy. The employment gap is the difference in the percentage of individuals with and without disabilities who are employed. The employment gap is slightly higher for non-Hispanic Asians with disabilities living in Washington (32%) than the employment gap for non-Hispanic Asians with disabilities in the U.S. (30%) and Hispanics with disabilities living in Washington (36.5%) compared to the U.S. (32.8%). The employment gap is less for non-Hispanic Black individuals with disabilities (33.4%) than in the U.S. (40.3%).

In looking at employment rates for selected disability groups, the percentages are slightly higher than the U.S. rates. For individuals with a hearing disability ages 18 to 64 the employment rate is 55.9% in Washington compared to the U.S. (52%). For individuals with a cognitive disability, the

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employment rate in Washington is 29.6% compared to 29.1% in the U.S. and for individuals with a vision disability the employment rate in Washington is 46.9% compared to 45.5% in the U.S.

The American Community Survey collects and reports information on the most prevalent industries and occupations for individuals with and without disabilities. ACS asks respondents about their primary job, and for those individuals who have not worked in the last five years, their most recent job. Industries are categorized based on the North American Industry Classification system (NAICS) which is a publication of the Office of Management and Budget.

The percentage of people with disabilities working in the Education Service Industry in Washington is slightly higher (8.8%) than those individuals without disabilities (8.3%) and higher than people with disabilities in the U.S. (7.9%). In the Manufacturing Industry, the percentage of people with disabilities in Washington and in the U.S. is the same (9.9%) and higher than the percentage of people without disabilities (8.8%). The Retail Trade Industry and Office and Administrative Support Occupations follows the same trend. Two industries where the percentage of people with disabilities employed in Washington is less than those without disabilities and the U.S. rates are the Health Care & Social Assistance Industry and Sales and Related Occupations. The percentages for the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry for individuals with disabilities working in Washington (12.3%) is almost 2% less than individuals with disabilities in the U.S. (14.9%).

The gap in median earnings for workers with disabilities in Washington is approximately $8,428 when compared to those without disabilities. This gap in earnings in Washington is greater than found in the U.S. which is $7,719. This data does not include workers who did not work in the last 12 months or who worked less than full-time. As income may be skewed, the earnings are expressed by median earnings.

The American Community Survey collects information from individuals in creating statistics on poverty which is set as a dollar threshold by the U.S. Census Bureau. The poverty rate for individuals with disabilities in Washington State (25.5%) is less than the U.S. rates (27.8%); however, the gap between those with and without disabilities is larger in Washington (16.3%) compared to the U.S. (15.9%).

DSHS/DVR examined the demographic characteristics of Washington case service data for those in plan status July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and compares it to population estimates and demographic characteristics of individuals with disabilities in Washington. As indicated previously it is important to keep in mind individuals with disabilities may not wish to utilize the services of WA DSHS/DVR, may have disabilities that are not sufficiently severe to warrant DSHS/DVR services, or may voluntarily be out of the workforce. Furthermore, significant differences between the characteristics of the DSHS/DVR population of customers and the characteristics of the population of people with disabilities in the state indicate that further study beyond this report may be needed.

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Estimates made by the U.S. Census in 2020 found 942,827 individuals reported a disability in the state of Washington. In the period July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020, DSHS/DVR served 15,765 individuals (not including Pre-ETS). Data indicates that the percentage of open and closed cases during the period July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, identifying as men (57%) is higher than the percentage of women served during the same period (53%). The percentage of individuals with disabilities in Washington state is equally split at 49.5%.

DSHS/DVR assessed the full list of counties in Washington comparing DSHS/DVR cases and cases in plan July 1, 2020, through June 30th, 2021, with ACS estimates for people in the state who reported a disability in 2020. This information might be useful in planning for future resource distribution. Data Indicates those counties with the highest percentage of DSHS/DVR customers. The data show that a quarter of the DSHS/DVR cases were in King County (25%), followed by Pierce (11%) and Snohomish (9.6%). According to ACS data, Thurston and Spokane Counties have the highest percentage of people ages 18-64 reporting a disability relative to the entire population (16.0%) whereas King County has the lowest percentage of people reporting a disability (10%). The percentage of the population with a disability, ages 18-64 follows a similar pattern with Spokane and Thurston Counties with the highest rates (13.5% and 12.9%) and King County with the lowest percentage of people with disabilities ages 18-64 (7.4%).

As part of the contracted Comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the Center for Continuing Education conducted three separate surveys, including a customer survey, DSHS/DVR staff survey, and stakeholder interviews.

Barriers to Employment for Individuals with Disabilities

In analyzing the collected information, a couple of themes emerge regarding barriers to employment – organizational and societal. Examples of organizational issues include high staff turnover, inconsistency in the delivery of services across the state, and the complexity of DSHS/DVR's process (including Order of Selection). Societal barriers focus on infrastructure issues such as the lack of transportation in both rural and urban areas of the State. Other societal issues include the continuing attitudinal barriers individuals with disabilities experience, especially among employers.

Customers were asked to identify how their disability affects their ability to get a job, keep a job, or advance in their career development. The top three barriers identified include work tolerance, communication, and interpersonal skills. The three primary disabilities reported by customer respondents included Autism Spectrum Disorder, Mental Health/Psychiatric disability, and Intellectual disability. Non-disability related barriers reported by customers focused on education/training, job skills, available jobs, job-seeking skills, and employer attitudes. Other notable challenges reported by customers that make it difficult to get or keep a job or advance in a career include change in health condition and health management, COVID, the job market, and a need for flexible hours or lack of work history. Most customers (n=499; 80.6%) report DSHS/DVR services are provided in a convenient location and that they are easily able to get

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around the DSHS/DVR office building (n=445; 72.8%); however, a sizable proportion indicate they have never been to a DSHS/DVR office given the change to remote services due to COVID. Almost 76% (n=466) of customers indicate they can use technology or equipment and just over 92% (n=567) report they are able to communicate using their own language to participate in DSHS/DVR services.

The staff respondents identified three themes as barriers to achieving successful employment outcomes. These included social barriers, such as access to mental health care, society and employer attitudes, social support resources, physical/environmental barriers, family barriers, and communication. Personal barriers included severity of the disability, customer behavior, homelessness/housing, income, criminal background, and interpersonal skills. Transportation was identified as a third major barrier by staff. DSHS/DVR staff report the three main reasons customers might find it difficult to access DSHS/DVR services are not knowing about or having a limited understanding of DSHS/DVR services, transportation, and access to technology.

Finally, key informant participants identified some similar themes with the most frequently mentioned organizational barriers being the complexity of DSHS/DVR's processes, inconsistency among staff and service delivery approaches, staff turnover, and Order of Selection. Societal barriers identified by key informants included employer attitudes and general stigma about people who have disabilities as well as the lack of reliable transportation.

Customer Survey

A total of 4781 DSHS/DVR customers were sent the 2022 CSNA Customer Survey electronically or randomly selected to be contacted by phone from the no-email list to attain their perspectives regarding customer barriers to achieving their employment goals, DSHS/DVR service needs, most helpful services, remote services, WorkSource, and customer perspectives about how DSHS/DVR services can be improved. Six-hundred eighty-eight (N=688) customers responded to the survey for a response rate of 14.4% (688/4781). DSHS/DVR customers were asked questions to inquire about their experiences and needs related to barriers to employment.

Disability Barriers

Customers were asked to identify how their disability affects their ability to get a job, keep a job, or advance in their career. Disability-related functional limitations related to mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, and work skills are relatively well dispersed. Work tolerance (or being able to work for a sustained period, lift, stand, sit, tolerate stress), with the highest number of responses (n=365), communication (or being able to use formal language, spoken or sign, understand others, or be understood) (n=290), and interpersonal skills (or ability to interact and develop relationships with others) (n=286) are the top three identified disability-related barriers.

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Non-Disability Barriers

The top non-disability barriers reported by customers are education or training/credentials (n=287), followed by job skills (n=259), available jobs (n=251), job-seeking skills (n=222), and employer attitudes (n=207).

Services

In terms of timeliness of DSHS/DVR staff response and services, eighty-two percent (n=562) agree or strongly agree that DSHS/DVR staff answered their questions, responded to their requests, and were told of changes. About 86% (n=541) agree or strongly agree that DSHS/DVR staff provide accommodations needed to participate in DSHS/DVR services, and just over 91% (n=617) agree or strongly agree that DSHS/DVR staff are sensitive to their cultural background and identity. This last item received the highest rating in this area of DSHS/DVR staff response and services.

DSHS/DVR customers were asked to mark DSHS/DVR services they have found most helpful. Customers identified VR Counseling and Guidance, Assessment, and Job Search Assistance as the most helpful employment-related DSHS/DVR services. Similarly, the top three VR or related services identified by DSHS/DVR staff that are most needed by DSHS/DVR customers to achieve their employment goals include Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance, Job Placement services, and Training (college or university training and Occupational/Vocational training). DSHS/DVR customers rate the quality of employment-related DSHS/DVR services as very good (39%), followed by good (24%), acceptable (16%), poor (11%), and very poor (10%).

Customers were also surveyed about the quality of vocational rehabilitation (VR) counseling received. Almost 88% agree or strongly agree (n=600) that their DSHS/DVR counselor shared information in a way they could understand. This item received the highest rating percentage in quality of VR counseling. Whereas just over two thirds (n=457; 67.4%) agree or strongly agree that their DSHS/DVR counselor helped them understand their disability and how it may affect future work. This last question received the lowest rating percentage in quality of VR counseling.

The lack of transportation both in rural and urban areas seems to influence the delivery of services as well as impede customers in the pursuit of their employment goals. Overall, most respondents indicated that DSHS/DVR is an organization with dedicated staff who do a good job of serving individuals with disabilities in Washington with the current available resources. Furthermore, 479 customers provided additional comments to improve services and several key informants expressed appreciation for recent changes in leadership.

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Staff Survey

Three hundred thirty-seven WA state DSHS/DVR staff were sent the 2022 CSNA WA Staff Survey electronically to attain their perspectives regarding customer barriers to employment, DSHS/DVR customer service needs, needs for underserved or unserved customers, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Transition Services, Partner Programs, Remote Services, and Staff Support. Ninety-Eight (N=98) staff responded to the survey for a response rate of 29.1% (98/337). A follow-up survey was sent out in August 2023 for further assessment of any changes that may have taken place. Findings were consistent across both surveys. Highlights of overall findings based on results and thematic analysis of staff comments who responded to the survey questions are listed below.

Barriers

The top three themes of barriers identified by DSHS/DVR staff (n=98) that prevent DSHS/DVR customers from achieving successful employment outcomes are social barriers, personal barriers, and transportation. Social barriers and personal barriers had the most staff comments, and then transportation.

Service Needs

The top three VR or related services identified by DSHS/DVR staff (n=96) that are most needed by DSHS/DVR customers to achieve their employment goals include Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance, Job Placement, and Training (Vocational Technical/Higher Education). Example comments from staff representative of each main theme are described below.

Access to Services

Ninety-eight DSHS/DVR staff respondents report the three main reasons customers might find it difficult to access DSHS/DVR services are not knowing about or having a limited understanding of DSHS/DVR services, with the most comments, followed by transportation, and access to technology.

Key Informant/Stakeholder/Partner Interviews

In collaboration with the Washington SRC, CCER identified more than 30 partner agencies, service providers and individuals who could potentially provide input as key informants to Washington DSHS/DVR. During September and October of 2022, CCER conducted 28 interviews with identified key informants to collect critical community information about barriers to employment and the rehabilitation service needs of individuals in Washington who have disabilities. All interviews were conducted live via video conferencing and approximately 46 individuals representing a variety of entities across the state of Washington participated. An accommodation in the form of an American Sign Language interpreter was provided by one of the interviewees and all interviews were accessible. Interviewees were informed that their input

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would be documented and aggregated in a final report alongside other collected data to preserve confidentiality.

Barriers to Successful Outcomes

Interviewees were asked to identify the most prevalent barriers encountered by people with disabilities while trying to achieve a successful outcome. The following themes were identified and addressed by multiple respondents: the complexity of the DSHS/DVR process, Inconsistency in quality of staff, staff philosophies, and service delivery, employer Attitudes and Disability Stigma, transportation, staff turnover, order of selection.

Rehabilitation Service Needs

Key Informants were asked to identify the most important services needed by people with disabilities to achieve successful employment. Services identified as the top three most important services by respondents: rapid engagement/timely responses from counselors, job exploration, career planning, job training, job sampling, work-based learning, job coaching, job development/placement, behavioral health services, independent living services, benefits planning.

DSHS/DVR Areas of Strength

Throughout the key informant interviews, almost all the respondents had positive things to say about Washington DVR. In at least 9 of the 28 interviews, DVR's partners described their relationship with DSHS/DVR as productive and strong, while still pointing to the need for improving collaboration and partnerships. This seems to indicate that most of the key informants recognize DSHS/DVR's efforts and intentions but still see room for functional improvement. Additionally, many respondents took the opportunity to highlight the quality and direction of the current DSHS/DVR director. Many of the respondents also mentioned staff "pockets of excellence" and made statements such as "We've seen lots of improvement in DSHS/DVR's engagement with community partners and their ability to craft services to meet the audience they're working with" and "there are excellent staff who engage well with clients and provide quick turn-around."

a) ***Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment.***

DSHS/DVR reviewed MSD cases during the two-year period July 1, 2021-June 30, 2023, and consulted with experts to assess service rates for individuals with most significant disabilities (MSD) and the need for and availability of supported employment services.

While still in an Order of Selection, originally implemented on November 1, 2017, DSHS/DVR has completely opened all categories for service on July 1, 2023. Over 64% of all applications during

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the reporting period were customers who had MSD determinations. Over 57% of MSD customers had supported employment needs identified on their IPE; 92% of these customers listed having a cognitive disability and 84% of these customers also listed having a psychosocial disability.

DSHS/DVR service data suggest that DSHS/DVR has greater challenges assisting individuals with behavioral health, physical/mobility, and vision impairments to move from eligibility determination to plan development than individuals with cognitive disabilities. Since the need for supported employment is assessed in the plan development process, service needs are likely to be greater than indicated by the data for customers in plan.

Supported Employment Services and Systems

Funding for supported employment services is segmented among DSHS/DVR, DSHS/Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA), the Health Care Authority Behavioral Health Administration (HCA/BHA), and DSHS Aging and Long-Term Services Administration (DSHS/ALTSA). BHA and ALTSA have program oversight responsibility for Foundational Community Supports (FCS), which provides resources for supported employment. Coordination among these lead agencies is complicated and insufficient. Ideally, DDA and FCS services are complementary to and braided with DSHS/DVR's services, to enable individuals to access resources from both systems when needed and as appropriate to their needs.

DSHS/DVR services are time-limited, whereas both DDA and FCS can be ongoing. DSHS/DVR typically provides assessment, job placement, intensive training services, and support services needed by the individual to obtain a job and achieve stable job performance. DDA or FCS long-term supports begin when the customer reaches stabilization on the job. DDA and FCS can provide job placement services and short-term supports for customers ineligible for DSHS/DVR services; however, the range of services is more limited than those available from DSHS/DVR.

Supported employment resources have expanded statewide with the startup of FCS in 2018 but availability of long-term supports is insufficient to meet the need and is often a determining factor in access to VR services. DSHS/DVR customers with behavioral health needs may not qualify for FCS or be connected to behavioral health services. Additionally, permanent adoption of FCS is not yet assured. DSHS/DVR could also expand long-term supports by encouraging supported employment providers to focus on developing natural supports within customers' workplaces.

Definitions and understanding of eligibility for services, readiness to participate, and long-term support differ among the three programs. To effectively serve customers, these differences need to be bridged and staff and providers need to be knowledgeable about the different systems and services. Additionally, customers and their families or advocates need better access to

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benefits planning and understanding of the impact of work on other benefits, to make an informed choice about pursuing employment.

b) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Provided data on the racial and ethnic characteristics of DSHS/DVR clients served during the period July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and individuals with disabilities in the state of Washington, ages 18-64. Individuals who identified as white comprise the highest proportion of the DSHS/DVR caseload (77%). Individuals who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native constitute a smaller proportion of the DSHS/DVR caseload (5%) while according to ACS estimates the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native with disabilities in Washington ages 18-64 is 18%. However, one of the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in Washington may offer services to this population. The percentage of individuals served by DSHS/DVR who identify as Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Island (3%) is lower than the percent of the population with a disability ages 18-64 (11%).

Individuals with disabilities who are American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islanders may be groups underserved by WA DSHS/DVR. The existing data indicates a low percent of American Indians served by WA DSHS/DVR. However, American Indians/Alaskan Native with disabilities may be served through one of the many tribal vocational rehabilitation programs available across the state. Unserved populations include refugees, migrants, and undocumented individuals. Individuals with criminal histories and individuals who do not speak English were also identified as groups who may be unserved or underserved. Additionally, the rural nature of Washington and the difficulty in providing services with limited financial and staff resources.

The diversity of DSHS/DVR's service population is similar to that of working age people with disabilities. However, employment outcomes differed by race/ethnicity: all minority groups except Asians experienced lower than average rates of successful case closure. See section introduction for further assessment.

c) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR) is one of six core programs in Washington's workforce development system. Each program depends on the strengths of other partners to maximize the resources available to serve businesses and job seekers. Ten additional partners bring supplemental resources to the service delivery system.

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board is the State's federally-designated Workforce Investment Board, which collaborates with business, labor organizations, state

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agencies, 12 Workforce Development Councils (WDC) and other program partners to develop the Combined State Plan.

WDC's oversee the local one-stop service delivery system and coordinate with a broad range of local partners, including business, labor organizations, education, social services, and government. One-stop partners, also known as WorkSource, administer a set of programs to provide integrated streamlined services to customers.

There are three types of WorkSource centers: comprehensive center, affiliate, and connection sites. Twenty-two Comprehensive centers are physical locations where job seeker and employer customers access programs, services, and activities of the core WorkSource partners. Twenty-four Affiliate sites provide access to one or more partner programs and the availability of staff is determined at the local level. Seventy-two Connection sites offer virtual resources and services of the WorkSource system.

WorkSource centers assists a broad population of job seekers secure employment. This system presumes that those it serves are coming to the job search with a base level of skills and the ability to utilize the tools and training opportunities the system provides, maintain a degree of self-direction in the job seeking process, understand and follow directions to report outcomes to the personnel, and pursue opportunities independently. The role of these services is not to craft a job to suit the particular skills and abilities of an individual jobseeker.

DSHS/DVR serves a narrow constituency of jobseekers with significant disabilities who have barriers to employment. Customers interested in services must meet eligibility requirements and demonstrate they will benefit from services. A professionally trained Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor provides substantial counseling and guidance and helps the customer develop an individualized plan to identify and overcome disability-related barriers to their employment goal.

WorkSource Washington is a partnership of state and local government agencies, colleges and non-profit organizations that offer employment services for job seekers and businesses. WorkSource services are available in-person and online. Only a little more than one-third (n=231; 33.9%) of DSHS/DVR customer respondents report to have used WorkSource services. Of customers who have used WorkSource services, about 75% (n=155) report they were able to easily get around the WorkSource office and more than two-thirds (n=139; 68.8%) indicate they were able to fully participate in WorkSource services.

Of the customers who report they were not able to fully participate in WorkSource services (n=49; 24.3%), concerns related to WorkSource staffing and customer disability-related limitations were notable themes identified as these customer comments suggest, "no, not enough staff available to answer questions especially regarding tech questions/problems I had with forms" and "No, the services are not disabled friendly. You can't get help filling out a form that is not ADA accessible, My workforce does not have adaptive computers with Dragon and screen reader". DSHS/DVR customer respondents were asked to select what WorkSource

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services they have received. The three most used WorkSource services are job listing, referrals, and hiring events (n=120), followed by resume and application help (n=84), and internet access for job searches (n=80).

Overall, the quality rating of WorkSource services reported by customers (n=224) is "Acceptable" with a mean score of 3.66 on a five-point rating scale: 1=Very Poor, 2=Poor, 3=Acceptable, 4=Good, 5=Very Good. Displayed another way, DSHS/DVR customers rate the quality of WorkSource services as "Very Good" (n=71; 32%), followed by "Acceptable" (n=60; 27%), "Good" (n=58; 26%), "Poor" (n=20; 9%), and "Very Poor" (n=15; 6%).

When questioned about the effectiveness of WorkSource service delivery for people with disabilities and their partnerships with DSHS/DVR, key informants highlighted the following points:

- Many of the respondents indicated that the relationship between DSHS/DVR and WorkSource programs is solid and that WIOA has strengthened and institutionalized this partnership.

- WorkSource locations still struggle to effectively serve individuals who have disabilities and many times over-rely on referrals to DSHS/DVR to address them.

- Co-location of DSHS/DVR staff at WorkSource locations has been extremely important to the partnership and effective service delivery, although there are still considerable inconsistencies in the quality of those relationships from location to location across the state.

- Both partners could benefit from increased awareness and deeper education about their respective systems of service delivery.

Human Services Agencies

Several areas are reported by DSHS/DVR staff to need improvement in relation to DSHS/DVR's partnership with other human services agencies to support high quality services. Housing topped the list (n=64), followed by community mental health (n=56), independent living (n=48), parole and probation/corrections/juvenile rehabilitation (n=46), Social Security Administration (SSA) (n=42), and substance abuse (n=40). Others include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (n=34), Aging and Long-term Support (n=34), Veterans Administration (n=34), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) (n=33), and Services for the Blind (n=32).

Partnership with Department of Services for the Blind

Of the 90 staff respondents, DSHS/DVR staff were about split in their rating of service coordination quality on cases shared with the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB). About 51% rate the quality of service coordination on cases shared with DSB as "Okay" (n=25) or "Needs Improvement" (n=21), whereas almost 49% rate the quality of service coordination on cases shared with DSB as "Good" (n=38) or "Excellent" (n=6). Overall, staff report the average

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service coordination quality rating or mean score is 2.32 or "Okay". Twenty-eight DSHS/DVR staff made comments to explain their "Needs improvement" response. The main theme that emerged was related to the need to improve agency collaboration.

Developmental Disabilities Administration

Of the 92 who responded, the majority DSHS/DVR staff (just under 70%) rate the quality of service coordination on cases shared with DDA/County Developmental Disabilities agencies as "Good" (n=46) or "Excellent" (n=18), whereas about 30% report the quality of service coordination on cases shared with DDA/County Developmental Disabilities agencies as "Okay" (n=17) or "Needs Improvement (n=11). Overall, staff report the average service coordination quality rating or mean score is 2.77 or "Okay". Twenty DSHS/DVR staff made comments to explain their "needs improvement" response. DVR/DDA communication and coordination that involve DDA/DVR monitoring and support plans were suggested by staff.

Mental Health/Behavioral Health

Of the 94 who responded, 67% of DSHS/DVR staff rate the quality of service coordination on cases shared with mental health/behavioral health agencies as "Okay" (n=37) or "Needs Improvement" (n=26). Conversely, only about 33% of DSHS/DVR staff rate the quality of service coordination on cases shared with mental health/behavioral health agencies as "Good" (n=25) or "Excellent" (n=6). Overall, staff report the average service coordination quality rating or mean score is 2.12 or "Okay". Thirty-one DSHS/DVR staff made comments to explain their "Needs Improvement" response. The two main themes that emerged were related to comments revolving around DSHS/DVR/mental health communication and service coordination, and the lack of mental health providers and staff capacity.

> d) ***Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.***

The Transition Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) was administered by Washington State University during the 2021/2022 academic year to a representative sample of public high schools in Washington state (200 out of 538 or 37.2%). Valid and reliable data was collected from 238 individuals, mostly Special Education Teachers followed by District Special Education Directors. The TSAT results indicate the extent to which required pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) were made available to all potentially eligible students with disabilities in Washington state. In addition, the TSAT assessed transition services in terms of accessibility, coordination with DSHS/DVR, and quality.

- 73% of the Pre-ETS were available in schools across the state. A similar percentage was

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reported last year.

- 26-50% of potentially eligible students with disabilities were participating in school-based transition services. Although not statistically tested, a visual and descriptive comparison suggests that more students accessed school-based transition services this year than they did last year.

- 1-25% of time, Pre-ETS provided were delivered in coordination with DSHS/DVR. A similar percentage was reported last year.

- On average, the quality of Pre-ETS was perceived as neither good nor poor. Although not statistically tested, a visual and descriptive comparison suggests that the perceived quality of the transition services was higher last year.

Need for Pre-ETS and DSHS/DVR Transition Services

Several considerations arise from the TSAT results. First and foremost, the results substantiate an even greater need for the availability and provision of Pre-ETS, and for DSHS/DVR to coordinate those services with school personnel statewide. (Poppen, 2022). A survey conducted by Seattle University between June and November 2021 affirms this finding.

Over 7000 16- to 21-year-old youth responded to the survey. Each respondent had had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) when they attended a Washington State high school and had graduated or left high school a year prior. The data revealed the following:

- When it comes to participation in higher education or employment, the respondents were outpaced by their peers, whose disability status was not reported. 27% of the respondents were in competitive employment and 21% were in other employment, compared to 80% of their peers across the country who were employed or looking for work (per U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

- 17% of the respondents were enrolled in higher education (i.e.,. two-year or four-year college or university), compared to 60% of their peers in Washington state (per Education Research & Data Center). 30% of the respondents were not participating in postsecondary education or employment.

In addition, when the survey results were compared to the previous years, Washington state had a five-year pattern of declining participation by youth and young adults who had IEPs in the areas of higher education and competitive employment in the year following their high school experience. In fact, these respondents reported the highest number of non-participation in education or employment in the past five years.

Based on these comparisons, it is no surprise that youth who had IEPs or received special services or Section 504 services while in a Washington state high school did not earn as much as their peers during their first year post-high school. The median earnings of those who received special services was $10.1K, compared to $13.1K earned by those who did not receive special

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education. The median earnings of those who had a Section 504 plan (and were not enrolled in higher education) was $12.1K compared to $12.7K (Education Research & Data Center).

Qualitative Feedback on Transition Services

Eighty-four DSHS/DVR staff provided responses when asked to describe what is working well with DSHS/DVR's partnership with schools (high school, post-secondary education) to support high quality services. Four themes emerged that include communication by specialized DSHS/DVR staff and liaisons with the most comments, followed by relationships, the work of regional transition consultants, and high school staff knowledge. Eighty DSHS/DVR staff made comments related to areas they think need improvement in DSHS/DVR's partnership with schools (high school, post-secondary education) to support high quality services. They indicated that relationship development with schools, followed by communication, and providing training of DSHS/DVR Pre-ETS and transition process/service model were areas in need of improvement. Allocating for VRC transition specialty caseloads and the agency providing clear roles and procedures were additional themes that emerged from the data.

Key Informant Interviews included questions about the needs of transition aged youth, how well DSHS/DVR is working with educational partners to meet those needs, and information about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In these areas, participants most frequently raised concerns about the implementation and delivery of Pre-ETS. Several respondents mentioned that the contracting process for provision of Pre-ETS is problematic. In addition, respondents remarked that the Pre-ETS processes and required forms can be prohibitive for school districts, students, and families to successfully use and navigate.

Other transition comments addressed the need for DSHS/DVR to improve its relationships with schools and school staff and do a better job of educating students, families and school personnel about what DSHS/DVR can do and who it serves. Respondents also indicated that there are often concerns about the supplanting of services as DSHS/DVR and schools are attempting to collaborate around provision of supports that both systems can offer. Interviewees indicated that many youth lack soft skills, confidence and self-advocacy, all characteristics that are critical for future success. Several respondents suggested that having more common verbiage and definitions among service providers would be helpful to the overall transition process.

2. <u>Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.</u>

For the two-year period from July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022, CRPs provided 100% of paid job placement and short-term job support services, and over 80% of assessments and supported employment services for customers who completed services. Nearly 60% of customers with a successful employment outcome received services from CRPs.

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Most respondents across the surveys indicated a need to increase the availability of CRP services geographically, especially in rural areas. The contracting processes (including payment rates) may be deterrents to increasing CRPs across the state. Increasing training to CRP staff, along with improvement in the contracting process, might foster better relationships with CRPs and other partner organizations. In addition, increasing the availability of CRPs to provide Pre-ETS may influence improved services. Key informants were asked about the quality and needs of existing Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) in Washington. The most common responses indicated that CRPs would benefit from additional training about DSHS/DVR processes, clients and expectations and that DSHS/DVR could benefit from training about the CRPs and their capabilities. Key informants also discussed the difficulty of CRPs to remain solvent and effective due to low and capped payment rates as well as barriers related to the contract and billing processes required by DSHS/DVR. CRPs also struggle with staff turnover due to the level of payment rates from DSHS/DVR and other governmental partners. Other comments included the need for more CRP resources in rural areas, better data sharing among service providers (including DSHS/DVR), and better alignment of disability and service-related definitions and verbiage.

CRPs have waitlists for services across the state, and often customers must wait for services to begin. CRPs are limiting the hours they can support customers who obtain employment due to staffing shortages. This may result in CRPs assisting supported employment customers to obtain employment for less hours than they have chosen to work so that CRP has capacity to support them on the job. Community Program Manager is working with contracts to simplify the contracting process to limit the required documents for CRPs who have historically contracted with DSHS/DVR.

Improvements made: In 2023 rates for CRP services were increased by 7% across all services, and a rate study has been launched to inform our rate setting process and policy. Our goal is to consistently assess if the rate DSHS/DVR pays is adequate to reimburse CRPs for the work they do, as well as plan periodic rate increases between study years.

In July 2023, DSHS/DVR introduced several new bonuses to incentivize high quality outcomes. These bonuses will be paid to CRPs providing Job Placement Services when they assist customers in obtaining high wage employment, employment in rural areas, and if they achieve the placement rapidly (within 60 days of start of service).

Aso in 2023, DSHS/DVR added 11 CRPs across the state when the new contract was initiated in July. Some contractors also chose not to renew their contracts, and DSHS/DVR currently has 111 CRPs on contract.

C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1.   Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

2.   Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

   A. *Support innovation and expansion activities.*

   B. *Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services.*

   C. *Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and*

   D. *Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.*

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority.

Goal One: Highly Engaged, Diverse, and Skilled Team

Goal one priorities reflect CSNA results, internal case review results, staff and stakeholder input which challenge DSHS/DVR to provide DSHS/DVR staff with clear performance expectations, training, and working conditions that support their success.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities and strategies:

   1. DSHS/DVR staff achieve and maintain mastery in their work.

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a. Continue delivering foundational and practical training for field staff through internal training team, and appropriate vendors.

b. Continue onboarding efforts for all new staff. Implement role-specific and topic-specific training as needed. Strengthen DSHS/DVR knowledge and application of transition and pre-employment transition services, best practices, and strategies that support positive outcomes.

c. Ensure Equity Diversity Access and Inclusion (EDAI) are a key piece of every training. Utilize an EDAI lens to develop and deliver training, and build a more accessible, inclusive, and equitable community.

2. DSHS/DVR excels in key performance indicators.

a. Within our new case management and enterprise performance management systems, establish, track, and monitor key performance measures for all levels of the agency using reports/dashboards easily accessible to staff at all levels.

b. Evaluate, monitor, and coach staff using performance reports. Ensure staff understand program measures and performance targets and the relationship to case practice. Review reports with staff routinely and identify improvement needs and strategies.

c. Utilize staff expertise and feedback, subject matter experts, and partners to continue building a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and collaboration across DSHS/DVR.

3. DSHS/DVR is an employer of choice.

a. Implement the strategies and action items adopted from DSHS/DVR's recruitment and retention plan to address staffing trends, turnover, and recruitment of under-represented groups among staff.

b. Maintain options for telework and flexible work schedules and explore options like internship opportunities.

c. Using caseload and fiscal forecasting, analyze the need for additional FTEs, pay scale adjustments, and retention incentives and the fiscal impact of implementing any changes in these areas.

Goal Two: Safe, Efficient and Secure Operations

Goal two reflects DSHS/DVR's commitment to improving the systems and practices that support DSHS/DVR staff and operations, and in turn, affect customer service.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. Establish a reporting framework that informs decisions and improvements at all levels.

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a. Within our new case management and enterprise performance management systems, build reports/dashboards for DSHS/DVR staff with easy access to performance data at the statewide, regional, unit, and office levels.

b. Develop an informed decision-making model based on the quarterly DSHS/DVR customer satisfaction survey information.

2. DSHS/DVR staff have modern, user-friendly tools that streamline their work.

   a. Fully implement new electronic case management system. Maximize usability and efficiency of the updated case management system.

   b. Complete implementation of updated internal DSHS/DVR website, including transfer of appropriate information, archiving unused and redundant information, and decommissioning the old internal DSHS/DVR website called iDVR.

   c. Streamline electronic signature and electronic forms for core VR processes including transition and pre-employment transition services.

   d. Establish a formal IT portfolio management process to include a dashboard that allows staff to see how IT projects are prioritized.

3. DSHS/DVR will maintain a safe and accessible work environment to ensure staff and visitors remain safe and secure and business operations are maintained and can recover quickly.

   a. Develop an emergency preparedness and recovery plan for all DSHS/DVR standalone facilities, consistent with DSHS and other state policies. Include accident prevention, emergency response and worksite physical security in the scope of the plan.

   b. Develop and implement a training plan to address emergency preparedness and recovery operations at DSHS/DVR and co-located facilities. Provide reports on training completion to supervisors.

   c. Communicate regularly with staff about workplace safety, updates to safety plans and training requirements and opportunities.

Goal Three: Customer Service Excellence

Goal three reflects DSHS/DVR's focus on providing customer service excellence, including communication, provision of services, and hardware and software necessary to participate effectively in vocational rehabilitation services. Based on Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings and partner input, this goal prioritizes the importance of providing quality customer service every time.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

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1. Customers experience timely, continuous progress throughout the VR process.

    a. Identify and address barriers to timely services and continuous customer engagement practices.

    b. Review and modify current case transfer approach to reduce the impact to customers' case progress when staff transitions, vacancies, or any other case impacts occur.

    c. Integrate minimum standard for customer contact as a performance measure. Continue customer response standard to support timely service delivery.

2. Individuals with disabilities have just and equitable access to DSHS/DVR services.

    a. Continue to improve access to DSHS/DVR services using technology, mobile service locations, translation and interpreter services, transportation services, remote service access and virtual access, and other accommodations.

    b. Develop a DSHS/DVR outreach plan targeting unserved and underserved populations in local communities who may not be familiar with DSHS/DVR services. Include customer success stories and communication access (which could include language access and interpreting services) in this outreach plan to promote effective engagement from all possible customers of DSHS/DVR. Ensure all field staff are trained to implement the outreach plan.

    c. Strengthen information and referral for those who need basic services and support to engage effectively with DSHS/DVR and to facilitate their access to workforce development programs.

    d. Ensure regular completion of internal 7.01 American Indian Policy trainings for all staff. Develop and encourage additional training resources and opportunities for staff to support cultural humility when working with American Indian and/or Alaska Native customers and partners.

Goal Four: Successful Customer Outcomes

Goal four reflects DSHS/DVR's focus on providing high-quality services that result in high-quality employment outcomes. Based on Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings and partner input, this goal prioritizes the importance of supporting customers in high-quality employment which offers the pay and benefits that support financial security and stability.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. DSHS/DVR customers achieve employment in living wage jobs with benefits.

    a. Increase percentage of customers with IPEs that include job goals leading to self-

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sufficiency/financial security (at least 200% of the federal poverty level or greater, based on job type, wages, hours worked per week).

b. Identify career pathways and increase the percentage of customers with IPEs that include post-secondary training related to employment in their field of study. Support staff in providing these services by providing training to help VRCs better understand how to conduct appropriate vocational assessment and identify vocational goals and simplifying the financial aid process to make it easier to identify unmet need.

c. Assist staff in understanding and developing effective job search and job placement strategies, and tools that are readily available to all customers at the time they are job ready.

2. Students are better prepared to pursue career pathways and job goals leading to financial security after high school.

a. Implement transition and pre-employment transition services program, policy, and procedure updates to support high quality outcomes for students and youth. Streamline roles and responsibilities of staff and provide training and information to staff and partners.

b. Expand the scope and availability of pre-employment transition services to all areas based on statewide needs assessment, school demographics, contract mapping data, and other available resources.

c. Engage with transition partners, students, and families earlier and work towards DSHS/DVR evidence-based transition planning and practices in alignment of IEP and High School and Beyond Plan goals.

d. Increase regional collaboration with individual school districts to identify and address gaps in services and Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities.

Goal Five: Strong Business, Partner, and Community Relationships

Goal five priorities will improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by Washington's workforce development system, as well as other agency partners and DSHS/DVR service providers. As a core WIOA program, DSHS/DVR will contribute its expertise and strengths to maximize outcomes for individuals with disabilities and business customers. These priorities align with the strategic and operational elements of this Combined State Plan and reflect the needs of individuals with disabilities served system wide.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. Strengthen communication and collaboration with partners that deliver benefits to customers.

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a. Engage with CRPs to encourage higher quality customer outcomes and utilize CRP incentives and rewards.

b. Collaborate with CRPs and identify key performance indicators for high quality outcomes.

c. Collaborate with the Behavioral Health Administration to fully implement the Foundational Community Supports inter-local agreement statewide and provide training to relevant staff.

d. Increase collaboration between DSHS/DVR and DSHS' Community Service Office to improve understanding of services available to mutual customers.

e. Collaborate with WorkSource leadership to increase WorkSource staff capacity and effectiveness in assisting people with disabilities with job search activities.

2. Formalize and implement targeted business engagement efforts.

a. Continue outreach and training for staff and partners to understand business engagement staff roles, responsibilities, and support services.

b. Implement statewide plan establishing expectations and measure outcomes for the business engagement program.

c. Provide technical assistance to employers, partners, and staff on topics such as the use of natural supports, EDAI, and disability etiquette in the workplace.

d. Provide candidate (VR customer) referrals to employers to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe:

(1)   Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs

Goal One: Customer Service and Outcomes are our Highest Priority

Goal One, Priority One: Customers experience timely, continuous progress throughout the VR process.

Strategy 1: Identify and address barriers to timely services and continuous progress for customers throughout the VR process.

- It was identified that obtaining signatures have been a barrier to timely service delivery when working with customers virtually. DocuSign, electronic signature and forms management software, was procured and rolled out for staff use with customers and partners.

- It was identified that inconsistent benefits planning practices can create barriers to continuous progress for customers. A new process is being piloted to ensure that benefits planners are connecting with customers prior to IPE development and continue to be available while customers move through the VR process. This allows customers to make informed decisions about working early in the process, which increases the efficiency of service delivery.

Strategy 2: Establish an approach for reducing the impact to customers' case progress when staff transitions and vacancies occur.

- Regional Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Float positions were established as a strategy to reduce the impact to customers' case progress when vacancies occur. These VRCs work with customers in locations with staff capacity concerns. They provide services remotely and in person, traveling within the region as necessary to meet customers' needs.

- DSHS/DVR also implemented automatic replies to outgoing staff emails, so customers know who to contact when their counselor has left the agency.

- Part of the work of implementing a new case management system was to ensure a standard operating procedure for contacting customers when their case is being transferred. While not yet in place, the new database has capability to automatically produce letters for customers, which can be processed and mailed by support personnel to ensure timely communication. Further, now that the case management system is in place, work is being done to review the operating procedures, processes, and checklists with the goal of aligning a non-paper procedure with field practice and the new management system that can be trained to all staff.

Strategy 3: Integrate customer contact and response standards as performance measures for VR counseling staff.

- Aside from ongoing messaging and training to staff containing the department-expected minimum response times for any communication received, this strategy was not implemented during the PY 2020 to 2023 State Plan cycle. Although there are best practices and guidelines for timely response, these have not been integrated into formal performance expectations for VR counseling staff.

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Goal One, Priority Two: DSHS/DVR customers achieve employment in living wage jobs with benefits.

Strategy 1: Increase rate of customers with IPEs that include job goals leading to self-sufficiency/financial security (at least 200% of the federal poverty level or greater, based on job type, wages, hours worked per week).

- A specific strategy was not implemented during the PY 2020 to PY 2023 State Plan cycle for the purpose of increasing the rate of participants with job goals leading to self-sufficiency. However, a data sharing agreement was established to begin tracking the percentage of participants exiting DSHS/DVR services with incomes at or above 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). There is a lag with the availability of this data, but the results indicate that this is trending up. Of the participants who exited in the quarter ending March of 2021, 16.9% achieved an income at or above 200% of the FPL, while 24.7% of customers who exited in the quarter ending June of 2022 achieved an income at or above 200% FPL. This is a 7.8 percentage point increase over five quarters.

Strategy 2: Identify career pathways and increase the rate of customers with IPEs that include postsecondary training resulting in employment in their field of study.

- There has not been an establishment of a consistent statewide process or expectation for identifying career pathways and increasing the rate of customers with IPEs that include postsecondary trainings. However, there has been more of an emphasis on supporting customers to advance in their career goals and efforts to coordinate with workforce partners to explore training opportunities for in-demand career pathways.

Strategy 3: Develop effective job search and job placement assistance and/or services that are readily available to all customers at the time they are job ready.

- This strategy was evaluated in the 2022 State Plan Update, with no additional comments for PY 2022.

Goal One, Priority Three: Students are better prepared to engage in VR services after high school.

Strategy 1: Pre-ETS are available in all areas based on statewide needs assessment, school demographics, and contract mapping data.

- Pre-Employment Transition Services staff and DSHS/DVR's Tribal Relations Administrator collaborated to provide outreach to Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs and schools in order to elevate collaboration and Pre-

ETS services to eligible Native American students.

Strategy 2: Lead collaboration with individual school districts to identify gaps in services and CTE opportunities.

and

Strategy 3: Engage with transition staff, students, and families earlier and work toward alignment of IEP and High School and Beyond Plan goals.

- These strategies were not formally implemented during the PY 2020 to 2023 State Plan cycle, however, DSHS/DVR initiated a contract with Synergy Consulting Partners for technical assistance in improving Pre-ETS operations. This included the completion of a gap analysis, recommendations, and a plan of action. Work groups were established to focus on specific deliverables which will contribute to the future state of the Pre-ETS program, and this work is still underway and scheduled to continue through PY 2023.

Goal One, Priority Four: Individuals with disabilities have equitable access to DSHS/DVR services.

Strategy 1: Improve access to DSHS/DVR services through the use of technology, mobile service locations, translation and interpreter services, transportation services, or other accommodations.

- Since the reopening of DSHS/DVR offices through the pandemic recovery period, DSHS/DVR has maintained a hybrid approach to serving customers. This allows for customer choice in receiving services remotely when it meets their needs, while ensuring that customers who don't have access to technology are able to meet with staff in the office.

- The rollout of DocuSign has improved access to DSHS/DVR services for customers who choose to be served remotely or in a hybrid fashion.

- DSHS/DVR Policy and Customer Relations partnered to update the Washington Administrative Code rules and information in the DSHS/DVR Customer Handbook and ensured digital accessibility of the pdf version. This helped to improve customer self-advocacy through the VR process.

Strategy 2: Develop a DSHS/DVR outreach plan targeting under-represented populations in local communities that may be unaware of DSHS/DVR services.

- The Washington State DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01 defines the department's commitment to consultation and collaboration with recognized American Indian organizations and federally recognized tribes to ensure quality and comprehensive service delivery to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Outreach

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goals and objectives were developed by DSHS/DVR and submitted to the Washington State DSHS Office of Indian Policy and include outreach goals and objectives to raise awareness of DSHS/DVR services and increase service delivery to this under-represented population.

- DVR Tribal Relations facilitated a core advisory team comprised of subject matter experts from the Client Assistance Program, Department of Services from the Blind, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Pro-Equity Anti Racism staff, Business Management Modernization Project staff, and VRC tribal liaisons to review and make recommendations for improving service delivery to American Indian and Alaskan Native customers.

Strategy 3: Strengthen information and referral for those who need basic services and support to engage effectively with DSHS/DVR and to facilitate access to workforce development programs.

- DSHS/DVR's business team is closely aligned with WorkSource one-stop centers and community partners across the state and provide referrals and collaboration on inclusive hiring and resource events.

- Many of the WorkSource one-stop centers across the state have DSHS/DVR staff members working on site on a regular schedule. This has led to strengthened partnerships and collaboration which has helped to better facilitate DSHS/DVR customer access to workforce development programs and basic services provided by workforce partners.

(2)   Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Goal Two: Motivate and Inspire High Performing Staff

Goal Two, Priority One: DSHS/DVR staff achieve mastery in their work.

Strategy 1: Deliver foundational and practical training for field staff through VR Institute and internal trainers.

- In addition to activities noted in the 2022 State Plan Update, the DSHS/DVR training team has worked hard to develop a comprehensive list of on-demand virtual trainings available to staff. The topics include supported employment, financial statements, vocational evaluation, application and intake, and case closure. Additional training course topics have included customer service,

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eligibility, assistive technology, and self-employment.

Strategy 2: Expand new VRC cohort program to all regions to reinforce VR counseling principles and practices among newer counseling staff.

- The DSHS/DVR training team developed a comprehensive field staff onboarding curriculum focused on developing the foundational knowledge and skills that new Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians need to meet competency requirements. This is required for all new field staff and is provided virtually throughout the first full month of employment.

- The DSHS/DVR training team in also developing a comprehensive supervisory onboarding curriculum focused on developing and enhancing foundational supervisory expertise and skills new Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisors need to meet competency requirements.

Strategy 3: Strengthen DSHS/DVR knowledge and application of transition planning and practices that support positive outcomes.

- The DSHS/DVR training team developed a foundational on-demand transition training in program year 2022.

Goal Two, Priority Two: DSHS/DVR excels in key performance indicators.

Strategy 1: Establish, track, and monitor key performance measures for all levels of the agency using reports/dashboards easily accessible to staff at all levels.

- DSHS/DVR implemented enterprise performance management software called Results which tracks key performance measures and performance indicators. Results displays measures using dashboards which are easily accessible to all staff. Results is also used to track projects, such as those related to State Plan strategies, and links them to the performance measures to easily see how strategic efforts are contributing to those measures.

- DSHS/DVR is also in the process of developing needed reports through the newly launched case management database, known as Waves.

Strategy 2: Evaluate, monitor, and coach staff using performance reports.

- Performance reports within Power Bi are used to monitor and provide monthly coaching to Vocational Rehabilitation counseling staff, focusing on timeliness of services, such as time to eligibility and time to plan. This helps to direct conversations with VR staff which encourage practices which contribute to more meaningful and rapid engagement. Monthly reviews of authorizations for payment are also completed for each caseload to ensure accuracy and

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appropriateness of caseload expenditures.

Strategy 3: Build capacity and skills throughout DSHS/DVR for continuous improvement and innovation.

- Training opportunities have been provided to staff to build skills for continuous improvement and innovation. Training has included Six Sigma Yellow Belt, which was provided to members of executive leadership and program managers, as well as Transformational Rehabilitation Leadership Training provided by the National Training Center for Transformational Rehabilitation Leadership, leading to the Certified Rehabilitation Leader certifications.

- There has been a focus on increasing staff awareness of tribal culture and Native American topics. Activities and initiatives have included weekly articles to staff and presentations from Native American speakers during Native American Heritage month, a monthly Talking Circle for staff to learn and share best practices when working with tribes and Native American customers, training led by DSHS/DVR's Tribal Administrator and staff with tribal lived experience, and a focus on tribal relations and government-to-government activities during new employee onboarding.

Goal Two, Priority Three: DSHS/DVR is an employer of choice.

Strategy 1: Develop a recruitment and retention plan to address staff patterns, turnover, and recruitment of under-represented groups among staff. Plan will acquaint managers with targeted recruitment strategies, reasonable accommodations, training and cultural competencies that foster a diverse and inclusive work environment.

- DSHS/DVR has developed partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) nationwide to increase diversity among staff. This has included presenting to students at HBCU's VR or equivalent programs.

- Efforts have been taken to increase training opportunities and remove barriers per position classification, allowing staff to participate in training and development opportunities intended for others within different positions.

Strategy 2: Increase options for telework, flexible work schedules, and part-time.

- This strategy was evaluated in the 2022 State Plan Update, with no additional comments for PY 2022.

Strategy 3: Adopt and implement a staff recognition approach.

- A workgroup was formed to develop an employee recognition approach which

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was rolled out to all staff. An Employee Recognition Guide was developed and shared with staff, with an expectation that each unit adopt at least one recognition activity monthly. Included in the guide is support for implementation of monthly activities, as well as many examples of activity options to be considered.

- DSHS/DVR also gave employee recognition awards at the DSHS/DVR in-service to nominated staff who exemplified the department's five values: Honesty and Integrity, Pursuit of Excellence, Open Communication, Diversity and Inclusion, and Commitment to Service.

Goal Three: DSHS/DVR Collaborates with Businesses and Partners that Deliver Benefits to Customers

Goal Three, Priority One: Strengthen communication and collaboration with partners that deliver benefits to customers.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with CRPs on contract changes that incent/reward higher quality outcomes based on established outcome measures.

- Within Program Year 2022, a decision was made to increase Community Rehabilitation Provider fees by 7% and initiate bonuses for high quality employment outcomes, such as rapid placement, high wage placement, and rural placement, effective 7/1/23.

- A CRP/IL rate study was initiated to ensure CRPs are fairly compensated for the work they perform.

Strategy 2: Increase collaboration with and understanding of services available to DSHS/DVR-Community Service Office mutual customers.

- DSHS/DVR partnered with the Community Services Division to create an updated DSHS/DVR-CSD Warm Handoff Memorandum of Understanding. Regular meetings with CSD and DSHS/DVR leadership were initiated to ensure services were being provided and coordinated effectively. Updated training was created and provided to all DSHS/DVR staff to ensure effective implementation of the new process.

- Efforts have been made to work on programming within DSHS/DVR's new case management system, WAVES, in order to better track CSD referrals and provide data outlined in the DSHS/DVR-CSD MOU.

Strategy 3: Collaborate with BHA to fully implement FCS inter-local agreement statewide.

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- This strategy was evaluated in the 2022 State Plan Update.

- In addition to the implementation of the FCS inter-local agreement, DSHS/DVR participates in a quarterly FCS steering committee and Olmstead committee focusing on increasing employment outcomes for individuals with behavioral health and physical conditions, such as traumatic brain injuries, that qualify for FCS supported employment services.

Strategy 4: Collaborate with WorkSource leadership to increase WorkSource staff capacity and effectiveness in assisting people with disabilities with job search activities.

- DSHS/DVR Business Specialists have attended the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 101 and Washinton's One-Stop System Training in order to develop foundational knowledge necessary to effectively engage with workforce partners and work with co-enrolled customers.

- Key DSHS/DVR staff were approved to attend the Workforce Washington Association conference, which provided an opportunity to collaborate with Workforce Development Council staff and WorkSource leadership on job search strategies and integration approaches to better serve co-enrolled customers.

Goal Three, Priority Two: Formalize and implement targeted business engagement efforts.

Strategy 1: Define business engagement staff roles and responsibilities for education, training, and outreach to employers.

- This strategy was evaluated in the 2022 State Plan Update, with no additional comments for PY 2022.

Strategy 2: Develop statewide plan establishing expectations and measure outcomes for the business engagement program.

- This strategy was evaluated in the 2022 State Plan Update, with no additional comments for PY 2022.

Strategy 3: Provide technical assistance to employers on the use of natural supports and disability DEI and etiquette in the workplace.

- DSHS/DVR's Supported Employment Program Manager provides technical assistance on the use of natural supports in the workplace to state agencies participating in the Supported Employment in State Government Program.

- The DSHS/DVR Business Team produced a Webinar for statewide HR Managers received recertification credits with the HR Certification Institute and the Society

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for Human Resource Management, including content focused on enforcement priorities, registered apprenticeship programs, early return to work, stay at work, recruiting diverse talent, disability inclusion and disability etiquette.

- The DSHS/DVR Business Team offers businesses training on a variety of topics related to best practices in hiring, retaining, and promoting people with disabilities, including trainings on disability etiquette, disability awareness, section 508 and accessibility training, tax credits, 503 rules, and reasonable accommodations.

Goal Four: Improve DSHS/DVR's System & Performance

Goal Four, Priority One: Establish a reporting framework that informs decisions and improvements at all levels.

Strategy 1: Build reports/dashboards for DSHS/DVR managers with easy access to performance data at the statewide, regional, unit, and office levels.

- In addition to the development of reports identified in the 2022 State Plan Update, enhancement of the Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor coaching tool was completed, an emergency management dashboard was built, and An IPE eligibility overview dashboard was built. A new Business Engagement tracking tool was created which will be migrated into DSHS/DVR's new case management system.

- The Tribal Administrator completed the refinement of quarterly reports to offer more meaningful referral, tribal affiliation, and American Indian/Alaska Native waitlist data for DSHS/DVR managers and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program directors.

Strategy 2: Develop a reporting framework and database for overall agency reporting.

- This continues to be in development but will be streamlined through the development of DSHS/DVR's new case management system, WAVES. This is an ongoing project in partnership with Technology Innovation Administration.

- Partnerships were built to allow for data transfers between state and federal agencies for enhanced data capabilities.

Strategy 3: Full implementation of DSHS/DVR customer satisfaction survey.

- This strategy was evaluated in the 2022 State Plan Update, with no additional comments for PY 2022.

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Strategy 1: Modernize DSHS/DVR's electronic case management system.

- The work to roll out DSHS/DVR's new electronic case management system has been ongoing throughout this performance period. The initial goal of launching WAVES on July 1, 2022, was delayed due to the need to ensure accessibility. DSHS/DVR worked with the vendor to remediate the accessibility issues, pushing the launch date to October 31, 2023.

- DSHS/DVR also rolled out an electronic document management system, Laserfiche in order to fully transition to electronic customer files. Staff have been given the ability to upload documents directly into the electronic case record. Work has also been completed to integrate Laserfiche and WAVES via API so that case file documentation can be accessed through the new case management system.

Strategy 2: Update and enhance the content and usability of the iDVR website to provide staff with easy access to clear, up-to-date program, policy, and administrative reference guides information.

- A new communication platform, VOICE, was developed within SharePoint, leading to easier access to program, policy, and administrative information all in one location. Initial efforts have focused on building sites for the Customer Service Manual, Standard Operating Procedures, Equity, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion. Ongoing site updates include training resources, tribal relations, and operations.

Strategy 3: Implement new application to document Pre-ETS participant information and consent to participate in services and allow use of personal data for service delivery and reporting.

- This functionality is intended to be implemented in DSHS/DVR's new case management system, WAVES.

- Related projects have included building a GIS school location map which includes universities, private, technical, and public schools, as well as a web tool to manage school locations.

Strategy 4: Establish a formal IT portfolio management process to include a dashboard that allows staff to see how IT projects are prioritized.

- An IT portfolio management process was built; however this process is currently on hold. DSHS/DVR's IT team has been matrixed into a larger, DSHS-wide IT administration. Transition to a merged portfolio process is pending.

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(2)   Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Actual Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Actual Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	44.0%	45.3%	45.0%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	36.0%	34.4%	37.0%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,350	$3,915	$4,400	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	25.0%	14.5%	26.0%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	47.0%	51.8%	48.0%	TBD

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(3)   The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

Innovation and Expansion Activities Spending PY 2022 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)	
Partnering Organization	Amount
Washington State Rehabilitation Council	324,185.22
Washington State Independent Living Council	255,607.16
WOIS	27,430.40
University of Washington	63,694.74
Total Funds	670,917.52

E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(1)   Acceptance of Title VI Funds

[X] VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.
[   ] VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(2)   If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund an estimated 800 customers annually who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 400-500 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 3,200 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,800 supported employment outcomes during Federal Program Years 2024 to 2027.

DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are comparatively scarce. Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long-term funding source for extended services. Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able to expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

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DSHS/DVR strategies for expanding the availability of supported employment services support the Division's overall goals of building a **Highly Engaged, Diverse, and Skilled Team and Strong Business, Partner, and Community Relationships.**

Specific strategies include the following:

- Participate in an interagency service committee, which supports initiatives to improve employment outcomes for persons living with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries.

- Train staff and partners on Social Security Ticket to Work incentives, which includes Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency (PASS Plan), to expand revenue sources.

- Provide staff training on the use of natural supports and other behavioral health treatment modalities that can be utilized for DSHS/DVR Supported Employment customers for extended services.

- Coordinate cross-program training opportunities on innovative supported employment strategies.

- Coordinate cross-agency program training opportunities on the FCS Individual Placement and Support evidence-based model and the DSHS/DVR HCA/DBHR Interlocal Agreement.

- Participate in the FCS Advisory Committee.

*(3)	Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.*

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Supported employment services are unduplicated services needed to support and maintain eligible customers with the most significant disabilities to retain their competitive employment. Supported employment services consist of:

1. Time-limited "ongoing" support services and other vocational rehabilitation services provided by DSHS/DVR;

2. Extended services provided by the long-term service provider when the customer's performance is stabilized on the job and the services DSHS/DVR provides have ended.

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Time-limited support services are provided by DSHS/DVR under an IPE to assist customers eligible for supported employment to get a job and achieve stabilization on the job. Supported employment services are provided according to DSHS/DVR's policies and procedures and in accordance with cooperative agreements developed between DSHS/DVR and State, public, or private organizations that fund and/or provide extended services following the termination of DSHS/DVR time-limited services. Examples of extended services partners/ providers include, but are not limited to:

- County Developmental Disabilities

- Mental Health agencies

- Foundational Community Supports

- Social Security Work Incentives

- Trust Fund

- Natural supports such as family, co-workers, and employers

The Timing of Transition to Extended Services

DSHS/DVR customers receiving supported employment services transition from time-limited ongoing support services to extended services when stable, satisfactory job performance is achieved. The timeframe for this transition is within 24 months of customers beginning employment unless a longer timeframe has been specified in the IPE. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act amends the Rehabilitation Act to permit DSHS/DVR to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years or until age 25, whichever happens first. DSHS/DVR will fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities on a case-by-case basis.

(4)   Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).

Supported Employment Partners & Agreements

DSHS/DVR identifies and makes arrangements with private non-profits (community rehabilitation programs/CRPs) as identified in the response to Description (e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Organizations, to provide supported employment services for individuals with most significant disabilities including youth.

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DSHS/DVR collaborates with state and local entities including, but not limited to the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA), Health Care Authority Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (HCA/DBHR), DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration (DSHS/ALTSA), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, workforce development system, business partners, community behavioral health agencies, local education agencies, and local developmental disabilities employment providers to provide competitive integrated supported employment services to eligible individuals.

DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS/Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). DDA is committed to funding extended services for all its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR.

DSHS/DVR has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DDA signed in 2018, renewed in 2021, and again in 2023. The agreement describes criteria and process for DSHS/DVR and DDA to provide seamless and consistent supported employment services statewide to mutual customers. It formalizes the referral procedures, has assigned liaison counselors in each DSHS/DVR office, and coordinates services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

For individuals with behavioral health conditions, DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner is the Health Care Authority (HCA) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). BHA's Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supported Employment Program is available to address the employment resource needs of mutual BHA and DSHS/DVR customers. DSHS/DVR completed an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with DBHR which provides a collaborative framework for both agencies to provide employment services to individuals with behavioral health conditions. The ILA identifies shared eligibility criteria and defines roles and responsibilities for DSHS/DVR's Supported Employment Program and for DBHR's FCS Supported Employment Program.

DSHS/DVR continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential revenue source for developmental disability, behavioral health disability, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services. DSHS/DVR will collaborate with DSHS/ALTSA to explore the development of a cooperative agreement for individuals with physical impairments and long-term care needs, such as individuals with traumatic brain injuries and other significant disabilities, who require supported employment and are eligible for both ALTSA's FCS Program and DSHS/DVR services.

Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long-term funding source for extended services. The State of Washington Health Care Authority was approved for the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration Foundational

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Community Supports Supported Employment in 2017. Effective July 1, 2023, the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration has been extended for another five years. FCS funds supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1.   Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

A. VR Program; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
1	4960	4960	$30,868,800	Not applicable
2	3800	3800	$23,649,500	Not applicable
3	1920	1920	$11,949,200	Not applicable
4	990	990	$6,161,300	Not applicable
5	140	140	$871,295	Not applicable

2.   Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Not Applicable	800	800	$5,562,701	Not Applicable

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G. ORDER OF SELECTION

☒ The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

☐ The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

DSHS/DVR is maintaining Order of Selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an Order of Selection.

1. <u>For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—</u>

(A) The justification for the order

Agency Response:

As of July 3, 2023, all priority of service categories became and remain open, and all eligible customers are able to receive services. DSHS/DVR has chosen to maintain the priority of service categories as explained below.

(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities

Agency Response:

As part of every customer's eligibility determination process, a qualified DSHS/DVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will evaluate: 1) disability-related functional limitations; 2) anticipated number of needed services; and 3) whether services are anticipated to be needed over an extended period to time. The VRC will use these criteria to assign eligible customers to one of five priority categories, based on the severity of the customer's disability. Priority categories ensure that DSHS/DVR services are prioritized for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Priority Category 1: Individuals with a most significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 1 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in four or more of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition, and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and

- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 2: Individuals with a significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 2 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in three of the following areas in

terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition, and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and

- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 3: Individuals with a significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 3 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in two of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition, and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and

- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 4: Individuals with a significant disability

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 4 if:

- The customer experiences serious functional limitations in one of the following areas in terms of an employment outcome: mobility, communication, self-care, cognition and learning (self-direction), interpersonal, work tolerance, and work skills; and

- The customer requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Priority Category 5: Individuals with Disabilities

An eligible customer is assigned to Priority Category 5 if:

- The customer is determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services but does not meet the criteria for Priority Categories 1-4.

Priority categories will be assigned consistently, objectively, and with customer rights to review and due process. Consistent with federal regulations, DSHS/DVR will not consider duration of residency in Washington State, type of disability, age, sex, race, color, national origin, type of expected employment outcome, source of referral, particular service needs or anticipated service costs, individual or family income level, when assigning a priority of service category. In addition, applicable State law and DSHS/DVR policies regarding anti-discrimination apply to eligible customers who are assigned a priority of service category.

(C) The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timeless for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

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DSHS/DVR is currently maintaining priority of service categories without the implementation of a waiting list. All eligible individuals are being assigned to open categories, so there are not currently goals in place for assisting individuals assigned to closed priority categories.

2. <u>Has the VR Agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?</u>

Agency Response:

☒ Yes

☐ No

H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

Not applicable.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. <u>Analysis of current personnel and projected needs, including</u>

(A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

(B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Personnel Data (A and B)

DSHS/DVR employs 338 Staff members to serve a projected 15,764 customers. DSHS/DVR's direct service personnel fall into eight different classifications. The bulk of these positions are Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs), and Rehabilitation Technicians (RTs); the vocational professional and paraprofessional personnel respectively.

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Personnel Data & Vacancies - DSHS/DVR Field Service Personnel Levels and Vacancies by Classification, December 3, 2023

Classification	Personnel on 11/30/2023	Vacancies on 11/30/2023
VRC 1 In-training	16	2
VRC 2 In-Training	11	0
VRC 3 Journey	79	13
VRC 4 Lead	52	10
RT 1 Case Aide	73	5
RT 2 Case Aide	0	0
RT 2 Benefits Tech	8	0

Classification	Personnel on 12/3/2023	Vacancies on 12/3/2023
RT 2 Business Spec	7	6
VR Supervisor	22	1
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	4	1
Office/Admin. Assistant	8	1
Program Specialist	3	0
Administrator/Manager	27	0
TOTAL	**310**	**39**

Table 1, Number of new hires by position and year, 2020-2022. Source: Learning Center

Position	2020 hires	2021 hires	2022 hires	2023 hires
RT 1	9	13	27	18
RT 2	4	2	2	9
VRC 1	2	3	13	9
VRC 2	2	3	13	15
VRC 3	1	2	14	19
VRC 4	9	4	6	17
Total	26	28	74	91

(C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

DSHS/DVR Projected New Staff Needs by Personnel Classification, 2024 – 2027

Personnel Classification	Projected Number of Positions to be Filled, 2024 – 2027
VRC 1 In-Training	9
VRC 2 In-Training	6
VRC 3 Journey	33
VRC 4 Lead	46
RT 1 Case Aide	21
RT 2 Benefits Technician & Business Tech	12
Supervisor	4

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(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:

Agency Response:

As of 12/05/23:

- 145 qualified VR counselors

- 8802 customers being served

- Ratio 61 customers per counselor

(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:

Projected Individuals Served in 2024	Projected Individuals Served 2024-2028
~12,000 customers	~62,000 individuals

2. <u>Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:</u>

(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Higher Education Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Several pacific northwestern state universities offer vocational rehabilitation graduate programs. As of late 2023, these universities report the following enrollment and graduation rates:

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Idaho State University	MCoun in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	20	5
Portland State University	MS in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	36	10
Portland State University	Graduate Certificate in Orientation and Mobility	29 (9 from WA)	19 (includes 8 full MS + O&M cert)

Western Oregon University	MS in Rehabilitation Counseling	47	12 (plus 4 more in Dec 2023)
Western Washington University	MA in Rehabilitation Counseling	36	14

Source: Beth Boland, WWU

WWU Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling Participants and Sponsorships, FFY 2020

Students Enrolled	32
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	6
Graduates	10
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	5

(B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR's FTE allotment is capped at 320.0 FTEs until June 30, 2025. The division is able to recruit all field service vacancies as they occur and has exceeded its FTE cap. Approval by the DSHS Secretary is required to fill any newly established exempt or program management positions, as part of ongoing budget savings policies.

Qualified Personnel Recruitment & Preparation Strategies

DSHS/DVR will maintain recruitment linkages and concentrated efforts with regional higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs. These include:

- Western Washington University

- University of Idaho

- Portland State University

- Western Oregon University

- San Diego State University

- Fresno State University

- Utah State University

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DSHS/DVR will also continue to send recruitment announcements to higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs nationwide. Recruiting qualified candidates in sufficient numbers to fill VRC positions is a continuing challenge. The national shortage of qualified VRC applicants has significantly affected DSHS/DVR's ability to fill vacancies in a timely manner.

In response to recruitment challenges, DSHS/DVR broadened its list of qualifying master's degrees to include psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields that promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities). The list of qualifying master's degrees broadened, but the required competencies that a VRC candidate must demonstrate remained unchanged. The incorporation Bachelor's level education qualifications into the VRC classification series also resulted in a broader recruitment pool and more timely appointments to vacant positions. However, a consequence of hiring graduates without a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling is the additional time required for these new staff to master the work. To ensure all new staff obtain a breadth of VR knowledge, all new field staff attend a robust onboarding curriculum that focuses on all aspects of vocational rehabilitation work.

Additionally, new counselors without a Master's in Rehabilitation complete 18 credit hours in rehabilitation counseling within their first two years with DSHS/DVR. New counselors with a Bachelor's degree have two years to complete a Master's Degree. These Bachelor level counselors also carry fewer cases than journey-level counselors while completing the educational requirements and learning the job.

A particular focus of recruitment continues to be attracting candidates who identify as African-American, Latino, and American Indian, as these individuals are presently under-represented among DSHS/DVR personnel and in comparison to our caseload demographics. Targeted recruitment will continue in collaboration with Latino community-based organizations, American Indian VR Programs and other Tribal organizations, as well as African-American community-based organizations.

Retention & Advancement

DSHS/DVR encourages staff to enhance their job skills and develop professionally by attending external webinars, conferences, in-person training, and using their free access to LinkedIn Learning. In addition, the DSHS/DVR Training Team facilitates trainings monthly such as Everyday Ethics, a clinical supervision series to support Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisors, as well as online courses that support specialized aspects of VR work.

DSHS/DVR conducts an employee survey bi-annually, and uses the results to identify ways to improve employee job satisfaction. In 2024 DSHS/DVR will implement action plans associated with the annual employee engagement survey. We will identify 4 areas for improvement, create action plans to target these areas, and track progress quarterly.

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(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

Professional Development

DSHS/DVR Training offers a customizable, multimodal training, mentorship, and on-demand learning program for staff to accommodate a variety of needs:

1. DSHS/DVR process training

2. Vocational Rehabilitation training

3. Specific Disability, Barrier, and Opportunities knowledge

4. Clinical supervision guidance

5. Customer service, Ethics, and Equity Diversity Access and Inclusion (EDAI) best practices training

6. Professional development

The overall goal of all DSHS/DVR Training is to use a measured, balanced approach to maximize learning retention and psychological safety while staff master the multiple variable complexities of vocational rehabilitation. We intend to give new staff what they need to begin their work, introduce them to their co-workers and partners, inspire them with the social justice foundation of vocational rehabilitation, then provide them continuing education, live support, and on-demand learning opportunities, from internal and external providers, to best serve their current customers.

When an employee is hired at DSHS/DVR, they begin onboarding curricula to match their role per state, DSHS/DVR requirements. For field and (and a growing number of) state roles, new staff work with their supervisor to complete a documented training plan. All required training and refreshers are documented in the DSHS/DVR Training Matrix, then delivered and tracked in Washington state's The Learning Center (TLC), our learning management system. Additional learning opportunities, job aids, and resources are accessible from the Training Team SharePoint site, the Learning Center, and LinkedIn Learning.

DSHS/DVR provides staff development and training for all staff, and in so doing, provides training opportunities (required and optional) to enhance staff competencies and skills. DSHS/DVR offers training to both professional and paraprofessional staff in core subjects through online (eLearning), instructor led virtual, and in-person instructor led training.

DSHS/DVR tracks each staff member progress on assigned training through The Learning Center, the State's learning management system (TLC). Employees use the Learning Center to register for instructor-led and on-demand e-learning modules.

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Many internally created and externally contracted DSHS/DVR courses are pre-approved through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) to provide continuing education hours to those counselors who hold a CRC.

Identifying Training Needs

DSHS/DVR employs various methods of reviewing staff performance, like monthly supervisor case reviews and annual performance evaluations, to cultivate individual performance development plans of all staff. Additional information is collected to identify training needs including:

- Statewide case reviews conducted by the division's Compliance and Planning and Performance teams

- Recommendations from Executive Leaders

- Contributions from all field staff via a statewide training needs assessment.

- Recommendations from the WSRC and the State Independent Living Council

- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

- Statewide Training Specialists

Training needs are identified by staff and leadership interaction, then assessed and documented with a Training Needs Analysis template. Needs become training objectives, which become evaluation points. All internally-created training goes through subject matter expert, field leadership, Policy, and accessibility review before release. The Training Team employs multiple levels of Kirkpatrick evaluation, including Student Feedback, Initial Competency, and ROI.

Statewide Training Team

The DSHS/DVR Training Team includes six experienced, credentialed vocational rehabilitation counselors who run instructor-led activities and create asynchronous e-learning modules and job aids for staff. Trainers work with field leaders and the Strategies and Policy Unit to make sure internally-created training aligns with policy and executive direction.

The Training Coordinator makes sure all staff receive all required assignments in their Learning Center dashboard, which are then monitored by their supervisors. Our Coordinator has also completed a Microsoft Trusted Tester Certification to coach and monitor the production of accessible training materials.

The Training Manager monitors agency wide initiatives and trends to provide training to meet current and future needs, coaches trainers on instructional design and adult learning best practices, provides technical support and coaching for instructional software, manages the Training SharePoint site, monitors professional development educational procurement, and manages training transparency through the entire ADDIE process.

Onboarding/New Employee Orientation (NEO)

All field hires, and other hires as appropriate, attend a three-week onboarding course introducing them to Vocational Rehabilitation as a function of social justice, and how the vocational rehabilitation process is conducted at this agency.

All new hires meet with several key staff to get a warm introduction of the following components and partners of DSHS/DVR:

- DSHS/DVR Director

- Chief of Field Services

- EDAI administrator

- Accessibility Specialist

- Washington State Rehab Council Executive Director

- Washington State Independent Living Council

- Tribal Relations Manager

- Customer Relations Manager

- Client Assistance Program Personnel

- Benefits Planning Manager

- Forms and Records Manager

- Assistive Technology and Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs)

- Business Relations Manager

Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (VRI)

Washington DSHS/DVR is continuing an interlocal agreement with the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) at University of Washington to deliver specialized classes on the most common disabilities and barriers to employment on a rotating cycle throughout the contract period. These classes enable staff to build the knowledge needed to perform at a highly professional level. Field staff at DSHS/DVR, as well as DSB and Tribal VR Partners (per MOUs) are invited to attend any and all topics.

For the 2024-2026 agreement, VRI will be offering a rotating cycle of courses in half day segments without prerequisite: a morning session featuring disability information provided by a subject matter expert, and an afternoon session discussing the vocational rehabilitation considerations of that disability/barrier. Students can attend either or all sessions to suit their schedule and supplement prior knowledge.

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- Depressive and other Mood Disorders

- Anxiety Disorders

- Autism Spectrum

- Intellectual Disability

- Physical Disorders/Conditions

- Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Specific Learning Disabilities

- Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders

- Epilepsy

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- Substance Use Disorder (other than alcohol)

- Alcohol Use Disorder

- Personality Disorder Clusters

Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Washington DSHS/DVR distributes significant information in emails, statewide and regional face-to-face meetings, video teleconferencing, weekly and quarterly newsletters, Agency SharePoint sites, and Microsoft Teams.

Washington DSHS/DVR staff at all levels attend numerous conferences every year to gain knowledge and skills. Conferences include Workforce Development, Mental Health, Transition, Supported Employment, Program Evaluation, and many others. Individual staff members also are granted approval to attend training or conferences related to serving specific populations or areas of specialization.

DSHS/DVR Benefit Planners receive specialized training through Cornell University to confirm the delivery of quality services when working with customers that receive monetary or medical benefits. Benefits Planners have provided ongoing training and support statewide with over 17 classes conducted for counseling staff on basics of social security and work incentives for customers.

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3. Description of the VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

Personnel Standards

In accordance with 101(a)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act, DSHS/DVR maintains consistent standards for all rehabilitation personnel. These standards include prior education and experience requirements as well as specific core competencies. All current DSHS/DVR counseling personnel (Field Services Administrator, Regional Administrators, VR Supervisors, and VRCs) hold credentials that are consistent with either the state-based VRC registration requirements or the national certification standards of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

DSHS/DVR continues to apply educational qualifications for new hires into VRC 2, VRC 3, VRC 4, and VR Supervisor classifications that require the following credentials:

- A master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields which promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well—being of individuals with disabilities; or

- CRCC Certification; or

- A master's degree in a closely related field, plus 18—quarter (12—semester) credit hours in specified rehabilitation counseling courses at the graduate level.

DSHS/DVR has adopted education qualifications at the Bachelor's level for the VRC1 classification as an entry point in to the VRC classification series. However, the VRC1 has been designated as an "In-training" classification that requires incumbents to obtain a Master's degree within two years of hire.

(B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR specifications for the VRC classification series are as follows:

- VRC1 – "In-training" classification that requires incumbents to have at least one year of experience and obtain a Master's degree within two years of hire.

- VRC2 – "In-training" classification that requires incumbents to have a Master's degree

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with less than three years of experience.

- VRC3 – "Journey" classification that requires incumbents to have a Master's degree with at least three years of experience.

- VRC4 – "Lead" classification that requires incumbents to have a Master's degree with at least four years of experience.

DSHS/DVR completes an annual Performance and Development Plan (PDP) with each employee that covers the period September 1 to August 31. The PDP is a standard State of Washington tool used to evaluate job performance and emphasize individualized staff development needs. Specific development needs identified for each employee are to be addressed in the following year. Each "step" in the VRC position has a different training plan, with different skills and abilities to learn and master. The supervisor works with the support of the training team to ensure VRCs obtain the necessary knowledge to be successful.

In addition to determining individual training needs, DSHS/DVR compiles results to plan overall training and developmental priorities conducted staff wide. While specific priorities evolve year-to-year, DSHS/DVR consistently addresses eligibility, vocational assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, job placement, transition services, as well as assistive and rehabilitation technology.

4. <u>Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.</u>

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

DSHS/DVR continues to assure full communication access for all individuals with limited English proficiency. In addition to bilingual DSHS/DVR staff, contracted interpreter and translation services are available. DSHS/DVR forms and publications are available in Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali. Translations are available in other languages when needed. DSHS/DVR has staff who act as the Language Access Advisor and Language Access Coordinator to ensure the division is adhering to the department's Language Access Plan. These staff serve as subject matter experts and support field staff in obtaining effective translation and interpretation services.

Individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing may communicate with DSHS/DVR staff at all locations via video phone, video relay, voice relay, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, real-time captioning, augmented listening devices, and UbiDuo devices. DSHS/DVR's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) provide effective and culturally competent services for customers who are Deaf.

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All DSHS/DVR-sponsored trainings include an invitation for potential attendees to request accommodations as part of the registration process. When an accommodation is requested, training staff follow up to assure the accommodation is arranged. Individual staff members may also request accommodations such at Dragon Naturally Speaking or other dictation software through an HR disability accommodation request to ensure they are able to complete their work and participate in training activities.

5. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Washington DSHS/DVR works closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to coordinate personnel development activities under an interagency agreement with OSPI and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) to address mutual issues. This agreement is intended to facilitate the required coordination with education and provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services, as required under WIOA. In addition, this agreement allows DSHS/DVR, DSB, and OSPI to identify necessary training for DSHS/DVR and education staff regarding new services, new coordination, and best practices in serving students with disabilities.

J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Introduction

The 2014 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 profoundly enhance expectations for coordination between DSHS/DVR and education officials to provide early job exploration and work-based learning opportunities for secondary students with disabilities. DSHS/DVR has developed a long-range plan to develop and strengthen the education-vocational rehabilitation infrastructure for the coming four years.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

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With the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandate that state vocational rehabilitation programs allocate 15% of federal funds to provide five required Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to all students with disabilities, it is imperative that DSHS/DVR develop meaningful, appropriate, and individualized plans to meet the needs of secondary students with disabilities statewide. These five required activities include 1) job exploration counseling; 2) counseling on post-secondary education opportunities 3) instruction in self-advocacy; 4) workplace readiness training; and 5) work-based learning experiences.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) has expanded the population of students who receive services from DSHS/DVR. Secondary students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students with Section 504 Plans, and students with a documented disabilities may be either eligible for DSHS/DVR services or potentially eligible for services. Pre-ETS are provided as generalized services to groups of eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities, or as individualized and intensive services for students with higher support needs.

For the provisions of Pre-Employment Transition Services, DSHS/DVR has defined a "Student with a Disability" as an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who:

- (A)(1) Is **not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services** under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)); and/or Washington Administrative Code 392-172A-03090 (1) (iii) (k) in part "Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education"

- (B)(1) Is **not older than 21 years of age**; or (2) If the State law for the State provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), is not older than that maximum age; and

- (C)(1) Is **eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.); or (2) Is a student who is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504. (Authority: Sections 7(37) and 12(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 U.S.C. 705(37) and 709(c))

While not all students receiving Pre-ETS will apply for DSHS/DVR services, engagement with transition staff and students works in support of IEP and Washington State High School and Beyond Plan goals.

DSHS/DVR staff meet with student and families to best support their transition needs. DVR vocational Counselors, transition, and Pre-ETS staff work together to identify appropriate supports and services for students receiving transition and Pre-ETS services.

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DSHS/DVR staff will ensure all student participants who apply for DSHS/DVR services have an IPE (Individualized Plan for Employment) within 90 days of being determined Eligible or their name being removed from the Order of Selection list, whichever is later, unless there is a mutually agreed to extension as described within DSHS/DVR policies and procedures.

Coordinated Services for Students and Youth: Goals & Objectives

> **Strengthen and enhance the DSHS/DVR and education agency partnership at state and local levels so that students receive a seamless continuum of transition services.**

- Continued work with the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to improve communication regarding clarifying roles and responsibilities of each partner agency in coordinating activities that promote successful post-secondary transition services for students with disabilities.

- Follow the guidance given in the DSHS/DVR and Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)'s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OSPI to help:

  o Disseminate the agreement to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) including special education directors and 504 coordinators, and to VR staff, and encourage further dissemination to school counselors and principals.

  o Promote outreach to identify potentially eligible students as early as possible, including students who are receiving special education services (who have an IEP), students receiving Section 504 accommodations, aids, and services (who have a 504 Plan), and students who have otherwise documented disabilities and may benefit from Pre-Employment Transition Services and/or transition services.

  o Communicate regularly among state and local entities to identify and address gaps in services.

  o Explore and identify the transition needs of students with disabilities at risk of drop-out or who have a history of incarceration and integrate supports into existing state initiatives as applicable.

  o Promote individualized and student-centered planning, with post-secondary goals consistent with student interests, strengths, preferences, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and informed choice.

  o Promote transition planning between LEAs and VR to ensure seamless and coordinated services for students.

  o Share training materials developed by the agencies or their agents and extend invitations to trainings using these materials to LEAS and VR staff.

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- Collaborate to identify and implement high quality Pre-Employment Transition and transition services delivery models.

- Invite partner agencies to statewide meetings as needed for cross training or education.

- Support eligible students with disabilities to engage with the broadest transition team possible and encourage LEAs to provide early invitations to VR staff for IEP consultation and technical assistance.

Increase student access to Pre-Employment Transition Services and individualized transition services from DSHS/DVR.

As reflected in our CSNA, there is still great need for increased student access to Pre-ETS.

- Continue to ensure every high school in the state, including public, private, alternative and transition programs, and Juvenile Rehabilitation facilities is assigned a VR Counselor liaison or Regional Transition Consultant trained to provide outreach and comprehensive high school transition services.

- Continued inclusive outreach to all educational partners including but not limited to: Transition coordinators, Administrators, Guidance counselors, School Psychologists, 504 coordinators, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Special education teaching staff, Alternative high school teachers, the McKinney-Vento coordinator, and Career Technical Education (CTE) staff

- RTCs attend and coordinate the provision of Pre-ETS. This includes attending and leading meetings and presentations at the local and regional level.

- Encourage regular transition or Pre-ETS check-ins with school staff including special education directors, district transition specialists, special education teachers, and teachers whose students are engaged in or receiving Pre-ETS as appropriate

- Collaboration with individual school districts to identify gaps in transition services using data from the state-wide needs assessment as well as school enrollment and demographic data obtained from OSPI

- Continue to develop, support, and expand interagency agreements and service contracts with organizations to provide Pre-ETS to potentially DSHS/DVR-eligible and DSHS/DVR-eligible students.

- Maintain and develop a DSHS/DVR student transition website that provides information and tools to students and their families.

- Update transition best practices guidance and provide ongoing training and

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technical assistance to DSHS/DVR supervisors, counselors, regional transition consultants, staff, and community partners. This training and technical assistance should incorporate appropriate data and subject matter expert information from other statewide agencies involved in Transition

- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved disability populations not limited to: students with 504 plans, those with emotional-behavioral challenges, students who are deaf or hard of hearing, those who have specific learning disabilities, as well as other disability populations who often do not receive services.

- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved populations that include Tribal youth, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) youth justice-involved youth, unhoused youth, LGBTQAI+ , multilingual students in a culturally responsive way, and students and youth receiving foster care.

2. <u>Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:</u>

(A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;

Consultation with Education

DSHS/DVR staff including the Workforce and Youth Chief, DSHS/DVR Transition manager, Pre-ETS Program manager, Regional Transition Consultants, and transition program supports collaborate with education and transition partners at local and state levels.

As part of the formal interagency agreement developed in 2020 between DSHS/DVR, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), and OSPI, DSHS/DVR consults with and provides technical assistance to staff at secondary schools and LEAs in transition planning for students with disabilities from school to post-school activities. This agreement defines partners' roles in Pre-Employment Transition Services and collaborative training activities and is based on the strengths of agencies that support transition students.

This consultation effort includes attending Transition Collaborative meetings. These meetings are a collaboration between OSPI, CCTS, DSB, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), county Developmental Disabilities representatives, and DSHS/DVR. The Transition Collaborative meetings support meaningful cross collaboration of transition and Pre-ETS services,

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opportunities for outreach and technical assistance, and transition systems' alignment for increased transition access across the state.

(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

DSHS/DVR and Individualized Education Plans (IEP)

DSHS/DVR has designated Vocational Counselor liaisons that work closely with local education agencies statewide; every high school in Washington has a designated DSHS/DVR Counselor liaison, including tribally operated secondary schools. DSHS/DVR liaisons maintain close collaborative relationships with students, families, educators, and partners. Their activities include, but are not limited to:

- Build and maintain relationships with educational partners

- Explain the scope of VR services

- Coordinates outreach and training activities for students and families

- Addresses organizational problems between school and DSHS/DVR

- Maintains regular contact with schools

- Provide individualized transition services (when appropriate)

- Participate in IEP planning and development

- Attends IEP meetings

- Ongoing consultation in the development of transition IEPs

- Dissemination of appropriate transition materials to parents, students, school staff, and partners

- Attend transition fairs and events as needed

(C) Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition service;

Financial Resources and Personnel

Financial Responsibilities

DSHS/DVR provides any financial resources and services needed to establish eligibility for students and youth with disabilities. In addition, funds are made available for students' activities

primarily related to Pre-Employment Transition Services, transition services, and employment services.

Local Educational Associations are fiscally responsible for providing transition services for students eligible for special education that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate their movement from school to post-school activities.

Decisions regarding funding that may not fall into these agreed categories is made collaboratively. In these instances, the following is considered: a.) Student eligibility for services; b.) The purpose of the transition service (is the purpose primarily education or employment); and c.) Customary transition services provided by each entity.

Personnel

DSHS/DVR, OSPI, and local education agencies maintain lists of DSHS/DVR Regional Transition Consultants on public-facing web sites.

Regional Transition Consultants work in partnership with students, families, school districts, educators, and contracted vendors to plan, implement and provide ongoing support to facilitate individualized group Pre-ETS services. The RTCs engage in consistent outreach efforts to schools, community partners and regional transition networks to support these efforts, provide consultation to partners, and technical assistance when necessary.

DSHS/DVR Vocational Counselors and Regional Transition Consultants work in partnership together to provide transition services at the local level including outreach, consultation, and direct services.

(D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services;

Outreach and Identification Activities

The current agreement between DSHS/DVR, DSB, and OSPI identifies outreach activities to increase the number of students with disabilities who engage in DSHS/DVR and DSB services. In addition, this agreement specifies that DSHS/DVR services should be available to all students with transition IEPs well before students prepare to exit secondary education.

Outreach and engagement activities include:

- An OSPI representative is a member of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council

- DSHS/DVR Counselors are assigned as liaisons to each high school in the state

- DSHS/DVR and OSPI share training and information materials for cross-program professional development

- DSHS/DVR provides outreach and education about DSHS/DVR services to underserved populations, including students with disabilities

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Additionally, transition staff present information at monthly Education Service District (ESD) Special Education Transition Network meetings to disseminate information to Special Ed Directors and administrators. This can include but is not limited to work opportunities that compliment graduation requirements, support services, and local transition events. Special Education directors and administrators then disseminate this information to their local Special Education departments. This partnership allows Pre-Employment Transition work to compliment the work students must complete their graduation pathway and prepare for successful transition into employment.

DSHS/DVR in partnership with Washinton State University College of Education implemented the Transition Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) to evaluation transition services in Washington state. Local Educational Associations complete the tool and the data is collected and analyzed. This report provides guidance to identify schools with high support needs, general service needs across the state, and students with disabilities in Washington state with unmet needs. This information is provided to RTCs and allows RTCs to target their outreach and engagement appropriately. This effort is ongoing and is intended to support our identification of students, families, and schools that would benefit from DVR services.

(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

Washington Administrative Code permits subminimum wage if all parties (employer and employee) are in agreement to subminimum wage, and they have obtained a certificate of approval prior to payment of subminimum wage. This certificate must be approved by the director of the department of labor, and it must explain the special circumstance necessary to approve subminimum wage. This certificate must be reevaluated every two years.

While subminimum wage is allowed for persons with disabilities of students in the state of Washington under Washington Administrative Code Chapter 296-128, DSHS/DVR does not support employment seeking subminimum wage.

(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage

DSHS/DVR's contractors or local education agencies do not fund contracts under which a student or youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

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K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

Introduction

This section describes DSHS/DVR's contributions to coordinated business engagement activities. DSHS/DVR and its workforce development partners will embrace a dual—customer model, serving both Washington's businesses and Washingtonians living with disabilities.

Businesses will have enhanced access to talented and highly skilled job seekers with disabilities, while enjoying DSHS/DVR's training and technical assistance supports. Concurrently, DSHS/DVR and its partners will provide Washingtonians living with disabilities with the full breadth of best practice rehabilitation, training, and employment services needed to thrive in Washington's workplaces and communities.

This dual-customer model closes skill gaps for businesses, promotes the economic self-sufficiency of Washingtonians living with disabilities, and contributes to a more prosperous Washington.

Businesses & Vocational Rehabilitation Services

In coordination with workforce development partners at the state and local level, DSHS/DVR establishes the following business engagement objectives for PY 2024 - 2027:

- Define the areas/counties/cities with continued need of Business Relations Specialists (BRS) and Job Coaches/Employment Specialist services.

- Continue to update the 5-year Strategic Plan for Business Engagement. Include year-by-year details and implementation recommendations.

- Utilize the newly created business engagement tracking tool to track coordination with businesses and evaluate areas of need.

- Continue to partner and participate in WorkSource business engagement strategies and provide opportunities with career pathways programs throughout the state. This includes partner events, webinars, and social media messaging.

- Ensure all newly onboarded BRS complete the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 101 and Washington's One-Stop System Training.

- Utilize DSHS/DVR Business Relation Specialists to assist with the recruitment and referral of qualified job seekers with disabilities to meet businesses' demands.

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- Provide businesses with training and technical expertise services such as Americans with Disabilities Act reasonable accommodations and disability etiquette to employers, DSHS/DVR staff, and WorkSource center staff

- Coordinate local WDC/WorkSource in the engagement of federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to skilled job seekers with disabilities to help the business meet their 7% utilization goal for people with disabilities, per Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. Maintain partnership with the OFCCP.

- Change employer perceptions of people with disabilities through and integrated marketing campaign. This includes a digital and social campaign to gain traction with businesses, as well as BRSs connecting with local businesses, chambers of commerce, and professional organizations.

- Support and expand innovative disability hiring initiatives with businesses to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities in high-skill and high-demand occupations.

Businesses & Transition Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) provide value to both students and businesses. In the dual-customer model, Pre-ETS will engage Washington's businesses in actively molding the future workforce. By exposing students with disabilities to hands-on and realistic work experiences, these students will enter the workforce well prepared to meet business' skill needs and expectations. As a result, business will experience higher productivity, better engagement, and reduced turnover.

DSHS/DVR will collaborate with workforce development, education, and community partners to:

- Continue to build relationships with businesses who will work with students and youth by developing internships and on-the-job training programs.

- Partner with DSHS/DVR Transition Consultants and workforce development council to provide opportunities for youth career exploration, including workplace tours, job shadows, internships/apprenticeships, and OJTs at businesses across Washington.

- Develop business training and outreach materials that address hiring youth and students with disabilities.

- Promote the development and expansion of on-site job exploration and internship programs, such as Project Search, statewide.

- Partner with businesses, leveraging pre-employment experiences to prepare youth for the realities and expectations of the 21st Century workplace.

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L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. State Programs Carried out under Section 4 of Assistive Technology Act of 1998

DSHS/DVR has an Interlocal Agreement with the University of Washington, Center for Technology and Disability Studies, Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP), which is the state program carrying out activities under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. WATAP provides training to DSHS/DVR, Tribal VR, and DSHS/DVR contractor staff; provides AT device demonstrations and evaluations, purchases some equipment requested specifically by DSHS/DVR, provides our ATAPs with a technology "go kit" for working with Customers, and lends AT devices to staff and customers. DSHS/DVR maintains a close collaborative relationship with WATAP, which includes DSHS/DVR representation on WATAP's Advisory Council.

DSHS/DVR customers will continue to have access to assistive technology devices, services, and consultations. DSHS/DVR counselors will assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address all customers' barriers to employment as part of DSHS/DVR's standardized vocational assessment process. DSHS/DVR has four full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) to provide customers with specialized AT assessments, consult with staff and customers regarding a full spectrum of AT services and products, coordinate service delivery with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources about advancements in AT devices.

To ensure that DSHS/DVR staff is informed of ongoing developments in the AT field, assistive and rehabilitative technology will continue to be a core focus of the redesigned DSHS/DVR VR Institute curriculum.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

2. Programs Carried out by Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture

None

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3. Non-Educational Agencies Serving Out-of-School Youth

Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families, Juvenile Rehabilitation (DCYF/JR): DCYF/JR provides rehabilitative services to justice-involved youth. DSHS/DVR and DCYF/JR have a cooperative agreement to jointly serve JR youth who are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services and other DSHS/DVR services. Through coordinated services, DCYF/JR youth with disabilities will receive services supporting community re-entry along career pathways.

4. State Use Contracting Programs

None

5. State Agency Responsible for Administering State Medicaid Plan

Health Care Authority (HCA): The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all eligible DSHS/DVR customer recipients. HCA is also the designated state mental health authority. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA contracts with Amerigroup, a Third-Party Administrator, to administer Foundational Community Supports (FCS), a Medicaid Transformation Demonstration project that provides supported employment services for individuals with behavioral health conditions or long-term care needs. HCA Behavioral Health Administration (HCA/BHA) and the Department of Social and Health Services Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (DSHS/ALTSA) support FCS network development and provider engagement.

6. State Agency Responsible for Providing Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA): DSHS/DDA is the primary agency that funds extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities who require supported employment. DSHS/DDA contracts for these services with Washington counties, and counties sub-contract with community rehabilitation providers to provide extended services to DSHS/DVR customers. DSHS/DVR coordinates with DSHS/DDA in the following ways:

- DSHS/DVR and DSHS/DDA leadership meets on a regular basis and is co-sponsoring several initiatives aimed at improving employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advancing the skills of employment service providers

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that serve joint DSHS/DVR and DSHS/DDA customers.

- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council.

DSHS/DVR collaborates with DSHS/DDA, counties, Community Rehabilitation Programs, schools, and students/families to implement the School-to Work program, which provides state-only funded services for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD). The legislative intent behind School-to-Work funding is to make specific services available to all 39 counties in Washington, with funding distributed through counties. DSHS/DVR receives data on eligible students from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, contracts with counties, and collaborates with stakeholders to offer team building, assessment, job placement, employment, and stabilization services for specified individuals with IDD.

7. State Agency Responsible for Providing Mental Health Services

Health Care Authority Behavioral Health Administration (HCA/BHA): The Behavioral Health Administration (DBHR) was moved from DSHS to HCA in 2018 to integrate physical health with behavioral health, thereby providing whole-person care. DBHR manages the majority of public behavioral health services in Washington. HCA/DBHR provides a broad range of community-based mental health, substance use disorder, and pathological and problem gambling services using multiple funding sources to meet broad behavioral health needs. In addition, HCA/DBHR sponsors recovery supports and the development of system of care networks.

DSHS/DVR entered into an Interlocal Agreement with HCA/DBHR in 2019. The purpose of the agreement is to establish a collaborative framework for both agencies to provide employment services for individuals with behavioral health conditions. This framework identifies shared eligibility criteria and defines roles and responsibilities for DSHS/DVR's supported employment program and HCA/DBHR's Foundational Community Supports (FCS) supported employment program.

DSHS/DVR and HCA/DBHR coordinate in the following ways:

- DSHS/DVR and HCA/DBHR leadership meet on a regular basis for ongoing coordination and collaboration between systems. DSHS/DVR and HCA/DBHR FCS Workgroup meet on a regular basis for ongoing coordination, collaboration for mutual customers enrolled in FCS and DSHS/DVR.

- DSHS/DVR and HCA/DBHR participate in the FCS Amerigroup Advisory Committee with DSHS/ALTSA and other FCS providers and stakeholders.

- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Behavioral Health Advisory Council.

- DSHS/DVR collaborates with HCA/DBHR's FCS to serve shared supported employment customers, using the FCS Individual Placement Support (IPS) model of supported

employment and DSHS/DVR supported employment services.

- DSHS/DVR maintains active referral relationships with treatment providers that are funded through HCA/DBHR contracts with each county.

- DSHS/DVR assigned liaison counselors to work with behavioral health agencies across the state, facilitating access to DSHS/DVR services for behavioral health consumers.

- DSHS/DVR and DBHR signed a memorandum of collaboration that establishes methods for Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services to be provided as extended services for joint DSHS/DVR supported employment customers.

- King County Behavioral Health and Recovery has become a Ticket-to-Work (TTW) Employment Network and is establishing a Partnership Plus Agreement with DSHS/DVR to build a revenue stream from the TTW Program that will fund extended services for those mental health customers who require a supported employment model.

8. <u>Other Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Programs Outside of the Workforce Development System</u>

Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities: The Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities (ACHS-DD) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization of the thirty-nine County Developmental Disabilities (CDD) Coordinators across the state who contract with DSHS/DDA to deliver residential, employment and other services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

DSHS Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (DSHS/ALTSA): DSHS/ALTSA provides long- term care through personal care attendant services, Kinship Care, Roads to Community Living, "money follows the person" policies, New Freedom Services, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Council, the Title V Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), and the Medicaid Transformation Demonstration project Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supported Employment program. DSHS/ALTSA supports FCS network development and provider engagement. DSHS/DVR and DSHS/ALTSA will explore the development of a cooperative agreement for serving joint customers.

DSHS Community Services Division (DSHS/CSD): DSHS/CSD administers the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) Program (formerly known as the General Assistance - Unemployable (GAU) Program), Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Program, and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Program. These programs provide time-limited income assistance and other support services to low-income families and individuals. Washington DSHS/DVR continues to work closely with CSD to mutually serve Customers through an Interlocal Agreement that implements a warm handoff process between the local Community Service Office (CSO) and DSHS/DVR. CSD participants with disabilities are offered a warm handoff to DSHS/DVR if they are interested in pursuing employment, with the goal of increasing positive outcomes for these participants.

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Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE): The DSHS/DVR Director participates as a member of the GCDE and partners with committee members on initiatives.

Centers for Independent Living: DSHS/DVR currently contracts Title VII, Part B funds to four independent living centers statewide. These centers use Part B funds to enhance and expand core independent living services with a focus on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, independent living centers have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas. Additional outreach efforts include targeted disability groups, minority groups, and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment for youth with disabilities in which youth feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing youth understanding of independent living philosophy, successful self-advocacy, and ways to engage with legislators about disability issues. The independent living centers' Title VII, Part B contracts are aligned with and can be amended to meet the goals set forth by the State Plan for Independent Living, the strategic plan developed by the Washington State Independent Living Council.

Community Employment Alliance: The Community Employment Alliance (CEA) is statewide membership organization comprised of Community Rehabilitation Programs. CEA provides advocacy, education, and partnering opportunities to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. DSHS/DVR and CEA leadership meet quarterly to share information, hear concerns and collaborate on issues and special projects affecting employment services.

Disability Inclusion Network (DIN): The DIN is a business resource group for members of the Disabled Community and their allies in Washington State service. The DIN's mission is to engage in the experience, values, and knowledge of people with disabilities in state government, promote universal access, and create an environment where people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of the workplace. THE DIN's vision is to see Washington State as an Employer of Choice ensuring people with disabilities have equitable access and resources through recruitment, hiring, training, development, retention, and promotion.

Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council: In the late 1990s, DSHS/DVR was the primary sponsor of a demonstration grant to identify gaps in providing services to individuals who sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI). DSHS/DVR continues to be a represented member of the TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council. This group discusses TBI-related policy issues, system development, and the need for services to meet the needs of TBI survivors, family members, prospective employers, and community members. The TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council has identified gaps in housing, a lack of resources, and a need for support group facilitator training. This Council has successfully encouraged the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation that adds fees to specific traffic violations (e.g., negligent

driving and speeding) which correlate with increased risk of injury accidents and TBIs. These collected fees are used to help fund TBI-related programs and resources. DSHS/DVR continues to be an active partner in addressing the needs of individuals who have been, or will be affected by, traumatic brain injuries.

Tribal Governments and Programs: DSHS/DVR and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) have a joint statewide cooperative agreement with thirteen   Section 121 programs operated by tribal governments, consortium of tribal governments, or a tribal organization that performs American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services benefiting more than one Indian tribe, including twelve in Washington and one in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. This joint agreement outlines how all partners will ensure effective communication, collaboration, coordination, and cooperation in serving individuals with disabilities who are tribal members in Washington. The agreement, updated on an annual basis, outlines procedures for referrals, joint cases, financial responsibility, shared training opportunities, information sharing, transition planning, and communication. Section 121 directors meet annually with DSHS/DVR and DSB directors in a government-to-government collaboration to promote partnership, maximize resources, and ensure high service quality for American Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities who want to work. Through DSHS, DSHS/DVR continues its cooperative working relationships and service delivery commitments with all federally recognized tribes in Washington, including those that do not operate federally funded Tribal VR programs. DSHS/DVR participates as a member on the DSHS Indian Policy Advisory Committee. This includes annual and quarterly meetings to review our partnership and to identify service delivery improvements for individuals with disabilities, who are members of federally recognized tribes, as well as those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA): DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with the regional USDVA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) and its regional offices to facilitate improved service delivery for customers receiving USDVA benefits by formalizing referral procedures, designating local referral liaisons, and coordinating services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

University of Washington Rehabilitation Program: Since 2006, DSHS/DVR and the University of Washington Rehabilitation Medicine Unit have collaborated to maintain an on-site Rehabilitation Medicine-DSHS/DVR liaison. This mutually beneficial relationship improves inpatient and outpatient care at the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) by providing UWMC patients with direct access to DSHS/DVR services during their hospital treatment. The UWMC is the only regional rehabilitation medicine center in the Pacific Northwest for the treatment of spinal cord injuries and other severe disabling medical conditions. Early introduction in the medical setting provides DSHS/DVR with comprehensive insight into patient needs and makes the referral process more efficient. This relationship provides UWMC patients with additional resources for education, support, and funding. The liaison coordinates DSHS/DVR orientation and intake procedures for individuals referred from

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UW Rehab Medicine; determines eligibility for DSHS/DVR services; provides information and referral; participates in UWMC team staffing to coordinate DSHS/DVR services with the interdisciplinary treatment team; upon release from the hospital, assists with transitioning the individual to a VR Counselor near their home; learns about extensive medical and other resources available through the UW Medical School; and shares resources with other DSHS/DVR counselors.

Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges: The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) oversees the operation of thirty-nine Community and Technical Colleges across the state. DSHS/DVR will develop cooperative agreements with SBCTC programs authorized, and not authorized, by WIOA to jointly serve students with disabilities who require VR services to achieve competitive employment outcomes. DSHS/DVR works closely with SBCTC to implement an Interlocal Agreement between the Public Institutions of Higher Education (PIHE), DSHS/DVR and DSB to support the costs of specific academic accommodations for students who are attending school as part of their approved IPE.

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS): DSHS administers a wide range of programs that include, but are not limited to, developmental disabilities, long-term care and disability determination, and economic assistance services. DSHS/DVR continues close collaboration throughout DSHS.

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA): DSHS/DVR and WDVA have procedures for referring DSHS/DVR customers with military service to WDVA to determine eligibility for any state or federal Veterans' benefits. This collaboration has increased the use of Veterans' benefits as comparable services for DSHS/DVR customers who are veterans with disabilities.

Washington State Health Care Authority: The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all eligible DSHS/DVR customer recipients. HCA is also the designated state mental health authority. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with DSHS/DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA contracts with Amerigroup, a Third-Party Administrator, to administer Foundational Community Supports (FCS), a Medicaid Transformation Demonstration project that provides supported employment services for individuals with behavioral health conditions or long-term care needs. HCA Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) and the DSHS/Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (ALTSA) support FCS network development and provider engagement.

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HCA also administers Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD), a Medicaid buy-in program. DSHS/DVR coordinates with HCA/HWD to assist qualified individuals to receive medical benefits after they become employed.

Washington State Office of Financial Management/State Human Resources (OFM/SHR): The Office of Financial Management (OFM) division of State Human Resources (SHR) administers the Supported Employment in State Government (SESG) Program, adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 1999. Executive Order 13-02, effective May 22, 2013, requires each agency, board, commission, and other organization that reports to the Governor to participate in the SESG program. Positions are available to individuals with a development disability or a significant disability who require on the job training and long-term support to perform their job successfully. Candidates must also have a reliable source of long-term support.

DSHS/DVR has a SESG Program Memorandum of Understanding with OFM/SHR to designate a Statewide SESG Program Coordinator, market the SESG Program to state agencies, assist agencies to establish and fill positions, and ensure that employee needs for job modification, reasonable accommodations and long-term support are met.

Individuals with a developmental disability or a significant disability who require on the job training and long-term support and have a reliable source of long-term support are eligible for these positions. All SESG positions are regular classified positions, filled on a competitive basis per State recruitment and hiring policies and procedures.

Washington Workforce Association: The Washington Workforce Association (WWA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization comprised of Washington's twelve Workforce Development Councils (WDCs). The WWA partners with state, regional, and national organizations advocating for a coordinated and fully funded workforce development system focused on the needs of job seekers and businesses. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the WWA have created and signed a Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and WDCs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities in Washington's One-Stop Centers.

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PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

Agency Response:

- (B) DSB has an established State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1st	11/2022
Parent Training and Information Center	1st	11/2023
Client Assistance Program	2nd	10/2023
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1st	10/2023
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	1st	11/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st	9/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st	11/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st	9/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st	9/2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	1st	9/2022
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1st	9/2022
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	2nd	10/2023
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1st	11/2023
State Workforce Development Board	1st	Exited 12/2023 New applicant pending
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	n/a	01/2020

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If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

Agency Response:

The SRCB has been fully staffed with appropriate community representation, and meets quarterly. Since 2020, the SRC has been meeting remotely, which meets most members and public access needs. In 2024, the SRC will begin to meet in person for one of the quarterly meetings.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

Agency Response:

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (WSRCB) input to The Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) State Plan/2023:

The SRCB has selected three categories of focus in the DSB vocational rehabilitation process, to include in the 2023 Combined State Plan. We are offering suggestions under each category to improve services to blind consumers at DSB. We are aware that changes in these areas are already underway and appreciate DSB's strong commitment to continuous improvement in service provision.

Category One:

A large percentage of DSB customers (approximately 70%) are leaving DSB services without employment. The following suggestions are submitted to improve the percentage of customers leaving DSB without employment:

- It would be helpful if customers were provided with clarification at the beginning of the VR process as to what to expect of DSB. Many customers think DSB is an employment agency. Clarification re: this should be made up front in the process.

- Prior to plan development customers should understand exactly what is in the document and be aware of services available to them.

- Onboarding new customers should be more manageable. It is suggested that initial paperwork be presented in "chunks" and streamlined.

- A group orientation should be considered for individuals considering services at DSB. Services are explained. Questions are answered. Emphasis is put on employment and vocational rehabilitation services from the start.

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- Create a standard orientation that can be recorded for the DSB website or be held in person.

- Review policies and procedures prior to application. Read the Rights and Remedies document to customers and make sure they understand the information.

- Customers should clearly understand the expectations of participation in the OTC day one.

- The SRCB applauds the new intake system developed at DSB which will significantly decrease the number of days between application and intake.

- Improve job readiness and assessments for best career matching.

- Provide intense blindness skills training, applicable to career choice either through DSB resources or contracted training resources.

- Training for providers has been a valuable tool to improve contracted services for customers. The preferred provider training offered by DSB strengthens the skill base of providers and benefits customers. If this could be offered more frequently, this might positively impact employment outcomes.

- Some customers complete college and do not understand how their degree relates to entering the workforce. To prevent them from dropping out of services after graduation, intensive communication is necessary with their VRC.

- A strong community awareness program would help employers and community partners understand some of the unique features of working with blind employees.

- Internships are very important. Connect with other agencies to help DSB customers access internships that may lead to work. No need to reinvent the wheel, consult with other agencies who have resources in this area. The DSB Business Engagement and Workforce Manager is a valuable resource, and the SRCB applauds the future hiring of business relations specialists.

Category Two:

Over the last few years DSB, like so many agencies, has experienced staff turnover at a high rate. A strong training program is essential to ensuring superior service to DSB customers. The following suggestions are offered to enhance professional development for all DSB staff

- Ensure that staff training is provided by qualified trainers, specific areas of focus include:

  - Major eye conditions, how vision is impacted, and recommendations for low vision items.

  - Blindness Awareness Training, preferably from a person who is blind and knowledgeable.

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- Medical Aspects of disabilities training to ensure understanding and consideration of secondary disabilities on the customer's VR process.

- Learning disabilities and styles, especially common secondary conditions of genetic vision impairments that can impact vocational goals and progress.

- Explaining the VR process, customer rights and customer options for when there are disagreements about services, job goals, etc.

- Broader support for working with customers with mental health disabilities, including staff training, list of providers that are willing to work with DSB, are covered by Medicaid and/or Medicare, and community resources and partner agencies.

- Clarify the what and why behind obtaining medical documentation needed for Eligibility and explain options for customers so they can choose which method is most efficient and effective for their situation.

- Best practice should include Deaf VRC's notifying their customers they are deaf and will be communicating through an interpreter.

Category Three:

Historically, deaf-blind customers have not been satisfied with services at DSB. The following suggestions are offered to improve services to the deaf-blind community:

- Include representation and content for staff training from individuals with lived experience.

- Best practice should include understanding and utilizing communication methods that work best for individual customers.

- Strengthened relationships with the Deaf Blind Services Center, Helen Keller Center and DSB Orientation and Training Center at DSB could help coordinate and streamline training services to ensure focus on deaf, blind and deaf/blind issues and needs, including an emphasis on social engagement skills.

- Include/expand self-advocacy skills training for Deaf-blind transition students to support youth/students with understanding their needs and advocating for services to help them obtain their employment goals.

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Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

Agency Response:

The agency is in full agreement with the recommendations made by the SRC, and as noted, the agency has begun to take steps towards process and service provision improvement that align with the SRC recommended goals. Most of the SRC recommendations are reflected in the agency's strategic goals within this plan.

The Category One set of recommendations relate to improving employment results. The agency has recognized and shared with the SRC that DSB customers are exiting from services without employment too regularly. A 70% exit rate without employment has been consistent since the beginning of the pandemic, and our target is to reduce that ratio to 30%. The agency is aligned with the SRC, and are incorporating their recommendations for ensuring that DSB customers clearly understand the expectations of career preparation at the initial stages of interaction with the program and throughout services. We are aligned with a need to revise processes to ensure that the customer experience is streamlined, expedited, and meaningful. We are aligned with the need to ensure career preparedness is the main focus of every conversation, that the preparedness is in line with the current labor market, and that vendors are trained to understand and support and raise expectations around visual disability.

The Category Two set of recommendations refer to the agency's need to manage the skillsets of a predominantly new internal workforce, and to provide new systems of training to ensure all DSB team members – no matter their job class - understand, support and raise expectations around visual disability, and have the technical skills to provide the highest quality services to each DSB customer.

The Category Three set of recommendations relate to the agency's shared understanding that our DeafBlind customers are underserved. The DeafBlind community is identified through the CSNA and other data as our target underserved community, and we will be working to improve the customer experience and assure equitable services for the DeafBlind community during this state plan four-year period.

B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA)

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. <u>The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:</u>

(A) Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment

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Agency Response:

In analyzing the collected information, four themes emerge regarding barriers to employment for individuals with vision loss through the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment process and analysis.

The community barriers most identified by respondents included *physical environment* that included lack of accessibility, limited digital and assistive technology, and limited transportation especially in rural areas.

The second barrier theme presented were *agency issues* that included challenges with insufficient Information about WA DSB services and insufficient time and communication with WA DSB counselors.

Another barrier theme described were *personal issues* and included lack of self-confidence, low motivation and/or limited belief in one's ability.

The fourth major barrier theme identified were *lack of job preparedness and job placement services.*

Many respondents also reported employment barriers such as lack of openness to hiring persons with vision loss, refusal to adjust or modify practices, and denial of accommodations.

Another employment barrier identified included participants who struggle with orientation and mobility within the community and in job sites.

The CSNA report noted that most participant comments were positive towards WA DSB and several extended their appreciation to WA DSB counselors and team members. They also opined that WA DSB counselors listen to them and are often supportive and encouraging.

Services and Service Provision in Addressing the Needs of Persons who are Blind or have Low Vision

According to data sources and responses analyzed, the most critical service needs of WA DSB participants were identified. The following service categories emerged across respondent groups as important for participants to be successful in employment:

- Assistive technology and understanding its use (greatest need),

- Adaptive equipment,

- Access to effective communication (including Braille when appropriate),

- Improved and more frequent WA DSB communication,

- Mental health services, and

- Job search/placement support services.

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The issue of high turnover of WA DSB staff across Washington State was reflected in the responses identifying timely counselor replies as a service need as well as rapid engagement with participants. Respondents also remarked that timely services such as plan decisions, approvals, and vocational rehabilitation services need improvement.

Increased visibility of WA DSB and was a subject mentioned by respondents, especially in rural areas of the state. Most respondents seem to understand that WA DSB has limited resources; however, in partnership with other service providers the agency might be able to increase its reach and visibility across the state. Respondent suggestions included more workforce engagement and business partnership, and marketing via social media platforms, presence at community events, and increasing connections with medical providers, especially eye doctors.

After comprehensive data collection and analysis, CCER has identified several areas of focus for WA DSB and SRC consideration as they move forward with strategic and state planning. These areas of focus include:

- WA DSB staff simplify rehabilitation and workflow processes to better focus on participants needs and outcomes.

- Strengthening the agency's focus on improving the responsiveness, quality, and frequency of counselor/participant communications

- Enhancing accessibility services that includes digital and assistive technology, and training participants to ensure technology solutions work

- Increased mental health services that address vision loss changes, health problems, addiction, and mental/behavioral health challenges

- Brainstorming ways to address limited transportation for those with vision loss, especially in rural areas

- Educating employers on biases regarding employment abilities of visually impaired as well as available supports, best practices, and benefits of employing individuals with vision loss

- The development of a system accessible by all staff to collect business engagement information

- Focus on staff training in how to best serve WA DSB populations including individuals with multiple disabilities

- Encourage staff to participate in diverse community events to represent WA DSB and cast a wider net of networking opportunities with businesses

- Advocating for inclusion of younger youth that includes career assessments and best practices within Pre-Employment Transition Services for blind services

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- More direct support with participants job readiness, job placement, and communication with employers to support an individual's success on the job

(B) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

Agency Response:

Data shows that numbers of individuals with disabilities who are minorities served by the agency exceed ratios of state demographic populations for each community.

	WA DSB		Washington	
	Percent of cases served 7/1/22 – 6/30/23	Count	Percent of population w/visual disability	Count
White	61%	672	2.3%	111,914
Black/African American	8.6%	95	2.3%	6,496
Native Am. or Alaska Native	3.4%	37	NA	NA
Asian	5.4%	60	1.6%	11,519
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	1.4%	16	NA	NA
One or More Race/Ethnic Group	15.3%	161	NA	NA
Hispanic	3.4%	37	1.9%	20,145
Did Not Wish to Identify	1.7%	19		
Missing Data	.6%	7		
Total		1104		

Perception of fulling serving individuals with disabilities from various communities is less clearcut. Focus group participants, customers, and key informant interviewees identified unserved and underserved groups of individuals who could benefit from WA DSB services. The most common responses pointed to those living in remote areas, youth, and people of diverse backgrounds including Mexican/Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern, Native/Tribal, and Black/Brown communities. Other unserved or underserved groups noted by WA DSB included individuals who are deaf blind and have significant mental health diagnoses.

The agency will need to do greater analysis for equity in services provided, and will be contracting with a consultant to assist with that understanding. Questions have been added by the State Rehab Counsil to the 2024 Customer Satisfaction Survey to better gauge equity in service provision and customer experience.

(C) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system

Agency Response:

Comments were evenly mixed between those who had success using WorkSource Center services and those who did not. Those with positive responses indicated they had help with resumes and cover letters, attended job search classes such as interviewing skills, and had help using the website to search for jobs and upload documents. None of the respondents indicated that they were able to gain employment through these efforts, but the experience was generally positive. Others reported getting no help from WorkSource staff, and their efforts to use the services and software on their own were frustrating.

Many surveyed or interviewed respondents identified partnership barriers related to employer beliefs and attitudes about someone who is blind or has low vision or are deaf-blind. These biases impact the possibility of successful employment opportunities for WA DSB participants. Several respondents stated that they would like to see more employer engagement with businesses in smaller and more rural areas. Finally, another partnership need is additional education to employers to address their fears and biases about hiring and accommodating individuals who are blind, have low vision, and are deafblind.

Expectations of Individuals who are Blind. At least 5 respondents described barriers caused by the low expectations placed on people who are blind, low vision or deaf/blind by others in their environment.

Ableism, Bias, Employer Attitudes, and Disability Stigma. On a similar note, the second most often mentioned barrier is a bias or stigma among employers regarding the employment abilities of someone who is blind. Several respondents mentioned "ableism" as a barrier and indicated that many employers harbor negative beliefs about what people who are blind can do and are not well educated and informed about available accommodations, technology solutions, and support services. As one respondent put it, "sometimes the biggest barrier experienced by people who are blind is sighted people!"

Others mentioned the dearth of effective interpreters to work with individuals who are deafblind and the lack of adequate funding for technology access and solutions.

Transportation. Another barrier identified by almost half of key informant interviewees was the availability of and access to transportation, especially in more remote and rural areas.

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When questioned about the effectiveness of WorkSource service delivery for people individuals who are blind, low vision, and deafblind and their partnerships with WA DSB, key informants with experience in this area stated that the WorkSource system doesn't have the skills or necessary technology, adaptive equipment, or communication tools to adequately serve individuals, but that WA DSB has worked to establish partnerships with the system. Some indicated that it would be helpful if more WA DSB staff were able to be present and/or co-located at WorkSource offices, but also acknowledged that this would be difficult for a small agency like WA DSB. One WorkSource representative who participated in an interview stated, "It has been a pleasure to work with <the representative> from WA DSB. She is awesome and one of my favorite WDC partners. We have well planned memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements, smoothly facilitated by DSB. She is very responsive to agreed-upon tasks, has exceptional communication with our agency, prepares important letters of support, and completes needed paperwork in a timely manner."

Key informant respondents were asked if they had any observations and recommendations about how WA DSB could better engage with area employers to recruit and hire individuals who are blind, low vision, and deafblind. Most respondents shared their impression that WA DSB does a nice job of building relationships with area businesses and employers and that they effectively share those resources with their partners. One respondent stated, "While still a work in progress, DSB is making a lot of effort and inroads with business partners." Several respondents stated that they would like to see this employer engagement continue and focus even more on businesses in smaller and more rural areas. Finally, interviewees also noted that there is always the need for additional education to employers to address their fears and biases about hiring and accommodating individuals who are blind, low vision, and deafblind.

(D) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

Agency Response:

An identified barrier for WA DSB youth is lacking early access (younger than age 14) to transition programming that address self and societal expectations for best fit employment as they exit the education system. Vocational assessment for students should be identified early on and training is recommended for WA DSB counselors and staff on best practices in working with Pre-Employment Transition Service students.

Several participant survey respondents in this age group recognized WA DSB's youth programs as the most helpful WA DSB services. Specific examples given were YES I, YES II, and Good Vibe Friday. YES (or Youth Employment Solutions) are summer programs that assist students who are blind or have low vision with career preparation. YES is sponsored by WA DSB and the Washington State School for the Blind. Good Vibe Friday is a space for teenagers who are blind

or have low vision to form a community, talk about important topics, play fun games, and practice skills. Topics covered have included ableism, healthy relationship-building including self-love, self-worth, and self-value. Pre-ETS skills practiced during the Good Vibe Friday sessions have included active listening, self-advocacy, and peer mentoring.

When asked if there were other services that youth feel they need to achieve their employment goals, participant survey respondents in this age group identified the following five services:

- Entrepreneurship experience and preparation,

- More assistance in attaining the first job,

- More career assessment and exploration,

- More counseling and guidance, especially after graduation, and

- Referral to services besides blindness-related services.

Barriers listed included meaningful time & access to DSB counselor; information about the agency, and public transportation.

Most respondents indicated that WA DSB's current Pre-ETS were effective and that they would like to have more of these services, a greater variety of these services, or would like services to start before age 14.

2. <u>Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.</u>

Agency Response:

Partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Programs and Other Agencies/ Organizations that Serve Individuals with Disabilities

When responding to questions about Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and other service partners in Washington, respondents identified a concerning barrier is the low expectations placed upon individuals who are blind, have low vision or are deafblind. This negatively impacts the possibility of participant's achieving successful employment.

Additionally, several commenters pointed out that it is difficult to cultivate the low vision or vision loss specialty area within a CRP because blindness and low vision are perceived as "low incidence" disabilities by the provider community.

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C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must:

1. Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

Agency Response:

The agency and SRC actively and on-going discuss the challenges facing the agency, and strategize goals for addressing issues of chronically low exit-with-employment rates, staffing issues, and customer experience. We have reviewed customer feedback, RSA monitoring feedback, CSNA data, Community Forum discussions, and other data gathering including agency culture and benchmarking research. The agency's strategic goals closely align with the recommendations put forward by the SRC.

2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that:

(A) Support innovation and expansion activities;

(B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

(C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

(D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

Agency Response:

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Based on a wide set of data, the agency is setting out on a major revisioning of the agency's VR program, including revamping of how we have historically done business, ensured staff are trained, communicated internally and externally, and provided business relations and workforce partner services. The core revision areas are categorized as People; Process; Technology; Strategy; and Structure.

<u>Overall Goal</u>

Develop, prioritize, and execute on a renewed operational vision for the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) Vocational Rehabilitation services to better equip and support people with visual disabilities to gain, retain and advance in meaningful employment.

We are re-visioning our Vocational Rehabilitation Program to improve service provision, lessen the bureaucracy that our customers and staff face, build relationships with businesses and external partners, and improve our employee skill, morale and environment.

Through the re-visioning, our leaders and staff will become more skilled at adaptability, accountability and teaming, which in turn will help our participants to become more skilled, marketable, and effective in their career readiness path.

Outcomes & Potential KPIs

Increased results

- Increased # of job placements that continue past 4th quarter after exit

- Increased percentage of participants who exit with employment

- Continued diversity and high quality employment outcomes

- Improved VR process metrics (WIOA Negotiated Performance Measures; Process timelines)

More people served

- Increased # of referrals

More Businesses Served

- Increased # of responses on statewide business survey

Improved employee satisfaction

- Increased % positive score on Employee Engagement Survey question: "In general, I'm satisfied with my job"

Improved employee initiative, adaptability, accountability

- Customer Satisfaction Survey questions show agency staff are responsive and engage

participant in meaningful activities, and are not an obstacle to individual's employment goal.

Increased employee empowerment

- VR Counselor empowerment measure: Increased % positive score on Employee Engagement Survey question: "Involved in decision making, and Feels safe to take risks, make mistakes."

Goal 1: PEOPLE: These strategies relate to human resources in the organization and organizational culture.

- PEOPLE 1 – Focus cultural change on building a "Performing as a Team" culture.

- PEOPLE 2 - Leverage the team culture for continuous improvement.

- PEOPLE 3 – Create a safe space for team member feedback.

- PEOPLE 4 – Revamp and focus communication to support culture change.

- PEOPLE 5 – Reconsider core language to match changes to culture.

- PEOPLE 6 - Capture participant and employer success stories.

- PEOPLE 7 – Hire Business Relations staff with business experience, skill set, and training.

- PEOPLE 8 - Train VR counselors on Business Relations and workforce initiatives concepts, activities, and processes.

- PEOPLE 9 – Revamp and re-invigorate role training.

Goal 2 - PROCESS: These objectives relate to the process and operations of the organization.

- PROCESS 1 - Begin "Teaming" starting on "Day 1".

- PROCESS 2 - Begin employment exploration starting on "Day 1".

- PROCESS 3 – Clearly define how participant "job readiness" is determined.

- PROCESS 4 – Adopt an "As Soon As Possible" philosophy for process performance and optimization.

- PROCESS 5 – Adopt a "bias-to-action" philosophy in the VR processes.

- PROCESS 6 – Focus on expedited eligibility assessment.

- PROCESS 7 – Focus plan development & engagement on employment outcomes.

- PROCESS 8 - Monitor operations for equitable services delivery.

- PROCESS 9 – Integrate Rhythms of Business (ROB) reviews and Quality Assurance.

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- PROCESS 10 - Prioritize opportunities to incorporate Business Relations staff as early as possible in the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process.

- PROCESS 11 - Track business relations team interactions with participants and employers in a customer relationship management system or other technology.

- PROCESS 12 – Implement a standard set of measures, metrics, and KPIs accompanied by a regular review and planning process to focus on and propagate a high-performance culture.

Goal 3 - TECHNOLOGY: These objectives relate to technology leveraged in the organization.

- TECHNOLOGY 1 – Implement QA Tools & Technology.

- TECHNOLOGY 2 - Implement a Learning Management System (LMS).

- TECHNOLOGY 3 – Implement technology to enable the tracking of interactions, placements, and services delivered by agency team members to employers.

Goal 4 - STRATEGY: These objectives relate to the overall market positioning and services of the organization.

- STRATEGY 1 – Develop consistent approaches to building interest with employers.

- STRATEGY 2 - Define and market the services your agency offers directly to employers.

- STRATEGY 3 - Ensure consistency and connection between external and internal communications.

- STRATEGY 4 - Define measures, metrics, and KPIs that align to strategic goals of the agency.

- STRATEGY 5 - Implement a monthly and quarterly "rhythm of business" (ROB) review.

- STRATEGY 6 – Expand engagement with local partners.

Goal 5 - Structure: These objectives relate to how the organization is structured, for example organizational design.

- STRUCTURE 1 - Implement an agency organizational unit dedicated to Workforce Initiatives.

- STRUCTURE 2 – Define balanced workforce and Business Relations approaches to connecting participants to employers.

- STRUCTURE 3 – Intentionally integrate Workforce and Business Relations work with Participant Services work.

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D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS

VR and Supported Employment Goals. For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe:

1. <u>Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;</u>

Agency Response:

<u>Evaluation of Agency PY 2021-2023 Goals and Priorities</u>

The agency's goals and priorities for the PY 2021-2023 VR State Plan amendment were broadly intended to enhance and coordinate customer services, and to refine & streamline processes to sharpen the agency's outreach, effectiveness, and capacity, Each goal and sub-goal is evaluated below:

Goal 1: Refine and enhance outcomes for business and agency participants

DSB has actively addressed this initial goal over the two year period of this State Plan amendment. As an agency we have needed to reassess practices and processes in the new post-pandemic environment in order to provide a foundation for increased productivity, effectiveness and outcomes for the agency's dual customers: the individual job seeker with a visual disability, and business. The State of Washington reacted strongly to the pandemic, keeping the safety of the public and staff as top priority. As the agency's work has historically relied on person-to-person services, we had to find ways to adapt our services to the realities of remote services.

<u>Agency Performance</u>

- 312 individuals with a visual disability got or kept a job, or promoted in their career field.

  - 25 individuals were self-employed

  - 21 individuals required long term supports for their job tasks.

- 78% increase in employment outcomes PY 2022 (end June 30, 2023) compared to PY2020.

- As an agency, DSB exceeded all PY2022 federal performance measures

- 93% of Independent Living recipients reported being more confident in their current living situation and that their independent living skills have improved

- Major VR process revision underway. First stage reduced intake process from average 34 days to zero for 73% of those requesting services.

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<u>Business Relations</u>

- With a new Business Relations Manager hired in this period, there has been increased activity, interaction and education of staff around contemporary business practices and expectations, workforce opportunities for participants, and increased engagement with Workforce partners.

- There was organized outreach efforts and awareness training around visual disabilities facilitated by the DSB Business Relations Manager for local WDCs across the state.

- There have been discussions of developing an expedited recruitment process for people with disabilities among the state enterprise, led by DSB.

Goal 2: Increase agency outreach to individuals and communities that would benefit from vocational rehabilitation services

Customer Experience/Community Voice

Agency expanded inclusion of community voice through multiple new forums:

Bi-annual Town Halls; quarterly consumer organization leadership; quarterly satisfaction surveys of active customers; multiple comprehensive needs assessments.

- Customer identified service delivery strengths:

  - **Assistive technology**: Assistive technology powerfully changes an individual's access to others, to information, to employment, and improves nearly every aspect of their lives.

  - **Orientation and mobility training**: Respondents call the services life-changing and transformational. The skills not only increase their employment potential, they improve individuals' well-being and quality of life by enabling them to engage in their communities with more confidence.

  - **Counseling and guidance**: Recognition is readily given throughout the survey for the professional and caring services delivered by WA DSB counselors and staff.

We have developed systems to gather, analyze and incorporate the customer voice into agency improvement efforts. We pay individuals with lived experience a stipend for those who are asked to engage in agency improvement activities.

The agency website continues to need an overhaul, and it is a planned project for 2024. Broad communication of how people might benefit from services, customer success stories and other outreach efforts will be reviewed as part of the agency's ReVision project.

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Below are some examples of the customer voice gathered through survey:

In the Customer Voice

Youth Services

- "Youth who are blind or have low vision are in need of early empowerment to develop positive self-esteem"

- "Mentorship from older peers or other students my age; Information on services that I was previously not familiar with, like available assistive technology; mock interview tips and training to help me gain more confidence in my current abilities were the three most helpful services I received through WA DSB"

- "The Pre-Employment Transition Service activities are valuable for me, because I learn about different careers that I had not even considered thinking about before, in the past. Additionally, Pre-Employment activities have also been supporting me with asking people questions about their careers, so as to receive an insight as to how their everyday work life is like, both during and outside of the workday"

- "The activities increased my skill level in independent living such as cooking, cleaning, and independent travel. They also gave me ideas of possible career paths. It helped me see that there are people just like me"

Impact of Services

- "This awesome program gave me my life back"

- "Invaluable. I am no longer afraid to leave my house and could participate in life again"

- "It allowed me to be comfortable in my blindness without judgment and flourish enough to be my best self in a sighted world"

- "The OTC changed my life; they helped me get to the point where I can live on my own"

- "It was one of the most challenging, but life changing experiences. It gave me my life back. I was introduced to an entirely new supportive community, it gave me direction, and it gave me a chance to finally accept my low vision/blindness and go forward"

Partner Voices

- "DSB is an incredible agency to work with. They are committed to their mission and work very hard in serving clients"

- "Michael's team is very communicative and does good outreach work"

- "DSB is well organized and works well with legislative and other partners. I value the partnership – they are a very important voice in transition planning"

- "DSB have been excellent partners in this work – they've been flexible and willing to engage in dialogue with us. They're professional, collegial and collaborative"

Goal 3: Enhance and maintain DSB capacity & expertise in serving blind Washington residents

Recruitment and Retention

Vacancy of a DSB position is cited as the **most disruptive factor** for the customer experience.

- **Total turnover rate of 75%** - 3/4 of DSB staff are new to their roles since 2020.

- Average time from posting to hire is **66 days**. Changes to recruitment strategies:

  - Hiring at **in-training** levels; Maximizing use of **social media** for recruitment; **Revising position requirements; Double filling** expected vacancies; **Rapidly responding** to recruitments

- Over 25% of the DSB workforce/ 33% of DSB management **report having a disability**

- **Increased compensation** for Vision Rehab Specialists – equity issue

Stabilized Fiscal Resources

- Negotiated increased split of state's VR Grant, from 16% to 18%

- Brought extra funds into state through federal re-allotment process

- Found ways to fund Business Enterprise Program staff through VR Grant dollars

- Overhaul projects for BEP sites – Openings November 2023 for Leg Dome and OB2

- Secured funding to serve youth ages Birth - 13

Partner in Increasing Accessibility of State Enterprise

- Staff involvement in development of IPMA Accessibility conferences; Accessibility assessments and referral for state agencies; Coordination of WATech Accessibility Community of Practice; Disability Inclusion Network BRG resources and activities

2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Agency Response:

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As an agency, DSB met or exceeded all negotiated performance measure criteria. As a state, we under-performed in the negotiated measure for Credential Attainment.

Agency and State performance:

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY22- DSB	PY22- Combined DSB and DVR
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	44.00%	46.00%	45.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	36.00%	39.03%	34.4%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	4,350		3,914.55
Credential Attainment Rate	25.00%	37.00%	14.5 %
Measurable Skill Gains	47.00%	68.00%	51.8%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable 1		

3. The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

Agency Response:

The agency will use Innovation and Expansion funds to support all State Rehab Council activities, including funds required to conduct and analyze on-going customer satisfaction survey data, and on-going Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment information.

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E. **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

1. <u>Acceptance of title VI funds:</u>

Agency Response:

(B) VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

2. <u>If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.</u>

Agency Response:

N/A

3. <u>Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.</u>

Agency Response:

Vocational Rehabilitation staff are well versed in the provision of supported employment services and understand the issues related to eligibility, vocational assessment, and creating vocational plans that address the need for on-going long-term support services.

In keeping with averages over time, we expect that five (5) to ten (10) customers that require long term supports per year will achieve competitive & integrated employment outcomes.

4. Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).

Agency Response:

The agency collaborates with the general VR agency, DVR, in order to provide the best supports for co-occurring disabilities. Through the DVR agreement with the Developmental Disabilities Administration, priority for county long-term support funds are secured for those individuals eligible for DDA services who gain employment. Until those long term supports are in place, DSB and DVR will negotiate costs, mindful that all individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth, may receive up to 24 months of supported employment services after placement on a job until the transition to extended services - or longer if necessary to meet an individual's needs. In addition to the 24 months of supported employment services, DSB in coordination with DVR may fund up to four years of extended services following transition to extended services until a youth reaches age 25.

Agency staff seek other natural or other supports in case the individual is not eligible for DDA long-term job support funds.

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year –

(A) VR Program and (B) Supported Employment Program

Agency Response:

An individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services at the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) if the individual:

- Has a visual disability

- Experiences unaddressed functional limitations due to the visual disability that limit their ability to get or keep a job, or advance in their career, and

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- Requires substantial vocational rehabilitation services over time to mitigate those functional limitations and obstacles to employment.

Through the Pre-Employment Transition Services arm of vocational rehabilitation services, the agency provides non-individualized career exploration services to potentially eligible and eligible students with a disability.

While traditional working age is considered ages 21 - 64, the agency serves a large proportion of adults ages 64 and above through the vocational rehabilitation services program - approximately 8% of the FFY 2023 caseload are adults over age 64.

The annual American Community Survey (ACS) through the US Census Bureau provides estimates on numbers of people in the United States - and within Washington State - who experience "blindness or serious difficulty seeing things even with use of corrective lenses". The ACS results are based on self-report and are extrapolated from a sample of individuals who are surveyed each year. While not representing an exact accounting, the American Community Survey is among the few and strongest data sets estimating the number of individuals within Washington State who experience a visual disability.

For traditional working age adults (ages 21 - 64), the ACS estimates there are approximately 81,400 individuals with visual difficulty in the state with 40,293 (49.5%) that are actively employed. Of the remaining 41,107 individuals, 2,466 (8.6%) are actively seeking work.

With 49.5% of those individuals with a "serious visual difficulty" being employed and only 8.6% of the remaining 50.5% actively seeking employment, the data indicates there are approximately 41,100 individuals with a visual disability that could be seeking vocational rehabilitation services to find work, with a subset of approximately 2,466 individuals who are actively seeking work while in an unemployed status. Eligible individuals may also be employed, requiring vocational rehabilitation services to keep a job that may be at risk due to visual disability or to advance in their chosen field.

Students may be eligible to receive individualized services through the vocational rehabilitation program and simultaneously receive non-individualized career exploration services through the Pre-Employment Transition Services program, starting at age 14. Students with a disability may receive Pre-Employment Transition services and have not yet applied or been found eligible for individualized VR services; they are termed "Potentially Eligible" students.

In 2022, there were approximately 400 students with visual disabilities, documented as having an individualized special education or 504 plan through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) or post-secondary educational institution, within the age range 3 - 21 in the state of Washington.

The number of students in schools that require accommodation for their visual disability (through Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act) is not recorded.

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Costs for all categories are an average and based on the costs incurred during the Federal fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2022, to Sept. 30, 2023)

<u>All Priority Categories</u>:

- $4,475 per case per year for purchased services.

- $10,835 per case per year for all provided VR services (purchased and in-house excluding Pre-ETS)

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Estimates for the VR program for Federal fiscal year 2024:

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
All Categories	41,100	817	$8,852K	N/A

Estimates for the VR program for Federal fiscal year 2025:

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
All Categories	41,100	900	$11,214K	N/A

DSB is anticipating a 10% growth in each category of participants that we serve and a 15% increase in costs.

Data Source: The number of individuals eligible for services was based on a FY 2021 Disability Status Report for Washington State conducted by Cornell University. This survey defines a visual disability as an individual who has serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses and is not working but actively looking for work. The survey results can be found here:

Link to disability survey

Supported Employment:

The State's grant for Supported Employment is managed by DVR commencing in Federal FY 2024.

G. ORDER OF SELECTION

Agency Response:

[XX] The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

1. For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

(A) The justification for the order;

Agency Response:

N/A

(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Agency Response:

N/A

(C) The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

Agency Response:

N/A

2. Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

Agency Response:

[XX] Yes

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H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Agency Response:

Not Applicable

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

(A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

Agency Response:

The Department of Services for the Blind has 96 employees in total. All employees at DSB are hired in some provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

Personnel Category	# of Personnel Employed
Administrative Assistants	2
BEP - Program Specialists 3	2
BEP Manager	1
Business Engagement Manager	1
Business System and Process Improvement Manager	1
Chief Information Officer	1

Communications Manager	1
Contracts Manager	1
Contracts Specialist	1
Deputy Financial Officer	1
Executive Director	1
Exempt Assistant Directors (includes CFO)	4
Exempt Executive Assistant	1
Fiscal	3
HR Liaison and DEI Program Manager	1
IT	3
IT Help Desk Manager	1
Management Analyst	1
OTC - VRS	8
OTC Administrator	1
Pre-ETS Manager	1
Pre-ETS - Program Specialists 3	5
Reader/drivers (part-time community workers)	10
Regional Area Managers	3
Rehabilitation Techs 2	5
ROMERS - VRS	8
SRC Liaison (part-time)	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	14
VR - AT Specialists	8
VR Program Specialists 4 (Leads and includes OTC)	4
Birth through 13	1
Total	**96**

(B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Agency Response:

The number of personnel currently needed by the VR Agency to provide VR services is 110. Those additional positions are included in the table below:

Personnel Category	# of Personnel Needed
HR Liaison	1
Business Relations Specialists	3
Accessibility Coordinator	1
Business Relations Accessibility Technologist	1
Learning Design and Delivery Coordinator	1

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VR Learning Design and Development Coordinator	1
Business Enterprise Program Self-Employment Training Coordinator	1
Quality Assurance Analyst	1
Vision Rehabilitation Specialists	3
Policy and Management Analyst	1
Total	**14**

(C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Agency Response:

The number of personnel expected to be eligible for retirement in the next five years is 10. On average, we have had a turnover rate of 51% of employees resigning and retiring over the past three years. It is estimated that in the next 5 years that turnover rate will increase by 10%. Below is a recent capture of DSB Recruitment Data.

Year 2020 – 2023 Employee Separations:

- **58** employee separations

- # of retirements: **14**

- Transfers to other state agencies: **10**

- Separation: **16**

- Non-Perm Separation: **18** (these are our Youth Workers for Pre-ETS programs; and Reader Driver positions)

DSB turnover rate: (not including internal transfers & promotions)

- 51% turnover rate

DSB Internal Appointment changes: (promotion and transfers)

- Total of 39

- 41% of our agency is in a new role as of 2020.

DSB total turnover rate is 75% either, in new roles or new to the agency.

DSB anticipates 10% growth each year for the next two years, tapering to 5% annual growth for the remaining 3 years of this projection. Because statistics from the past 5 years were affected

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by DSB's Order of Selection status, and then by the pandemic, these numbers are only estimates. The anticipated staffing needs are illustrated in the following table:

Personnel Category	# of Personnel Currently Employed	Anticipated # of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Accessibility Coordinator	0	1
Administrative Assistants	2	2
BEP - Program Specialists 3	2	2
BEP Manager	1	1
Business Engagement Manager	1	1
Business Enterprise Program Self-Employment Training Coordinator	0	1
Business Relations Accessibility Technologist	0	4
Business Relations Specialists	0	3
Business System and Process Improvement Manager	1	1
Chief Information Officer	1	1
Communications Manager	1	1
Contracts Manager	1	1
Contracts Specialist	1	1
Deputy Financial Officer	1	1
Executive Director	1	1
Exempt Assistant Directors (includes CFO)	4	4
Exempt Executive Assistant	1	1
Fiscal	3	3
HR Liaison	0	1
HR Liaison and DEI Program Manager	1	1
IT	3	3
IT Help Desk Manager	1	1
Learning Design and Delivery Coordinator	0	1
Management Analyst	1	2
OTC - VRS	8	9
OTC Administrator	1	1
Policy and Management Analyst	0	1
Pre-ETS Manager	1	1
Pre-ETS - Program Specialists 3	5	5
Quality Assurance Analyst	0	1
Reader/drivers (part-time community workers)	10	12
Regional Area Managers	3	3
Rehabilitation Techs 2	5	5
ROMERS - VRS	8	11

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SRC Liaison (part-time)	1	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	14	15
VR - AT Specialists	8	8
VR Learning Design and Delivery Coordinator	0	1
VR Program Specialists 4 (Leads and includes OTC)	4	4
Birth through 13	1	1
Total	**96**	**118**

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(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:]

Agency Response:

DSB currently has 14 VR Counselor positions and 830 active participants. This is a ratio of approximately 59 participants per counselor. These caseloads reflect a capacity to accommodate most of the anticipated growth over the next 5 years.

(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:

Agency Response:

Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years

Participants To Be Served					
2023	2024 (10%)	2025 (10%)	2026 (5%)	2027 (5%)	2028 (5%)
830	913	1005	1056	1109	1165

2. <u>Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:</u>

(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Agency Response:

Currently, only one institute of higher education in Washington State has a program directly related to vocational rehabilitation. However, DSB has benefited greatly from collaboration with programs at Portland State University and Idaho State University. Therefore, statistics for those additional programs are also included.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Idaho State University	MCoun in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	20	5

Portland State University	MS in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	36	10
Portland State University	Graduate Certificate in Orientation and Mobility	Didn't report	19 (includes 8 full MS + O&M cert)
Western Oregon University	MS in Rehabilitation Counseling	47	12 (plus 4 more in Dec 2023)
Western Washington University	MA in Rehabilitation Counseling	36	14

(B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Agency Response:

Currently DSB is actively reviewing and revising its recruitment practices. DSB HR has expanded its use of social media in recruitment to include Linked-In, Indeed, Facebook, CSAVR website, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification board, and ACVERP List serve, and CATIS certifying lists for recruitment in specialized areas that our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Vision Rehabilitation Specialists, and our Assistive Technology Specialists require.

At the guidance and management of our DEI Program Manager, we have been reviewing Job Descriptions including working directly with managers to identify and eliminate areas of requirements or tasks that limit or discourage diverse populations from applying. DSB has improved its initial onboarding processes to be inclusive, welcoming, and putting their best foot forward to support a sense of belonging and retention. Below is a chart of our current workforce demographic data:

WORKFORCE OVERVIEW 2023 DATA

	People of Color	People with Disabilities	Veterans
■ DSB Employees August 2023	19.30%	25.40%	2.30%
■ All WA State Executive Branch Agencies	22.80%	4.80%	5.90%
▦ WA State Available Workforce	34.20%	7.40%	5.90%
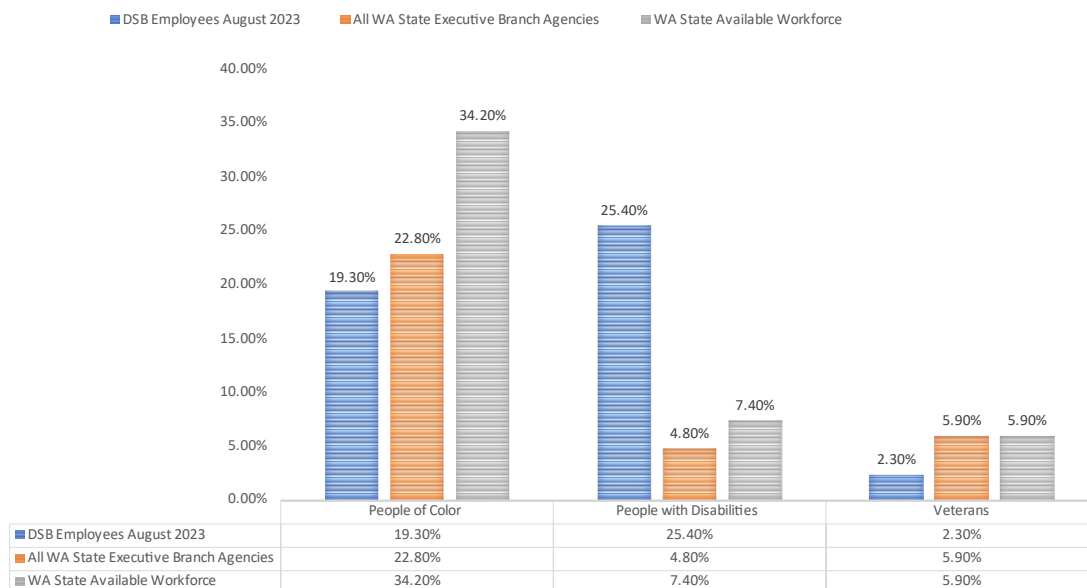
DSB has instituted a recruitment relocation bonus policy and procedure, to assist with expenses to move to Washington. This is to encourage more applicants from other areas throughout the United States. This has increased our applicant pool and negotiation ability to entice qualified applicants.

(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

  I.   *Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and*

  II. *Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.*

Agency Response:

DSB has an active and current Training and Development Policy that supports employees' continued training and development.

208.20 Training and Development Policy.docx available upon request.

There are many opportunities provided throughout the year that are specific to job class and tasks relevant to specific roles and responsibilities. Each year every employee, through their

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performance and development review, can list areas of growth and training and the supervisor works with that employee throughout the year to acquire the training if available. Staff are encouraged to attend Conferences at the local and national level to gain knowledge and experience from other states and stakeholder groups. DSB Managers and staff provide in-service training for meeting internal control processes and any procedural changes and updates.

DSB is currently working with our Consumer Stakeholder Groups, National Federation of the Blind-Washington, and Washington Council of the Blind to provide an orientation to Blindness Awareness training for new and current staff. This will assist with increased knowledge for staff to provide necessary support and services to their participants.

Continuing Education and staff development are critical and DSB supports staff to attend trainings and events that provide continuing education credits for their certification needs. DSB has identified that with our turnover and retirement of senior staff the onboarding and training for each classification has become difficult for the supporting managers as our historical practice of training and onboarding through verbal and shadowing experience is not sufficient. DSB HR will be working in the next year to assist managers to develop training plans for each classification, as vacated, to support a consistent and adequate training so that staff have clear expectations, and training objectives across disciplines and throughout the agency. DSB is also in the process of creating training positions for Policy and Procedure, specific VR required trainings, and self-employment and BEP services. This will provide a training plan and action for all new employees and current employees to continue to increase their skills and provide professional development at all levels.

After the overhaul of DSB's Procedure Manual in 2021, monthly VR procedure trainings were established to continuously refresh and reinforce staff understanding of agency practices. These trainings are anticipated to continue as the agency reorganizes and revises the way we do business. Additionally, quarterly case reviews typically result in internal control relevant trainings for classifications of staff, depending on the review subject matter.

3. Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—

(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

Agency Response:

DSB has three vocational rehabilitation positions that require specific education and certification set forth by the state classification system in collaboration with DSB. Those positions include our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Vision Rehabilitation Specialist, and our Assistive

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Technology Specialist series. requirements through the Department of Enterprise Human Resources for each position.

(B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Agency Response:

The purpose of the Classification of In-Training is for recruitment options and opening our positions to a diverse population to apply for our skilled positions. The in-training series takes advantage of our classification of VRC1-VRC4; our VRC Journey – Senior series; and our AT Specialists Entry – Journey IT Classification.

Below are the required qualifications listed in our classifications:

Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Series:

Qualifications

List the education, experience, licenses, certifications, and competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors).

Required Qualifications for VRC 1 (Range 47)

A Bachelor's degree in a field of study reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation, to indicate a level of competency and skill demonstrating basic preparation in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported employment, customized employment, economics, or another field that reasonably prepares individuals to work with consumers and employers; and

At least 1 year paid or unpaid experience, consisting of:

a) direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center.

b) direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individual with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities; or

c) direct experience as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources, recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities that provide experience in competitive integrated employment environments.

(Incumbents must be currently accepted or enrolled in an accredited graduate school to obtain one of the Master's degrees specified below). Upon obtaining one of these degrees or certification as a Rehabilitation Counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor

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Certification (CRCC), the VRC1 will promote to a VRC2 based on successful completion of the VRC1 Training Plan, or the VRC1 will promote directly to a VRC 3 if they have 3 years' qualifying experience.

OR

A Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (such as one that promotes the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities), *

* The following Master's degrees will qualify:

1. Rehabilitation Counseling

2. Psychology with an emphasis/major concentration of coursework in one of the following areas:

Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology, Educational Psychology, School Psychology, Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, Marriage, Family and Child Counseling, Counseling, regardless of emphasis

3. Education with an emphasis/major concentration of coursework in one of the following areas:

Rehabilitation Counseling, Special Education, Educational Counseling, Counseling and Guidance, Mental Health Counseling, Community Counseling, School Counseling, Vocational Evaluation

 OR

A Master's degree with at least 18 quarter or 12 semester credit hours specified as follows:

1. ONE graduate course with a primary focus on the Theories and Techniques of Counseling, and

2. THREE graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas:

   a. Occupational Information

   b. Job Development and Placement

   c. Medical Aspects of Disabilities

   d. Foundations of Rehabilitation

   e. Psychological Aspects of Disabilities

   f. Personal and Vocational Adjustment, and

3. TWO graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas:

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a. Assessment

b. Research Methodology

c. Vocational and Career Development

d. Community Resources

e. Case Management

Required Qualifications for VRC 2 (Range 51)

Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (such as one that promotes the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities), The following Master's degrees will qualify: *Same as noted in VRC1

OR

A current Certification as a Rehabilitation Counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC),

OR

A Master's degree with at least 18 quarter and 12 semester credit hours specified as follows:

1. ONE graduate course with a primary focus on the Theories and Techniques of Counseling, and

2. THREE graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas:

a. Occupational Information

b. Job Development and Placement

c. Medical Aspects of Disabilities

d. Foundations of Rehabilitation

e. Psychological Aspects of Disabilities

f. Personal and Vocational Adjustment, and

3. TWO graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas:

a. Assessment

b. Research Methodology

c. Vocational and Career Development

d. Community Resources

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e. Case Management

f. Delivery of Rehabilitation Services,

AND

Two years of paid experience as a vocational rehabilitation counselor or similar paid experience in vocational counseling, job placement, vocational assessment, or other areas of rehabilitation counseling. This experience may be gained either before or after obtaining the qualifying education or CRCC certification. One year of the paid experience may be substituted with unpaid experience consisting of:

a. Direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center,

b. Direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individuals with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities; or

c. Direct experience as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources, recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities that provide experience in competitive integrated employment environments.

Upon successful completion of the VRC 2 Training Plan, the VRC 2 will advance to the VRC 3 level.

Required Qualifications for VRC 3 (Range 53)

A Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (such as one that promotes the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities), * The following Master's degrees will qualify: Same as listed above.

OR

A current Certification as a Rehabilitation Counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC),

OR

A Master's degree with at least 18 quarter and 12 semester credit hours specified as follows:

Same as above VRC2.

AND

Three years of paid experience as a vocational rehabilitation counselor or similar paid experience in vocational counseling, job placement, vocational assessment, or other areas of rehabilitation counseling. This experience may be gained either before or after obtaining the qualifying

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education or CRCC certification. One year of the paid experience may be substituted with unpaid experience consisting of:

a. Direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center.

b. Direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individuals with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities; or

c. Direct experience as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources, recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities that provide experience in competitive integrated employment environments.

Required Qualifications for VRC 4 (Range 57)

A Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (such as one that promotes the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities),*

* The following Master's degrees will qualify: Same as above.

1. Rehabilitation Counseling

2. Psychology with an emphasis/major concentration of coursework in one of the following areas:

Clinical Psychology

Counseling Psychology

Educational Psychology

School Psychology

3. Social Work

4. Marriage and Family Therapy

5. Marriage, Family and Child Counseling

6. Counseling, regardless of emphasis

7. Education with an emphasis/major concentration of coursework in one of the following areas:

Rehabilitation Counseling

Special Education

Educational Counseling

Counseling and Guidance

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Mental Health Counseling

Community Counseling

School Counseling

8. Vocational Evaluation

OR

A current Certification as a Rehabilitation Counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, (CRCC)

 OR

A Master's degree with at least 18 quarter and 12 semester credit hours specified as follows:

AND

Four years of paid experience as a vocational rehabilitation counselor or similar paid experience in vocational counseling, job placement, vocational assessment, or other areas of rehabilitation counseling; This experience may be gained either before or after obtaining the qualifying education or CRCC certification. One year of the paid experience may be substituted with unpaid experience consisting of:

Direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center,

Direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individuals with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities; or

Direct experience as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources, recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities that provide experience in competitive integrated employment environments.

Vision Rehabilitation Specialist Series:

Qualifications

List the education, experience, licenses, certifications, and competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors).

<u>Required Qualifications for Vision Rehabilitation Specialist-Entry (Range 43)</u>

A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major field of study in blind or vision rehabilitation, or closely related program in rehabilitation, special education, family and consumer science education, or adaptive technology.

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Two years of experience in social services or providing services to individuals who are blind, low vision or deaf blind will substitute for two years of the required education.

For those positions performing Orientation and Mobility functions, current certification, and a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours in an accredited orientation and mobility program is required.

For Braille instruction Certification in the UEB braille code which indicates proficiency in the code is required for the teaching of braille reading and writing in the now accepted UEB braille code.

Required Qualifications for Vision Rehabilitation Specialist-Journey (Range 49)

A Master's Degree from an accredited college or university with a major field of study in blind or vision rehabilitation, or closely related program in rehabilitation, special education, family and consumer science education, or adaptive technology.

OR

A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university with a major field of study in blind or vision rehabilitation, or a closely related program in rehabilitation, special education, family and consumer science education, or adaptive technology.

AND

Two (2) years of paid professional experience providing services that teach adaptive skill of blindness to the blind, low vision, or deaf blind individuals.

For those positions performing Orientation and Mobility functions, current certification, and a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours in an accredited orientation and mobility program is required.

For those positions performing Braille instruction, Certification in the UEB braille code which indicates proficiency in the code is required for the teaching of braille reading and writing in the now accepted UEB braille code.

Required Qualifications for Vision Rehabilitation Specialist-Senior (Range 56)

A Master's Degree from an accredited college or university with a major field of study in blind or vision rehabilitation, or a closely related program in rehabilitation, special education, family and consumer science education, or adaptive technology.

OR

A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university with a major field of study in blind or vision rehabilitation, or a closely related program in rehabilitation, special education, family and consumer science education, or adaptive technology.

AND

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Three (3) years of paid professional experience providing services that teach adaptive skills of blindness to the blind, low vision, or deaf blind individuals, including one year of supervisory or lead experience.

For those positions performing Orientation and Mobility functions, current certification, and a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours in an accredited orientation and mobility program is required.

For Braille those providing Braille instruction, must have Certification in the UEB braille code which indicates proficiency in the code is required for the teaching of braille reading and writing in the now accepted UEB braille code.

Preferred/Desired Qualifications:

- Knowledge of and ability to teach alternative strategies and techniques used for orientation and mobility by individuals who are blind or have low vision.

- Knowledge of low vision, aids, and use of functional vision strategies used by individuals with low vision.

- Knowledge of adaptive aids used for independent travel and their resources.

- Knowledge of adaptive note-taking aids and strategies used by individuals who are blind or have low vision.

- Knowledge of common eye diseases leading to blindness and its impact on functional vision.

- Knowledge of major secondary disabilities and their impact on an individual's functioning and abilities to learn.

- Knowledge of the basic alternative skills and strategies used by blind and visually impaired people.

- Knowledge of national and local resources for blind and visually impaired people.

- Knowledge of federal and state laws affecting services and rights of people with disabilities such as the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, etc.

Qualifications for the Information Technology Specialist 4; DSB Working Classification of Assistive Technology Specialist:

Qualification – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

List the education, experience, licenses, certifications, and competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors) and a description of each that are necessary to successfully perform the work of the position.

Required Education, Experience or Certifications:

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A Bachelor's degree including 9 semester or 15 quarter hours of computer science courses and three years of consultative, administrative or supervisory experience in information technology analysis, system maintenance, or troubleshooting/problem resolution experience OR An Associate's degree or completion of an accredited vocational training program in information technology or related program and four years of consultative, administrative, or supervisory experience in information technology analysis, system maintenance, or troubleshooting/problem resolution OR One year as an Information Technology System Specialist 2 or equivalent. Consultative, administrative, or supervisory experience in information technology analysis, system maintenance, or troubleshooting/problem resolution will substitute for education on the basis of one year of experience for two years of education. A Master's degree will substitute for the specified Information Technology Systems Specialist 3 requirement

AND

Two years paid work experience as an ITS3 with the Department of Services for the Blind.

AND

Demonstrates the following Superior AT skills including but not limited to:

•   Effective in conducting superior work with high degree of independence and autonomy

•   Exhibits superior organizational strategies

•   Demonstrates superior documentation and quality of work:

•   Superior skills and autonomous in all aspects of AT services (Orientation to range of adaptive technologies, Assessment of skills sets, Onsite job accommodation analyses, Software compatibility testing, Accommodation recommendations)

•   Assumes responsibility for preparing and delivering one formal peer or team training annually. Training assignments are determined by the Regional Area Manager to meet team needs.

•   Takes lead on AT Projects

Application (why each qualification exists):

Perform a wide range of duties spanning multiple IT job families. Must have knowledge of a wide variety of principles, theory, and best practices to resolve problems and develop strategies for unprecedented issues.

Desirable/Preferred Education, Experience or Certifications:

Work experience with a range of people with disabilities.

Application (why each qualification exists): Position requires extensive interaction with people with disabilities.

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Desirable/Preferred Education, Experience or Certifications:

Experience in job assessment for accommodation with technologies of blindness and vision impairment.

4. <u>Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.</u>

Agency Response:

DSB utilizes several methods to ensure that participants receive accurate and understandable information regardless of their English comprehension. Agency brochures have been translated into the most frequently requested languages including Spanish and Korean. DSB also contracts with translation services to make materials available in other languages as needed. Both in-person and virtual interpreter services are available to VR personnel for meetings with participants.

In addition, the state of Washington has reaffirmed their commitment to "plain talk" with Executive Order 23-02 Plain Language. This order mandates that all state agency external communications be written for maximum understandability for those with limited English literacy.

5. <u>As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.</u>

Agency Response:

N/A

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

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J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. <u>Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.</u>

Agency Response:

DSB is a dedicated partner in Washington State supporting students with disabilities making successful transitions from school to post school activities, including participation in Competitive Integrated Employment. Through interagency agreements with Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), that identify collaborative efforts and activities to provide coordinated services to students, DSB provides individualized transition services for those in secondary education and Pre-Employment Transition Services for students aged 14-21 years old.

2. <u>Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:</u>

<u>(A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;</u>

Agency Response:

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are offered to students with disabilities through dedicated staff service coordination, pre-employment transition service contractors, and through our state partner, Washington State School for the Blind. Technical assistance for pre-employment transition services is provided to DSB through our intensive services agreement with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition – The Collaborative (NTACT-C), the Collaborative Building Institute (CBI), which includes transition partners throughout Washington State, national non-profit organizations focused on transition services, and national transition model projects shared through the Council on State Administrators Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and National Council of State Administrators for the Blind (NCSAB) annual conferences.

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(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

Agency Response:

Transition planning and implementation is coordinated by agency staff and education professionals, with larger collaboration efforts developed through the CBI and 'Round Tables' dedicated for teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) throughout the state and calendar year. In addition, the Washington State Transition Collaborative, a group of transition staff from both state and local agencies, and non-profits, meet regularly to guide and inform on developments and opportunities for students and provide needed and comprehensive transition services through the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Each partner is intended to participate and contribute to these IEP meetings, where the students' goals shape the progressive nature of the services through secondary school and beyond, in post-secondary training or Competitive Integrated Employment.

DSB staff develops an IPE with each eligible student at a time DSB staff, student and parent/guardian determine appropriate, to ensure services and supports are in place as the student leaves secondary school and begins post- secondary activities. Services provided under an IPE are coordinated with the services in a student's IEP or 504 plan. Services on the IPE that are the responsibility of the LEA are identified as comparable services and benefits.

(C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

Agency Response:

Fiscally, Local Education Agencies (LEA) are responsible for providing transition services for students eligible for special education within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to their movement from school to post-school activities. Activities may include, but are not limited to, career exploration, community-based work experiences, activities providing knowledge about work habits and responsibility. Services authorized by DSB while a student is in secondary school include outreach, pre-employment transition services, information and referral, and counseling and guidance that facilitate a progressive transition to post-secondary training or Competitive Integrated Employment. Pre-employment transition services are provided in collaboration with the Local Education Agencies, and are non-duplicative in nature.

There is no cost to the LEA, student, parent or guardian, for outreach, information and referral, and counseling and guidance provided by DSB for student's IEP and 504 plan consultation and planning. DSB is responsible for student's transition or accommodation services that are outside

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the scope of the IEP or 504 plan or are necessary for their participation in pre-employment transition services. In addition, DSB is responsible for any services needed to establish a student's eligibility for VR services, including assessment as appropriate for age and disability.

(D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

Agency Response:

Through the interagency agreement between DSB and OSPI, the partners agree to coordinate individualized transition and pre-employment transition services outreach to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), including special education directors and school staff, regarding by:

- Scheduled and informal communications and stakeholder connections to identify students as early as possible, including students who are receiving special education services, students receiving accommodations, aids, and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Communications might include: joint webinars, teacher meetings (both virtual and in-person options) prerecorded modules, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.

- Communicate regularly during the calendar year, with scheduled meetings between partners including state and local agencies, to identify and address gaps in transition services.

- Explore and identify the transition needs of students who have been significantly impacted by trauma, have been identified as at-risk of drop out and have had interactions with the legal system.

- Integrate supports into existing state initiatives for students and youth when applicable to include training, partnering, and outreach.

- Support students to engage with the broadest transition team possible across state partners, to develop and coordinate comprehensive transition services with appropriate consultation and technical assistance.

- Promote pre-employment transition services, with employment and training goals consistent with student interests, strengths, preferences, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and informed choice.

- Share training and outreach materials developed by the agencies, or their agents, and extend invitations to agency specific events and activities using these materials to LEAs and the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and DSB staff.

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- Receive technical assistance and to identify and implement high quality pre-employment transition and transition services.

- Invite partner agencies to statewide meetings as needed for cross training or education.

Outreach to students occurs with regular communication output from DSB and collaboration efforts coordinated with the LEA and DVR. Conferences, 'Round Tables', and outreach events coordinated with the LEA's and DVR provide information to school staff, families and students regarding the transition services available by the VR agencies, statewide.

Expectations of DSB staff, pre-employment transition services procedural and program developments, and managerial internal controls are recent enhancements at the agency, and implemented to execute more diverse and collaborative outreach, targeting students and families with regular communications on eligibility for pre-employment transition services and additional individualized services, application for VR services, pre-employment transition services programming, and opportunities to participate in statewide pre-employment transition activities.   DSB has developed a birth-13 specialist position in 2023, which will be coordinating communication and consultation for potentially eligible transition students and families, providing outreach about available transition and Vocational Rehabilitation services as early as possible.

(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

Agency Response:

The 2021 Washington State Legislature ended the practice of allowing workers with a disability to earn less than minimum wage under a subminimum wage certificate. Senate Bill 5284 eliminated new certificates for any employer in Washington State after July 31, 2023 and phases out existing certificates.

(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

Agency Response:

We will follow and promote the Washington State law (Senate Bill 5284) that prohibits sub-minimum wage practices for individuals with a disability.

K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

Agency Response

DSB is revisioning how we introduce services to employers to better facilitate opportunities for business on accessibility and accommodations while investing in VR participant's access to gain work experience and Competitive Integrated Employment. DSB is dedicating resources in the redesign of our VR program to include a business relations unit, with specific services and staff dedicated to developing these opportunities. Some of the enhances to serve employers better will include:

- Accommodation Consultation & Referral: DSB provides employers with consultation and training on accommodations for Blind, DeafBlind, and Low Vision employees, that lead to greater inclusion and accessibility in the workforce. DSB connects job seekers to employers, providing the necessary accommodations so there are no barriers to employment security and advancement.

- Dedicated Programs and Staff: Recently DSB has dedicated program administration to workforce opportunities, with dedicated leadership oversight to pre-employment transition services, business relations, workforce collaboration, and business enterprise development. In 2024, DSB will be recruiting three new Business Relations Specialists who will be dedicating outreach to business offering accessibility training, recruitment and retention assistance, and financial incentives.

- Labor Market Analysis Utilization: DSB business relations staff explore labor market trends and opportunities in the state of Washington, including local area businesses. DSB is working towards acquiring a Labor Market data tool, that will assist DSB staff know in real-time what industry sectors are in demand, growing or restricting. This analysis will assist employers through the development of industry specific career pathways training to job seekers, to create a pool of potential employees with skills and experience.

- Revisioning VR Process: DSB will be incorporating business relations into the VR process early and often. Business relations staff will be a part of the itinerant field services team, supporting employers by vetting job seekers to fulfill employer recruitment needs while facilitating resources and support from other DSB staff for employer training needs.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Collaboration: DSB has an interagency agreement and commitment to partnership with our vocational rehabilitation general agency, Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and meet monthly to coordinate

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business relations activities and services for job ready vocational rehabilitation participants. Activities include job fairs, business outreach, collaboration of tools and resources that benefit job seekers at both agencies.

- Workforce Development Council Partnership: DSB staff will be better integrated into workforce development activities, including committee participation, to increase effectiveness of service delivery and sector strategy development. This will include developing community partnerships with employers across the State of Washington.

- Work-based Learning Development: When employers have specific workforce recruitment needs, DSB will introduce through training the opportunity to utilize on the job training and work-based learning experiences services. These specific skill development services are developed with the business itself which leads to specialized training, development, and knowledge of employer workplace culture, and emersion in the business's mission and vision.   This is especially valuable for Pre-employment transition students.

L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

Agency Response:

DSB believes that collaboration with stakeholders is essential to assist people with disabilities to access the most comprehensive services to prepare for, gain, advance and retain Competitive Integrated Employment. DSB has several interagency agreements that support these efforts to include:

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP). DSB has an interagency agreement with WATAP to broaden access and services to adaptive technology for the agency participants. The agreement allows the agencies to facilitate equipment loans, technology assessment services and trainings.

DSB provides access to statewide adaptive technology labs for WATAP to conduct assessments, reducing WATAP's need to purchase or manage technologies for visual disability.

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DSB collaborates with the Deaf Blind Equipment Program – I CAN CONNECT – through WATAP to coordinate technology assessment and training for DeafBlind participants.

2. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

Agency Response:

N/A

3. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

Agency Response:

N/A

4. State use contracting programs;

Agency Response:

N/A

5. State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

Agency Response:

None

6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

Agency Response:

- The Department of Social and Health Services Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). DSB has an interagency agreement in development with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Developmental Disabilities Administration to support students with disabilities to make successful transitions from school to post school activities, including participation in Competitive Integrated Employment.

- The Department of Social and Health Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DSB has a memorandum of understanding with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation who assists people with disabilities, including individuals with developmental disabilities, prepare for, obtain, advance and retain Competitive Integrated Employment.

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7. State agency responsible for providing mental health services;

Agency Response:

The Department of Social and Health Services Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). DSB staff refer participants to BHA for participants with addiction and mental health conditions. BHA provides funding and effective prevention and intervention services for youth and families, including treatment and recovery support.

8. Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and

Agency Response:

- Public Institutions of Higher Education. DSB and DVR have a formal interagency agreement with the Public Institutions of Higher Education in Washington. This agreement facilitates collaboration for our participants with disabilities who are attending Higher Education schools in Washington State. One of the primary components in the agreement concerns cost sharing for certain high cost accommodations.

- Washington Sensory Disability Services (WSDS). DSB staff partner with the WSDS in providing referrals and services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf—blind, and provides training and other supports to families and service providers. The WSDS is a strong partner within the Blind Youth Consortium.

- Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH). ODHH is a state agency that provides resources for our Deaf Blind participants, including telecommunication—related services, reasonable accommodations to access DSHS services and human services via regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing. ODHH manages the funds for the Deaf Blind Service Center, which provides information, referral and Support Service Providers for environmental interpretation.

- Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). The Helen Keller National Center is a resource for DSB on Deaf—Blind resources and can provide contracted services to DSB participants as well as trainings for DSB staff for working effectively with DSB Deaf Blind participants.

- University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER). DSB benefits from services provided from CCER on rehabilitation training, state planning, and program development. CCER facilitates information-sharing and forums for problem-solving among peer VR agencies among Oregon, Idaho, Alaska and Washington.

- Northwest Access Fund. DSB informs agency participants of funding mechanisms for adaptive technology and financial planning through the and coordinates services to support small business ownership and self-employment.

9. Other private nonprofit organizations.

Agency Response:

None

M. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

1. CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA,[1] and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2.	In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit)[2] agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[3], the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations[4], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[5], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[6], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

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4.	The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

2. ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	**Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:** The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

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2.	**Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:** The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140.
3.	**Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:** The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
	a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
	e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and

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	implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A). m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4.	**Administration of the Provision of VR Services:** The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
	
	a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
	
	i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
	
	j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State:
	    (i) has developed and will implement,
	      (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and

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	(B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15),101(a)(25), and 113). (iii) shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5.	**Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:** a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.	**Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):** a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act. b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

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7.	**Provision of Supported Employment Services**:
	     a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
	     b. The designated State agency assures that
	    the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM

WASHINGTON STATE PERKINS V PLAN

Introduction

The Washington state Perkins plan uses an industry-informed, equity-focused approach to support the design, development, implementation and improvement of career and technical education. It is envisioned to support high quality, data-informed CTE pathways that develop a skilled workforce, ensure business and industry thrive and expand across the state, and enable every Washingtonian to obtain living wage careers through credentials of workplace value.

- The Washington state agencies entrusted with administering the Perkins plan are committed to the following values, which prioritize equity and access for individuals served by Perkins:

- Using quantitative and qualitative data to inform decisions,

- Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, reflective of the communities they serve, to inform policies and practices,

- Leveraging and aligning federal and state policies and funding to improve student outcomes,

- Responding to labor-market gaps and emerging industries and occupations in the design of programs of study, and

- Promoting life-long learning that develops the knowledge and skills that allow individuals to remain competitive in chosen occupations/careers.

As a component of Washington's 2024-2028 combined state plan, Talent and Prosperity for all (TAP), these goals align closely with the TAP plan's guiding principles and five strategic priorities of systems, business, youth, credentialing, and job quality.

The TAP guiding principles – to close economic disparities for marginalized populations, provide comprehensive support for individuals with barriers to employment, and utilize system- wide performance metrics and accountability – closely reflect the goals and values of the state's Perkins plan.

There are specific alignments of Perkins priorities with TAP strategic priorities. One of the strongest alignments between Perkins and the larger combined state plan is with the youth strategic priority intended to further improve opportunities for young people to transition to an economically successful adulthood. Dual credit and student support services remain strong areas of focus in both programs with the intention of shortening time to credential attainment.

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The TAP plan also contains the Job Quality, Credentialing and Business strategic priorities, whereas Perkins aims to improve access to high-quality and high-demand CTE jobs by focusing on the local community that each college serves. Additionally, it is expected that decisions in both Perkins and TAP are informed by data and that there is additional emphasis on special populations, including through Methods of Administration. These correlate closely with the systems integration TAP strategic priority.

A. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

1. <u>Describe how the State plan was developed in consultation with the stakeholders and in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) of Perkins V. See Text Box 1 for the statutory requirements for State plan consultation under section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V.</u>

Following the July 2018 enactment of Perkins V, Washington state submitted a one-year transition plan covering FY 2019 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) and then a four-year State plan covering FY 2020-23 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024). In order to receive its FY 2024 Perkins grant award, the state puts forward non-substantive revisions to our previous four-year plan to include establishment of SDPLs for FY 2024-2028.

Feedback for the 2024-2028 overarching Talent and Prosperity for All, statewide workforce combined plan was solicited from a wide cross section of stakeholders in the fall of 2023. These stakeholders included business, industry, education, labor, state agencies, local Workforce Development Councils, community-based organizations and state associations. Stakeholder engagement took place at a wide variety of in person events as well as virtual/online opportunities.

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The Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) maintains regular engagement opportunities with the providers of secondary CTE through statewide conferences, regional leadership networks, and monthly two-way communication opportunities hosted by the office. With the acknowledgement of the unexpected and ongoing impact of the pandemic, and the timing of the pandemic in relationship with our initial Perkins V plan approval, it was a quick consensus that non substantive updates would be necessary to our Perkins plan. The priorities and focus needs of our secondary system are still well represented in our initially submitted plan.

For the purposes of updating secondary practitioners with requirements related to submitting a new or updated state plan, and to determine appropriate performance targets, OSPI engaged in feedback sessions with statewide leadership and attendees of the Washington Association of Career and Technical Educators (WA-ACTE), and Washington Association of Career and Technical Administrators (WACTA). The WA-ACTE organization is the largest professional membership organization of CTE educators and administrators, and the summer conference is

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the largest in-person convening of educators, supporters such as industry partners and CTSOs, and individuals providing direct programming for CTE. The WACTA organization represents the most representative membership of CTE administrators, which provide direct local administration of the Perkins plan.

- August 2023- Summer WA-ACTE conference; general Perkins update, and annual requirements of Perkins application.

- October 2023 – Fall WACTA conference presentation and discussion of supporting academic achievement, Perkins state targets and data.

- December 2023 - Presented the proposed state targets at the WACTA area leadership meeting. The leadership reviewed the proposed targets and has disseminated the documents to their members and asked for feedback.

    o There was overwhelming support for the submitted 2025-28 state targets.

POSTSECONDARY

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) engages quarterly with workforce education leaders in our system specific to Perkins V and comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) planning, performance outcomes, industry engagement, programs of study, and professional development. Conversations related to the 2024-2028 planning have included the following elements:

- Presentations on significant areas of emphasis within the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V);

- Opportunities to review performance indicators and disaggregated, college-specific data, including: student subgroups, special populations, and individual program performance;

- Training on Opportunity Gap Analysis;

- In-depth training on the comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA); and

- Quarterly office hours to support in-depth conversations and training for colleges

SBCTC provides quarterly reports on Perkins V at the colleges' Workforce Education Council meetings, representing the workforce administrators from each of the state's two-year colleges. College stakeholder input is collected via annual reports, CLNAs, quarterly engagement and office hours, and professional development. This input informs the updates to the current state Perkins plan which is being developed in coordination with the Workforce Board and OSPI.

SBCTC staff also provide group and individual technical assistance on the comprehensive local needs assessment and local application through in-person and virtual meetings, guidance documents, calls, and webinars.

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2. Consistent with section 122(e)(1) of Perkins V, each eligible agency must develop the portion of the State plan relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the State agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(A)-(C) of the Act. If a state agency, other than the eligible agency, finds a portion of the final State plan objectionable, the eligible agency must provide a copy of such objections and a description of its response in the final plan submitted to the Secretary. (Section 122(e)(2) of Perkins V)

3. Describe opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing on the State plan. (Section 122(d)(14) of Perkins V) See below.

B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. State's Vision for Education and Workforce Development

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(1)

(A) Provide a summary of State-supported workforce development activities (including education and training) in the State, including the degree to which the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study are aligned with and address the education and skill needs of the employers in the State identified by the State board.

State-supported workforce development activities include:

- Registered Apprenticeship and Recognized Apprenticeship Preparation Programs

- Locally, LWDBs and their Title I youth, adult and dislocated worker programs partner and coordinate with labor, business, public community and technical colleges, apprenticeship training centers to develop pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities for Title I participants.

- Mutual goals of fostering the apprenticeship training system in the state by developing and monitoring registered apprenticeship programs, promoting apprenticeships as a skills development system for employers as well as a postsecondary training choice for individuals with the goal of expanding apprenticeship training opportunities and recruitment of employers who hire apprentices for traditional and non-traditional programs.

- The Governor and Legislature seek yearly General-Fund state appropriations to support

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the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

- At the state level, the State Workforce Development Board (WTECB), State Workforce Agency (ESD), and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges are ex-officio members of the Washington State Apprenticeship & Training Council (WSATC), which also includes ties to the state Department of Labor and Industries' Office of Apprenticeships.

Career and Technical Education (Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction)

- Leadership provided by OSPI/K-12 (Perkins Act Programs), through the CTE Department, provides oversight and accountability of all approved CTE programs offered through the 7th-12th grade.

- All approved courses/programs must align with in-demand sectors, and review of labor market data is a requirement of approval.

- All approved courses/programs must provide a course framework which details the industry competencies required of the student to be successful in the aligned industry.

- OSPI is represented on the Career Connect Washington Cross Agency Work Group, to expand Career Connected Learning (CCL) opportunities. OSPI staff oversee the Consolidated Service Agreement (CSA) for the CCL Regional Coordinators housed in the state's Educational Service Districts (ESDs). These coordinators work to expand access to CTE programs through the development of high quality CTE graduation pathways and expanded Career Connected Learning opportunities with special emphasis on Career Launch programs.

- OSPI is represented on the WTECB Board and ensures alignment of developing initiatives with the state's secondary CTE system.

Workforce Education (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges)

- Coordination between the Title I Dislocated Worker program and the state's Worker Retraining Program.

- Coordination between Title I local workforce boards and various Centers of Excellence, depending on the connection to key industry sectors and/or industry skill panels.

- Coordination between Title I and the state's employer-specific Job Skills Program and Customized Training Program.

- Coordination and administration of industry-specific programs and work groups such as the Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Committee and Hospital Employee Education and Training Grant.

- Alignment of student support programs such as WorkFirst and the Basic Food,

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Employment, and Training program with other Workforce funding programs and initiatives.

- Coordination with OSPI in the development and administration of CTE dual-credit pathways and programs of study.

- At the state level, WTECB and ESD are ex-officio members of the SBCTC Workforce Training Customer Advisory Committee (CAC).

- SBCTC is represented on a cross-agency work group for Career Connect Washington. It oversees the Career Launch endorsement review process and supports colleges in the implementation of Career Launch programs, a strategy for expanding and supporting work-based learning opportunities statewide.

- SBCTC is represented on the WTECB Board and ensures alignment of developing initiatives with the state's postsecondary workforce education (CTE) system.

Local non-profit workforce development activities

- Local workforce boards and their Title I programs have coordinated with a myriad of local non-profit organizations to leverage resources and funding to help at-risk youth, low-income adults (especially veterans) and dislocated workers acquire the skills and training needed to obtain and keep nonsubsidized employment.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(2)

(B) Describe the State's strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State's career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals.

The state's workforce plan (Talent and Prosperity for All or TAP) guiding principles are to close economic disparities for marginalized populations, deliver comprehensive support individuals with barriers to employment and to provide systemwide performance metrics and accountability.

Additionally, five strategic priorities were identified for the 2024-2028 TAP Plan. The system priority aims to integrate system services, data, accountability with clear partners and roles. The business priority centers around supporting business development and competitiveness by aligning with economic development and growth efforts. The youth priority aims to improve opportunities for young people to transition to an economically successful adulthood. The credentialing priority allows for exploration of credential reform to improve equitable access,

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mobility and long-term economic success. Lastly, the job quality priority focuses on developing a job quality framework to guide decisions and key investments in the delivery of business services.

The strategic priorities and guiding principles of the TAP Plan are in alignment with the state's Perkins Mission, Vision, Values statements below:

Washington's Perkins Mission – Vision – Values

MISSION:

The Washington state Perkins plan uses an industry-informed, equity-focused approach to support the design, development, implementation and improvement of career and technical education.

VISION:

Support high quality, data informed CTE pathways that develop a skilled workforce, ensure business and industry thrive and expand across the state, and enable every Washingtonian to obtain living wage careers through credentials of workplace value.

VALUES:

The Washington state agencies entrusted with administering the Perkins plan are committed to the following values, which prioritize equity and access for individuals served by Perkins:

- Using quantitative and qualitative data to inform decisions

- Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, reflective of the communities they serve, to inform policies and practices

- Leveraging and aligning federal and state policies and funding to improve student outcomes

- Responding to labor-market gaps and emerging industries and occupations in the design of programs of study

- Promoting life-long learning that develops the knowledge and skills that allow individuals to remain competitive in chosen occupations/careers

Under the Talent and Prosperity for All Plan (TAP), Washington's strategic plan for workforce development, our vision is more Washingtonians finding and keeping jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency; closing skill gaps for employers; and working together as a seamless unified system of partners to make this a reality for our state. It is the goal of this unified system of partners to maintain a single unifying vision for how funding from multiple federal education and workforce development programs can be brought together. This work will be accomplished with a focus on disadvantaged populations and in-demand industry sectors and occupations including apprenticeships CTE programs are integral to developing a skilled workforce in key

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industries such as semiconductors, broadband, electric vehicles, batteries, clean energy and infrastructure. Washington plans to take maximum advantage of IIJA, CHIPS, IRA, IIA, BIL to ensure our state has the workforce needed to fill the jobs created by these programs.

The State's secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs will help to meet the State's workforce development goals by continuing to:

- Engage with business, industry employers, and labor representatives to design relevant and high-quality education programs that provide strong preparation for high-demand, high- skills occupations.

- Develop programs of study that offer students opportunities to participate in work-based learning activities and education programs that lead to industry-recognized or postsecondary credentials of value in the labor market.

- Align programs of study and minimize barriers so that secondary students have the ability to earn dual credit to meet both high school graduation requirements and earn college- level credit within a professional/technical pathway.

- Provide instructional support for registered apprenticeships across the state.

- Review quantitative and qualitative data and engage in quality improvement processes to strengthen outcomes for all students and improve career and technical programs to meet current and emerging employer needs.

- At the postsecondary level, provide incumbent worker training customized to meet the needs of the state's large, medium and small employers.

One example of the state's commitment to meeting the needs of existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, is the model secondary program, Core Plus. Core Plus was developed in partnership with The Boeing Company, specifically to expose high school students to the competencies needed for in-demand jobs in the manufacturing and advanced manufacturing industry. This industry-based curriculum includes an industry certificate which provides students preferred interview status at many aerospace suppliers and manufacturers within Washington.

The "Core" of this curriculum builds basic manufacturing skills, while the "Plus" focuses on the advanced manufacturing in the aerospace field. This model demonstrates the partnership between secondary CTE programs and the workforce, as Core Plus has expanded to include curriculum options in Construction and Maritime industries.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(3)

(C) Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with

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the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including the core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(2)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965.

The state's strategies were developed in close partnership with education and training providers statewide, in particular SBCTC's Workforce Education and Basic Education for Adults (BEdA) departments – the state's administrator of Title II programs – and OSPI's Career and Technical Education Department.

SBCTC is an active, collaborative member of workgroups established through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The focus of these groups is on students, workers, and employers with a priority around education that leads to job entry, job and wage progression, and retention.

Throughout the planning process, OSPI has relied heavily on decision points reflected in the state's ESSA plan to seek alignment for secondary schools. The Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education and Pathway Preparation sits on the OSPI review committee for the state ESSA plan, and has provided updates to align with the Perkins plan. To the degree possible, data methodology and policy decisions within the ESSA plan have been reinforced in the state's Perkins plan. OSPI remains committed to aligning the ESSA and Perkins plan where appropriate in future iterations of either submission.

2. <u>Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study</u>

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(A)

(A) Describe the career and technical education programs or programs of study that will be supported, developed, or improved at the State level, including descriptions of the programs of study to be developed at the State level and made available for adoption by eligible recipients.

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The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program standards are authorized by state law Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.700.010 and are established by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the agency that administers all secondary career and technical education programs in the state. The CTE standards are designed to ensure high-quality, consistent and relevant CTE programs as essential components of educational and career pathways. These standards provide OSPI with approval guidelines for CTE courses and guide the development and continuous improvement of Career and Technical Education

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programs in local school districts and State- Tribal Education Compacts (STEC). Washington defines Career and Technical Education as, "a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begin with the exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, options for high skill, high wage employment preparation, and advanced and continuing education (RCW 28A.700.010). Only school districts/STECs with state-approved career and technical education courses will be eligible recipients of Perkins V funding.

Currently OSPI administers secondary CTE programs through 6 educational program areas: agriculture, business and marketing, family and consumer sciences, health sciences, skilled and technical sciences, and STEM. Within these 6 program areas, the 16 national career clusters are administered, and local districts have the choice of selecting the Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) codes to build a coherent sequence of courses and program of study in a career cluster that leads to postsecondary opportunity.

The below table reflects the current opportunities for course offerings in Washington state, by the 16 adopted national career cluster areas, and the associated number of career pathways as designated and aligned with the national career cluster areas.

Career Cluster	Current CIP codes	Current Career Pathways
Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources	62	8
Architecture and Construction	12	2
Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications	26	5
Business Management and Administration	14	4
Education and Training	6	2
Finance	6	3
Government and Public Administration	2	1
Health Science	27	5
Hospitality and Tourism	11	5
Human Services	18	4
Information Technology	15	3
Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	11	3
Manufacturing	20	3
Marketing	11	5
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	26	2
Transportation Distribution and Logistics	15	1

OSPI is committed to reviewing existing programs of study to refine and further develop defined program of study resources for use at the local level. OSPI has been reviewing the existing CIP code offerings and as this work evolves, we will look to eliminate duplicative and un- used

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course options, as well as any courses that no longer align with in-demand occupations or clear postsecondary articulated pathways.

Subrecipients are able to utilize Perkins funds to support any programs of study that meet the definition of programs program of study within the Perkins V legislation. The programs of study align with the career clusters, and clearly articulate the opportunities for registered apprenticeship, direct employment, military service, certificates and credentials of value and 2-year, and 4-year continuing education and training opportunities. The development of programs of study are prioritized in high demand areas in Washington which include, but are not limited to agriculture, manufacturing, construction, health care, and information technology.

Although qualifying programs may be supported with funds, the results of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment and district performance across all indicators may further impact how a district may spend Perkins funds. In cooperation with SBCTC, OSPI will continue to work towards the development of resource materials that support decision-making at the district and college level when considering adopting new programs of study, modifying existing programs of study, or eliminating programs of study. OSPI continues to support initiatives that support quality programs of study, such as regional and statewide articulation agreements, and high-quality dual credit aligned with professional technical programs that provide meaningful and transferrable program specific (not elective) credit for secondary students.

POSTSECONDARY

Washington State's community and technical colleges offer over 1,100 associate's degrees in CTE fields and over 175 applied baccalaureate degrees in addition to providing non-degree-seeking students with opportunities to upskill by earning credentials of workplace value, obtaining credits for prior learning, accumulating stackable certificates, and designing individualized education programs to meet the career goals of individual students.

SBCTC, OSPI, and the Workforce Education and Training Coordinating Board will continue to investigate the feasibility of developing statewide alignment, articulation, and approval practices, especially in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industries and occupations. However, Washington State's CTC system is highly autonomous with independently appointed Boards of Trustees and, therefore, there is no statewide approval process for local programs of study or career pathways. Locally, all colleges receiving Perkins Plan funding are required to feature at least one program of study and provide with their application a spreadsheet listing any updates to articulations for dual credit on an annual basis. Most colleges administer their dual-credit programs through one of the system's 17 dual-credit consortia, through which memorandums of understanding, articulation agreements, and curriculum alignment rubrics are developed. In addition, the Perkins Plan application requires all colleges to explain their articulation and program of study development, recruitment, and review processes in detail.

The state's community and technical colleges offer more than 100 programs of study with over 1,000 secondary schools and skills centers throughout the system. A sampling includes Business

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Law, Marketing, Criminal Justice, Welding and Fabricating Technology, Engineering Technology, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences, Information Technology, Agricultural Business, Unmanned Aerial Systems, and Mechatronics.

Dual-credit opportunities are provided to high school students through Running Start, CTE Dual- Credit (formerly Tech Prep), Advanced Placement, and College in the High School; however, the vast majority of professional/technical credits are earned through CTE Dual Credit and College in the High School. These programs are subject to the rigorous academic standards established by the college and must be taught by qualified instructors who meet the college's faculty appointment criteria.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(B)

(B) Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—

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School districts/STECs will apply for Perkins funds on an annual basis. Applications will require identification of their programs of study, course specification and progression, and alignment with local, regional, state, or tribal community workforce needs.

Every CTE course is approved through the Education Data System (EDS) and includes course frameworks, extended learning opportunities, skills gap information and assurance of advisory committee review. Frameworks are approved for new courses, and then updated regularly by the district. The framework and course approval process ensures academic rigor, alignment with state education requirements, including Washington State Learning Standards, and current industry standards. Each course approval includes hours of instruction, course title, course description, identified career cluster and career pathway. The process requires proof of required elements before approval is granted. The course approval process helps ensure strong relationships with local CTE advisory councils are maintained and essential in the design and delivery of CTE programs.

In addition to the course approval process, program level review and support is conducted regularly. Program level review and support ensures essential elements are included in the design and implementation of high quality CTE programming and aligned with industry standards and workforce needs.

The CTE course approval and program level review and support processes ensure alignment of CTE courses and programs to workforce development needs in the state. The annual application

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for Perkins funds will require school districts/STECs to identify a program of study offered, and the programs must align with approved courses within the CTE application.

POSTSECONDARY

All CTE programs offered at the state's 34 community and technical colleges are approved through the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. SBCTC's professional/technical program approval process requires colleges to provide descriptions of the field's employment forecast, wage data, industry reports, work-based learning opportunities, potential conflicts with other colleges, and planning and/or advisory committee activities. The college must also submit documentation related to the demand, viability, curriculum, learning objectives, delivery, and administration of the program. Once a Program Approval Request (PAR) is endorsed by SBCTC and after system colleges have had the opportunity to provide feedback on the program request, the program will be entered on the college's inventory of approved professional-technical programs.

Like its associate's degree and certificate programs, SBCTC's applied baccalaureate degree approval process is comprehensive, requiring a statement of need, supply/demand gap rubric, two-person independent external review, program proposal form, and presentation to the State Board. Proposals must include labor market data demonstrating the need for a particular program as well as documentation supporting the program's viability and rigor.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(B)(i)

(B)(i) Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;

SECONDARY

The Washington CTE Foundation standards include that all students will demonstrate occupationally specific skills and competencies including the application of current state and national core content standards using a contextual approach. Within the CTE Application, school districts/STECs submit course applications for approval. Components of the course approval system include a course framework, which outlines the number of instructional hours, units of instruction, academic standards, industry standards, leadership and employability standards, and the formative and summative assessments to be aligned with standards. In addition to the course approval process, program level review and support will be conducted. Program level review and support occurs regularly and ensures essential elements are included in the design

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and implementation of high quality CTE programming and aligned with industry standards and workforce needs.

OSPI will continue to refine data elements collected through student information systems, to be accessible through the state data system to inform the use of Perkins Leadership and Perkins Reserve funds. Data points such as academic growth and proficiency, as well as technical skill attainment, earned industry certificates, and number of dual credit opportunities will help direct funds and decision making to continue to promote continuous improvement. The OSPI CTE office will work in cooperation with the OSPI Student Information, as well as the greater OSPI Secondary Education and Pathway Preparation team, to ensure consistent communication and resource support to CTE educators and administrators for best practices for academic achievement and growth, and the use of assessment to inform improvement.

The role of the state approved CTE equivalency course list will also promote continuous improvement in academic achievement, as the state has published model frameworks that provide equivalency credit in the academic areas of science, mathematics, and English Language Arts. State legislation, passed during the 2019 legislative session, has also dictated that school districts must provide students with access to at least one state equivalency course until September 1, 2021. This legislation also directed that on and after September 1, 2021, any statewide equivalency course offered by a school district or accessed at a skill center must be offered for academic credit. There are currently 62 state approved equivalency course frameworks available for local implementation.

Washington requires students to demonstrate readiness through completion of one or more graduation pathways. Of the graduation pathways, completing a CTE sequence of courses that meet minimum statutory requirements was established. A student may show competency to exit the secondary system by earning two credits through CTE coursework in the same program area, with courses that include either the opportunity to earn dual credit or, the opportunity to earn industry certification or coursework that leads to industry certification. We believe this pathway reinforces the review of high-quality programs that support both academic and technical skill attainment. School districts/STECs may propose Local CTE Pathways which would meet the same criteria with the exception of courses from more than one program area. These proposals must be approved by OSPI CTE. Once approved, the Local CTE Pathway may be adopted by other districts/STECs who have been approved for the same CIP codes and offer similar opportunities to earn dual credit or industry certification in the coursework.

POSTSECONDARY

Programs approved through SBCTC's Program Approval Request (PAR) process require the establishment of program Advisory Committees consistent with RCW 28B.50.252. Comprised of college, employer, and labor representatives, Advisory Committees contribute to program evaluation and technical skill assessment by ensuring alignment between the needs of business/industry and program curricula. Per SBCTC's Policy Manual, "A minimum of two

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Advisory Committee meetings must be held during each calendar year" to perform, in part, assessment-related duties, including:

- *"Advise the college as to the industry standard or certification required by the occupational area, and/or assist in the development of skill standards where appropriate."*

- *"Advise the college as to the industry standard or certification required by the occupational area, and/or assist in the development of skill standards where appropriate."*

- *"Review instructional materials and recommend those that are most appropriate to the instructional program; i.e., instructional materials, computer software, technical materials, and trade publications."*

- *"Review instructional materials and recommend those that are most appropriate to the instructional program; i.e., instructional materials, computer software, technical materials, and trade publications."*

- *"Review instructional materials and recommend those that are most appropriate to the instructional program; i.e., instructional materials, computer software, technical materials, and trade publications."*

With the expertise of faculty and input from employers and labor representatives on Advisory Committees, colleges rely on industry standards and, when applicable and available, incorporate standardized tests and certification exams into their curricula.

Colleges' adherence to expectations regarding continuous improvement is evaluated through application review, performance improvement plans, annual Reports of Accomplishment, and monitoring visits. Colleges that do not achieve Perkins indicator targets in consecutive years are required to provide improvement plans. SBCTC works closely with colleges in reviewing their applications, Reports of Accomplishments, and CLNAs to identify program achievements, changes, deficiencies, and performance gaps.

Informed by the aforementioned materials, the Program Administrator and/or Policy Associate for Workforce Education assess each college's risk and then perform desk audits and/or virtual/in-person monitoring visits, based on risk. Through college monitoring, SBCTC evaluates the composition and health of program Advisory Committees, compliance with faculty certification requirements, effectiveness of programs and initiatives, efficiency of recordkeeping practices, and overall progress towards meeting Perkins V requirements and performance targets. Summaries including commendations, recommendations, and follow-up items are sent after each visit. When significant deficiencies are noted or a college repeatedly fails to reach a performance target, improvement plans are required.

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PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(B)(ii)

(B)(ii) Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—expand access to career and technical education for special populations;

SECONDARY

OSPI's mission is to *"transform K-12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities."* With agency values that include ensuring equity and achieving excellence through continuous improvement, OSPI has an agency focus on serving all students; which will include focused efforts to expand access to CTE for special populations. OSPI's equity statement is, *"Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools."*

The agency goes further to state, "Ensuring educational equity:

- *Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.*

- *Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools."*

The OSPI CTE department will rely on the expertise of multiple internal departments and divisions to ensure that Perkins is leveraged to close opportunity gaps and expand access for students. Examples of these critical partnerships include:

- Special Programs & Federal Accountability: Working with the Program Review & Support Team Systems and School Improvement: Working with the Migrant and Multilingual Education, Office of Native Education, student support programs such as Institutional Education, Homeless Education, Homeless Stability, and Foster Care.

- Secondary Education and Pathway Preparation: Work with content leads to ensure equitable academic supports and access to high quality education for all students.

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- Special Education: Over the last four years, OSPI in partnership with a network of in-state professional organizations, has implemented the Inclusionary Practices Professional development Project, which provides statewide access to professional development on the provision of inclusionary practices within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). This work has continued to expand as Washington's education culture shifts to be one that upholds the right of all students to be meaningfully included in the general education setting, both academically and socially to the maximum extent possible.

- Office of System and School Improvement (OSSI): Working with the Migrant and Multilingual Education, Office of Native Education, student support programs such as Institutional Education, Homeless Education, Homeless Stability, and Foster Care. This is also the division that supports school improvement efforts and the implementation of the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF), a product of the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. Work with K12 System Supports department to provide consistent technical assistance to school counselors. Aligned disaggregated data reports will ensure equitable access, as well as support expanded access and intentional intervention for populations that are currently underserved in LEA's CTE programs.

- Equity and Civil Rights Department: Expertise for alignment to civil rights policy, inform accessibility issues.

- Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL): Thought partnership for high impact investments to support students, and partnership in data governance decisions.

- Federal Fiscal Policy Department: Ensure alignment of Perkins administration and fiscal allocations with all federal policies.

- Student Information: Align state collected achievement data, student information, and publicly reported indicators to position state and local institutions in making data driven investments.

Collaborative professional development and development of communication and resource tools will be imperative to support CTE directors, educators, school counselors, district level administrators, and support staff that directly impact students that represent special populations as described in Perkins V. Additionally, the CTE office continues to support monitoring of equitable access to CTE programs for all students through the Program Review process which is inclusive of Methods of Administration (MOA) review process by CTE and division staff. The Program Review process provides another step in ensuring equitable access and encouraging local districts to prioritize policy and funding to result in expanded access to undeserved students.

School districts/STECs will utilize the results of their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) and the available disaggregated data to determine how to invest their Perkins V

allocations to intentionally close opportunity, access, and performance gaps across members of special populations.

POSTSECONDARY

SBCTC's vision statement reads, "Leading with racial equity, our colleges maximize student potential and transform lives within a culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and

economic justice in service to our diverse communities." Accordingly, the agency is purposeful in requiring colleges to address equity and access in both its comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) and Perkins Plan application. With respect to the former, all colleges must articulate an equity-based approach to maximizing student potential in CTE programs, describe methods of providing outreach to special and/or historically underserved populations, list financial and support resources available to members of underserved populations, and explain how their implementation of programs of study ensures equal access to high-quality career and technical education. In addition, the following section of the CLNA requires an analysis of disaggregated performance data, and where deficiencies, discrepancies, or gaps in performance exist in either section, the college must develop an action plan to address them.

These priorities and strategies must be incorporated into the colleges' local application and annual Reports of Accomplishment, which have their own sections on improving equity and access. In them, the colleges summarize programs, services, and initiatives designed to recruit and support students from special populations and report on the findings and actions plans associated with their CLNA. Insufficient responses are returned for revisions and/or addressed through technical assistance or monitoring visits.

Common strategies outlined in college applications include the development of outreach and recruitment materials featuring underrepresented students; staff and faculty training on inclusive pedagogy, implicit bias, universal design for learning (UDL), and other diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) topics; visits to community-based organizations and cultural centers; partnerships with student groups; collaboration with DEI/Multicultural Student Services offices; and coordination with financial aid, admissions, and advising offices and personnel to braid available funding sources and leverage various resources and services to ensure that students are adequately supported. Discussed elsewhere, I-BEST, Guided Pathways, and High School+ are also noteworthy approaches to expanding access to CTE for special populations – some combination of which is featured at every community and technical college.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(B)(iii)

(B)(iii) Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and

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education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways.

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The Washington CTE Foundation standards include that, "employability skills are integrated throughout the content of each course, and students in CTE programs apply these skills in each program." These standards also assert that, CTE programs of study assist students with career planning, career development, and/or transition to employment and postsecondary options." As leadership and employability skills are a required and integral component of all CTE courses, school districts/STECs are required to demonstrate alignment to the leadership and employability standards within the CTE course framework to reflect in-class instruction-based opportunities. Course applications include the additional requirement of demonstrating the leadership and employability skills accessible through extended leadership opportunities, which are defined as learning experiences that occur outside of the scheduled school day or school year.

Washington CTE 21st Century Leadership Skills, as influenced by the p21.org standards, are required in every course offered (See Appendix 3). Additionally, course frameworks require that every unit of instruction identify taught and assessed industry standards, based upon the career pathway or career cluster the course aligns with. Without these key requirements being met, the course would not achieve approval. Course approval is also contingent upon the course demonstrating the ability to meet the skills gap. Applicants show the occupation growth and projection data that supports establishing the course. The identified occupation and industry alignment help guide the necessary industry skills to be included in the courses. The leadership skills as adopted by Washington are available here as an appendix.

Professional development key topics will continue to include leadership and employability skill development as a component of in-class instruction, as evidenced in the course framework; as well as through extended learning opportunities through career and technical student organizations and equivalent leadership groups.

POSTSECONDARY

SBCTC and the community and technical colleges have embraced guided pathways reform as a framework to increase and diversify the students and communities accessing and earning high value postsecondary credentials. In 2018, 11 colleges were formally committed to the state's Guided Pathways initiative, securing over $5 million in College Spark grant funding to implement programs. In addition, five Guided Pathways colleges joined the American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) Pathways Project with support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. With many more colleges transitioning to a Guided Pathways framework, SBCTC invested an additional $1.5 million to support their efforts. The 2019 State Legislature invested $32.1 million to support development of the Guided Pathways framework across

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Washington's two-year college system. Currently, all 34 colleges are designing and executing Guided Pathways implementation plans.

In pathways such as Business, Healthcare, Education, Social Behavior Science & Public Service, STEM, and Computer & Information Technology, colleges provide student success classes, intensive advising, support services, and early intervention to keep students on-track. Data, apps, and electronic tools help students, faculty, and advisors monitor progress, while technology integration, on-line course offerings, and modularized curricula provide increased access for career advancement and learning opportunities through short-term specialized training. Counseling and advising services for special populations are supported as well as integration of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) into CTE course offerings through the model for Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST). Supplemental instruction as well as applied math and writing courses support student success and completion. Funding is also expended for tutoring and interpretative services for students with disabilities.

Guided Pathways is an approach that reduces and simplifies the number of choices about course selection a student must make and directs students into an intentional, comprehensive program of study within one or two terms. The process from college entrance to program selection to degree completion is streamlined, providing students with a clearer, more efficient path to completion. To support their efforts, SBCTC will provide colleges with technical assistance and coaches, convene teams twice a year, and facilitate opportunities for the colleges to learn from other Guided Pathways colleges in the nation and experts in the field of institutional change management. All of Washington's community and technical colleges will be encouraged to attend a subset of these events.

SBCTC also supports many I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training) CTE programs throughout the state. A nationally recognized model for engaging and supporting adult and out-of-school learners, I-BEST utilizes a contextualized team-teaching approach to deliver basic English, reading, and math content and job- and college-readiness skills simultaneously. As a result, students learn by doing and progress more quickly from basic skills to college-level content and, ultimately, certificates, degrees, and job placement. According to a Columbia University study, I-BEST students are three times more likely to earn college credit and nine times more likely to earn an award or certificate.

Reaching almost 6,000 students across the state (46% of whom are students of color) through 146 programs, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) is particularly well- suited to ESL, ABE, and GED students, teen parents, and returning adults and provide a dedicated pathway to Professional-Technical careers. Each I-BEST program is evaluated through a robust approval process that ensures a local and economic need is met in each in demand industry. The Workforce Development department also ensures living wages will be earned upon completion. The Basic Education for Adults department reviews curriculum in order to stay in alignment with industry standards and academic rigor. Examples of I-BEST programs include: Heating,

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Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Allied Health Clinical Lab Assistant, Computer Network Technology, Viticulture, Composite Structures, Medical Reception, Facilities Maintenance Engineer, and Nurse Assistant.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(i)

(C)(i) Describe how the eligible agency will—make information on approved programs of study and career pathways (including career exploration, work-based learning opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities) and guidance and advisement resources, available to students (and parents, as appropriate), representatives of secondary and postsecondary education, and special populations, and to the extent practicable, provide that information and those resources in a language students, parents, and educators can understand;

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OSPI will continue to develop resources to be shared through multiple mediums. The CTE webpage, accessed at https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/career-technical-education-cte, will be maintained with information accessible to subrecipients and interested members of the public. All posted information on the OSPI website will be in alignment with ADA requirements. Google Translate will be standard across the entire OSPI website. The CTE website will continue to be the main source of CTE resources and information related to programs of study, and career pathways. The CTE department published an updated version of the state's Work- based & Worksite Learning Manual in 2023, and will update the manual as needed. This manual defines work-based learning, and the benefit of the student experience, as well as provides reference and direction for districts implementing high-quality This manual will describe the types of work-based learning which include worksite learning, guest speakers, structured field trips, school-based enterprises, job shadows, apprenticeship preparation, and internships. The Washington Foundational CTE standards require that work-based learning is an integrated element of all CTE coursework.

In 2021, OSPI underwent new division organization and secondary counseling was included in the same division with CTE. We will continue to work collaboratively and provide resources and outreach to school counselors and guidance counselors, school administrators, school board members, and community members including parents, students, and business and industry partners to determine knowledge and information gaps. OSPI continues to create resources to help support a broadened understanding of opportunities for programs of study, which may be delivered through published documents, web-posted documents, webinar, community forums, or existing professional development opportunities.

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The State Board of Community and Technical College's website (www.sbctc.edu) features multiple pages dedicated to CTE programs, Guided Pathways, registered apprenticeships, and dual-credit programs (Running Start, CTE Dual-Credit, College in the High School, and High School+). Links to the 2023 Field Guide ("Lifting Lives, Communities and the Economy") and CTE dual-credit consortia HYPERLINK "https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs- services/cte-dual-credit/" provide more specific information on each of the system's 34 colleges and the dual-credit opportunities they provide.

In addition to the SBCTC website, a Perkins Leadership Block grant supports the state's Career Pathways Project (WACAPA). The Career Pathways web tool serves as a clearinghouse for information on college courses and programs, student achievement, wages, competencies/skills, articulations, and available degrees, certifications, and credentials. Interactive, multi-layered road maps allow current and prospective students to explore their options and potential outcomes in order to make informed decisions about their academic and career trajectories.

Likewise, Start Next Quarter provides current and prospective students with guidance related to pathway and career options. Aimed at prospective students, the Start Next Quarter web portal is designed to quickly assess individuals' interests and goals in order to connect them to relevant programs offered in the region. Based on their replies to simple survey questions, it can connect them to information about worker retraining and programs for low-income students, as well as allowing them to schedule advising appointments and apply for college. Thirty of the state's colleges use this tool.

At the local level, all colleges feature some combination of pathway-focused academic and career counseling, CTE open houses, try-a-trade events, internship fairs, marketing brochures and/or videos, high school visits, and online resources such as the Seattle Colleges' College-to-Career website. These are often targeted towards members of special populations or non-traditional fields with the support of Perkins Leadership Block Grant and/or Non-Traditional Grant funding. At many colleges, these and other activities are carried out by High School Outreach Coordinators, Embedded Career Specialists, 13th Year Navigators, Entry Specialists, and the like. All colleges report on their outreach, advising, and equity initiatives annually through a Report of Accomplishment and through the CLNA.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(ii)

(C)(ii) How the eligible agency will facilitate collaboration among eligible recipients in the development and coordination of career and technical education programs and programs of study and career pathways that include multiple entry and exit points;

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The Workforce Board will explore ways to bring together secondary and postsecondary system CTE and adult basic education administrators, along with stakeholders, to identify programs of study that provide greater dual credit opportunities, reduce or eliminate course replication, that offer multiple entry and exit points, and lead to living wage employment opportunities for all students.

OSPI and SBCTC provide direct leadership and oversight for Perkins V providing guidance of career and technical education and professional technical programs through the secondary and postsecondary education systems in the state. These partners have committed to aligning programs of study with the SBCTC Guided Pathways efforts and prioritize providing students in Washington with a comprehensive understanding of the multiple pathways to credential attainment in training programs that lead to living wage occupations. Both agencies oversee the responsibility of ensuring programs of study meet the federal definition.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(iii)

(C)(iii) How the eligible agency will use State, regional, or local labor market data to determine alignment of eligible recipients' programs of study to the needs of the State, regional, or local economy, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations identified by the State board, and to align career and technical education with such needs, as appropriate;

Both secondary and postsecondary state agencies have adopted standards for existing and new programs. The standards include an analysis of local labor market information to demonstrate how the program meets local economic need for development of a trained workforce.

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Secondary districts/STECs develop curriculum/programs, which must meet standards established by OSPI, as directed by legislation. The standards are designed to ensure high quality, consistent, and relevant CTE programs as essential components of educational and career pathways. Some of the foundational standards that support the importance of aligning CTE programs with economic demand, and ensure Washington's secondary programs continuously review this alignment include:

- CTE programs are coordinated with other workforce development programs.

- Employability skills are integrated into the content of each course, and students in CTE programs participate in some form of work-based learning.

- An advisory committee actively guides the relevance and continuous improvement of the program.

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- CTE programs are reviewed annually, and the results are used for continuous program improvement.

These standards and existing state law influence the course and program approval processes currently used to maintain CTE courses and programs in compliance. As described in 2(a) and (b) these systems require local applicants to review local, regional, and statewide labor market data to identify a skill gap and demand for the course and substantiate offering the program. Additionally, general advisory and program specific advisory committees review local, regional, and statewide data when determining if courses and programs will be approved during the program evaluation and district wide plan process.

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Community and technical colleges that wish to offer a new or substantively revise an existing program must submit a program approval request to SBCTC. The request must include well-documented local/regional demand data for the targeted occupation job title(s) for which the proposed program will prepare individuals. Supporting data may come from traditional labor market data, industry data, trade association data, or similar data sources. The college must also provide data on the number of similar programs and make the case that the number of current annual graduates is insufficient to meet current and projected demand.

If the program prepares individuals for employment in an emerging field where labor market data is not readily available, the college may provide employer survey results. The survey must ask employers for a description of typical job duties, how many job openings are anticipated in the next three years, and the required educational level of qualified candidates.

SBCTC supports twelve Centers of Excellence that act as liaisons between the State's largest industries and the community and technical colleges. The Centers of Excellence link business, labor, and the State's educational systems to create a highly skilled and readily available workforce that is critical to the State's economy. The Centers of Excellence often conduct labor market studies for their industry sector that help guide the colleges developing new programs or revising existing programs. They convene industry panels to help inform colleges about emerging technology trends, advances in manufacturing materials and federal and state policy changes that affect client services. They also assist with program reviews to ensure curriculum and instruction are meeting current labor market needs.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(iv)

(C)(iv) How the eligible agency will ensure equal access to approved career and technical education programs of study and activities assisted under this Act for special populations;

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Before Perkins funding is granted, colleges must agree in writing to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as it applied to this annual plan. Likewise, secondary requires an Agency Application Assurances for school districts/STECs, which includes alignment to all applicable state and federal laws. Secondary CTE programs are also reviewed as part of OSPI's Program Review & Support process. Equal access is monitored through desk reviews by CTE program and division staff.

Methods of Administration coordinators at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges develop annual plans. These plans are used to determine those high schools and colleges that will receive monitoring and technical assistance visit to ensure compliance with state and federal Civil Rights guidelines. Districts/STECs selected each year receive an exit report following the review which will either list the outstanding items that have not been fully implemented. The state agencies are required to follow up to ensure that the districts' corrective action addresses those areas identified as noncompliant. A biennial report is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights.

Personnel who administer the MOA activities for the Workforce Board, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges often attend the annual training to receive guidance to ensure the on-site visits conducted each year are effective and meaningful.

All institutions within the public secondary and postsecondary education systems maintain clear and consistent policies of non-discrimination and equal opportunities. Professional staff advising underserved and special populations, disability support services coordinators, and multicultural student services staff provide guidance, support, and resources to career and technical education instructors and students to prevent discrimination.

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OSPI reviews multiple data points to review and recommend targeting plans and program reviews to ensure school districts/STECs are providing equal access to CTE programs. This work is accomplished through the Program Review & Support process. Additionally, as sub- recipients apply for Perkins funds, they are assuring the district/STEC's adherence to the state and federal guidelines, including non-discrimination requirements.

The MOA targeting plan and process is developed in consultation with the OSPI Civil Rights department. The Program Review & Support process includes districts/STECs providing class and course level CTE enrollment reports that identify gender, race, and special population status to ensure proportional enrollment reflective of the school district population. Additionally, the district/STEC must provide evidence of support offered to CTE students, which may include examples of tutorial services, language assistance, 504 plans, or achievement evaluations for

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students. The school district/STEC must also provide evidence as to how they are addressing barriers to enrollment in CTE courses for special populations.

Local districts/STECs must develop their Perkins plan with a focus on improving access and opportunity for special population students. Within local planning documents, applicants must describe the efforts that they will make to ensure members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of the special populations.

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SBCTC complies with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights' (OCR) Method of Administration (MOA) program designed to verify compliance with Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, and Handicap in Vocational Education Programs (34 C.F.R. Part 100, Appendix B). The program, which requires each state agency responsible for administration of CTE programs to conduct compliance reviews of subrecipients. The purpose of these reviews on-site review is to determine the college's compliance with the guidelines, federal laws, and regulations. SBCTC selects colleges for review based on the State of Washington's Method of Administration Plan, submitted to OCR in June 2020 and approved in December 2020.

This plan requires desk reviews of 7 to 9 colleges and physical accessibility reviews of 2 to 3 colleges annually. The targeting plan also uses other optional rating criteria for selection of colleges to be reviewed. These additional criteria include the length of time since a college was last reviewed and disparities between total completion rates and CTE completion rates on the basis of race, sex, and disabilities. More in-depth reviews are performed if significant risk and/or noncompliance is found in any area during the course of the desk reviews.

Following the completion of each review, the college receives a letter of finding (LOF) summarizing the results of the review and a voluntary compliance plan (VCP) to allow the college to begin corrections on the reviews findings. In the VCP, the college must provide a planned corrective action for each deficiency, the name of person responsible for ensuring the correction is completed, and a date by which the finding will be resolved. The SBCTC MOA coordinator for the compliance review continues to monitor the college and verifies each correction has been made. Once all noted findings have been resolved, the college is notified the review is complete. In addition, to findings, reports also include recommendations designed to notify leadership of areas of risks, demographic information that may indicate barriers to students, and ways in which the college may better serve, welcome and retain students.

In addition, to regular reviews, SBCTC submits a required biannual report to OCR containing a summary of all work performed in the prior two years, along with copies of all open reviews. The MOA coordinator also provides technical assistance and training to colleges to ensure compliance with all applicable civil rights guidelines.

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SBCTC requires colleges to address their practices for ensuring equitable access and student support services in their CLNA and local application. Representatives of special populations and the offices and agencies that support them must be consulted in the development of the CLNA, and when deficiencies are noted through the process, the colleges are expected to address these in their application and drive funding towards remedying them. Feedback is provided to colleges that do not adequately address equity-related findings and/or cannot articulate a deliberate strategy for ensuring access and supporting underrepresented students. Applications will not be approved until colleges have improved their responses, and technical assistance is provided to those who have challenges accomplishing this.

Each college is monitored at least once every three years, and access and equity are critical components of the site visits. In addition to remarking on disaggregated student performance and application and report responses, SBCTC staff often review recruitment materials, websites, non- discrimination statements, program policies and practices, professional development initiatives, staff/faculty demographics, Advisory Committee composition, and other elements to generate a comprehensive picture of the college's efforts to recruit and support students from special populations. When deficiencies are noted, they are included in monitoring summaries, often requiring the college to take immediate corrective action or provide an improvement plan. These monitoring summaries typically include referrals to other colleges or college personnel that have received commendations or developed/adopted best practices.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(v)

(C)(v) How the eligible agency will coordinate with the State board to support the local development of career pathways and articulate processes by which career pathways will be developed by local workforce development boards, as appropriate;

A career pathway approach connects levels of education, training, advising, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress toward the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Career pathways engage businesses to help meet their workforce needs.

Through a career pathway approach, students are able to choose among a full range of education and work-based learning opportunities that allows them to earn marketable credentials. Career pathway plans are developed with guidance and key workforce information, such as labor market trends, wages, and connected training and education. The plans are 'living documents' that are subject to change as students learn more about career and education options and discover new areas of interest and opportunity.

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The CLNA process also represents a key opportunity to increase alignment between the state's CTE system and local workforce development councils (LWDCs). These LWDCs serve as critical local resources for labor market information for schools and colleges completing the CLNA.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(vi)

(C)(vi) How the eligible agency will support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers to provide students with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry, which may include work- based learning such as internships, mentorships, simulated work environments, and other hands-on or inquiry-based learning activities;

The state Perkins V administrator and oversight body, the Workforce Board, coordinates statewide CTE conversations and initiatives across all relevant stakeholders. CTE programs at the secondary and postsecondary level require the establishment and oversight of industry- specific CTE program advisory committees. Comprised of representatives from school/college administration, instruction, business/industry, labor, and other sectors, advisory committees ensure that CTE courses are taught to industry standards and ensure that there are meaningful opportunities for students to participate in the full continuum of work-based learning experiences. Business and industry advisory committee members often volunteer their time, expertise, and workplaces to provide site tours, demonstrations, simulated work experiences, job shadows, and internship or clinical placements. They also ensure that classrooms are modeled on a typical workplace to the greatest extent possible, so students gain experience both in the use of industry-standard equipment and materials and in meeting workplace expectations. This contextualization extends to related instruction components (human relations, computation, and communication) so such concepts support and complement workplace skill development.

In 2018, the Washington State Legislature passed the Work-Integrated Learning Initiative [Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (E2SHB) 1600], which created the Work-Integrated Learning Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to advise the Legislature and the education and workforce sectors on creating opportunities for students to: "Explore and understand a wide range of career-related opportunities through applied learning; engage with industry mentors; and plan for career and college success" [E2SHB 1600, Sec. 3 (1)].

Membership on this committee includes representation from the Workforce Board, OSPI, and educator/faculty representation from secondary and postsecondary CTE. The committee completed its work and published a final report to the legislature and the committee was extended to continue their work in 2023.

Governor Jay Inslee launched Career Connect Washington (CCW) in 2017 to help young people gain valuable, real-life work experience while they study. This ensures students receive not only

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high-quality classroom instruction, but hands-on work experience that helps them start a career with employers looking to hire. Career Connect Washington brings together higher education, business and industry leaders, government and state agencies, labor leaders, community leaders and nonprofits, and regional leaders to find ways to better link education and work. The Legislature provided funding for Career Connect Washington during the 2019 legislative session.

Part of the Career Connect Washington initiative, Career Launch programs provide students with real- life work experience related to their classroom studies. Students graduate with skills to be competitive in the job market and with a valuable credential beyond a high school diploma. Its goal: to have 60 percent of young adults beginning in the class of 2030 participate in a career launch program.

Career Launch programs can include:

- Registered apprenticeships (automatic Career Launch endorsement).

- A post-secondary institution participating in the Washington College Grant, College Bound Scholarship or Passport programs with a paid work-based learning component as a credentials requirement.

- A secondary career and technical education program that meet credential requirements and include a work-based component.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(C)(vii)

(C)(vii) How the eligible agency will improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators, including those who are members of special populations.

The state will analyze performance data for all disaggregated subpopulations to identify any gaps in performance outcomes. The state will work with the secondary and postsecondary administrators to determine how local districts and colleges can be assisted to improve outcomes for student sub- groups and special populations where there are gaps in performance outcomes. These gap findings will be reviewed by the Workforce Board on an annual basis to determine if action is needed to improve performance outcomes. Subrecipients will utilize the results of their CLNA, which will include performance gap review to determine strategic investment of Perkins allocations.

Accordingly, OSPI and SBCTC commit to the following strategies:

- On an annual basis, OSPI and SBCTC will monitor school district and STEC/college performance data related to special populations to identify performance gaps, verify that the schools are acknowledging and responding to them, and provide technical assistance to recipients when applicable.

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- Where performance gaps persist without noticeable improvement over a period of three years, school districts/STECs and colleges may be required to allocate a percentage of their Perkins award to programs, services, and/or initiatives designed to address discrepancies in participation or performance.

- Each subrecipient will utilize available data to identify school districts and STECs/colleges whose special populations are exceeding performance targets to evaluate and communicate to other schools what strategies and practices are effectively in narrowing or eliminating performance gaps.

- The state will strategically invest Perkins funds to develop and implement programs to address performance gaps among special populations.

In addition, both agencies will support and/or provide professional development opportunities to explore options for serving special populations that will improve outcomes.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(4)(D)

(D) Describe how the eligible agency, if it chooses to do so, will include the opportunity for secondary school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, or competency-based education.

The Washington School Improvement Framework, a product of the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation process includes dual credit participation as a reported element of school quality or student success indicator. Dual credit access through CTE is a critical component to overall access, and a critical opportunity for students in a CTE program of study. OSPI and SBCTC look to continue to broaden access to the state's dual credit menu for all students. These opportunities will include course and exam-based opportunities such as Advanced Placement, Cambridge International, and International Baccalaureate Programs. Running Start provides 11th and 12th graders the opportunity to take college courses on college campuses, as well as College in the High School, which provides 10th, 11th, and 12th graders the opportunity to take college level courses at high school campuses.

While OSPI and SBCTC will continue to provide additional opportunities to access many types of dual credit programs where appropriate, the most common dual credit program aligned with CTE courses continues to be CTE Dual Credit (formerly Tech-Prep). RCW 28B.50.531 describes the legislature's intent to recognize and support the work of community and technical colleges, high schools, and skill centers in creating articulations and dual credit agreements for CTE programs of study that include dual-credit opportunities.

In June 2023, the Washington legislature funded a CTE Dual Credit proviso (ESSB 5187), assigning the state board to administer a pilot program to increase career and technical

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education dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional technical programs. The state board, in collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, are committed to eliminating articulation agreements that only provide elective college credit for successful completion of CTE courses. It is critical for CTE dual credit articulation agreements to be aligned with required credits for the professional/technical programs offered through the state's community and technical colleges. Including dual credit as a program quality indicator for secondary programs will encourage increased access for students as well.

Additional policy structures are in place to support opportunities for dual credit, such as RCW 28a.700.070, which states that OSPI shall provide professional development, technical assistance, and guidance for school districts to develop CTE course equivalencies that also qualify as advanced placement courses.

The State Board of Education (SBE) provides guidance to school districts/STECs related to competency- based education and competency-based credit. OSPI will continue to partner with the SBE to investigate policy, guidance, and resources related to competency-based education, newly referred to as mastery-based education in state legislation. Students are able to earn competency- based credit by demonstrating proficiency of knowledge acquired outside of the classroom setting. School districts/STECs are allowed to assess students in CTE program areas, and confer the appropriate school credit based upon a student's demonstrated abilities. The SBE mastery-based learning work group may deliver recommendations that will further increase access to mastery- based experiences for secondary students.

OSPI will continue to ensure communications and technical assistance provided to local education agencies include opportunities to increase student participation in dual credit and competency-based education, when appropriate. While policy around opportunities for dual credit, concurrent enrollment, early college high school, and competency-based education largely remains a local decision, OSPI will partner with SBCTC to create best practices guidance where appropriate.

C. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. <u>Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how—</u>

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(5)(A)

(a) Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how— each eligible recipient will promote academic achievement;

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Funding allocations will be formula-based, as outlined in the Perkins Act. Continuing with the 2023-24 school year the districts/STECs will continue working on their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). Districts/STECs will continue to evaluate all of the performance targets and identify improvement plans for any failed indicators. Results of the CLNA will inform local investment of Perkins funds.

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Funding allocations to eligible recipients will be formula-based, as described in the postsecondary waiver request section. Each college will receive baseline accountability reports from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges via the Perkins Dashboard. The dashboard includes college-specific and statewide performance indicator data disaggregated by student subgroups, special populations, and professional/technical programs offered at the colleges, since reporting year 2015-2016. The colleges will analyze the data and discuss findings with their stakeholder groups as part of their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment. Performance will be addressed within a section of the local application. Colleges will be asked to identify strategies and develop a plan to lessen academic achievement gaps experienced by special populations, student subgroups, or students enrolled in specific programs that are performing poorly on 1P1, 2P1, and 3P1 indicators.

The application reflects the priorities and requirements of Perkins V. The Perkins Plan application focuses on the CLNA process; equity and access; evaluation of student performance, program size, scope, and quality; programs of study and pathways, and recruitment, retention, and professional development of CTE educators as well as questions that reflect the requirements of Section 134(b) of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. The application also includes a Budget Narrative section wherein colleges provide precise descriptions of how they will utilize Perkins funding in 16 categories. There are 16 questions in the Grant and Fiscal Accountability section and a required Perkins Plan Assurances document that must be signed by the college president.

SBCTC hosts, records, and posts to its website an annual training webinar to explain the application process and provide technical assistance to applicants. As applications are received, the Program Administrator and Contract Specialist provide substantial feedback to colleges, when applicable, to ensure that applications meet the requirements of Perkins V and expectations of SBCTC. Agency feedback is recorded in OGMS and revisions are required prior to approval.

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PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(5)(B)

(b) Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how— each eligible recipient will promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential;

SECONDARY

Funding allocations will be formula-based, as outlined in the Perkins Act. Districts/STECs will provide improvement plans for any failed indicators, and results of the CLNA will inform local investment of Perkins funds. For the 2023-24 application, the district/STEC will update the CLNA and describe specific plans to promote academic achievement. The Perkins application will include support on how the eligible recipient plans to promote technical skill attainment. This is further reinforced by the state's CTE graduation pathway option which requires students that utilize this pathway to complete two credits of CTE through courses with access to dual credit or include or lead to an industry recognized credential of value.

POSTSECONDARY

Funding allocations to eligible recipients will be formula-based, as outlined in the Perkins Act. SBCTC provides a data dashboard displaying each college's performance on each indicator that displays data disaggregated by student subgroup, special population, and CTE program, and is accessible to the colleges and the public. The dashboards are updated annually as enrollment and completion data from the previous year becomes available. The colleges will analyze the data and discuss the findings with professional/technical advisory committees and other stakeholder groups as part of their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment. The college will also complete comprehensive reviews of their professional/technical programs on a periodic basis to ensure content is relevant to preparation for employment. Colleges will also analyze completion data to identify and mitigate barriers students may experience that negatively affect completions. Colleges will submit their strategic plan to promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential as part of their Local Application.

All Perkins applications include a discussion of employability skills and pathways-focused guidance and counseling services in the Size, Scope, and Quality section, and SBCTC has developed a monitoring rubric to enumerate the best practices being utilized at the local level. These include career exploration workshops, mock and on-campus interviews, resume workshops, credit-bearing career-readiness courses, online/interactive pathways tools, flipped classroom models, and contextualized instruction. A substantial number of these are features of two of the systems most comprehensive approaches to career and technical education – Guided Pathways and I-BEST.

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PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(5)(C)

(c) Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how— each eligible recipient will ensure the local needs assessment under section 134 takes into consideration local economic and education needs, including, where appropriate, in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

SECONDARY

Funding allocations to eligible recipients will be formula-based, as outlined in the Perkins Act. All eligible recipients must engage with their local employers through the advisory committee process and analyze labor market data as a component of course and program approval, and in consideration of program evaluation. Multiple data tools are available for local use, and economic data is provided quarterly by the Employment Security Department (ESD).

POSTSECONDARY

Funding allocations to eligible recipients will be formula-based, as outlined in the Perkins Act. All colleges must engage with their local employers and analyze labor market data prior to submitting a professional/technical program request for approval by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. As part of the approval process, the colleges are required to evaluate whether or not other public and private institutions in their geographic area offer similar programs. The colleges must assess work-based learning placement opportunities for the proposed program.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(6)

Describe how the eligible agency will support the recruitment and preparation of teachers, including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide career and technical education instruction, leadership, and support, including professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations.

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OSPI supports the recruitment and preparation of educators, administrators, and support personnel through a variety of methods. OSPI partners with the Washington Association of Career and Technical Educators (WA-ACTE) organization to provide statewide professional development opportunities. The WA-ACTE is an umbrella professional organization that includes; Washington Association of Career and Technical Administrators (WACTA), Washington Association of Agricultural Educators (WAAE), Washington State Business Education Association (WSBEA), Washington Career Counseling & Employment Readiness (WA-CCER), Washington

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Family and Consumer Sciences Educators (WA-FCSE), Washington Association of Marketing Educators (WAME), Washington Industrial Technology Education Association (WITEA), Washington Association of Skilled and Technical Sciences (WASTS), and Health Science Career and Technical Educators (HSCTE).

OSPI supports early career teachers, including CTE teachers both certificated and on conditional certificates, through a competitive grant program which serves 75 percent of Washington state's first-year teachers. The Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grant supports districts in training mentor teachers and in the implementation of induction standards. The program is also collaborating with preparation programs to train mentors for pre-service teachers. Additionally, OSPI supports professional learning for all educators through Title II, Part A federal Title funds. These funds support CTE teachers, and all educators with both district/STEC level and state level professional learning opportunities.

As required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and our state equity plan under the Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Initiative, OSPI's Title II, Part A program office (TIIA) monitors certification requirements and teaching assignments for all educators including CTE. OSPI monitors CTE courses based on Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code reported with state course code and V-Code matches (CTE specific teaching certificate endorsement(s)) and student grade level. Based on the teaching assignment, TIIA can provide information and data on CTE's teacher shortage area and quantify the FTE needed to place fully qualified teachers for CTE courses in shortage area(s) by state, educational service district, local education agency, and school district/STEC level. Furthermore, this information could be used to communicate with post-secondary institutions to target and supply educator workforce candidates to fill specific shortage areas and geographical shortage areas in CTE. The collaboration with post- secondary institutions to fulfill teacher shortage area(s) is one of strategies identified to improve teacher shortage issues in Washington and is included in Washington's State Equity Plan.

OSPI is a sponsor of both the fall and summer WA-ACTE conferences, and provides funds for school district/STEC employees to attend these and other professional learning opportunities. OSPI will continue to invest strategic professional learning funding; previous examples include targeted investments such as sponsorship of an annual CTE Boot-Camp, a professional development opportunity provided by the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), which was specifically intended for educators entering the field from industry – and focused on supporting pedagogy and classroom management. The investment of funds will be contingent on the providers meeting the definition of professional development found in Perkins V. OSPI will seek to provide funding to sponsor, or support the attendance of individuals at high quality development opportunities.

OSPI will continue to partner with preservice and continuing education preparation programs across the state to provide technical assistance and outreach. OSPI provides workshops, presentations, and webinars as requested at conferences of the professional organizations that

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serve educators in our state including the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA), Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), and Washington State Counselors Association (WSCA). In addition, OSPI provides clock hours to many professional learning events, which supports certificate renewal requirements for CTE Directors and CTE Educators.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is improving ability to collect and use data to identify preparation and educator shortage needs to better target and support educator preparation in those areas. Educator preparation programs are evaluated based on the percentage of educators prepared in educator workforce shortages, particularly special education. It is required that 20 percent or more of the certifications each year are in endorsements in shortage areas. PESB provides feedback to the providers that they should expand the number of endorsements offered in those identified shortage areas. This feedback loop has led to a statewide increase in the number of providers offering endorsements in shortage areas; and this process may be applied to help positively impact the shortage for CTE educators.

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The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will continue to support the recruitment and preparation of CTE faculty, administrators, and staff. Perkins Leadership funds will be allocated to each of the colleges to support industry-based professional development. Funding will be available to professional/technical faculty, administrators, staff, and professional/technical/adult basic education faculty teams to support new skill development directly related to the business and industry field(s) to which they are assigned. Funding is available to adult basic education faculty or administrators to jointly participate in professional development activities with professional/technical faculty or administrators to strengthen content knowledge and develop new skills in the field when an integrated instructional model is in place. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has championed the I-BEST model that uses a team-teaching approach to provide students with basic education instruction while they also receive instruction in career preparation in the field of their choice.

All professional/technical faculty and administrators must complete an initial three-year or on-going five-year professional development plan (PDP) to maintain their certification. Individual professional development activities must directly align with each instructor or administrator's plan and increase their knowledge of current practices in the field. Professional development activities may also support participation in recognized industry sponsored training programs that result in industry certification or offer comprehensive skills training resulting in a better match between employer expectations and the program content. Washington State Skills Standards for Professional/Technical Instructors is currently being reviewed and updated to include DEI competencies. These new standards are expected to be introduced and adopted in spring quarter of 2024. The current Standards for Professional/Technical Instructors and Industry Trainers incorporated in the PDP process include:

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- Manage Learning Environments

- Develop Outcomes, Assessment and Curricula

- Provide Student Instruction

- Develop and Review Programs

- Provide Student Instruction

- Create and Maintain a Professional Environment

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will continue to facilitate statewide training and professional development to enhance the recruitment and retention of CTE faculty, administrators, and staff. For example, in 2019, Perkins Leadership funds provided an in-depth presentation on Diversity and Equity in Hiring at the college system's Workforce Education Council meeting.

Leadership funding was also used to provide an Implicit Bias Institute for workforce faculty, administration, deans, and leadership from the community and technical colleges and registered apprenticeship programs across the state. The Institute was designed to develop working tools and processes to identify and reduce unconscious biases that hinder student and faculty success and to enrich the overall campus climate. The project builds and sustains diversity and inclusion initiatives by building a cohort of campus experts to identify and strategically reduce bias at all critical decision points through the examination and implementation of policies and practices within each respective campus and apprenticeship program.

The Workforce Deans' Academy is also supported with Leadership funding. It is an in-depth, hands-on opportunity for new and aspiring workforce deans to experience situations and challenges they will face as administrators and practice the skills they will need before facing them on the job.

Boot Camps are intensive, hands-on courses for professional/technical faculty who have limited or no teaching experience. Qualified instructors/facilitators will introduce and model essential components of classroom management, adult learning, and facilitating skills. Emphasis is on practical and real-life applications.

Finally, SBCTC will continue to provide system convenings to more efficiently and cost-effectively deliver Workforce Education training, technical assistance, and professional development. In the past year, SBCTC and the Workforce Education Council have collaborated to provide Opportunity Gap Analysis training, bringing together teams from across our system to engage colleges in deep learning and practical application of new skills.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(7)

Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for purposes under section 124 of the Act. See Text Box 2 for the required uses of State leadership funds under section 124(a) of Perkins V.

Leadership funds will support the state's subrecipient agencies, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to systemically invest leadership dollars. Leadership funding decisions include:

1. The state shall reserve not more than 10 percent of leadership funds to carry out the following activities:

   a. **1% of the allocation to serve individuals in state correctional institutions, juvenile justice facilities, and educational institutions that serve individuals with disabilities.**

      The allocation will be split 50% to SBCTC and 50% to OSPI.

   b. **The state will set aside $60,000 for services that prepare individuals for non-traditional fields.**

      The allocation will be split 50% to SBCTC and 50% to OSPI. While the $60,000 represents the minimum allocation set-aside, additional leadership dollars will be prioritized for all members of special populations, so investment can be made towards increasing all underrepresented populations within non-traditional employment and not be restricted to gender data only.

   c. **The state will set aside an amount equal to 0.1 percent to support the recruitment of special populations to enroll in CTE programs.**

      This allocation will be directed to the Workforce Board. The SBCTC and OSPI have prioritized spending to support special populations, which may include additional recruitment efforts, or other initiatives and activities based upon collected data.

   d. **The remainder of the leadership funds will be administered by the Workforce Board, SBCTC, and OSPI in alignment with the General Authority and Permissible Uses of Funds articulated in the Perkins V Act.**

      In alignment with the Washington Perkins Mission, Vision, and Values, SBCTC and OSPI will commit to assessing and evaluating local and statewide performance data to identify performance and opportunity gaps and establish priorities for local and/or state funding. Highly informed by the local Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNAs), and state level data, and with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion the SBCTC and OSPI will invest leadership funding in the following areas:

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i. **Developing High Quality CTE Programs:** Examples include investing in the partnership to establish regional and statewide articulation agreements aligned with programs of study; supporting the adoption and integration of recognized postsecondary credentials and work-based learning into programs of study; and increasing access to high quality work-based learning. This would include, but not be limited to: expanding access to Career Connected Learning activities including career preparation and career launch programs, work-integrated learning activities, and other work-based learning programs as defined in the Perkins Act. These activities include sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required to a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

ii. **Adapting Existing Programs:** Examples include prioritizing program investment aimed at closing an opportunity or access gap; adapting programs to increase access to remote students including adopting hybridized learning models; increasing access to industry-recognized credentials; and adapting program offerings to meet employment trends in light of advancement in technology, automation, and artificial intelligence. Additionally, supporting investment in improved labor market tools that will support predicting new and existing employment opportunities and future trends.

iii. **Improving Access and Outcomes for Special Populations:** Examples include investing in programs and activities that increase student access, engagement, and success in programs that serve members of special populations. These may include but are not limited to: partnerships with tribes and tribal organizations and business, industry, and labor leaders; supporting participation for non-traditional employment; lowering barriers identified by school districts/STECs and colleges in rural communities; and activities that eliminate inequities in access to high-quality programs.

iv. **Supporting Professional Development and Leadership:** Examples include investing in professional learning opportunities for CTE educators, faculty, administrators, guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals. As required by the Perkins Act, activities must be high-quality, comprehensive, and support the most effective training options to individuals, and to the degree possible be coordinated with other professional learning opportunities. Additionally, investing in programs

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that serve students in alignment with the definition of CTSO; organizations for individuals enrolled in CTE programs, that engage in CTE activities as part of the instructional program. These investments will prioritize activities that support positive impacts to the performance indicators, and specifically serve students representing special populations.

v. **Supporting Statewide and Regional Partnerships:** Examples include: incentivizing a regional and/or statewide approach to planning and activities related to expanding CTE dual credit access; review and development of CLNAs; developing statewide programs of study aligned with high-skill, high-wage, in demand, and emerging occupations; increasing community work-based learning opportunities for both secondary and postsecondary students; and facilitating career pathway development.

vi. **Facilitating Opportunities for Technical Assistance:** Examples include activities that promote leadership, CLNA preparation, and professional development as well improving the quality of career and technical education teachers, faculty, administrators, and counselors.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(8)(A)

Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed— Among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace;

Approximately 85% of Perkins Basic Grant funds for Washington are distributed to the local level for required and permissive uses of funds. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the eligible agency in Washington, determines the relative portion of funds provided to the secondary and postsecondary partner agencies, respectively the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

In determining the secondary and postsecondary split, the Board examined enrollment and full-time equivalent counts for both systems' career and technical education students, as well as compared the distribution splits in other states. Based on this analysis, the Board has determined that the split between secondary and postsecondary systems is set at 44/56 percent of Basic Grant funds, respectively. The Board retains the authority to reexamine the data should additional information become relevant to the issue.

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OSPI, SBCTC, and the Workforce Board will jointly establish a workgroup to examine the existing funding split between secondary and postsecondary, with the delegated authority to amend the state plan. This group will develop proposals for formulaically maintaining and/or adjusting the funding split in future years, and come to a consensus determination to report to the Workforce Board. At a minimum, the workgroup will be comprised of representatives from OSPI, SBCTC, and the Workforce Board. The Workforce Board may elect to include other stakeholders as mandatory participants and will encourage broad stakeholder engagement in this process.

Formulaic proposals will be based on a data analysis that at a minimum examines the quantitative effects of adjusting the split, the number of students served by each sector as defined by both headcount enrollments and across sector normalized full time equivalents, and the existing level and availability of state and local funding support to CTE students in each sector. The analysis must further include an examination of the impact of changes on sub-recipients, especially rural serving institutions and school districts/STECs. Finally, formula proposals must include strategies such as ramped implementation to mitigate the effects of sudden formulaic changes to the funding split, achieved through a cap of the maximum percentage change in any given year. Workgroup partners will develop a rationale and "business rules" that specify the rationale for maintaining or modifying the split level and criteria for adjusting it in the future inclusive of the minimums enumerated above into a written report submitted to the Workforce Board.

The workgroup plans to conclude its planning by October 31, 2026 and will report to the state Workforce Board its recommendations for funds that become available July 1, 2027, along with their rationale and criteria for future split discussions, at a fall meeting of the Workforce Board.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(8)(B)

Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed— among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

The secondary system has 142 eligible recipients that meet the minimum $15,000 Perkins grant. Of those, all districts/STECs who apply for the grant request and are granted waivers. Presently, no consortia operate at the secondary level in Washington. OSPI has utilized Perkins Reserve funds in the past to incentivize small, rural districts/STECs to investigate possible consortia development, however there have been none established at this time. If a consortium is developed, the initial allocations based on the Perkins formula for all members will be combined and any incentive reserve dollars will be added to the consortium's allocation. School

districts/STECs that apply for the waiver to the minimum allocation must demonstrate ability to meet the requirements for size, scope, and quality to be eligible recipients.

The postsecondary system has only one institution that does not qualify (based on size of CTE enrollment) for a $50,000 minimum grant, so there are no postsecondary consortia in Washington.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(9)(A)

Describe the eligible agency's program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—will be provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act;

Equity, access, and inclusion are at the heart of Washington's Perkins V Mission, Vision, and Values. These will be the foundation upon which we further develop strategies and identify promising practices that ensure all students have equal access and program opportunities that will help them succeed in CTE and beyond.

Our state's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment includes disaggregated data reviews of enrollment and outcomes as well as a full section on equity and access. This tool will help identify gaps in performance and outcomes, and will incent school districts/STECs and colleges to develop strategies and implement solutions that address the gaps and improve outcomes for all students.

Individuals who are members of special populations are guaranteed equal access to activities under Perkins V through compliance reviews conducted by staff whose role and responsibilities include oversight of Methods of Administration (MOA) for civil rights compliance in career and technical education. MOA administrators are engaged in onsite visits and/or desk audits, and providing technical assistance on civil rights compliance to community and technical colleges and school districts/STECs.

In addition, OSPI and BEdA have partnered to create a seamless pathway for out-of-school youth and adults lacking a high school diploma or its equivalent. The Open Doors re-engagement program administered through OSPI and the competency-based High School+ programs implemented across the community and technical college system provide students with a seamless pathway to high school completion. As students age out of Open Doors all credits and competencies earned count towards a high school diploma in the HS+ competency-based diploma program in Washington's community and technical colleges.

The set aside for recruitment of special populations will be used for a CTE focused marketing campaign. The campaign will be designed to incent more special population participation in programs.

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OSPI ensures equal access to Perkins funded activities for all students, including members of special populations, through multiple monitoring activities. Compliance to federal and state laws is monitored through the Program Review & Support and Methods of Administration (MOA) processes. School districts, STECs, and skill centers provide evidence of access and support for all students, including members of special populations. MOA and Program Review administrators are engaged in desk audits, and providing technical assistance on civil rights and program requirement compliance to school districts/STECs. Equal access is additionally monitored and supported by the OSPI Civil Rights Department. Secondary Perkins applicants must complete an Agency Application Assurances for school districts/STECs, which includes alignment to all applicable state and federal laws. Perkins Reserve Fund Projects have prioritized service expansion to members of special populations to support closing opportunity and performance gaps.

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As articulated in Washington's Perkins V Mission, Vision, and Values Statement, SBCTC "prioritize[s] equity and access for individuals served by Perkins [by]…Leveraging and aligning federal and state policies and funding to improve student outcomes." To that end, the postsecondary Perkins Plan funding formula incentivizes enrollment of students from special populations and benefits recipients that prioritize student support through the braiding of multiple funding sources. These include Pell/BIA, Opportunity Grant, Worker Retraining, Washington College Grant, WorkFirst, and BFET. Colleges demonstrating the greatest level of student need by effectively administering these programs receive greater proportions of Perkins Plan funding.

With respect to supporting equal access, the Opportunity Grant administered by SBCTC is noteworthy. Offered to low-income students (those with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level), the state's Opportunity Grant specifically supports individuals in high-wage, high-demand programs. Of students receiving Opportunity Grants, over 90% are typically enrolled in CTE programs and approximately 50% are students of color. Grant proposals require that colleges address skill gap shortages in a targeted industry, identify educational pathways linked to viable careers, demonstrate that completers will have job opportunities, and provide evidence of community partnerships. SBCTC approves only Opportunity Grant pathways that lead to minimum starting wages of $15/hour in King Country and $13/hour elsewhere in the state. In addition to providing funding for tuition, fees, and books, Opportunity Grant recipients are eligible for individualized tutoring, career advising, college success classes, emergency childcare, transportation, and an industry mentor through the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's Opportunity Partnership Program.

Washington's commitment to Guided Pathways is also intrinsically tied to inclusion and equitable access to education. SBCTC's Guided Pathways initiative is focused on helping more of

our students — especially low-income, first-generation students and students of color — earn credentials to prepare them for entry into higher-paying, high-demand fields with value in the labor market. A research-based approach to advising and instruction, Guided Pathways simplifies choices for students by grouping courses together to form clear pathways through college and into careers.

Likewise, I-BEST is a nationally recognized model for engaging and supporting underserved and special populations, such as adult and out-of-school learners and English language learners. I-BEST utilizes a contextualized team-teaching approach to deliver basic English, reading, and math content and job- and college-readiness skills simultaneously. Reaching almost 6,000 students across the state (46% of whom are students of color) through 146 programs, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) is particularly well-suited to ESL, ABE, and GED students, teen parents, and returning adults and provide a dedicated pathway to Professional-Technical careers. Each I-BEST program is evaluated through a robust approval process that ensures a local and economic need is met in each in demand industry. The Workforce Development department also ensures living wages will be earned upon completion. The Basic Education for Adults department reviews curriculum in order to stay in alignment with industry standards and academic rigor. Examples of I-BEST programs include: Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Allied Health Clinical Lab Assistant, Computer Network Technology, Viticulture, Composite Structures, Medical Reception, Facilities Maintenance Engineer, and Nurse Assistant.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(9)(B)

Describe the eligible agency's program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population;

By vigorously implementing Methods of Administration (MOA), all Washington students, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, have equal access to high-quality career and technical education programs. The state agencies' responsibilities under the MOA program are included in the Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, and Handicap in Vocational Education Programs (Appendix B of the Title VI regulation and the Section 504 regulation, and Appendix A of the Title IX regulation). These responsibilities include: conducting targeted compliance reviews of selected secondary and postsecondary schools that provide career and technical education; securing corrective action when civil rights violations are found; and reporting civil rights activities and findings to OCR.

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Under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 392-190-060, all school districts must designate at least one employee to be responsible for monitoring and coordinating the district's compliance with state nondiscrimination laws (chapters 28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW, and chapter 392-190 WAC). Federal nondiscrimination laws require each school district to designate an employee to coordinate compliance with Section 504 (34 C.F.R. §104.7), Title IX (34 C.F.R. §106.8), and Title II of the ADA (28 C.F.R. §35.107). The coordinator for state nondiscrimination laws may also serve as the Title IX and/or Section 504/ADA coordinator. Front office staff at all school buildings and the district office must be aware of the name and contact information of the compliance coordinator(s) so that they may inform students, parents, and others as needed. The compliance coordinators' contact information must also be published with the school district's nondiscrimination statement.

Each school district must submit an Equity Assurance Report on an annual basis. In this report, each school district evaluates its compliance with specific requirements under chapter 392-190 WAC. OSPI also regularly monitors and enforces school districts'/STECs' compliance with state and federal nondiscrimination requirements through program monitoring, discrimination complaint investigations, and agency-initiated compliance reviews.

POSTSECONDARY

At the foundation of SBCTC is a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The vision statement, "Leading with racial equity by working to dismantle racist policies and practices throughout our community and technical college system, and ensuring our students of color and other minoritized students reap the benefits that come with higher education: higher incomes, better health, and greater social and economic mobility that passes from generation-to-generation" serves as a framework for how we prioritize funding. One of the goals in the strategic plan is to "increase access and retention among populations who can benefit the most from college access. This includes young adults, working adults, low-income people, people of color, immigrants and single parents." Additionally, the implementation of Guided Pathways, through our community and technical colleges, creates more inclusive campuses by focusing on increasing the diversification of students that access and earn credentials. These efforts are supported by legislative investments in our college system's equity efforts with the passage of SB5227 requiring DEI training and assessments at institutions of higher education and SB5194 providing for equity and access in the community and technical colleges.

The commitment to fulfill the mission is evident with a section dedicated to improving equity and access in the Perkins Grant application and CLNA. Colleges requesting Perkins funds are required to provide information in relation to recruiting special populations in the application and CLNA including current projects, services, or initiatives, gaps and deficiencies, action plan and priorities, and evaluation of efficacy of strategies in recruiting. Prior to awarding funds, SBCTC reviews each college's past and current efforts and initiatives, assessment of their success

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at recruiting and retaining special populations, as well as their plan to narrow any gaps for special populations by analyzing their performance indicator data. Additionally, SBCTC provides technical assistance, specific to this area, during monitoring visits.

SBCTC has also adopted and disseminated strategies and research on equitable hiring practices through the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and Workforce Education Council (WEC) in an effort to curtail discrimination by diversifying college faculty and staff. The tool was developed by the Diversity and Equity in Hiring and Professional Development (DEHPD) work group, which was formed in 2014 in order to address the low numbers of faculty, administrators, and staff of color and other underrepresented, marginalized groups throughout the CTC system.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(9)(C)

Describe the eligible agency's program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—will be provided with programs designed to enable individuals who are members of special populations to meet or exceed State determined levels of performance described in section 113, and prepare special populations for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage, or in- demand industry sectors or occupations;

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LEAs will work to eliminate barriers by:

- Reducing the amount of course fees to ensure that all students have equal access to CTE Programs;

- Offering the Graduation, Reality and Dual Roles (GRADS) Program, which helps teen parents continue their education by providing child care and support;

- Ensuring Career Guidance Centers are open to all populations and offer events that underserved populations may have a difficult time attending otherwise;

- Offering course equivalencies, which allow students to earn graduation credit for a course that may better align with their individual needs and pathways;

- Offering CTE Dual Credit, which allows students to earn high school credit while earning college credit at the same time. CTE Dual Credit helps those students who may not have any other route to earn college credits;

- Annually reviewing enrollment data for courses and programs, including CTE, disaggregated by race, sex, English-learner status, and disability, to identify and address any substantial enrollment disproportionalities and ensure they are not the result of discrimination.

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POSTSECONDARY

As part of their Guided Pathways efforts in fields such as Business, Healthcare, Education, Social Behavior Science & Public Service, STEM, and Computer & Information Technology, colleges provide student success classes, intensive advising, support services, and early intervention to keep students on-track. Data, apps, and electronic tools help students, faculty, and advisors monitor progress, while technology integration, on-line course offerings, and modularized curricula provided increased access for career advancement and learning opportunities through short-term specialized training. Counseling and advising services for special populations are supported as well as integration of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) into CTE course offerings through the model for Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST). Supplemental instruction as well as applied math and writing courses support student success and completion. Funding is also expended for tutoring and interpretative services for student with disabilities.

Like Guided Pathways, I-BEST provides an accelerated and supportive college experience for special populations, and when coupled with High School Plus (HS+), has the potential to significantly impact the state's goal of having 70% of 25- to 44-year-olds attain a postsecondary credential. Challenging the traditional notion that students must move through a set sequence of basic education courses before they can start working on certificates and degrees, I- BEST places adult education students directly into college credit-bearing career pathways that lead to high demand, living wage jobs. The combined teaching method at the heart of I-BEST allows students to work on college-level studies much more quickly than in traditional models, and the required navigational services connects students to resources and guides them to completion. Co-enrollment in our High School Plus (HS+) and I-BEST programs enables students to work on a secondary and postsecondary credential at the same time. HS+ is a competency-based high school completion program that results in a Washington state high school diploma. It awards credit for prior learning, military, training, and work experience. Because it is competency-based, students can complete coursework through I-BEST and have that same coursework count toward the completion of a high school diploma through HS+, saving the student both time and money and accelerating Washington state toward its completion goals.

Other statewide programs related to special populations' preparation for high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand industry sectors include:

- **Worker Retraining**: The Worker Retraining program can help pay for training expenses at Washington state's community and technical colleges and selected licensed private schools for those who have lost their jobs due to economic changes and for those receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Community and technical colleges also receive Worker Retraining funding to improve programs that prepare people for work. Based on input from local employers, government, and community, these funds are used to update equipment, revise curriculum, develop work experience opportunities and hire staff to advise Worker Retraining students and coordinate Worker Retraining program.

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- **WorkFirst**: WorkFirst is Washington state's welfare reform program that helps people in low-income families find jobs, keep their jobs, find better jobs and become self-sufficient. WorkFirst helps participants gain skills necessary for better jobs, higher wages and further advancement. As this goal is achieved, savings from reduced caseloads have been reinvested in targeted supports to help participants be more employable and move up the wage ladder.

- **BFET**: The Basic Food, Employment and Training program (BFET), Washington's SNAP E&T, provides access and services to basic food assistance recipients in Washington state. Services include job search and job search training, education and skills training, and support services to Basic Food recipients not participating in the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

- **Achieving the Dream**: Adopted by 21 colleges, Achieving the Dream is a national initiative to help more community college students — particularly low-income students and students of color — succeed. The initiative works on multiple fronts — including efforts on campuses and in research, public engagement and public policy — and emphasizes the use of data to drive change. Strategies identified to help more students continue their studies and earn certificates and degrees include: Helping students better prepare for college-level work by focusing on precollege (remedial/developmental) education; engaging students in the classroom through new instructional techniques that include team learning and combined subjects to make learning more relevant to students' lives; and using student success courses to teach skills such as time management and effective study skills

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(9)(D)

Describe the eligible agency's program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—will be provided with appropriate accommodations;

SECONDARY

A school district/STEC cannot categorically deny admission to a student because the student needs English Language (EL) services or special education or related aids or services. A school district/STEC must provide all students an equal opportunity to meet any appropriate minimum eligibility criteria for admission. During the Program Review process, school districts/STECs must provide evidence of services provided to school districts/STECs, including CTE educator involvement in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 processes as well as demonstrate how they are providing language access for EL qualified students. In addition, districts/STECs may demonstrate the professional development teachers have received

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regarding differentiating instruction specific to language acquisition and development for EL students and other students who may need such supports.

Washington state tracks the involvement of students with an IEP in CTE courses and pathways, and has prioritized Professional Development (PD) and Technical Assistance (TA) in meaningful inclusion. This PD/TA is supported by the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) at Seattle University, who is providing support to school IEP teams around consideration of services, accommodations, and transition plans to increase access to CTE pathways for students who have expressed an interest.

POSTSECONDARY

In addition to critical state-wide initiatives, colleges leverage Perkins funding along with other state and federal sources to provide a variety of services and programs to members of special populations. Means by which colleges utilize Perkins funding to support special populations include disability support personnel and adaptive technologies, early alert teams, policy and content translation, bi-lingual course content delivery, multicultural student services, veteran transition and re-entry specialists/navigators, affinity groups and student clubs, outreach to community-based organizations, etc. In addition, many colleges have adopted and provide training on principles associated with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), Open Educational Resources (OER), directed self-placement, Achieving the Dream, and Safe Zone. Among the many community-based and social services organizations with which the colleges partner to provide additional support and resources are the Urban League, Treehouse, YMCA, Blue Mountain Action Council, Year-Up, Gear-Up, RISE, the Hispanic and Native American Chambers of Commerce, Latinos Unidos Northwest Association (LUNA), All Within My Hands Foundation, the NAACP, and the Achieving the Dream Network.

SBCTC also provides support for accommodations, adaptive technologies, OER, UDL, distance learning, and the like through the Educational Technology and Open Education department, which is committed to building a system of shared resources and practices using system-wide tools, shared courses and programs, and open courses. Guided by the Strategic Technology Plan, its mandate is to "mobilize technology to increase student success...and create a culture of resource sharing with the goal of making cost-effective, innovative lifelong education available to every student in the state, anytime, anywhere."

Finally, SBCTC's policy manual reads:

Community and technical colleges shall provide students with disabilities the appropriate core service(s) to ensure equal access to higher education. Reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities shall be provided for all aspects of college life, including nonacademic programs and services (see RCW 28B.10.910 through RCW 28B.10.918). The State Board supports the colleges to provide services and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities through an earmarked allocation.

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Washington State community and technical colleges shall provide appropriate, effective, and integrated access to technology for students, employees, and external community members. This policy applies to the procurement, development, and implementation of instructional, administrative, or communications technologies and content. Further, the policy applies to both current and emerging technologies, including both hardware and software, in use or being evaluated for purchase or adoption throughout the community and technical college system. The policy encompasses, but is not limited to, college websites, learning management tools, student information systems, training materials, instructional materials, and assessment tools.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(9)(E)

Describe the eligible agency's program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board as well as both OSPI and SBCTC are represented on the legislatively-directed, cross-agency state work group supporting the Governor's Career Connect Washington initiative. A movement that combines the efforts of all state agencies and external partners (including employer, community, labor, regional networks, and intermediaries), Career Connect Washington seeks to expand career-connected learning opportunities across all sectors. Including registered apprenticeships and other career-connected learning opportunities, this initiative provides opportunities for all Washingtonians to gain invaluable work experience and skills with an emphasis on providing equitable access to historically underserved individuals and members of special populations.

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Washington State Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Standards define and require Work-Based Learning as a component of all CTE programs. It is an essential element of the total educational system and provides technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in specific occupations and careers. It prepares students for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies in any career.

Strategies for Worksite Learning may apply to a wide range of students with special needs. Some students may have multiple disabilities and benefit from a variety of strategies. These need to be determined on an individual basis. Many of the strategies that are used in a school-based setting can be applied to the Worksite Learning situation as well.

It is important to provide opportunities that will enhance student success in the workplace. Some challenges can be addressed prior to initial placement while others will need to be addressed as the individuals are working/training at the worksite. Some of these considerations:

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- Allow for additional time and effort to match training requirements with student abilities.

- Provide for more onsite supervision and assistance when initially placing a student on a job site.

- Provide reasonable accommodation and strategy information to each business—this will enhance student success.

- Provide information to the employer about student health conditions, behavioral issues, and physical concerns.

- Provide transportation to and from the worksite or facilitate a community transportation plan that will allow for independence.

POSTSECONDARY

All colleges partner with business and industry leaders, agencies, companies, and labor organizations to provide work-based learning opportunities for students. Many colleges have specific personnel dedicated to identifying and promoting these and offer registered apprenticeships and formal arrangements with employers to provide credit-bearing internships, practicum, job shadowing, mentoring, and clinical experiences.

To identify and market internship and work-based learning experiences, many colleges offer internship fairs and a significant number employ Perkins-funded personnel dedicated to coordinating internships.

In 2023, there are just over 145 active apprenticeships (Washington State and Federally Registered) that partner with 18 of the 34 Community and Technical Colleges. The Washington State Registered Apprenticeship Program provides both on-the-job training that is employer sponsored and supervised by a journey-level craft or trade professional for minimum 2,000 hours/year, and related supplemental instruction (RSI) provided by training agent for minimum 144 hours/year that develop highly trained, knowledgeable, and skilled professionals. WA Labor & Industry registers qualified apprenticeship sponsors/employers who partner with a variety of training agents, including employer-sponsored schools, union-sponsored schools and Washington state's community and technical colleges (more information at RCW 49.04 and https://secure.lni.wa.gov/arts-public/#/program-search). Federally Registered Apprenticeships comprise of industry-driven career pathways where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable credential. Programs are approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship.

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PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(10)

Description of the procedure the eligible agency will adopt for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113, which, at a minimum shall include (a) a description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance under section 113(b); (B) an explanation of the State determined levels of performance; and (C) a description of how the State determined levels of performance set by the eligible agency align with the levels, goals, and objectives of other Federal and State laws.

Washington's 60-day public comment period for the performance indicators will be open on-line in late 2023/early 2024, prior to the plan's submission. This meets the requirement process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance.

The Workforce Board will post notification of the open comment period on its website: www.wtb.wa.gov and through its newsletter.

For both 3S1 and 1P1, the state is not able to gather placement data of CTE concentrators who, in the second quarter after exiting from secondary or postsecondary education, are in military service or are volunteers as described in section 5a of the Peace Corps Act. This is a FEDES issue and one that comes under the direction of the Department of Defense (DOD). Because Washington's plan has a focus on equity and access, it should be noted that the state recommends an expanded definition of "non-traditional" beyond gender, as defined by Perkins law. With the emphasis Perkins V places on closing performance gaps for sub-populations and special populations, it seems contrary to have a measure that is limited to only gender. SBCTC is working to implement a new gender option in data collection, allowing individuals to identify as gender X, male, or female. This is not an option when pulling or reporting data for federal programs. This will cause a disparity in our data collection.

SECONDARY

As the secondary system began the process of updating its performance indicators school districts/STECs across the state were included in the conversations. The indicators align with Washington's ESSA goals for graduation and extended graduate rates. The definition of a CTE concentrator will be, "a student earns at least two high school credits in a single cluster within their four-year cohort.

The secondary system's proposed targets for the next four years, including the corresponding methodology and reasoning for baseline and increases, may be found in appendix 1. (pg. 382)

See Appendix #1 for secondary performance indicators and proposed targets for the 2025-28 years, and corresponding methodology and reasoning.

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POSTSECONDARY

SBCTC collaborated with its system's data services and research staff in February 2023 to define terms found in the postsecondary performance measures definitions and how student data that is already being collected can be used to report performance results. SBCTC offered trainings related to data education and literacy: Perkins Data Dashboard and Perkins Data, Coding, and Award Formula.

In October 2023, SBCTC presented at the Workforce Education Council fall meeting to provide information about how SDPLs are created showing the most recent performance data. Attendees had an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Additionally, an email was sent, in November 2023, to all Perkins contacts, Workforce Education Council members, Workforce Education listserv, and the Vice Presidents of Instruction listserv asking for feedback about the proposed SDPLs.

See Appendix #1 for postsecondary performance indicators and proposed targets for the next four years, and corresponding methodology and reasoning.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122(d)(11)

A description of how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance, as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II), in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps.

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Through processing district, STEC, and skill center Perkins applications, reviewing local and statewide data, reviewing the CLNA, and the Perkins end-of-year reports, OSPI will closely monitor disparities or gaps in performance, as well as identified plans to make meaningful progress.

If a district/STEC/skill center fails to meet the state target by at least 90%, they will complete a Performance Improvement Plan, to address action plans related to the indicator. In the second year a district/STEC/skill center fails to meet a local target, they will review CLNA and student performance results to inform amendments to their application and plan, and will prioritize funding to address gaps. These will be prioritized for technical assistance outreach by OSPI. In the third year of a failed indicator, the state will require technical assistance interaction between OSPI and the district/STEC/skill center to support the area they have failed. This may be an in-person visit, webinar, professional development conference, or regular check-ins. In year 4 of a failed indicator, funding may be modified, withheld, or required to be used in a manner directed

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by OSPI. This will also be the basis to deny the approval or reapproval of one of more of the district/STEC's CTE programs, as permitted by RCW 28a.700.040.

OSPI is also committed to consistently reviewing data methodology and variances to make improvements to collection methods, data guidance, and follow up reporting to ensure accurate and valid data is used to inform local and statewide decision making. Improvements in methods or guidance, or a developed understanding from baseline data and concurrent year data may result in amendments to state targets for future plans.

POSTSECONDARY

SBCTC will review college-level data, the colleges' Local Comprehensive Needs Assessments, local applications, and annual performance snapshots to monitor progress on performance indicators. If a college fails to meet its negotiated target on one or more performance indicators, the college will be required to develop a performance plan related to that indicator(s) to address access/achievement disparities or gaps in the coming year. SBCTC will provide technical assistance as necessary. If a college fails to meet one or more performance indicators for three years in a row, the college will be required to reevaluate their current improvement strategies and Perkins allocation and percentages toward meeting SDPLs. In addition, SBCTC will increase support and monitoring, as deemed appropriate and necessary.

SBCTC provides a data dashboard displaying each college's performance on each indicator, that displays data disaggregated by student subgroup, special population, and CTE program, and is accessible to the colleges and the public. The public dashboard masks counts less than 10 to protect student's privacy and the protected dashboard is accessible only to authorized college staff. The dashboards are updated annually as enrollment and completion data from the previous year becomes available.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122 (d)(12)

Describe how the eligible agency will involve parents, academic and career and technical education teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local business (including small businesses), labor organizations, and representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, as appropriate, in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its career and technical education programs.

SECONDARY

School districts/STECs have identified new partnerships in light of the requirements of the CLNA. Prior state law required that advisory committees be made up of representatives of business, industry, and the local community. Additionally, representatives of labor and agriculture were specifically called out in state statute. While many school districts/STECs included CTE educators

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in the work of the advisory committee, many school districts/STECs have partnered to complete CLNA requirements. To eliminate duplication in requirements, many districts are expanding their advisory committees to include required stakeholders as described above.

POSTSECONDARY

Implementation of Perkins V has focused the colleges on their partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders that are reflective of the communities they serve. The new Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment requires the colleges to seek meaningful input from stakeholders to help inform the colleges' workforce education policies, practices, and program development. SBCTC has developed guidance to help the college ensure their stakeholders are well informed and prepared to provide thoughtful, reliable, and constructive feedback as part of a continuous improvement process.

Each college's workforce education program is required to have an advisory committee made up of members representing employers, employees, labor and, as appropriate, apprenticeship programs within the field for which the program prepares individuals. A more detailed description of professional/technical advisory committees can be found in section 122(d)(4)(B)(i). Colleges are also soliciting input from their Worker Retraining and Worker Retraining Financial Aid advisory committees. Representatives on these committees not only include business and labor representatives, but members representing workforce development councils, economic development councils, and agencies working with dislocated workers. The colleges are reaching out to members of special populations, advocates for individuals facing barriers to employment, tribal leaders in their communities, and students enrolled in CTE programs through in-person meetings, community forums, virtual meetings, and survey instruments.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122(d)(13)

The *State plan shall include assurances that the State will comply with federal fiscal and programmatic elements of the State plan.*

The Workforce Board will upload and sign electronically all required assurance forms into the Perkins portal website administered by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE).

PLAN CONTENT
Section 122(d)(14)

Describe opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing on the State plan.

SBCTC and OSPI CTE staff worked with respective individuals from the postsecondary and K- 12 systems for the plan submitted in 2020. These individuals provided feedback as the plan was

developed. They shared their colleagues' input, which was brought before the plan-writing team for discussion and modifications.

The plan was also posted on the Workforce Board website to request public comment. Notification of this posting was announced in the Board's newsletter. The public comment period for this plan was held in conjunction with the public hearings conducted under WIOA, as Perkins V was included in Washington's comprehensive state plan, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP).

The 2024-2028 Talent and Prosperity for All combined state plan will be made available for public comment starting in January 2024 on the website listed below. The deadline for feedback is in late March 2024. The notification of the posting will be announced once again in the Board's newsletter.

https://wtb.wa.gov/planning-programs/washington-state-workforce-plan/

Include a copy of the local application template that the eligible agency will require eligible recipients to submit pursuant to section 134(b) of Perkins V.

See Appendix #2 for secondary local application. Note that the included application is under review/revision and are subject to change.

Also see Appendix #2 for post-secondary local application.

Include a copy of the comprehensive local needs assessment template and/or guidelines that the eligible agency will require of eligible recipients to meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V. See Text Box 3 for the requirements of the comprehensive local needs assessment under section 134(c) of Perkins V.

The comprehensive local needs assessment and guidelines can be found in the 2020 Perkins V plan.

Provide the eligible agency's definition for "size, scope, and quality" that will be used to make funds available to eligible recipients pursuant to section 135(b) of Perkins V.

Washington state defines size, scope, and quality in the following way:

Size: Eligible recipients must demonstrate that enrollment in their programs sufficiently supports and justifies the operating costs associated with them. In addition, colleges, school districts, STECs, and skill centers applying for funds must demonstrate that:

1. An adequate number of qualified/certified instructors and support staff are associated

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with the programs to provide relevant instruction, quality student support, and appropriate course sequencing; and

2. The funding and resources available to the programs sufficiently supports their technology, equipment, facilities, and personnel needs and resources associated with outreach, recruitment, and program quality.

For secondary applicants only:

3. School districts/STECs that meet the criteria for size must only use federal Perkins funds to support CTE programs that offer a progressive sequence of courses, with at least two course options within the same program area.

Scope:

For postsecondary applicants:

Eligible recipients must offer a combination of SBCTC-approved, credit-bearing credentials, certificates, and degrees. Components of the approval process includes a demonstration of industry need and program sustainability, course and curriculum review, development of learning objectives, and an explanation of methods of delivery and administration, the details of which are available here.

For secondary applicants:

Eligible applicants must offer courses and programs that align with the CTE program standards, and are approved by OSPI. Requirements of the course and program approval system are available here. These components include approved course frameworks with integration of academic, industry, and leadership standards, extended learning, and work-based learning within all CTE courses. To maintain approval, state CTE programs must annually conduct program evaluations, to update the four-year plan each year. Evaluations must be completed by the advisory committee (as described in RCW.28A.150.500), and four-year plans must be approved by the local school board.

For all applicants:

Eligible recipients are expected to include the following elements in their program planning and implementation efforts:

1. Identify and communicate pathways to future education or employment;

2. Provide CTE-specific career and educational guidance and counseling;

3. Include multiple entry and exit points;

4. Incorporate rigorous, relevant, and contextualized academic content;

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5. Work in partnership to establish and communicate programs of study and dual-credit articulations to engage, recruit, and expand access to secondary students; providing them with increasingly specialized instruction leading to the attainment of postsecondary credentials of workplace value; and

6. Provide exposure to all aspects of industry and employers through work-based learning and/or training in environments that replicate the workplace by featuring industry-standard equipment or simulated exercises.

Quality: Eligible recipients are expected to include the following elements in their program implementation and review:

1. Meet or make meaningful progress towards achieving the performance targets set for the postsecondary or secondary indicators required of Perkins V;

2. Evaluate the degree to which underrepresented students – including special populations and those in non-traditional fields – are provided with equitable access and opportunities and develop strategies for decreasing barriers and addressing achievement gaps in order to enroll and graduate a diverse cross-section of students representative of the communities in which they live;

3. Implement a comprehensive and reliable method of reviewing their programs and assessing their efficacy in preparing students for employment and alignment with the needs of industry;

4. Engage a diverse range of stakeholders in developing, evaluating, and improving their programs with an emphasis on labor market data and state or regional workforce priorities;

5. Ensure that all programs have active, well-functioning, and representative advisory committees consistent with the requirements of Perkins V and state law;

6. Demonstrate all CTE educators possess appropriate credentials and provide adequate support for faculty and staff professional development and return-to-industry opportunities to ensure that instruction and student services are current, relevant, equitable, and comprehensive;

7. Maintain in up-to-date and industry-standard equipment, technology, learning materials, and methods of delivery;

8. Programs offered consider labor market data and must align with in-demand occupations, as defined in the Perkins V plan; and

For secondary applicants:

1. Programs must be comprised of a sequenced progression of multiple courses that are technically intensive and rigorous and lead to credentials of value for employment, state

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or nationally approved apprenticeship programs or postsecondary education/ advanced training in a related field;

2. Programs must offer access to high quality extended learning opportunities associated with each CTE course offered, under the direction of a certified CTE instructor. Extended learning is demonstrated at the highest level through state-approved Career and Technical Student Organizations; and

3. Secondary CTE educators should possess an initial or continuing CTE certificate, including the V-code alignment with CIP code, and should be supported in pursuing professional development that allows for renewal of certificates. Educators placed on conditional certificates should be supported to transition to initial or continuing certification.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 131 (a)(3)

Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

OSPI administers basic Perkins allocations to school districts/STECs that qualify, with a primary decision point being that approved state CTE programs are offered. At this time, there are no secondary charter schools that offer state approved CTE programs. If additional eligible sub-recipients are established, we would include the relevant data to determine new for all qualifying entities at the beginning of next allocation year. We would apply ratios using the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRLP) data to arrive at their federal census counts. This adjustment has not been needed in recent years, but would be an annual consideration based upon any new entities becoming eligible to receive federal Perkins funds.

Additional adjustments are necessary to provide funding to the state's Skill Centers who act as regional career and technical schools. We will use FRLP percentages and enrollment data that are submitted by school districts which are sending students to the Skill Centers.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 131 (g)

(The Secretary shall collect information from eligible agencies regarding the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for CTE programs and programs of study under subsections a,b,c,d, and e and how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies,

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area career and technical education schools, and educational service agencies, within the state in accordance with this section.)

For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, areas career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the State.

The allocation model uses the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) on the Census website. The secondary distribution will be based on:

- 70 percent – the number of 5- to 17-year-olds who reside in the school district from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget); and

- 30 percent – the number of 5- to 17-year-olds who reside in the school district.

Adjustments to this formula only occur in order to drive the initial allocations of tribal compact schools that offer skill centers programs. After initial allocations are determined, school districts/STECs that do not serve high school students are not eligible for funding. Skill Center allocations are determined by considering the FTE as reported from each sending district. The initial allocations are redistributed to the school districts/STECs that serve 9th grade students. Allocations based upon census data are not available for STECs, extra steps are taken to proportionally distribute population data between the STEC and the district that they're physically located at.

FY 24 Secondary Allocations

District/STEC/Skill Center	Allocation
Aberdeen School District	$56,328
Adna School District	$5,644
Almira School District	$821
Anacortes School District	$20,590
Arlington School District	$44,700
Asotin-Anatone School District	$5,785
Auburn School District	$237,744
Bainbridge School District	$22,676
Battle Ground School District	$111,628
Bellevue School District	$150,751
Bellingham School District	$151,056
Benge School District	$116
Bethel School District	$196,632
Bethel School District (Skill Center)	$51,338

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Bickleton School District	$1,494
Blaine School District	$32,452
Bremerton School District	$61,837
Bremerton School District (Skill Center)	$49,933
Brewster School District	$15,196
Bridgeport School District	$15,592
Burlington Edison School District	$38,245
Camas School District	$39,615
Cape Flattery School District	$10,252
Cascade School District	$15,929
Cashmere School District	$16,224
Castle Rock School District	$17,925
Central Kitsap School District	$85,115
Central Valley School District	$138,570
Centralia School District	$61,350
Chehalis School District	$31,415
Cheney School District	$70,357
Chewelah School District	$22,766
Chief Leschi Tribal Compact	$5,975
Chimacum School District	$13,121
Clarkston School District	$46,953
Cle Elum-Roslyn School District	$11,650
Clover Park School District	$167,352
Colfax School District	$5,979
College Place School District	$21,345
Colton School District	$2,069
Columbia (Stev) School District	$3,954
Columbia (Walla) School District	$7,648
Colville School District	$28,591
Colville School District (Skill Center)	$2,747
Concrete School District	$10,784
Coulee/Hartline School District	$2,890
Coupeville School District	$11,484
Crescent School District	$4,067
Creston School District	$1,591
Curlew School District	$3,538
Cusick School District	$5,085
Darrington School District	$5,760
Davenport School District	$6,175
Dayton School District	$7,468
Deer Park School District	$29,273
East Valley (Spokane) School District	$54,842
East Valley (Yakima) School District	$32,737
Eastmont School District	$58,192

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Easton School District	$1,242
Eatonville School District	$18,134
Edmonds School District	$192,004
Ellensburg School District	$39,596
Elma School District	$29,324
Endicott School District	$1,453
Enumclaw School District	$37,186
Ephrata School District	$28,827
Everett School District	$183,537
Evergreen (Clark) School District	$253,138
Evergreen (Clark) School District (Skill Center)	$86,851
Federal Way School District	$315,317
Ferndale School District	$78,056
Fife School District	$38,947
Finley School District	$9,622
Franklin Pierce School District	$104,749
Freeman School District	$6,745
Garfield School District	$1,910
Glenwood School District	$1,244
Goldendale School District	$20,786
Grand Coulee Dam School District	$12,623
Grandview School District	$49,653
Granger School District	$23,786
Granite Falls School District	$21,113
Harrington School District	$1,621
Highland School District	$12,784
Highline School District	$224,073
Highline School District (Skill Center)	$98,841
Hockinson School District	$12,291
Hoquiam School District	$31,778
Inchelium School District	$3,459
Issaquah School District	$128,425
Kahlotus School District	$1,109
Kalama School District	$12,073
Kelso School District	$73,414
Kennewick School District	$193,578
Kennwick School District (Skill Center)	$126,029
Kent School District	$388,526
Kettle Falls School District	$15,687
Kiona Benton School District	$17,380
Kittitas School District	$5,991
Klickitat School District	$1,045
La Conner School District	$8,016
Lacenter School District	$10,510

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Lacrosse Joint School District	$862
Lake Chelan School District	$16,240
Lake Stevens School District	$60,067
Lake Washington School District	$204,597
Lake Washington School District (Skill Center)	$54,383
Lakewood School District	$24,167
Liberty School District	$6,499
Lind School District	$5,303
Longview School District	$100,513
Lopez School District	$4,646
Lummi Tribal Compact	$7,847
Lyle School District	$5,839
Lynden School District	$40,597
Mabton School District	$13,219
Mansfield School District	$2,049
Manson School District	$8,805
Mary M Knight School District	$2,728
Mary Walker School District	$13,144
Marysville School District	$113,749
Mead School District	$84,571
Medical Lake School District	$14,849
Mercer Island School District	$27,122
Meridian School District	$16,096
Methow Valley School District	$9,311
Monroe School District	$41,756
Montesano School District	$14,420
Morton School District	$5,372
Moses Lake School District	$83,279
Moses Lake School District (Skill Center)	$46,229
Mossyrock School District	$8,941
Mount Adams School District	$19,398
Mount Baker School District	$35,064
Mt Vernon School District	$76,063
Mt Vernon School District (Skill Center)	$51,074
Muckleshoot Tribal Compact	$7,626
Mukilteo School District	$153,560
Mukilteo School District (Skill Center)	$88,623
Naches Valley School District	$15,617
Napavine School District	$8,448
Naselle Grays River School District	$4,222
Newport School District	$24,558
Nine Mile Falls School District	$13,396
Nooksack Valley School District	$26,326
North Beach School District	$12,804

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North Franklin School District	$23,462
North Kitsap School District	$57,680
North Mason School District	$37,339
North River School District	$694
North Thurston School District	$154,534
Northport School District	$4,905
Northshore School District	$137,151
Oak Harbor School District	$55,448
Oakesdale School District	$1,080
Oakville School District	$5,255
Ocean Beach School District	$17,123
Ocosta School District	$14,707
Odessa School District	$3,574
Okanogan School District	$14,072
Olympia School District	$105,611
Omak School District	$32,277
Onalaska School District	$12,232
Orcas School District	$7,428
Oroville School District	$15,894
Orting School District	$21,541
Othello School District	$66,585
Palouse School District	$2,258
Pasco School District	$215,814
Pateros School District	$3,284
Pe Ell School District	$3,205
Peninsula School District	$71,016
Pomeroy School District	$5,008
Port Angeles School District	$56,711
Port Townsend School District	$16,182
Prescott School District	$701
Prosser School District	$29,365
Pullman School District	$33,052
Puyallup School District	$195,603
Quilcene School District	$2,914
Quileute Tribal School District	$1,200
Quillayute Valley School District	$19,075
Quinault School District	$3,938
Quincy School District	$36,984
Rainier School District	$12,999
Raymond School District	$8,764
Reardan School District	$10,514
Renton School District	$211,545
Republic School District	$7,197
Richland School District	$127,951

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Ridgefield School District	$24,595
Ritzville School District	$4,937
Riverside School District	$20,635
Riverview School District	$24,855
Rochester School District	$23,418
Rosalia School District	$3,246
Royal School District	$16,722
San Juan School District	$10,952
Seattle School District	$623,363
Seattle School District (Skill Center)	$39,264
Sedro Woolley School District	$46,653
Selah School District	$40,291
Selkirk School District	$6,060
Sequim School District	$42,742
Shelton School District	$98,395
Shoreline School District	$85,433
Skykomish School District	$590
Snohomish School District	$57,719
Snoqualmie Valley School District	$49,576
Soap Lake School District	$7,762
South Bend School District	$6,345
South Kitsap School District	$97,113
South Whidbey School District	$14,363
Spokane School District	$370,993
Spokane School District (Skill Center)	$106,853
Sprague School District	$2,008
St John School District	$2,117
Stanwood School District	$43,424
Starbuck School District	$379
Stehekin School District	$179
Steilacoom Hist. School District	$26,895
Stevenson-Carson School District	$11,765
Sultan School District	$22,700
Sumner School District	$73,838
Sunnyside School District	$91,465
Suquamish Tribal Compact	$1,455
Tacoma School District	$371,012
Taholah School District	$5,957
Tahoma School District	$56,373
Tekoa School District	$2,286
Tenino School District	$16,835
Thorp School District	$2,597
Toledo School District	$8,684
Tonasket School District	$21,867

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Toppenish School District	$56,926
Touchet School District	$1,332
Toutle Lake School District	$8,053
Trout Lake School District	$3,718
Tukwila School District	$37,335
Tumwater School District	$51,793
Tumwater School District (Skill Center)	$75,030
University Place School District	$46,646
Vancouver School District	$264,131
Vashon Island School District	$14,363
Wa He Lut Tribal Tribal Compact	$2,510
Wahkiakum School District	$7,443
Wahluke School District	$20,170
Waitsburg School District	$3,127
Walla Walla School District	$57,708
Wapato School District	$62,284
Warden School District	$10,129
Washougal School District	$28,912
Washtucna School District	$800
Waterville School District	$5,498
Wellpinit School District	$5,526
Wenatchee School District	$82,468
Wenatchee School District (Skill Center)	$29,848
West Valley (Spokane) School District	$30,397
West Valley (Yakima) School District	$62,247
White Pass School District	$8,624
White River School District	$34,857
White Salmon School District	$14,618
Wilbur School District	$4,235
Willapa Valley School District	$4,188
Wilson Creek School District	$819
Winlock School District	$9,998
Wishkah Valley School District	$1,841
Wishram School District	$1,122
Woodland School District	$21,269
Yakima School District	$252,281
Yakima School District (Skill Center)	$99,964
Yelm School District	$64,950
Zillah School District	$12,958

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PLAN CONTENT
Section 132 (a)

For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the State.

Washington state proposes to distribute postsecondary Perkins basic grant as follows: ninety percent (90%) of funding will be distributed using a revised "Pell Plus" formula, nine percent (9%) will be distributed to colleges serving rural communities, and one percent (1%) will be distributed to colleges that have high CTE enrollments. The formula will use unduplicated enrollment data, analyzed annually from the two years preceding the current fiscal year with no caps. (For example, FY21 awards will be based on FY19 enrollment data.) All students coded with a workforce intent will be included in the data and the headcount will be determined for each postsecondary institution. Those institutions with a headcount that will result in an award of $50,000 or more will be allocated funds. The funds will then be distributed based on the percent of the total headcount. Currently, only one community college in Washington will not qualify for basic grant funding. The first ninety percent (90%) of funds to be distributed to the colleges will be based on the revised "Pell Plus" formula using enrollment and financial aid data. It is the intent of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to identify all students participating in CTE programs and receiving need-based financial assistance to determine equitable distribution of Perkins Basic Grant funds to the colleges. The revised "Pell Plus" formula is described in Section 131(a)(3).

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will utilize the ten percent (10%) reserve option from the basic grant funds to assist colleges identified as rural or with a high number or high percent of CTE students.

Nine percent (9%) of the funding will be distributed to colleges serving rural communities. Rural colleges are determined by using county-level data, based on population density, from the [Office of Financial Management | Population density and land area criteria used for rural area assistance and other programs | Office of Financial Management (wa.gov).](#) The final one percent (1%) of funding will be distributed to colleges that have fifty percent (50%) or more of their student population enrolled in CTE programs. The percentage will be calculated from the number of students with a workforce intent code, divided by the college's annual student headcount.

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SBCTC – FY24 Perkins Grants
(includes Basic, Reserve & Carryforward)

College	Perkins Basic Grant Award
Bates Technical College	587,451
Bellevue College	$303,198
Bellingham Technical College	$409,565
Big Bend Community College	$284,889
Centralia College	$238,861
Clark College	$468,365
Clover Park Technical College	$667,087
Columbia Basin College	$598,665
Edmonds Community College	$433,551
Everett Community College	$481,213
Grays Harbor College	$239,365
Green River College	$559,309
Highline College	$399,671
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	$407,499
Lower Columbia College	$277,477
North Seattle College	$279,655
Olympic College	$387,174
Peninsula College	$233,116
Pierce College District	$405,413
Renton Technical College	$524,502
Seattle Central College	$424,363
Shoreline Community College	$360,622
Skagit Valley College	$540,076
South Puget Sound Community College	$334,782
South Seattle College	$174,063
Spokane District Office	$1,499,815
Tacoma Community College	$578,259
Walla Walla Community College	$636,570
Wenatchee Valley College	$242,173
Whatcom Community College	$235,438
Yakima Valley College	$549,258

If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)—

a. *include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and*

b. *describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget*

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and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

Agency Response:

Not applicable at this time.

If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)—

   a. *include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and*

   b. *describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V) Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).*

Agency Response:

Washington state adjusted the "Pell Plus" formula to be inclusive of all CTE student enrollees who are receiving federal or state need-based financial aid. The previous "Pell Plus" formula included only three of the six need-based financial aid programs currently available to economically disadvantaged students. Enrollment data will capture an unduplicated count of students with a workforce intent who are Pell/BIA, Worker Retraining, Opportunity Grant, Washington College Grant, and WorkFirst or BFET recipients.

The state's previous "Pell Plus" formula was approved by OVAE for use beginning with Perkins III and continued under Perkins IV. Pell/BIA, Worker Retraining, and/or welfare and former welfare recipients who were enrolled in CTE programs were included in the previous "Pell Plus" formula.

If the eligible agency will award reserve funds to eligible recipients under section 112(c) of Perkins V, describe the process and criteria for awarding those funds.

Agency Response:

SECONDARY

OSPI will continue to strategically invest reserve funds to incentivize progress in priority areas, as represented in the state's leadership investment priorities. Reserve funds will be distributed to local programs for qualifying sub-recipients. Reserve funds may be distributed to

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districts/STECs/skill centers that qualify by offering programs in rural areas, programs with high percentages or high numbers of CTE students, or areas with gaps in performance between groups of students. These funds will be spent in alignment with the Perkins requirements to foster innovation and support programs of study that are aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations or industries. Eligible recipients will meet the criteria above, and will have completed an approved Perkins application.

Reserve funds are distributed through grants are administered separate grant applications. The selection criteria are described within the application, and alignment of Perkins Reserve priority areas are described within the application. This process will continue to be used to award reserve funding.

POSTSECONDARY

Ten percent (10%) of the postsecondary Perkins Basic Grant is distributed using a formula to rural colleges and colleges that have a high percentage of CTE participants. Rural colleges receive nine percent (9%) of the reserve funds and are defined as those colleges that include counties with population densities of less than 100 persons per square mile within their service district boundaries. Population density determinations are based on data from the Washington State Office of Financial Management. Counties are prorated to reflect the portions of the counties that meet the rural definition. Colleges with a high percentage of CTE participants receive one percent (1%) of the reserve funds and are those colleges that have fifty percent (50%) or more of their student populations enrolled in CTE programs. The percentage is calculated from the number of students with a workforce education intent code, divided by the college's annual student headcount.

PLAN CONTENT
Section 211 (b)(1)(D)

Provide the State's fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, that will establish the baseline for the Secretary's annual determination on whether the State has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, for the preceding fiscal year.

Agency Response:

The state will continue with the current baseline:

Aggregate non-federal (state money) outlays into the career and technical education system in PY22 totaled $783,762,040 in Total Basic Grant to States, this includes $628,220,614 Local Uses of Funds, $155,359,028 in Leadership Funds and $182,398 for state administration into the secondary system. For the postsecondary system $2275,338,264.00 in Total Basic Grant to States,

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this includes $274,909,648.00 Local Uses of Funds and $428,616.00 in state administration representing an aggregate expenditure level for the state of $1,059,100,304.

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D. APPENDICES

1. <u>Appendix #1 – Secondary and Postsecondary Performance Indicators</u>

Below are the secondary system's performance indicators and proposed targets for the next four years, and corresponding methodology and reasoning. Followed by the postsecondary system's performance indicators and proposed targets for the next four years, along with corresponding methodology and reasoning.

SECONDARY

The State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs), OSPI used the last two years of available Concentrator data to determine the upcoming state targets beginning 2025 through 2028. The proposed targets aligned Washington's proposed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) targets for the Four-Year Graduation Rate (1S1) and the Extended Graduation Rate (1S2). All other targets were proposed using the last two years of available data with an increase each year.

OSPI presented the proposed state targets at the Washington Association of Career and Technical Administrators (WACTA) area leadership meeting on December 7. The leadership reviewed the proposed targets and has disseminated the documents to their members and asked for feedback by December 11.

OSPI Proposed Secondary Indicators - 2025-2028

Proposed Indicators Methodology: The proposed targets aligned Washington's proposed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) targets for the Four-Year Graduation Rate (1S1) and the Extended Graduation Rate (1S2). All other targets were proposed using the last two years of available data with an increase each year.

CTE Concentrator Definition: A CTE Concentrator will be any student who earns two credits in a single career cluster within their four-year cohort.

CTE Participant Definition: A CTE participant will be any student that earns a high school credit in a CTE course in a single school year as reported annually.

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
1S1: Four-Year Graduation Rate *Defined as: The percentage of CTE concentrators who graduate high school as measured by the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).*	84.7%	85.7%	86.8%	87.9%

Numerator: CTE concentrators who graduate in the 4-year adjusted cohort.
Denominator: All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort.

Methodology/Background:...

If a student withdraws at any point in their high school career, they will still contribute to the denominator. If a student achieves concentrator status at any time during high school. the student will be identified as a concentrator for the 1S1 indicator. Wherever the student is last *served* is where the student will show up in data, whether they achieved concentrator status at that location or not. This is consistent with OSPI's adjusted cohort methodology used for the official federal graduation rate calculation.
....

Washington's primary goal is for students to graduate from high school. ready for college. career, and life. Consistent with the goals and indicators described in the state's ESSA plan, OSPI proposes establishing a 90 percent minimum graduation rate for all students. In review of data from recent years. no student group was performing higher than the 90 percent threshold, and some of the most underserved student groups will need to make substantial annual gains to meet the 10-year goal identified in the ESSA plan. OSPI proposes to mimic the state targets for all-students for the 1S1 indicator.

OSPI Proposed Secondary Indicators- 2025-2028

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
1S2: Extended Graduation Rate *Defined as: The percentage of <u>CTE concentrators</u> who graduate high school as measured by extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate defined in such section 8101.*	86.7%	87.6'%	88.4%	89.3%

Numerator: CTE concentrators who graduate in the five-year adjusted cohort.
Denominator: All CTE concentrators in the five-year adjusted cohort.

Methodology/Background:

If a student withdraws at any point in their high school career, they will still contribute to the denominator. If a student achieves concentrator status at any time during high school they will be identified as **a** concentrator for the 1S2 indicator. Wherever the student is last served is where the student will show up in data. whether they achieved concentrator status at that location **or** not. This is consistent with OSPI's adjusted cohort methodology used for the official federal graduation rate calculation.

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
2S1: Academic Proficiency in Reading/Language Ans *Defined as: CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging State academic standards adopted by the State under section1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as measured by the academic assessments in reading/language arts as described in section 1111(b}(2) of such Act.*	61.6%	62.1%	62..6%	63.1%

Numerator: Any CTE concentrators in the denominator who achieved proficiency on the ELA academic assessment, as defined in the Washington ESSA State Plan.
Denominator: All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort who were expected to take the ELA academic assessment.

Methodology/Background:

This indicator will represent proficiency based on a cohort of students rather than a snapshot in time. Students will be reported only once, in their expected on- time graduation year regardless of when they took their ELA academic assessment. If a student becomes a concentrator in their 5th, 6th or 7th year, they will not be reflected in this measure. If a student drops out prior to their expected graduation year, they will still be reflected in this measure.

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OSPI Proposed Secondary Indicators - 2025-2028

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
2S2: Academic Proficiency in Mathematics *Defined as: <u>CTE concentrator</u> proficiency in the challenging State academic standards adopted by the State under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as measured by the academic assessments in mathematics as described in section 1111(b)(2) of such Act.*	29.6%	30.1%	30.6%	31.1%
Numerator: Any CTE concentrators in the denominator who achieved proficiency on the mathematics academic assessment, as defined in the Washington ESSA State Plan. **Denominator:** All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort, who were expected to take the mathematics academic assessment.				
Methodology/Background: This indicator will represent the proficiency based on a cohort of students rather than a snapshot in time. Students will be reported only once, in their expected on-time graduation year regardless of when they took their math academic assessment. If a student becomes a concentrator in their 5th, 6'". or 7'" year, they will not be reflected in this measure. If a student drops out prior to their expected graduation year, they will still be reflected in this measure. For 2S1 and 2S2: The academic indicators in Washington's ESSA plan are related to proficiency on the statewide assessment for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Washington uses the Smarter Balanced Assessment System, which is aligned to the Washington K-12 Learning Standards. Students currently take the statewide assessment for ELA and Mathematics in the 10th grade. The state ESSA plan articulates targets for all students, at all grade levels. Considering the definition of CTE concentrator, high school students in grades 9-12 will contribute to the concentrator definition.				

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
2S3: Academic Proficiency in Science *Defined as: <u>CTE concentrator</u> proficiency in the challenging State academic standards measured by the academic assessments in science.*	45.5%	46%	46.5%	47%
Numerator: Any CTE concentrators in the denominator who achieved proficiency on the science academic assessment **Denominator:** All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort, who were expected to take the science academic assessment.				

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Methodology/Background:

This indicator will represent the proficiency based on a cohort of students rather than a snapshot in time. Students will be reported only once, in their expected on-time graduation year regardless of when they took their science academic assessment. If a student becomes a concentrator in their 5th, 6th. or 7th year, they will not be reflected in this measure. If a student drops out prior to their expected graduation year, they will still be reflected in this measure.

There is no current academic indicator or metric in the ESSA plan for academic proficiency in science. The Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) is aligned with the Washington State 2013 K-12 Science Learning Standards, which are the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students are assessed through the WCAS in the 11th grade.

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OSPI Proposed Secondary Indicators - 2025-2028

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
3S1: Postsecondary Placement *Defined as: The percentage of <u>CTE concentrators</u> who, in the second quarter after exiting from secondary education, are in postsecondary education or advanced training*, military service or a service program that receives assistance under title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990(42 U.S.C 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504(a)), or are employed.* **Washington does not collect data on "advance training".*	77.1%	77.6%	78.1%	78.6%

Numerator: Those students in the denominator who are placed in the second quarter after being reported in the denominator of 1S1. This includes postsecondary education, advanced training, military service, or employment.
Denominator: The number of CTE concentrators that exited (graduated or dropped out) from secondary education within the four-year adjusted cohort of the prior reporting year.

Methodology/Background
This data is driven by performance 2 quarters after the student is expected to leave the system as part of the four-year adjusted graduation cohort. OSPI relies on the Education Research & Data Center (ERDC) to provide the data on post-high school activities (post-secondary education, military service or employment). OSPI will provide ERDC with the cohort of students that make up the denominator so that they can create the numerator. Students who continue enrollment beyond four years will not be included in this measure.

3S1 data is available from ERDC the following year, for instance 2023 cohort data will be available in Fall 2024.

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OSPI Proposed Secondary Indicators - 2025-2028

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
4S1: Non-traditional Program Enrollment *Defined as: The percentage of CTE concentrators in career and technical education programs and programs of study that lead to non-traditional fields.*	19.8%	20.3%	20.8%	21.3%

Numerator: Those students in the denominator who at any time during their secondary enrollment, but prior to their on-time four-year expected graduation year, was enrolled in a CTE course that was designated as preparing students for non-traditional fields based upon the indicator on the CIP code chart, and the student's gender.

Denominator: All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort. Students that identify as "Gender X" are not permitted to be reported at the federal level. Due to this issue, students that identify as "gender X" will not be represented in the gender categories reported for this indicator but gender X will be represented in all other reporting groups for this indicator.

Methodology/Background:

Students will be reported only reported once, in their expected on-time graduation year. If a student becomes a concentrator. or enrolls in a non-trad program only in their 5th· 6th· or 7th year, they will not be reflected in this measure. If a student drops out prior to their expected graduation year, they will still be reflected in this indicator.

Washington understands the constraints associated with the federal definition of non-traditional being restricted to gender. This is problematic, as available data shows disproportional employment among many special populations, not solely restricted to gender. Additionally, Washington's secondary data system provides for students to be represented a "'gender X". This will potentially impact the validity of data reported at the local and state level for this indicator. OSPI reviewed the previous state targets and state performance metrics for non-traditional participation and non-traditional completion to inform proposed targets.

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
5S1: Program Quality-Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential *Defined as: The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential.*	36.9%	37.4%	37.9%	38.4%

Numerator: Of students in the denominator, those that have attained an industry recognized credential through CTE coursework, as reported in the state data system.

Denominator: All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort.

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OSPI Proposed Secondary Indicators - 2025-2028

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
5S2: Program Quality - Attained Postsecondary Credits *Defined as: The percentage of <u>CTE concentrators</u> graduating from high school having attained postsecondary credits in the relevant career and technical education program or program of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment or another credit transfer agreement.*	96.8%	97.3%	97.8%	98.3%
Numerator: Of students in the denominator, students that completed courses that provided dual credit. **Denominator:** All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort who graduated.				

Indicator/Definition from Perkins	2025	2026	2027	2028
5S3: Program Quality - Participated in Work-Based Learning *Defined as: The percentage of <u>CTE concentrators</u> graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning.*	43.3%	43.8%	44.3%	44.8%
Numerator: Of students in the denominator, CTE concentrators that participated in work-based learning. **Denominator:** All CTE concentrators in the four-year adjusted cohort who graduated.				
Methodology/Background: As work-based learning is a required component of CTE programs in Washington, work-based learning was defined as guest speakers, structured field trips, school-based enterprises. job shadows, cooperative and instructional worksite learning, paid and unpaid internships, all Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects, appropriate career and leadership development activities through CTSOs. and employment.				

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POSTSECONDARY

To determine the next four years of postsecondary State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs), SBCTC used the actual percentage of performance indicators for 1P1, 2P2, and 3P1 by averaging the last two years of data as a starting point.

SBCTC initially introduced information about Perkins State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs)/State Targets during the fall Workforce Education Council meeting in October 2023. Additionally, SBCTC emailed colleges, on November 14, 2023, asking for feedback about the proposed state targets. The email was sent to all Perkins contacts, Workforce Education Council members, and the workforce education listserv. Any college that did not respond within ten days was sent a follow-up email.

The process to establish minimum targets is fairly prescriptive. What is more difficult to propose or articulate is meaningful progress and improvement. We have taken into consideration the challenges our colleges have faced in staffing turnover, budget reductions, investing in new technology and state of the art equipment, and the pandemics impact on student enrollment and outcomes. We believe the proposed targets will drive deeper engagement in new investments and programming at the college level, utilizing Perkins funding differently to attain these goals.

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Postsecondary Perkins V Performance Indicators

1P1: Post College	Proposed Indicator PY2024-25	Proposed Indicator PY2025-26	Proposed Indicator PY2026-27	Proposed Indicator PY2027-28
The percentage of CTE concentrators who, during the second quarter after program completion, remain enrolled in postsecondary education, are in advanced training, military service, or a service program that receives assistance under title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 20 2504(a)), or are placed or retained in employment.	40	40.5	41	41.5

Methodology/Background:
For purposes of reporting 1P1 performance, SBGTC will include GTE completers who participated in registered apprenticeships, enrolled in postsecondary baccalaureate degree programs within the community and technical colleges system, those that enroll in postsecondary programs outside Washington's two-year college system, and those who were employed the second quarter following the completion year.

Like most states, Washington is unable to report the number of program completers who transitioned to military service, a service program that receives assistance under Title 1 of the National and Community Service Act, or who transitioned to the Peace Corps. Additionally, the state is not able to gather placement data of GTE concentrators who in the second quarter after exiting from postsecondary education, are in military service or are volunteers as described in section 5a of the Peace Corps Act. This is a FEDES issue and one that comes under the direction of the Department of Defense (DOD).

Denominator:
GTE Concentrator Cohort
Numerator:
Cohort that has received a postsecondary credential and is an exiter as well as one of the following: in the L&I apprenticeship completers or active files, enrolled in Bachelor Program in our CTC system, found in post-secondary (National Student Clearinghouse) outside of our CTC system, or employed.

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2P1: Degree Completion	Proposed Indicator PY2024-25	Proposed Indicator PY2025-26	Proposed Indicator PY2026-27	Proposed Indicator PY2027-28
The percentage of CTE concentrators who receive a recognized postsecondary credential during participation in or within **1** year of program completion.	**50.5**	**51**	**51.5**	**52**

Methodology/Background:
SBCTC will include all GTE concentrators who completed a CTE credential and who were no longer enrolled at a community or technical college two quarters after their last credential award.

Denominator:
CTE Concentrator Cohort
Numerator:
Earned a postsecondary credential in the current or following academic year.

3P1: Degree Completion	Proposed Indicator PY2024-25	Proposed Indicator PY2025-26	Proposed Indicator PY2026-27	Proposed Indicator PY2027-28
The percentage of CTE concentrators in career and technical education programs and programs of study that lead to non-traditional fields.	**21**	**21.5**	**22**	**22.5**

Methodology/Background:
For purposes of reporting 3P1 performance, SBGTC will include CTE concentrators from underrepresented gender groups (25% or less of the gender represented in the field) who were enrolled in CTE programs that lead to employment in non-traditional fields.

Denominator:
CTE Concentrator Cohort enrolled in programs that lead to employment in non-traditional fields.
Numerator:
Students who are in a nontraditional program and are not of the dominate gender are included in the numerator.

Definitions
CTE Concentrator: At the postsecondary level, a student is an eligible recipient who has:
(i) earned at least 12 credits within a career and technical education program or program of study; or
(ii) completed such a program if the program encompasses fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent in total.
Exiter: Not enrolled in the CTC system the following year excluding enrollments in bachelorette programs.

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2. Appendix #2 – Secondary and Postsecondary Local Applications

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Form Name - FP 215 - CTE: Perkins V - District/STEC SAS and Assurances

Is Form Validated?	Last Modified By	Last Modified Date

Overview and SAS

Organization and Pre-Application Information

Organization Name	Pre-Application ID	Pre-Application Title

Last Submitted Date

Eligible Sub Grantees

School districts and State-Tribal Education Compacts (STEC) operating Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses during the 2023–24 school year are eligible for this grant.

Substantially Approved Status (SAS)

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Public Law 115-224) was signed into law on July 31, 2018, and reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. It is important to note that the results from each eligible recipient's 2022-23 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) will dictate the types of programs and activities that agencies can implement with Perkins V funds during the 2023-24 program year and in subsequent program years.

Federal regulations (34 CFR 76.708) require that federal formula grant funds may not be obligated (incur costs) until the latter of the following two dates: (1) July 1 or (2) the date the applicant submits its application to the State in substantially approvable form. Federal regulations further stipulate that reimbursement for obligations is subject to final approval of the application.

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If submitted by September 1, 2023 – The school district/STEC will be able to obligate Perkins funds beginning with the date SAS is approved by OSPI.

If NOT submitted by September 1, 2023 – The school district/STEC will be able to obligate Perkins funds beginning the date the applicant submits its entire application to the State in substantially approvable form (all pages and uploads completed and submitted).

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Assurances

Assurance Instructions

1. Review the following requirements and click to read each hyperlink.
2. The district/STEC certifies they have read and understood the requirements listed under each section.
3. Complete the Leadership Acknowledgement section.
4. Sign, date, and print a copy of this assurance section.

Important: A hard copy of the printed, signed, and dated assurance section must be in district/STEC files for monitoring/auditing purposes.

Note: The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to monitor the performance of career and technical education programs in at least the following areas:

- Student participation in and completion of high-demand programs.

- Students earning dual credit for high school and college.

Assurances

By accepting these funds and signing below, your district/STEC agrees to abide by all federal, state, and agency rules and regulations required of this money.

Perkins funds shall supplement, and shall not supplant, non-Federal funds expended to carry out CTE activities. [section 211]

Upon written request, the district/STEC must consult in a timely and meaningful manner with representatives of nonprofit private schools in the geographic areas served by the eligible recipient. [section 317(b)(2)].

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FEDERAL

- The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance)
- Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)
- Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Public Law 115-224)

STATE

- Washington State Perkins Plan Requirements
- Washington Administrative Code (WAC)
- Revised Code of Washington (RCW)
- State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM)
- Career and Technical Education Program Standards

OSPI

- Accounting Manual for Public School Districts in the State of Washington

Leadership Acknowledgement

District/STEC Superintendent:

CTE Director/Administrator:

School Board Chairperson:

General Advisory Chairperson:

Date Leadership Acknowledgement Completed:

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Application - FP 215 Perkins

EGMS ID	Status	Submitted On

Overview

Information

Applicant Organization	Address	EIN

UEI

Announcement

Overview

Announcement ID	Announcement Title	Announcement Type Formula	Budget Category Package General Fund
AN-OSPI-1819	FP 215 Perkins		
Application Due Date	Subaward Floor	Subaward Ceiling	Project Period Start Date 07/01/2023
12/22/2023	$1.00	$624,000.00	
	Subrecipent Match Required? No	Program Income Allowed? No	
Project Period End Date			
08/31/2024			

Application Overview

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2023-24 Perkins Application

Applicant Contacts

Project Role	Name	Email	Is Key Contact	Is User
Project Director/Manager				

OSPI Contacts

Title	Name	Email	Business Phone	Organization	Project Role	Program
Director of Operations, Secondary Education & Pathways Preparation (SEPP)	Clarisse Leong	clarisse.leong@k12.wa.us	(564) 999-0148	Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Program Contact	
	Sary Li			Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Fiscal Contact	

System Information

Created By   Created Date   Last Modified By   Last Modified Date

First Submitted on

Budget

Instructions

Budget Information

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Allocation Amount	Indirect Rate	Requested Indirect Amount	Budgeted Indirect Expenditures	Budgeted Direct Expenditures	Allowed Budgeted Direct Expenditure	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Unbudgeted Amount
$0.00							0.00

Budget Details

EGMS ID:
Category Name: 21 Supervision-Instruction
Debit Transfer: $0.00 **Credit**
Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

EGMS ID:
Category Name: 22 Learning Resources
Debit Transfer: $0.00
Credit Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

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EGMS ID:
Category Name: 24 Guidance and Counseling
Debit Transfer: $0.00 **Credit**
Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

EGMS ID:
Category Name: 27 Teaching
Debit Transfer: $0.00 **Credit**
Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

EGMS ID:
Category Name: 31 Instructional Professional Development
Debit Transfer: $0.00 **Credit**
Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

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EGMS ID:
Category Name: 32 Instructional Technology
Debit Transfer: $0.00 **Credit**
Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

EGMS ID:
Category Name: 33 Curriculum
Debit Transfer: $0.00 **Credit**
Transfer: $0.00
Salaries-Certificated: $0.00
Salaries-Classified: $0.00
Benefits & Payroll Taxes: $0.00
Supplies Instr. Resources & Non-Capitalized: $0.00
Purchased Services: $0.00
Travel: $0.00
Capital Outlay: $0.00
Award Total: $0.00

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Budget Narrative

Budget Comments

Forms and Files			
Application Files			
Title	Classification	File Extension	Description
2022 2023 Perkins V CLNA.docx	Other Supporting Documents	docx	CLNA

Forms					
Sequence Number	Form Name	Is Form Validated?	Mandatory?	Last Modified By	Last Modified Date
	FP 215 - CTE: Perkins V - District/STEC Application	Yes	true		

Supporting Documents Checklist			
Description	Required	Template Link	Subrecipient Document Link
2023-24 Perkins User Guide	Optional	View	Not Applicable
Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)	Optional	View	Not Applicable

Notes			
Title	Description	Created Date	Created By

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Forms

Sequence Number	Form Name	Is Form Validated?	Mandatory?	Last Modified By	Last Modified Date
	FP 215 - CTE: Perkins V - District/STEC Application	Yes	true		

Supporting Documents Checklist

Description	Required	Template Link	Subrecipient Document Link
2023-24 Perkins User Guide	Optional	View	Not Applicable
Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)	Optional	View	Not Applicable

Notes

Title	Description	Created Date	Created By

Collab

Messages

Subject	From Address	To Address	Attention To	Preview	Send Date

System Emails

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OSPI_FN-0472

Form Name:	Is Form Validated?	Last Modified By:	Last Modified Date:
FP 215 - CTE: Perkins V - District/STEC Application			

Overview

Organization and Application Information

Organization Name: Application ID: Application Title:

Last Submitted Date:

Waiver Request

Waiver Request

Applicants with **allocations of more than $15,000 may skip this section** and move to "Required Uses of the Funds."

Applicants with an allocation of less than $15,000 who have demonstrated inability to enter into a consortium may be granted a waiver and will answer questions 1 through 4.

To receive a waiver, the district/STEC must meet certain eligibility requirements and demonstrate their ability to provide a program of sufficient size, scope and quality and demonstrate how Perkins V funding will be used to strengthen existing programs.

Waiver approval will be contingent on the following:

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2023-24 Perkins Application Form

The districts/STECs/ statutory eligibility for a waiver, per responses to the above questions. The quality of the district/STEC's entire Perkins Local Plan.
The applicant's historical capacity to manage the requirements of the Perkins grant (may include a review of past performance during Consolidated Program Reviews).

1. Is the district/STEC located in a rural, sparsely populated area (335 or fewer students in grades 9-12)?

2. What effort did the district/STEC make to enter into a consortium during the 2022-23 school year? If no effort was made, please explain why joining a consortium was not a viable option.

3. Describe how the applicant will provide services and activities that are sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective (this should include a description of existing programs of study, preparatory course offerings, articulations agreements, significant partnerships, etc.):

Perkins Consortium

Districts/STECs/skill centers who choose to participate in a consortium will not receive an individual Perkins allocation. Allocations for consortium will be sent to the fiscal agent (one of the participants).

4. Are you interested in participating in a consortium for the 2024-25 school year?

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5. Identify all school districts/STECs/skill centers in the consortium.

6. Which district/STEC/skill center will be the fiscal agent for the consortium?

Funding

Final Allocation

Final Allocation Amount for 2023–24:
$0.00

Required Uses of Funds

Funds made available to school districts/STECs under this part shall be used to support CTE programs that are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective. Applicants should review Section 135, Local Uses of Funds and review the full list of required uses of funds. Districts/STECs should only spend in areas that are specifically allowable through Perkins V.

• If funds will not be spent in an area, please enter 0. • Enter whole dollar amounts.
• Totals on this page must equal final allocation amount minus Indirects (if taken).

Enter the amount to be spent in the box below each corresponding description.

1. Provide **career exploration and career development activities** through an organized, systematic framework designed to aid students, before enrolling and while participating in a CTE program, in making informed plans and decisions about future education, career opportunities, and programs of study. *(Examples may include work on High School and Beyond Plan, CTE advising, outreach to middle school(s) in the district/STEC.)*
$0

2. Provide **professional development** for teachers, faculty, school leaders, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, career guidance and academic counselors, or paraprofessionals. *(Examples of PD may include the integrations of academic and CTE standards, ensuring labor market information is used to inform programs and guide students, providing teachers the opportunity to advance knowledge, skills, CTSO trainings, and understanding of all aspects of an industry, and other topics as identified in section 2.(A-I))*
$0

3. Provide within career and technical education the skills necessary to **pursue careers** in high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations. *(Examples may include alignment of area high wage/high demand data, CTE program standards, use of data from local workforce council, working with industry partners and stakeholders, or integrating new programs/modifications of existing programs to increase relevance.)*
$0

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4. Support the **integration of academic skills** into career and technical education programs and programs of study to support CTE students at the secondary school level in meeting state academic standards. *(Examples may include funding teacher review of standards to support the development of frameworks and*

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articulation agreements, integration of academic and industry standards and the development of curriculum resources, development and adoption of local and state equivalencies.)
$0

5. Plan and carry out elements that support the **implementation** of career and technical education programs and programs of study and that result in increasing student achievement of the local levels of performance established under section 113. *(Examples may include supporting teacher and postsecondary alignment of programs of study, work based learning opportunities, industry recognized credentials, high demand equipment purchases, curriculum and instructional resource purchase.)*

$

6. Develop and implement **evaluations** of the activities carried out with funds under this part, including evaluations necessary to complete the comprehensive needs assessment required under Section 134(c) and Section 113(b)(4)(B). *(Examples may include costs associated completion of CLNA and program evaluation.)*
$0

Total:
$

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Local Application of Funds

The state negotiated level of performance for each of the core indicators in "Overview of Perkins."

1. Describe the career and technical education course offerings and activities that the district/STEC will provide with funds, which shall include not less than 1 program of study approved by OSPI under section 124(b)(2), including:

(a)   how the results of the comprehensive needs assessment described in subsection (c) informed the selection of the specific career and technical education programs and activities selected to be funded;

(b)   a description of any new programs of study the eligible recipient will develop and submit to OSPI for approval; and

(c)   how students, including students who are members of special populations, will learn about their school's career and technical education course offerings and whether each course is part of a career and technical education program of study.

2. Describe how the district/STEC, in collaboration with local workforce development boards and other local workforce agencies, one-stop delivery systems, and other partners, will provide:

(a) career exploration and career development coursework, activities, or services;

(b) career information on employment opportunities that incorporate the most up-to-date information on high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as determined by the comprehensive needs assessment; and

(c) an organized system of career guidance and academic counseling to students before enrolling and while participating in a career and technical education program.

3. Describe how the district/STEC will improve the academic and technical skills of students participating in career and technical education programs by strengthening the academic and career and technical education components of such programs through the integration of coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical education programs to ensure learning in the subjects that constitute a well-rounded education (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

4. A description of how the district/STEC will:

(a)   provide activities to prepare special populations for high- skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations that will lead to self-sufficiency;

(b)   prepare CTE participants for non-traditional fields;

(c)   provide equal access for special populations to CTE courses, programs, and programs of study; and

(d)   ensure that members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.

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5. A description of the work-based learning opportunities that the district/STEC will provide to students participating in CTE programs and how the recipient will work with representatives from employers to develop or expand work-based learning opportunities for CTE students, as applicable.

6. A description of how the district/STEC will provide students participating in CTE programs with the opportunity to gain postsecondary credit while still attending high school, such as through dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high school, as practicable. Describe how the district/STEC will expand aligned programs of study with postsecondary partners, including articulation agreements.

7. A description of how the district/STEC will coordinate with OSPI, educator preparation programs and other stakeholders to support the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development, of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel.

8. A description of how the district/STEC will address disparities or gaps in performance between groups of students, and any actions that will be taken to eliminate these disparities or gaps.

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Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA)

CLNA

School Districts/STECs may opt to complete an individual CLNA or partner with one or more local educational agencies (secondary and/or postsecondary) to conduct the CLNA.

Most of the data must be collected on each individual school district/STEC programs to meet the Perkins V requirements for the CLNA.

2023-24 Perkins V eligible recipients will be prepared to incorporate the results of the CLNA to support CTE size, scope, and quality; budget alignment; and effective program offerings into the application.

SY 2023–24 CLNA Requirement
- District/STEC is not required to conduct the full process for CLNA during this year.
- Review the prior CLNA to inform decisions and edit as needed.

SY 2023–24 Perkins V Application Requirement
- Application Required.
- CLNA upload required.
- District/STEC negotiate local performance targets.

SY 2024–25 CLNA Requirement
- Full CLNA process is required, including expanded stakeholders and all elements within the CLNA.

SY 2024–25 Perkins V Application Requirement
- Application Required.
- CLNA upload required.
- District/STEC negotiate local performance targets.

- Did the district/STEC complete an individual CLNA or partner with one or more local educational agencies?
- District/STEC assures the CLNA was developed in coordination with stakeholders as identified in the CLNA document. District/STEC assures that the CLNA results will be used to inform Perkins investments.

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Washington Office of Superintendent of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Using the <u>files section</u> **of this application, please upload the district/STEC CLNA document which was completed during the 2022-23 school year. This upload is required.**

Instructions for navigating and uploading to Application Files:

1. Save this page.
2. Scroll to the top of the page and select the 'Back' button, which takes you to the application homepage.
3. Select the 'Form and Files' tab, which has a paperclip icon.
4. Scroll down to Application Files.
5. Select the 'Add Files' button to generate a popup window.
6. Stay on the 'Upload File from Computer' tab.
7. In Classification, scroll to 'Other Supporting Documents'.
8. Upload CLNA document.
9. Type "CLNA" in the description field.
10. Select the 'Upload' button.

To return to the application, scroll up to the 'Forms' section within 'Forms and Files' and select the pencil icon.

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Programs of Study

Federal definition of a Program of Study

The term "Program of Study" means a coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level that:

- Incorporates challenging state academic standards including those adopted by a state under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;
- Addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills including employability skills;
- Is aligned with the needs of industries in the economy of the state, region, tribal community or local area;
- Progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to a more occupation-specific instruction;
- Has multiple entry and exit points that incorporate credentialing; and
- Culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

Minimum criteria for program of study assurances

- The secondary CTE, academic, and appropriate elective courses are included, as well as the state and local graduation requirements.
- The secondary Program of Study includes leadership standards, through 21st Century skills.
- The Program of Study includes coherent and rigorous coursework in a non-duplicative sequence of courses from secondary to postsecondary.
- Completion of the secondary Program of Study prepares students for entry into the postsecondary opportunities (military, employment, apprenticeship, certificate and/or degree programs).
- Program of Study courses include appropriate state standards and/or industry skills standards.
- Program of Study leads to an industry recognized credential; academic certificate or degree; or employment.

Resources for this Section

- Pathway information can be found at https://www.careertech.org/career-clusters. Choose the cluster, then find the pathway information.
- Current high school building codes can be looked up at https://eds.ospi.k12.wa.us/schoollist.aspx.

Identify a Current Program of Study

- Identify a Career Cluster:
- Identify a Pathway:
- Which of the institutions types, if any, are included in the program of study?
  Provide the type and name of any institution(s) selected above.

If this program of study leads to any state or nationally recognized certification, please list it. If not, leave blank.
- Identify the current high school building code where this program of study is offered:

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Performance Indicators and Requirements

Perkins Performance Indicators and Requirements		
Perkins Indicators	2023-24 State Target	Proposed Negotiated Target
1S1: Four-Year Graduation Rate	86.8 %	%
1S2: Extended Graduation Rate (use 2021 data)	89.8 %	%
2S1: Academic Proficiency in Reading/Language Arts	69.0 %	%
2S2: Academic Proficiency in Mathematics	73.6 %	%
2S3: Academic Proficiency in Science	70.1 %	%
3S1: Postsecondary Placement (use 2021 data)	68.0 %	%
4S1: Non-traditional Program Enrollment	60.8 %	%
5S1: Program Quality – Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential	36.0 %	%
5S2: Program Quality – Attained Postsecondary Credits	82.5 %	%
5S3: Program Quality – Participated in Work-Based Learning	94.2 %	%

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Performance Improvement Plan

1S1: Four-Year Graduation Rate

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **1S1** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **1S1** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

1S2: Extended Graduation Rate

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **1S2** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **1S2** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

2S1: Academic Proficiency in Reading/Language Arts

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **2S1** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **2S1** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

2S2: Academic Proficiency in Mathematics

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **2S2** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **2S2** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

2S3: Academic Proficiency in Science

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Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **2S3** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **2S3** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

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3S1: Postsecondary Placement

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **3S1** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **3S1** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

4S1: Non-traditional Program Enrollment

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **4S1** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **4S1** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

5S1: Program Quality – Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **5S1** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **5S1** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

5S2: Program Quality – Attained Postsecondary Credits

Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **5S2** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **5S2** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

5S3: Program Quality – Participated in Work-Based Learning

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Describe in detail **the specific action(s) the district/STEC will take in the 2023-24 SY** to improve performance for indicator **5S3** (considering an analysis of the disaggregated data found in the new Perkins Data Dashboard). If the indicator was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

Please indicate the staff and stakeholders (name, title, and organization) who will be responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented. If indicator **5S3** was met by at least 90% of the state target, type N/A.

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- # **FY25 PERKINS PLAN APPLICATION w/CLNA**

- ## Section 1

Evaluation of Student Performance and Accountability

Special Populations include individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, individuals preparing for non-traditional fields, single parents including single pregnant women, out-of-workforce individuals, English learners, youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, homeless individuals, and youth with active-duty military parents.

Non-Traditional Fields: Occupations or fields of work for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25% of those employed in such fields.

If the college did not successfully meet the target for performance on any indicator, an improvement plan will be required. As outlined in Washington's Perkins V State Plan, the 2021- 2022 performance targets are:

1P1: SDPL%

2P1: SDPL%

3P1: SDPL%

Performance Indicator Definitions:

1P1 – The percentage of CTE concentrators who, during the second quarter after program completion, remain enrolled in postsecondary education, are in advanced training, military service, or a service program that receives assistance under title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 20 2504(a)), or are placed or retained in employment.

2P1 – The percentage of CTE concentrators who receive a recognized postsecondary credential during participation in or within 1 year of program completion.

3P1 – The percentage of CTE concentrators in career and technical education programs and programs of study that lead to non-traditional fields.

To answer the questions below, colleges are required to use the Perkins Protected Dashboard:

https://tableau.sbctc.edu/#/site/RESEARCH/views/PerkinsDashboardProtected/ExploreMeasures?:iid=1

Contact your college's Tableau administrator for questions about access.

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1.0 IMPROVEMENT PLAN: If your college did not meet at least 90% for any of the indicators, then an improvement plan will need to be developed and implemented (Section 123 (b)(2)) for those indicators.

After reviewing the data for 1P1, 2P1, and 3P1, which population(s) of students will be the focus using Perkins funding? What is your college's rationale for focusing on these special populations and/or subgroups? (Refer to Element 2 of the CLNA).

- # Section 2

Required Contents

The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment is required to be uploaded, in the Attachments section, with the Perkins Plan application. This is a required element that informs Perkins funding requests.

2.0 Complete the forms included in the "Grant Info" section. Upload, as an attachment, the Programs of Study Verification Form (with updates only), CLNA, and the completed Assurances form. Check to confirm you have reviewed and will attach the forms.

☐ Yes

2.1 Describe the career and technical education course offerings and activities that the college will provide with funds, which shall include not less than 1 program of study approved by SBCTC under section 124(b)(2), including:

(a) how the results of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment informed the selection of the specific career and technical education programs and activities selected to be funded;

(b) a description of any new programs of study the eligible recipient will develop and submit to SBCTC for approval; and

(c) how students, including students who are members of special populations, will learn about their college's career and technical education course offerings and whether each course is part of a career and technical education program of study.

2.2 Describe how the applicant, in collaboration with local workforce development boards and other local workforce agencies, one-stop delivery systems, and other partners, will provide:

(a) career exploration and career development coursework, activities, or services

(b) career information on employment opportunities that incorporate the most up-to-date information on high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as determined by the comprehensive needs assessment; and

(c) an organized system of career guidance and academic counseling to students before enrolling and while participating in a career and technical education program.

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2.3 Describe how the college will improve the academic and technical skills of students participating in career and technical education programs by strengthening the academic and career and technical education components of such programs through the integration of coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical education programs to ensure learning in the subjects that constitute a well-rounded education (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

2.4 A description of how the college will:

(a) provide activities to prepare special populations for high- skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations that will lead to self-sufficiency;

(b) prepare CTE participants for non-traditional fields;

(c) provide equal access for special populations to CTE courses, programs, and programs of study; and

(d) ensure that members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.

2.5 A description of the work-based learning opportunities that the college will provide to students participating in CTE programs and how the recipient will work with representatives from employers to develop or expand work-based learning opportunities for CTE students, as applicable.

2.6 A description of how the college will provide students participating in CTE programs with the opportunity to gain postsecondary credit while still attending high school, such as through dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high school, as practicable. Describe how the college will expand aligned programs of study with secondary partners, including articulation agreements.

2.7 A description of how the applicant will coordinate with SBCTC, educator preparation programs and other stakeholders to support the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development, of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel.

2.8 A description of how the college will address disparities or gaps in performance between groups of students, and any actions that will be taken to eliminate these disparities or gaps.

- # Section 3

Budget Narrative

Perkins V requires that local applications be informed by the results of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). SBCTC staff will use the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Summary in their review of this section.

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3A. Describe how funds will be used FOR REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – SALARIES, WAGES, AND BENEFITS. Include all position titles, percentages of effort/FTE/FTEF, and duties by position as they relate to this grant. See Perkins Fiscal Guidelines for examples.

3B. Describe how funds will be used FOR REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – GOODS AND SERVICES.

3C. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – BUILDING RENTAL & UTILIZATION. Include confirmation that rates are at or below fair market value (FMV).

3D. Describe how funds will be used FOR REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – TRAVEL.

3E. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – CONTRACTS.

3F. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – CAPITAL ASSETS. Capital Assets are defined as property or equipment with a useful life in excess of 1 year and a per unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more. All Capital Assets must be approved by SBCTC prior to purchase. See Perkins Fiscal Guidelines for approval process.

3G. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – TUITION.

3H. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – STUDENT FEES.

3I. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – SALARIES, WAGES, AND BENEFITS. Include all position titles, percentages of effort or FTEF, and duties by position as they relate to this grant. See Perkins Fiscal Guidelines for examples.

3J. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – GOODS AND SERVICES.

3K. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – BUILDING RENTAL & UTILIZATION. Include confirmation that rates are at or below fair market value (FMV).

3L. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – TRAVEL.

3M. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – CONTRACTS.

3N. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – INDIRECT.

3O. Check all that apply:

- The college will use funds from this grant for One-Stop support.
- The college will use funds outside of this grant for One-Stop support.

- # Section 4

Resource Alignment and Accountability

Budget requests need to align with identified needs in the CLNA as well as achieving state targets.

> **4.0** How is your college's Perkins funding aligned with your ability to successfully meet or exceed the State Target for 1P1?

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4.1 How is your college's Perkins funding aligned with your ability to successfully meet or exceed the State Target for 2P1?

4.2 How is your college's Perkins funding aligned with your ability to successfully meet or exceed the State Target for 3P1?

• Section 5

Grant and Fiscal Accountability

The following questions are required but not scored. Answers will assist the SBCTC with future grant monitoring of your organization. Please review the grant and fiscal guidelines documents, available in the Grant Info section of this grant application, PRIOR to completing this section.

5A. Does your organization have the cash-flow to support a reimbursement-based grant? (Grantees must pay for services up front and then bill SBCTC for reimbursement of incurred expenses.)

- Yes
- No

5B. How many Federal grants does your organization currently have? Include each federal grant your organization receives from SBCTC, other pass-through entities, and directly from the federal government.

5C. How many years' experience does your organization have with Federal grants?

- 0-2
- 3-6
- 7 or more

5D. How many years have your PROGRAM grant manager(s)/administrator(s) for this potential grant been managing/administering Federal grants?

- 0-2
- 3-6
- 7 or more

5E. How many years have your FISCAL grant manager(s)/administrator(s) for this potential grant been managing/administering Federal grants?

- 0-2
- 3-6
- 7 or more

5F. Has your organization received finding(s) from any independent audit in the last 3 years?

For the purposes of this question, an independent audit means the audit was conducted by a party other your own organization or SBCTC.

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- Yes
- No

5G. If Yes, please explain

5H. My organization has written processes and procedures for grants.

- Yes
- No, but we will develop and put them into place before we receive this potential grant

5I. How often does your college monitor grant expenditures and reconcile them against your grant budget?

- At least monthly
- At least quarterly

5J. Describe how your organization ensures invoicing requirements and budget revisions are submitted according to grant requirements.

5K. Describe your organization's procedures to ensure that all applicable grant terms, conditions, and requirements of this potential grant are upheld.

5L. Describe how your organization ensures new staff are trained on grant requirements and your organization's grant-related processes and procedures.

5M. Describe how your organization ensures all staff (new and existing) are notified and trained when grant requirements and/or your organization's grant-related processes and procedures change.

5N. My organization agrees that all employees funded partially or wholly from this grant, including any potential student employees, will complete time and effort documentation according to SBCTC's Time and Effort Guidelines. Time and effort reporting is required at least monthly for classified/hourly employees (including any student workers) and at least quarterly for exempt staff/faculty funded from this grant.

- Yes
- No

5O. Title(s) of the position(s) at your organization that is responsible for ensuring time and effort documentation is maintained for employees paid partially or wholly from this grant.

5P. My organization agrees that payroll charges for this grant will be reconciled with completed time and effort reports prior to the end of the grant and/or the end of my organization's fiscal year as required.

- Yes
- No

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- # **FY26 PERKINS PLAN APPLICATION w/o CLNA**

- # Section 1

Improving Equity and Access

Perkins V requires that local applications be informed by the results of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA).

For those transferring content from Word, please note that most fields are limited to 2,500 characters (approximately a half-page of text), although few responses require as much. Applicants are encouraged to be detailed, but succinct, utilizing concrete examples and bullet points, where appropriate. If you need additional space, please attach a separate document.

> **1.0** Identify your college's strategies from the CLNA Action Plan for Element 1: Improving Equity and Access. Please describe the progress made and stakeholders involved for each strategy. Note with an asterisk any strategies that are new or have been revised.

- # Section 2

Evaluation of Student Performance and Accountability

Special Populations include individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, individuals preparing for non-traditional fields, single parents including single pregnant women, out-of-workforce individuals, English learners, youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, homeless individuals, and youth with active-duty military parents.

Non-Traditional Fields: Occupations or fields of work for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25% of those employed in such fields.

If the college did not successfully meet the target for performance on any indicator, an improvement plan will be required. As outlined in Washington's Perkins V State Plan, the 2021- 2022 performance targets are:

1P1: SDPL%

2P1: SDPL%

3P1: SDPL%

Performance Indicator Definitions:

1P1 – The percentage of CTE concentrators who, during the second quarter after program completion, remain enrolled in postsecondary education, are in advanced training, military service, or a service program that receives assistance under title I of the National and Community Service

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Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 20 2504(a)), or are placed or retained in employment.

2P1 – The percentage of CTE concentrators who receive a recognized postsecondary credential during participation in or within 1 year of program completion.

3P1 – The percentage of CTE concentrators in career and technical education programs and programs of study that lead to non-traditional fields.

To answer the questions below, colleges are required to use the Perkins Protected Dashboard:

https://tableau.sbctc.edu/#/site/RESEARCH/views/PerkinsDashboardProtected/ExploreMeasures?:iid=1

Contact your college's Tableau administrator for questions about access.

2.0: Identify your college's strategies from the CLNA Action Plan for Element 2: Evaluation of Student Performance. Please describe the progress made and stakeholders involved for each strategy. Note with an asterisk any strategies that are new or have been revised.

2.1 Did the college achieve the state target (<mark>SDPL</mark>%) for 1P1?

☐ Yes
☐ No

2.2 Check all of the special populations or subgroups below where the college did not successfully meet the 1P1 state target during Reporting Year <mark>2022-2023</mark>.

☐ Students with Disabilities
☐ Economically Disadvantaged
☐ Single Parent
☐ English Learner
☐ Out of Work
☐ Non-traditional fields
☐ Foster Care Youth
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ American Indian
☐ Asian
☐ Black/African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Multi-Racial
☐ Other Race
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ White

2.3 Did the college achieve the state target (<mark>SDPL</mark>%) for 2P1?

☐ Yes
☐ No

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2.4 Check all of the special populations or subgroups below where the college did not successfully meet the 2P1 state target during Reporting Year <mark>2022-2023</mark>.

- ☐ Students with Disabilities
- ☐ Economically Disadvantaged
- ☐ Single Parent
- ☐ English Learner
- ☐ Out of Work
- ☐ Non-traditional fields
- ☐ Foster Care Youth
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Multi-Racial
- ☐ Other Race
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ White

2.5 Did the college achieve the state target (SDPL%) for 3P1?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2.6 Check all of the special populations or subgroups below where the college did not successfully meet the 3P1 state target during Reporting Year <mark>2022-2023</mark>.

- ☐ Students with Disabilities
- ☐ Economically Disadvantaged
- ☐ Single Parent
- ☐ English Learner
- ☐ Out of Work
- ☐ Non-traditional fields
- ☐ Foster Care Youth
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Multi-Racial
- ☐ Other Race
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ White

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2.7 IMPROVEMENT PLAN: If your college did not meet at least 90% for any of the indicators, then an improvement plan will need to be developed and implemented (Section 123 (b)(2)) for those indicators.

After reviewing the data for 1P1, 2P1, and 3P1, which population(s) of students will be the focus using Perkins funding? What is your college's rationale for focusing on these special populations and/or subgroups?

- ## Section 3

Program Size, Scope, and Quality

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines or Washington's Perkins V State Plan [following Section 122(d)(14)] for a formal definition of "Size, Scope, and Quality" in responding to the following questions.

3.0 Identify your college's strategies from the CLNA Action Plan for Element 3: Evaluation of CTE Programs. Please describe the progress made and stakeholders involved for each strategy. Note with an asterisk any strategies that are new or have been revised.

3.1 Did any of your college's CIP Groups not meet the state target (SDPL%) for 1P1? If so, please list them here.

3.2 Did any of your college's CIP Groups not meet the state target (SDPL%) for 2P1? If so, please list them here.

3.3 Did any of your college's CIP Groups not meet the state target (SDPL%) for 3P1? If so, please list them here.

3.4 In response to answers from questions 3.1-3.3, how will the college revise the Action Plan to improve size, scope, and quality of programs not meeting the state target?

- ## Section 4

Pathways and CTE Programs of Study

Programs of study are a requirement for eligibility to receive Perkins funding. These are expected to be developed in collaboration with secondary and business/industry partners to align with local needs and provide students with exposure and on-ramps to emerging, in-demand, high-skill, and/or high-wage professional/technical careers.

(See Perkins Plan Grant Guidelines: Programs of Study on page 6 for full description)

4.0: Identify your college's strategies from the CLNA Action Plan for Element 4: Implementation of Programs. Please describe the progress made and stakeholders involved for each strategy. Note with an asterisk any strategies that are new or have been revised.

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- ## Section 5

Recruitment, Retention, and Training of CTE Educators

> **5.0:** Identify your college's strategies from the CLNA Action Plan for Element 5: Improving Recruitment, Retention and Training of CTE Educators. Please describe the progress made and stakeholders involved for each strategy. Note with an asterisk any strategies that are new or have been revised.

- ## Section 6

Required Contents

> **6.0:** Complete the forms included in the "Grant Info" section. Upload, as an attachment, the Programs of Study Verification Form (with updates only) and the completed Assurances form. Check to confirm you have reviewed and will attach the forms.

> ☐ Yes

> **6.1** What planning has the college started to implement the next CLNA?

> **6.2** In preparation for the next CLNA, which required stakeholders (advisory committees, college leadership, workforce development partners, etc) have been engaged in the planning process?

> **6.3** How is the college leadership involved in the CLNA planning process and the alignment of the CLNA with other strategic initiatives?

- ## Section 7

Budget Narrative

Perkins V requires that local applications be informed by the results of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA). SBCTC staff will use the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Summary in their review of this section.

7A. Describe how funds will be used FOR REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – SALARIES, WAGES, AND BENEFITS. Include all position titles, percentages of effort/FTE/FTEF, and duties by position as they relate to this grant. See Perkins Fiscal Guidelines for examples.

7B. Describe how funds will be used FOR REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – GOODS AND SERVICES.

7C. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – BUILDING RENTAL & UTILIZATION. Include confirmation that rates are at or below fair market value (FMV).

7D. Describe how funds will be used FOR REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – TRAVEL.

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7E. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – CONTRACTS.

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7G. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – TUITION.

7H. Describe how funds will be used for REQUIRED & PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES – STUDENT FEES.

7I. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – SALARIES, WAGES, AND BENEFITS. Include all position titles, percentages of effort or FTEF, and duties by position as they relate to this grant. See Perkins Fiscal Guidelines for examples.

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7N. Describe how funds will be used for ADMINISTRATION – INDIRECT.

7O. Check all that apply:

- • The college will use funds from this grant for One-Stop support.
- • The college will use funds outside of this grant for One-Stop support.

Section 8

Resource Alignment and Accountability

Budget requests need to align with identified needs in the CLNA as well as achieving state targets.

8.0 How is your college's Perkins funding aligned with your ability to successfully meet or exceed the State Target for 1P1?

8.1 How is your college's Perkins funding aligned with your ability to successfully meet or exceed the State Target for 2P1?

8.2 How is your college's Perkins funding aligned with your ability to successfully meet or exceed the State Target for 3P1?

Section 9

Grant and Fiscal Accountability

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The following questions are required but not scored. Answers will assist the SBCTC with future grant monitoring of your organization. Please review the grant and fiscal guidelines documents, available in the Grant Info section of this grant application, PRIOR to completing this section.

9A. Does your organization have the cash-flow to support a reimbursement-based grant? (Grantees must pay for services up front and then bill SBCTC for reimbursement of incurred expenses.)

- Yes
- No

9B. How many Federal grants does your organization currently have? Include each federal grant your organization receives from SBCTC, other pass-through entities, and directly from the federal government.

9C. How many years' experience does your organization have with Federal grants?

- 0-2
- 3-6
- 7 or more

9D. How many years have your PROGRAM grant manager(s)/administrator(s) for this potential grant been managing/administering Federal grants?

- 0-2
- 3-6
- 7 or more

9E. How many years have your FISCAL grant manager(s)/administrator(s) for this potential grant been managing/administering Federal grants?

- 0-2
- 3-6
- 7 or more

9F. Has your organization received finding(s) from any independent audit in the last 3 years?

For the purposes of this question, an independent audit means the audit was conducted by a party other your own organization or SBCTC.

- Yes
- No

9G. If Yes, please explain

9H. My organization has written processes and procedures for grants.

- Yes
- No, but we will develop and put them into place before we receive this potential grant

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9I. How often does your college monitor grant expenditures and reconcile them against your grant budget?

- At least monthly
- At least quarterly

9J. Describe how your organization ensures invoicing requirements and budget revisions are submitted according to grant requirements.

9K. Describe your organization's procedures to ensure that all applicable grant terms, conditions, and requirements of this potential grant are upheld.

9L. Describe how your organization ensures new staff are trained on grant requirements and your organization's grant-related processes and procedures.

9M. Describe how your organization ensures all staff (new and existing) are notified and trained when grant requirements and/or your organization's grant-related processes and procedures change.

9N. My organization agrees that all employees funded partially or wholly from this grant, including any potential student employees, will complete time and effort documentation according to SBCTC's Time and Effort Guidelines. Time and effort reporting is required at least monthly for classified/hourly employees (including any student workers) and at least quarterly for exempt staff/faculty funded from this grant.

- Yes
- No

9O. Title(s) of the position(s) at your organization that is responsible for ensuring time and effort documentation is maintained for employees paid partially or wholly from this grant.

9P. My organization agrees that payroll charges for this grant will be reconciled with completed time and effort reports prior to the end of the grant and/or the end of my organization's fiscal year as required.

- Yes
- No

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3. Appendix #3 – Washington CTE 21st Century Leadership Skills

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Washington Career and Technical Education 21ˢᵗ Century Leadership Skills

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" style="background:gold">**LEARNING AND INNOVATION**
Learning and innovation skills increasingly are being recognized as those that separate students who are prepared for a more and more complex life and work environments in the 21st century, and those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**1. Creativity and Innovation**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**1.A Think Creatively**
Student Outcome: The student will be involved in activities that require applying theory, problem-solving, and using critical and creative thinking skills while understanding outcomes of related decisions.</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.A.1</td><td>Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming)</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.A.2</td><td>Create new and worthwhile ideas (both incremental and radical concepts)</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.A.3</td><td>Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**1.B Work Creatively with Others**
Student Outcome: The student will demonstrate the ability to incorporate and utilize the principles of group dynamics in a variety of settings.</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.B.1</td><td>Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.B.2</td><td>Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.B.3</td><td>Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.B.4</td><td>View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**1.C Implement Innovations**
Student Outcome: The student will demonstrate skills that assist in understanding and accepting responsibility to family, community, and business and industry.</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.C.1</td><td>Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**2. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**2.A Reason Effectively**
Student Outcome: The student will analyze, refine, and apply decision-making skills through classroom, family, community, and business and industry (work-related) experiences.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.A.1</td><td>Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**2.B Use Systems Thinking**
Student Outcome: The student will demonstrate an understanding of complex inter-relationships (systems). This means that the student understands social, organizational, and technological systems; they can monitor and correct performance; and they can design or improve systems.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.B.1</td><td>Analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**2.C Make Judgments and Decisions**
Student Outcome: The student will analyze, refine, and apply decision-making skills through classroom, family, community, and business and industry (work-related) experiences.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.C.1</td><td>Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.C.2</td><td>Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.C.3</td><td>Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments</td></tr>
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| 2.C.4 | Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis |
| 2.C.5 | Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes |

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2.D Solve Problems

Student Outcome: The student will be involved in activities that require applying theory, problem-solving, and using critical and creative thinking skills while understanding outcomes of related decisions.

2.D.1	Solve different kinds of non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways
2.D.2	Identify and ask significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions

3. Communication and Collaboration

3.A Communicate Clearly

Student Outcome: The student will demonstrate oral, interpersonal, written, and electronic communication and presentation skills and understands how to apply those skills.

3.A.1	Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts
3.A.2	Listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions
3.A.3	Use communication for a range of purposes (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade)
3.A.4	Utilize multiple media and technologies, and know how to judge their effectiveness a priori as well as assess their impact
3.A.5	Communicate effectively in diverse environments (including multi-lingual)

3.B Collaborate with Others

Student Outcome: The student will communicate, participate, and advocate effectively in pairs, small groups, teams, and large groups in order to reach common goals.

3.B.1	Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
3.B.2	Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
3.B.3	Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member

INFORMATION, MEDIA, AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by various characteristics, including: 1) access to an abundance of information, 2) rapid changes in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media and technology.

4. Information Literacy

4.A Access and Evaluate Information

Student Outcome: The student will demonstrate the ability to acquire and use information in a family, community, business and industry settings. This means that the student can acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information.

4.A.1	Access information efficiently (time) and effectively (sources)
4.A.2	Evaluate information critically and competently

4.B Use and Manage Information

Student Outcome:
The student will demonstrate the ability to acquire and use information in a family, community, business and industry settings. This means that the student can acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information.

4.B.1	Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand
4.B.2	Manage the flow of information from a wide variety of sources

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4.B.3	Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information

5. Media Literacy

5.A Analyze Media	
5.A.1	Understand both how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes
5.A.2	Examine how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and points of view are included or excluded, and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors
5.A.3	Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media
5.B Create Media Products	
5.B.1	Understand and utilize the most appropriate media creation tools, characteristics and conventions
5.B.2	Understand and effectively utilize the most appropriate expressions and interpretations in diverse, multi-cultural environments

6. Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Literacy

6.A Apply Technology Effectively

Student Outcome:

The student will demonstrate an ability to work with a variety of technologies, identify or solve problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies. This means that the student understands that the student can select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain and troubleshoot equipment.

6.A.1	Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information
6.A.2	Use digital technologies (computers, PDAs, media players, GPS, etc.), communication/networking tools and social networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create information to successfully function in a knowledge economy
6.A.3	Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information technologies

LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS

Today's life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills.

7. Flexibility and Adaptability

7.A Adapt to Change

Student Outcome:

The student will analyze the complex responsibilities of the leader and follower and demonstrate the ability to both lead and follow.

7.A.1	Adapt to varied roles, jobs responsibilities, schedules and contexts
7.A.2	Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities

7.B Be Flexible

Student Outcome:

The Student will use interpersonal skills to communicate, participate, and advocate effectively in pairs, small groups, teams, and large groups in order to reach common goals. This means that the student can effectively work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work effectively with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

7.B.1	Incorporate feedback effectively
7.B.2	Deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism
7.B.3	Understand, negotiate and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments

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8. Initiative and Self-Direction	
8.A Manage Goals and Time Student Outcome:	

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The student will demonstrate self-advocacy skills by achieving planned, individual goals.	
8.A.1	Set goals with tangible and intangible success criteria
8.A.2	Balance tactical (short-term) and strategic (long-term) goals
8.A.3	Utilize time and manage workload efficiently

8.B Work Independently

Student Outcome:

The student will demonstrate self-advocacy skills by achieving planned, individual goals.

8.B.1	Monitor, define, prioritize and complete tasks without direct oversight

8.C Be Self-Directed Learners

8.C.1	Go beyond basic mastery of skills and/or curriculum to explore and expand one's own learning and opportunities to gain expertise
8.C.2	Demonstrate initiative to advance skill levels towards a professional level
8.C.3	Demonstrate commitment to learning as a lifelong process
8.C.4	Reflect critically on past experiences in order to inform future progress

9. Social and Cross-Cultural

9.A Interact Effectively with Others

Student Outcome:

The student will demonstrate knowledge of conflict resolution and challenge management.

9.A.1	Know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak
9.A.2	Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner

9.B Work Effectively in Diverse Teams

Student Outcome:

The student will use knowledge, build interest, guide and influence decisions, organize efforts, and involve members of a group to assure that a pre-planned group activity is completed.

9.B.1	Respect cultural differences and work effectively with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds
9.B.2	Respond open-mindedly to different ideas and values
9.B.3	Leverage social and cultural differences to create new ideas and increase both innovation and quality of work

10. Productivity and Accountability

10.A Manage Products

Student Outcome:

The student will demonstrate the ability to identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources. This means that the student is able to demonstrate allocating time, money, materials, space, and staff.

10.A.1	Set and meet goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressures
10.A.2	Prioritize, plan and manage work to achieve the intended result

10.B Produce Results

Student Outcome:

The student will conduct self in a professional manner in practical career applications, organizational forums, and decision-making bodies.

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10.B.1	Demonstrate additional attributes associated with producing high quality products including the abilities to: 10.B.1.a Work positively and ethically 10.B.1.b Manage time and projects effectively 10.B.1.c Multi-task 10.B.1.d Participate actively, as well as be reliable and punctual 10.B.1.e Present oneself professionally and with proper etiquette 10.B.1.f Collaborate and cooperate effectively with teams 10.B.1.g Respect and appreciate team diversity

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	10.B.1.h Be accountable for results

11. Leadership and Responsibility

11.A Guide and Lead Others

Student Outcome:

The student will demonstrate the ability to train others to understand the established rules and expectations, rationale, and consequences and to follow those rules and expectations.

11.A.1	Use interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide others toward a goal
11.A.2	Leverage strengths of others to accomplish a common goal
11.A.3	Inspire others to reach their very best via example and selflessness
11.A.4	Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior in using influence and power

11.B Be Responsible to Others

Student Outcome:

The student will identify and analyze the characteristics of family, community, business, and industry leaders.

11.B.1	Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind

12. 21st CENTURY INTERDISCIPLINARY THEMES

12. A Global Awareness

12.A.1	Using 21st century skills to understand and address global issues
12.A.2	Learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts
12.A.3	Understanding other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages

12.B Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy

12.B.1	Knowing how to make appropriate personal economic choices
12.B.2	Understanding the role of the economy in society
12.B.3	Using entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options

12.C Civic Literacy

Student Outcome:

The student will analyze the roles and responsibilities of citizenship; demonstrate social responsibility to family, community and business and industry; understand their role, participate in and evaluate community service and service learning activities; understand the organizational skills necessary to be a successful leader and citizen and practices those in real-life; understand and utilize the organizational systems to advocate for issues on the local, state, and international level; understand the importance of and utilize the components and structure of community based organization; participate in the development of a program of work or strategic plan and will work to implement the organization's goals.

12.C.1	Participating effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes
12.C.2	Exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national and global levels
12.C.3	Understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions

12.D Health Literacy

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12.D.1	Obtaining, interpreting and understanding basic health information and services and using such information and services in ways that enhance health
12.D.2	Understanding preventive physical and mental health measures, including proper diet, nutrition, exercise, risk avoidance and stress reduction

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12.D.3	Using available information to make appropriate health-related decisions
12.D.4	Establishing and monitoring personal and family health goals
12.D.5	Understanding national and international public health and safety issues
12.E Environmental Literacy	
12.E.1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the environment and the circumstances and conditions affecting it, particularly as relates to air, climate, land, food, energy, water and ecosystems
12.E.2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of society's impact on the natural world (e.g., population growth, population development, resource consumption rate, etc.)
12.E.4	Investigate and analyze environmental issues, and make accurate conclusions about effective solutions
12.E.4	Take individual and collective action towards addressing environmental challenges (e.g., participating in global actions, designing solutions that inspire action on environmental issues)

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TALENT AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL
INTRODUCTION

DSHS administers Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which is included in the Washington State WIOA Combined Plan as an optional, Combined Plan partner and as a "mandatory partner" within the one-stop delivery system. The State of Washington provides cash assistance to financially needy families, who are more likely to be members of marginalized populations, through the federal TANF program. WorkFirst is Washington State's welfare-to-work component of TANF. In addition to the TANF cash grant, WorkFirst provides a range of services that address barriers to employment and support families as they move towards financial stability and economic success.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) partners with agencies to provide a suite of WorkFirst services from throughout the state workforce system: the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) provides basic and vocational education, and work-based learning; the Employment Security Department (ESD) provides job search services through its WorkSource offices; the Department of Commerce, through its contractors, provides subsidized employment and work experience for individuals with barriers to employment; DSHS's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance provides services to limited English proficient individuals; and the Department of Children, Youth and Families provides subsidized child care.

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(i) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

On November 1, 1997, Washington's WorkFirst Program became operational statewide. The program designed was to move families on welfare into employment as quickly as possible through upfront job search, work experience activities, and short-term education and training.

Today the program is an integral part of a statewide effort to reduce intergenerational poverty in Washington. It aims to connect families to resources and opportunities that help them reach their full potential, and has the goal of reducing poverty in a way that eliminates disparities. The State has instituted, by rule, uniform program policies in all political subdivisions, including uniform TANF cash benefit standards.

Washington State provides cash benefits to all needy families who meet the eligibility criteria established by rules of the Department of Social and Health Services and in accordance with this State Plan. TANF is the major cash assistance program providing cash benefits for low income families with (or expecting) children in Washington State. The WorkFirst program offers services and activities to help people in low-income families find jobs, keep their jobs, find better jobs, and move towards financial stability.

The WorkFirst program links families to a variety of state, federal, and community resources to meet this goal. Examples include:

- Child support collection

- Food assistance

- Subsidized child care

- Medical assistance

- Tuition assistance at community and technical colleges

- WorkFirst support services

WorkFirst support services include assistance with paying for work clothing/tools, car repair, driver's and vehicle licensing, diapers, hygiene supplies and transportation. Job preparation services also include education and training tuition assistance, books, test fees and subsidized work experience. These services are designed to help individuals keep their jobs or get better jobs.

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The WorkFirst Program is focused on obtaining paid, unsubsidized employment for all recipients who are able to work. In addition, WorkFirst is dedicated to assisting families up and out of poverty once they become employed by providing employment retention and wage progression services.

In operating the WorkFirst Program, the State:

- Provides an up-front employability screening and assessment for participants prior to any activity assignment to assess the individual's work readiness and barriers to employment. While Washington internally strives for these screenings/assessments to be done within 30 days of the eligibility determination, it elects at state option to have a firm assessment deadline of 90 days as allowed per 45 CFR 261.11(b).

- For individuals who are work ready, require immediate participation in job search activities.

- Assign participants who need education skills or work experience and those who do not find work in a job search activity, to additional job search activities for a short length of time, to paid work experience, subsidized employment, other work-like activities, or barrier removal activities as determined appropriate by assessment.

- Provide employment services to assist clients in remaining employed and to progress in skills and wages

- Provide educational opportunities in the context of learning while working, both in classroom settings and on the work-site.

- Encourage a new alliance of state, local, and tribal government, business, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and individuals, who dedicate themselves to helping families in poverty overcome barriers (RCW 74.08A.280(2)).

As the WorkFirst program has evolved, more emphasis has been placed on overcoming barriers to employment, job retention, and reducing the re-cycling on and off of assistance that characterizes a significant part of the TANF population.

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***B.* REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE THEY HAVE RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(e)(2) (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).**

The State includes the following activities in its definition of work activity:

- Unsubsidized paid employment

- Subsidized paid employment

- Work experience

- On-the-job training

- Job search and job readiness assistance

- Life skills training

- Community service

- Vocational education including internships and practicums

- Job skills training related to employment

- Education related to employment for a parent who has not completed high school or equivalent

- Volunteering in a child's licensed child care, pre-school or elementary school

- Internships

- Practicums

- Participation in other services to become employable to the extent federally countable such as

  o Mental health services

  o Family violence services

  o Substance abuse services

- Participation in post-employment activities to the extent federally countable

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What criteria will Washington State use to determine whether a parent or caretaker relative is ready to engage in work before 24 months?

The State requires all WorkFirst participants to undergo an evaluation/screening to determine most appropriate activities for initial engagement. Per this evaluation, if determined 'work ready' based on current or recent work experience, the participant may enter into a job search activity initially.

What criteria has the State established relative to a single custodial parent's "demonstrated inability" to obtain needed child care?

The State recognizes that informed choice is consistent with individual responsibility and that parents should be given a range of options for available child care while participating in the WorkFirst Program. Criteria established for "demonstrated inability" to obtain needed child care include:

- Is not affordable – *costs more than the co-payment would be under the state's primary subsidized child care program, Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)*

- Is not appropriate – *not licensed, certified or approved under federal, state, or tribal law and regulations for the type of care used or there is no appropriate and approved relative or in-home provider available*

- Does not meet the level of care required for a child with special medical or behavioral health needs

- Is not within a reasonable distance – *within reach without traveling farther than is normally expected in the community*

C. **ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (a)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE**

Work Participation Focus

In operating the WorkFirst program, the State uses the work participation rates specified in Section 402 of the Social Security Act as its work participation goal. However, the state, to the extent possible, will use the work participation rates as a minimum standard and will work toward exceeding these goals. Washington has established program goals around reduced caseloads and wage progression efforts with the expectation that low-income families will be

lifted up and out of poverty through employment, and WorkFirst is designed to meet that expectation. To the degree possible, all low-income families will have access to services that will help them gain in work skills and earn enough to become financially stable.

The State has used various welfare-to-work models, including models focused on moving job ready individuals into work as rapidly as possible, and providing employment-related training that is expected to lead directly to work for those lacking work skills.

Cross-Agency Collaboration

While the Department of Social and Health Services is the single State agency responsible for administering the TANF program, six core state agencies are designated to work together to manage the WorkFirst program. These agencies, referred to as the WorkFirst Partnership, include the Office of Financial Management, Department of Commerce, the Employment Security Department, the Department of Social and Health Services, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Department of Children, Youth & Families.

More specifically, the Employment Security Department provides labor exchange (Wagner-Peyser) services for WorkFirst clients, the community and technical colleges provide various kinds of vocational education and subsidized work experience, and the Department of Commerce provides subsidized jobs and unpaid work experience opportunities for clients with barriers to employment. In addition, the Department of Children, Youth & Families has a subsidized child care program for low-income working families including those participating in TANF/WorkFirst and Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET). DCYF also manages the state-funded pre-kindergarten program, a home visiting system and other family strengthening services for low-income, at-risk, pregnant, or parenting families, including those receiving TANF.

The WorkFirst Partnership Team works for collaboration and innovation across agencies, with direction coming directly from agency leadership as well as a task force comprising of Washington Legislative and Executive agency leadership – known as the *Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force.*

Within the Department of Social and Health Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves TANF/WorkFirst clients who qualify under its rules. In addition, post-TANF parents may be eligible for services through Washington's BFET program up to its eligibility threshold of 200% of the FPL.

TANF Employment and Training Needs Addressed in Workforce Development System

In the TANF program, the education and training options for parents are circumscribed by the work participation rate target and various process rules that don't apply to the WIOA core programs. This includes the 12-month limit on stand-alone vocational education and the 30% cap for vocational education participation. On the other hand, strengths of the TANF funding stream include ability to provide tuition assistance and child care for parents engaged in approved education and training activities.

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Historically, previous to WIOA, the one-stop workforce development system in Washington State did not prioritize providing services to clients with the range of barriers to employment identified in WIOA, who can be found in disproportionate numbers on the TANF caseload. With the expanded number of partners represented in this Combined State Plan, and the efficiencies that go with improved coordination, Washington State seeks to improve its capacity to serve these disadvantaged populations. This will be accomplished through intentional work at both the local and state levels and through the articulation of partnerships, services and strategies within Memoranda of Understanding, and local plans.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State has established confidentiality rules and procedures within the guidelines provided under state (RCW 74.04.060, 74.04.062) and federal law. The following changes have been made in response to state and federal welfare reform legislation.

The State has revised confidentiality provisions that expand access to client records by law enforcement officials. Specifically, in accordance with the Social Security Act, the Department of Social and Health Services will disclose the current address and location of a WorkFirst recipient to an officer of the law or a person identified as a United States immigration official if the department is given the recipient's name and social security number and the officer/official satisfactorily demonstrates that the recipient is a fugitive, that the location or apprehension of the recipient is within the officer's/official's duties, and that the request is made in the proper exercise of those duties. In addition, if the department becomes aware that a WorkFirst recipient is the subject of an outstanding warrant that meets certain criteria, the department may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency and, if the warrant is valid, provide the law enforcement agency with the location of the recipient.

The Department of Social and Health Services provides the Employment Security Department with the names and social security numbers of all recipients in the WorkFirst program. This information will be used for the purposes of statistical analysis and evaluation of the WorkFirst program only.

Attachment A [of the TANF State Plan] is written certification by Governor Jay Inslee that during the fiscal year the State will:

- Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure that the State screens for and identifies WorkFirst clients with a history of family violence as defined under Social Security Act (while maintaining confidentiality)

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- Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services and waive some requirements, such as time limit, work participation, and child support cooperation, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult to escape family violence or unfairly penalize clients.

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(aA)(1)(A)(v) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Following welfare reform legislation of the late '90s, the director of Washington's Office of Financial Management established an interagency task force on unintended pregnancy to review existing research on the short and long-range costs, analyze the impact on the WorkFirst program, and develop/implement a state strategy to reduce out-of-wedlock and unintended pregnancy.

The Department of Social and Health Services, Health Care Authority, Department of Health, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and other state agencies established goals associated with this task force and have continued to take action to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies. The current focus is to decrease unintended pregnancy, empower families to choose if and when they have children, and increase access and decrease barriers to quality family planning services.

Through a federal waiver, called TAKE CHARGE, the State provides pre-pregnancy family planning services to citizen men and women with family incomes up to and including 260% of the FPL. The State also extends eligibility for family planning services to citizen women up to 260% of the federal poverty level for a year after their pregnancy ends. Non-citizen women with Medicaid coverage for the birth of a child receive state-funded family planning services for one year after the end of their pregnancy. These women are NOT eligible for family planning services under the federally-approved family planning waiver. Non-Medicaid, low-income men and women can also receive family planning services through Department of Health Title X-funded family planning clinics.

Additional programs that contribute to achieving goals for preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancy include:

- The Washington College Grant and College Bound Scholarship programs for low-income students wishing to pursue higher education

- The Early Childhood Education Assistance Program serving low-income three and four year old children

- The Promoting Academic Success and Learning Assistance Programs for low-income and high risk public school students

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- The full-day kindergarten for all schools and reduced class size programs in high-poverty elementary schools.

All of these programs affect long-term outcomes including reduced likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system, higher earnings as adults, less reliance on social services as adults and fewer out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Washington State conducts a program reaching a variety of stakeholders and partners to educate and train on the problem of statutory rape. Specific examples are highlighted below.

Please note, crimes that may be considered statutory rape in other states, are considered 'rape of a child' under Washington statute. This distinction was deliberate to underscore that adolescents and teens under particular ages are not able to consent to sexual acts.

In conjunction with the Washington State Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, through the WAPA/State Judicial Case Processing Task Force, Washington State has developed mandatory reporting protocol for child support cases meeting the criteria for rape of a child. TANF and other public assistance program staff receive detailed direction on how to report suspected rape of a child to law enforcement. In addition, pursuant to the Social Security Act, minor parents' or pregnant minors' living situation cannot include an adult parent of the qualifying child if that parent is convicted of rape of a child (RCW 9A.44.079).

The state convenes an Interagency Workgroup on Unintended Pregnancy Prevention to review current outreach programs for men and women. This workgroup makes recommendations concerning the incorporation of appropriate education about the crime of rape of a child. Washington State also has a robust sexual and domestic violence prevention approach, with the Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) & Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP) being national leaders in prevention. Within a contract between DSHS and WSCADV, there are resources and training efforts dedicated to the "Healthy Relationships" approach, which focuses on identifying and promoting protective factors and establishing appropriate and healthy relationships.

Local sexual assault and domestic violence programs in Washington also have a significant focus on community education and prevention. The curricula seeks to increase awareness and build the skills of community members to reduce risk factors and build protective factors against rape

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of a child and other forms of sexual abuse. Emergency shelter contractors funded through the state's Family Violence Prevention Services Act and Victims of Crime Act grants are required to conduct prevention and community education activities as well.   Sexual assault services grantees, funded through Washington's Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, conduct sexual violence education and prevention with key stakeholders in local communities. Key targets for these efforts include those working in law enforcement, education and mental health counseling.

Educational offerings are designed to promote healthy, safe, relationships, and address attitudes and beliefs related to a culture of perpetration and are often targeted at youth/teens.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(a)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

In 2011 the state legislature enacted RCW 74.08.580 to address concerns regarding use of benefits at prohibited establishments, specifically, the following activities and products:

- Gambling

- Pari-mutuel betting

- Lottery tickets

- Tattoos

- Body piercings

- Tobacco products

- Alcoholic beverages

It further prohibits taverns, beer/wine specialty stores, nightclubs, contract liquor stores, bail bond agencies, gambling establishments, tattoo/body piercing shops, adult entertainment venues, or any establishment where persons under the age of eighteen are not permitted, from having Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and Point of Sale (POS) terminals on their premises that accept EBT cards.

The Department compares a list of EBT transactions at ATMs and POS machines monthly to a list of prohibited locations throughout the State provided by appropriate licensing authority for the state. The state Office of Fraud and Accountability or the state licensing authority for that

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business type (e.g. Liquor Control Board, Gaming Commission) physically inspects the location to verify that the match is accurate and appropriate and issues notices to non-compliant businesses and clients. Continued non-compliance by businesses results in referral to the individual licensing authority for regulatory action. Continued non-compliance by clients results in the opening of an intentional program violation investigation.

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Adequate authorized access to cash by recipients is ensured via an analysis required of the EBT vendor. The vendor is required by contract to perform a cash access assessment on an annual basis. The results are reviewed with the department to address any drought identified, especially related to remote locations. If such a locale is identified during the annual review, the EBT vendor is prepared to deploy EBT-only point-of-sale (POS) machines that would allow case transactions and cash-back access for those clients.

As of August 1, 2012, the EBT ATM fee imposed by Washington State's EBT vendor was eliminated. DSHS notifies clients that if they choose to withdraw cash benefits using an ATM, they may incur a surcharge for the transaction by the bank or ATM owner. Clients are encouraged to use POS terminals to avoid potential ATM surcharges. Retailers that accept EBT cards have the Quest mark decal that shows what benefits are accessible at each POS and ATM location. Clients can also log onto their online account and search for Chase ATMs or the client can contact CSD to conduct a search of filtered retailers by ATM, POS, or both.

This information is provided on the form "Your DSHS Cash or Food Benefits" (DSHS 14-520), or the informational pamphlet "Your Washington EBT Quest Card" (DSHS 22-310), which is given over the counter in offices or mailed to clients. In May 2000, DSHS implemented Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), allowing TANF clients to have their cash assistance deposited if they have a new or current personal bank account. DSHS educates TANF clients about EFT enrollment when they receive the EBT card.

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I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(a)(1)(B)(i) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Families from other states receive the same benefits as other longer term Washington state residents.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State exercises its option to provide federally funded TANF, Medicaid, and social services block grant (SSBG) benefits to qualified non-citizen families who are eligible to receive these benefits. The State provides State Family Assistance which is state-funded cash and medical benefits to those individuals who do not qualify for federally-funded assistance because of their immigration status, but otherwise meets all other eligibility requirements, including children and pregnant women. These are segregated funds and expenditures which are for the most part claimed toward the state's MOE requirement.

The State follows federal sponsor deeming rules for qualified alien families receiving federally funded benefits. The income and resources of the sponsors for families receiving state-funded assistance are deemed until the sponsored immigrant becomes a naturalized U.S. citizen or has 40 work quarters under the Social Security Act. Sponsor liability does not apply to the victims of domestic violence who self-petitioned under the Violence Against Women Act and their dependents.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State provides client protections by:

- Requiring that clients are treated with dignity and respect

- Are given sufficient opportunity to make their needs known to the department

- Are free from discrimination on any basis prohibited by state or federal law

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- Have their eligibility determined according to rules and procedures of the department promulgated pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act (RCW 34.05)

- Are permitted to make applications for benefits and have the application processed and decision made in a timely manner

- Have their rights and responsibilities explained to them

- Are informed of which programs and services are available to them through the department

- Have the conditions, requirements and benefits for which they are eligible explained to them

- Are allowed to exercise, after full explanation, options and choices available to them

Fair and equitable treatment does not mean that all WorkFirst benefits and services are available to all clients in all areas of the state at any one time. The State's need in some cases to gradually phase in a new service or to undertake pilot initiatives for purposes of determining program effectiveness may limit access to some services for some clients for limited periods of time.

Washington will ensure applicants and recipients of assistance are notified in writing of department decisions regarding the type and amount of benefits available to them, including adequate and advance notice of adverse actions. The State will inform applicants and recipients of the legal basis for the determination and within 90 days of such notice they may request an administrative hearing, unless good cause is shown to have prevented submission of the request. If the client has good cause for the delay, they will be allowed to submit the request for up to one year after the aggrieving decision.

The State will notify clients they may, without payment of a fee or posting a bond for filing such appeal or preparation of any necessary record, obtain judicial review of an adverse decision. The state will also explain the administrative hearing will be conducted by the independent Office of Administrative Hearings pursuant to state law (RCW 74.08, 34.05), with due process protections in place. The State provides an opportunity for any applicant or recipient aggrieved by an agency action to have an impartial administrative hearing before an Administrative Law Judge pursuant to RCW 74.08.080 and 34.05. The State will continue benefits pending the hearing decision, pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 388-458-0040.

The TANF cash assistance program has a statewide process for conducting application interviews for consistent administration of eligibility rules that include:

Household Composition (TANF/WorkFirst):

- Minor child(ren) 17 years or younger or child(ren) under age 19 who are making progress in High School (HS) or HS equivalency program

- Pregnancy at any stage

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- Parents or related needy caregivers of specific degree (e.g. those caring for grandchildren, nieces/nephews)

Residency:

- Currently living in Washington state with no minimum time to establish residency

Citizenship/Alien Status:

- US Citizens

- Qualified non-citizens, verified with use of Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)

Social Security Number (SSN) Requirements:

- Supply or apply for SSN

- Provide good cause for not applying/supplying

Assignment of Child Support Rights:

- Cooperate with establishing child support

- Provide good cause for non-cooperation

Financial Eligibility for Aided Household Members:

- Countable earned income is based on household size and published in state regulation (WAC 388-478-0035) and the unearned income limit is also the payment standard for cash assistance, per state regulation (WAC 388-478-0020).

- Countable Resource Limits

  o $6,000 cash resource limit

  o $10,000 vehicle exclusion

At or below 60 Month Time Limit for Recipients or:

- May meet Time Limit Extension criteria for aid after 60 months when -

  o Disabled and applying for SSI

  o Caring for disabled adult or child

  o Homeless

  o Working 32 or more hours/week

  o First time dependency with child welfare agency

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- o Addressing family violence
- o Being actively on TANF during a period of statewide High Unemployment, defined as 7% or higher per state regulation (WAC 388-484-0006)

Other TANF programs:

- Kinship Care TANF:

  - o Relatives of a specific degree

  - o Must cooperate with assignment of child support unless good cause claimed for non-cooperation

  - o Non-needy cases, so not subject to income or resource limitations

  - o Any income to child, including Title IV payments, is calculated when determining benefit level

  - o Not subject to TANF 60-month time limit

- In-Loco Parentis TANF:

  - o Adults acting in place of parent without relation to specific degree with child, or without legal guardianship

  - o Must cooperate with child support assignment unless good cause claimed for non-cooperation

  - o Must authorize DSHS to perform a background check, though is not disqualified from receiving benefits on behalf of child in their care based on background check results

  - o Non-needy cases, so not subject to income or resource limitations

  - o Any income to child, including Title IV payments, is calculated when determining benefit level

  - o Not subject to TANF 60-month time limit

The following must be included in the household receiving TANF:

- The child benefits were applied for and the child's full, half or adopted siblings

- The child's natural, adoptive parents, or stepparents

- Pregnant minors and minor parents who live with parents who need assistance (may include other siblings)

- Pregnant individuals with no other dependent children residing with them

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For the purposes of receiving assistance, the following defines how many days a child may be absent from the home in Washington state, and what are good cause exceptions:

- The State provides assistance for a minor child for 180 days following the end of the month in which such child, parent, or other caretaker relative receiving assistance, leaves the home on a temporary basis.

- The State allows good cause exceptions to extend the child's period of absence from the customary family setting beyond 180 days, including when the child, parent, or other caretaker relative is attending school pursuant to a plan approved by the department, and when the extension of time is beyond the control of the parent or other custodial relative receiving assistance.

- A parent or other caretaker relative must notify the department of an absence within the five-day period that begins on the date that it reasonably becomes clear to the parent or other caretaker relative that the absence will be for a period of greater than 180 days.

The income disregards for mandatory household members are:

- An earned income disregard of 50 percent is applied to applicants/recipients, including working minors who are not currently enrolled or making progress in school, or 100% for working minors enrolled in school

- Only a portion of the income/resources of the parents of a minor parent is deemed as available, if the minor parent, living in the household, is applying for TANF with their own dependent child(ren). This includes the parents of a pregnant minor.

- All SSI income.

- For household members who are ineligible due to immigration status:

  o Income for ineligible family members is totaled.

  o Earned income is given a 50% deduction and totaled with unearned income

- The payment standard for the eligible household members is subtracted from the payment standard for a household that would include ineligible members

- After income is totaled, the difference between the two payment standards is subtracted and the following is deducted:

  o Legally-ordered child support

  o Employment-related child care expenses

- Whatever is left over, after deductions, is counted for the household.

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L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(a)(1)(B)(v) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT):

- *Providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title),*

- *In other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.*

The state will assist TANF adults in receiving training for or obtaining employment in eldercare related employment in the home, health, community care, and long-term care facilities when there are identified employment opportunities in local communities.

In general, the TANF/WorkFirst program seeks to balance meeting the needs of adults, based on their particular work histories, employment barriers, and personal goals, with the actual opportunities available to them on the job market. As indicated under (c) above, the Department relies upon its WorkFirst partner, the Employment Security Department, to provide job market information and other employment services to its clients. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, another WorkFirst partner, provides oversight of high-wage, high-demand education and training program approval and career pathway planning services to clients. The ultimate goal is economic self-sufficiency and an end to reliance on public assistance.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

Through a variety of state and community-based service providers, the State offers the following types of services which meet one, or more, of the four TANF purposes. Services provided to families (and qualifying non-custodial parents) whose income is at or below 400% of the (FPL):

- Financial literacy

- Classes in child development, community resources, and parenting skills

- One-to-one mentoring of children and youth in professionally supported relationships

- Individual, marital, and family counseling services, to include domestic violence counseling for victims and offenders

- Alternative secondary education for at-risk youth that provides education, clinical counseling, and social services to students and families who have social adjustment, emotional, or school related difficulties

- Community centers that provide family support and family preservation services

- Domestic abuse shelters that provide victims of domestic violence and their families with a safe haven of temporary shelter with provisions for basic needs (food, clothing, etc.), counseling, and services for children

- Housing for eligible victims who need safety and support and are ready to go to school/work

- Preschool programs for 3 and 4 year old children provided at no cost to income eligible children

- Medical services and financial benefits to needy family members to address work-related injuries

- Domestic violence services such as assessment service, planning, counseling services, case management, and linkage and referral to recipients of TANF who have or are currently experiencing issues of safety and functioning related to domestic violence, which would adversely affect their ability to become self-sufficient

- State funded medical care to help needy families

- After school programs for children

- Food, meals, groceries, and volunteer services at food and commodity outlets and soup kitchens

- Services and education activities to prepare for employment

- Residential shelter and outreach to eligible teens

- One-time financial and material assistance to eligible families

- Education and enrichment programs to children from infancy and up

- Youth development programs

- Programs that address social-economic barriers, family violence, lack of workplace skills, poverty, teenage pregnancy, poor school performance, and behavioral difficulties

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- Programs that provide public awareness, education, and advocacy to prevent child abuse and neglect in families

- Drug and alcohol treatment

- Subsidized and unsubsidized work experience

N. TANF CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—	Department of Social and Health Services
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes

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4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse,including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	Yes

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EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 6(D)(4) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(D)(4)))

TALENT AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL
INTRODUCTION

The Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) Economic Services Administration's (EAS) administers the Basic Food Employment and Training program (BFET), which will be included in the Washington State WIOA Combined Plan as an Combined Plan partner program. BFET joins the plan to articulate the programs' role in aligning with, leveraging, and supporting workforce development efforts in Washington State, but not as a partner within the one-stop delivery system due to the 50/50 match and reimbursement structure of the program. BFET is administered through a 50% reimbursement program with 43 community-based organizations (CBOs), 34 community and technical colleges, the Employment Security Department and the DSHS's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA). The program provides supervised job search, job search training, educational services, skills training, help with development of self-employment microenterprises, a year of post-employment support services, and support services to Basic Food recipients not participating in the state's TANF program.

BFET aligns strongly with the guiding principles through focusing on supporting individuals and families in building their skills and fully making use of their talents through employment and/or education and training. Participants are eligible for support services with a focus on engagement by reducing barriers, such as assisting with transportation and accessing quality child care. Access to these supports increase the ability of Washington state residents to more fully participate in the workforce system, and for communities to benefit from the skills and abilities of their residents.

ESA strives to align its employment and training programs with other programs and services implemented under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA allows partner agencies who administer education, employment and training programs to leverage resources and coordinate approaches to help workers and job seekers, including youth (age 16-24 years old) and adults with low incomes, acquire skills and credentials that meet employers' needs.

BFET served 42,140 participants over the past five Federal Fiscal Years (FFY 2019-2023), with anticipated 9% growth over the next FFY. The BFET program operates in 35 of 39 counties in Washington State and is one of the most robust employment and training programs in the country.

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A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. <u>THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED. IF A STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (E)(2)(I) OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO INCLUDE IN THE E&T PLAN A SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTING SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH. THIS SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES, AT A MINIMUM, MUST DESCRIBE: THE CRITERIA USED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH, AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THOSE CRITERIA WERE CHOSEN, AND HOW THE SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH COMPONENT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS TO DIRECTLY SUPERVISE THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS AND TRACK THE TIMING AND ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS;</u>

Washington's E&T Program, called Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) began as a pilot in 2005 in the White Center community. BFET provides assistance to Basic Food recipients on a voluntary basis to assist in employability. Eligible individuals have the ability to receive the following services through contracted services offered at local community based organizations (CBO) and community and technical colleges (CTC):

- **Adult Basic Education/English Language Acquisition** includes education activities provided to participants with low reading, writing or math skills in order to raise their overall employability. High School Equivalency (formerly GED), High School Completion, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and English Language Acquisition (ELA).

- **Supervised Job Search** activities assist participants while looking for employment. This may include access to job listings, email, fax, telephone or assistance in preparing applications and resumes.

- **Job Search Training** activity is education and assistance provided to participants to secure employment. This may include education in a career setting, like Washington's I-BEST, assistance in preparing applications, resume writing, interview skills, and general computer instruction related to seeking employment.

- **Support Services** are ongoing supplemental assistance to assist clients during the transition to education and/or employment approved activities. This can include: transportation, child care, housing, clothing, books, educational supplies, tools, emergency assistance, etc.

- **Vocational Education** is education or instruction in specific skills and abilities required in an occupational field. This may include occupational assessment, remedial and entry

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level job skills training, customized and institutional skill training, and upgrade training.

- **Life Skills** training includes gaining abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life and employment.

- **Work Based Learning** is an activity defined as training in the private for-profit sector, non-profit sector, or public sector. This training can be an internship (Planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time; a program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship (A program or position in which a person learns a trade by working under a certified expert, or on-the-job training. BFET WBL is based on the partnerships BFET Providers build with employers in their area.

- **Integrated Education and Training** is an activity that provides Basic Education and/or English Language Acquisition (instruction or education that leads to a certificate; degree or industry recognized credential for an occupational field) activities concurrently and contextually with Vocational Education activities (Instruction or education that leads to a certificate; degree or industry recognized credential for an occupational field.

- **English Language Acquisition** is an activity that assists individual who are English language learners improve skills in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; or transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment

BFET is a 50% match reimbursement program. CBOs and CTCs are reimbursed for 50% of the approved activities as outlined in their contract. In FFY 2019, DSHS contracted and operated a 50% match reimbursement program with 43 CBO's, 34 community and technical colleges, the Employment Security Department and the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA).

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2. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

Basic Food & Employment Training (BFET) Operating Budget			
Instructions for completion: Complete all cells, as applicable that are shown in gray. The cells that are blue are either being prepopulated from contracts or partnerships table or will automatically calculate and populate some of the cells that are included in the Funding Sources table. the Non-Federal Share will include any State/local funds or funds being provided through third-party partnerships. Federal share will include the 100 percent Federal E&T funds and the federal share of the 50/50 funds.			
Expense Category	**Non-Federal Share**	**Federal Share**	**Total**
I. Direct Program and Admin Costs			
Salary/Wages (State agency only)		$ 1,981,792.00	$ 1,981,792.00
Fringe Benefits - provide approved fringe benefit rate percentage in line 8 below. Or provide total fringe benefits in line 9 if multiple rates are used by the State agency			
	$ -	$ -	$ -
Fringe Benefits -		$ 723,103.75	$ 723,104.00
Non-capital equipment			$ -

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Materials		$ 21,500.00	$ 21,500.00
Travel	$ -	$ 150,000.00	$ 150,000.00
Building Space	$ -		$ -
Equipment and other capital expenditures			$ -
Subtotal - State agency costs only	$ -	$ 2,876,395.75	$ 2,876,395.75
Contractual Costs: *Is prepopulating from Contract-Partnerships Table, must not include Participant reimbursements.*	$ 19,252,488.50	$ 19,436,154.50	$ 38,688,643.00
County Administered Program Admin Cost, if applicable: *Is prepopulating from Tab D - Optional County Admin Budget.*	$ -	$ -	$ -
County Administered Direct Program Admin Cost, if applicable. *Enter County costs here if Tab D - Optional County Admin Budget table is not used.*			$ -
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	$ 19,252,488.50	$ 22,312,550.25	$ 41,565,038.75
II. Indirect Costs - using indirect cost rate: *Indirect costs are only calculated on the subtotal of State agency costs shown on Row 15.*			
Indirect Costs - provide approved indirect cost rate percentage in line 23 below.			
8.08%	$ -	$ 232,274.00	$ 232,274.00

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Indirect Costs - using Federally Approved Cost Allocation Plan.			
Federally Approved Cost Allocated Costs - State agency only.			$ -
County Administered Allocated Costs (only applicable to County Administered Programs)			$ -
Total Allocated Costs based on Cost Allocation Plan	$ -	$ -	$ -
III. In-kind contribution			
State in-kind contribution	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Administrative Costs	$ 19,252,488.50	$ 22,544,824.25	$ 41,797,312.75
IV. Participant Reimbursements			
Dependent Care (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	$ 75,975.00	$ 76,675.00	$ 152,650.00
Transportation & Other costs (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	$ 3,255,767.00	$ 3,297,994.00	$ 6,553,761.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care	$ -		$ -
Total Participant Reimbursements	$ 3,331,742.00	$ 3,374,669.00	$ 6,706,411.00
V. Total Costs	$ 22,584,230.50	$ 25,919,493.25	$ 48,503,723.75

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Section C - SNAP Employment and Training Funding Sources

Instructions for completion: All blue cells will automatically calculate or will be populated from other worksheets, such as the planned expenses table or annual allocations. State agencies that receive additional 100 percent Federal funds will include the amount approved in the "allocation or target" column. The planned expenses shown for the 100 Percent Federal Grant will be inclusive of the formula allocation as well as any additional federal funds approved. All "Planned Expenses" are being populated from planned expenses table.

Source type	Funding Sources	Allocation or Target	Distribution of Planned Expenses	Over/Under Allocation/Target or Over/Under Planned Expenses	Percent of Allocation Planned Use
Federal	100 Percent Federal Grant	$ 2,548,918.00	$ 2,548,918.00	$ -	100%
Federal	100 Percent Federal - Additional Funds		$ -	$ -	
Federal	ABAWD Pledge Grant, if applicable	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Federal	Total - All 100 Percent Funds	$ 2,548,918.00	$ 2,548,918.00	$ 559,751.75	
Federal	50 Percent Administrative		$ 19,716,030.38		
Non-Federal	50 Percent Administrative		$ 19,532,364.38		
Federal	50 Percent Participant Reimbursements		$ 3,374,669.00		
Non-Federal	50 Percent Participant Reimbursements		$ 3,331,742.00		

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Federal	Total 50 Percent Federal Target	$ 32,589,784.00	$ 23,090,699.38	$ (9,499,084.63)	
NonFederal					
	Total	$ 35,138,702.00	$ 48,503,723.75		

Total Fiscal Year Plan Funding			
Funding Sources	**Non-Federal Share**	**Federal Share**	**Total**
100 Percent Federal Grant		$ 2,548,918.00	$ 2,548,918.00
ABAWD Pledge Grant, if applicable		$ -	$ -
50 Percent Administrative	$ 19,532,364.38	$ 19,716,030.38	$ 39,248,394.75
50 Percent Dependent Care	$ 75,975.00	$ 76,675.00	
50 Percent Transportation/Other	$ 3,255,767.00	$ 3,297,994.00	
50 Percent Total Participant Reimbursements	$ 3,331,742.00	$ 3,374,669.00	$ 6,706,411.00
Total 50 Percent Funds	$ 22,864,106.38	$ 23,090,699.38	$ 45,954,805.75
Total	$ 22,864,106.38	$ 25,639,617.38	$ 48,503,723.75

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3. <u>THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS.</u>

The BFET state plan submitted and approved by FNS acknowledges the voluntary participation program and exempts all households receiving Basic Food Assistance from mandatory participation in E&T activities. This includes mandatory work registrants and Able Bodied Adults Without Dependent's (ABAWDs).

4. <u>THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T.</u>

BFET serves individuals who are eligible for Basic Food Assistance and have a desire to pursue an education or need assistance in obtaining employment. Recipients enrolled in the BFET program must be ready to work and commit to the ability to engage in employment and training activities of at least 20 hours per week.

Washington State is a voluntary state and exempts all work registrants. Washington targeted population are ABAWDS both mandatory and voluntary participants, and Underemployed.

5. <u>THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;</u>

BFET served the following individuals in FY 2015 – 2023: It is estimated 12,874 individuals will participate in BFET in FFY 2024 anticipated growth 9%.

FFY	# of Unique Clients Served
2015	20,558
2016	20,383
2017	20,119
2018	18,390
2019	17,613
2020	13,809
2021	10,848
2022	10,814
2023	11,799

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6. <u>THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED.</u>

BFET services are administered by local Community Based Organizations (CBO)s, and all 34 State Community and Technical colleges. BFET currently operates and provides services in 36 of the 39 Washington counties. These counties include Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Grays Harbor, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, Whatcom, and Yakima Counties.

BFET continues to seek opportunities to increase providers in counties with expand into the 11 counties not currently served (Adams, Columbia, Douglas, Garfield, Island, Jefferson, Lincoln, San Juan, and Whitman). The program has not had the opportunity to provide services in these counties due to the lack of CBOs operating E&T activities in these counties.

7. <u>THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR.</u>

During SNAP eligibility application and review interviews, the last step of our Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) is the Work Registration page. State eligibility workers must use all of the information they have gathered over the course of the interview (student status, employment history, disabilities, etc.) to make work registration decisions. State eligibility workers then enter in the work registration status for the client on this screen. The computer program will assist, suggesting specific codes if certain parameters in the case are met; for example if the client is a student or if they have a disability. State eligibility workers use the Work Registration desk aid to assist them in making a determination.

Outcome Reporting

Evaluation plan reports are provided to FNS annually. Reports provided to FNS contain the following information:

1. The number and percentage of E&T participants and former participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after completion of participation in E&T;

2. The number and percentage of E&T participants and former participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after completion of participation in E&T;

3. The median quarterly earnings of all the E&T participants and former participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after completion of participation in E&T;

4. The number and percentage of participants that completed a training, educational, work experience or an on-the-job training component; and

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5. The number of all E&T participants who:

    a. Are voluntary vs. mandatory participants

    b. Have received a high school degree (or GED) prior to being provided with E&T services

    c. Are Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

    d. Speak English as a second language

    e. Are male or female

    f. Are within each of the following age ranges: 16-17, 18-35, 36-49, 50-59, 60 or older and

    g. Activity Participation: Supervised job Search; Job Search Training; Basic Education; Vocational education; and Strategies for Success/Life Skills.

    h. The number and percentage of participants that received high school diploma or equivalency prior to participation in E&T.

Of the number and percentage of E&T participants to be reported in the first four measures above, a disaggregation of the number and percentage of those participants by the characteristics listed in a, b, and c. A participant may have more than one characteristic.

Data Match Processes and Cohort Definition

Washington's employment data match is designed to capture employment outcomes from all service providers. A participant cohort is identified in each quarter, comprised of BFET clients who exited due to employment during the quarter. Each quarter's cohort is tracked as a whole for four quarters after the initial quarter to measure employment and performance over time.

The participant cohort for the entered employment data match is identified through the eJAS system by the start date of the service component code. The cohort is defined as those participants exiting the program due to employment, within a given quarter, following the federal fiscal year. For example, if someone starts participating on November 1, 2017, he or she will become part of the first federal fiscal quarter cohort.

Each quarterly cohort is followed for four quarters and matched with Washington's Employment Security Department's Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage file and New Hire Directory (from ACES). If a participant in the cohort is employed on either file, he or she will be tallied and sorted by service component. The results of the data match report is reviewed quarterly along with the cohort's employment median earnings. The department uses this information to measure contractors' performance and program employment outcomes.

Washington provides annual reports to FNS WRO using the evaluation data match and implemented data share agreements with Employment Security Department and the State Board

for Community and Technical Colleges. The available evaluation data continues to reflect strong program outcomes.

8. <u>THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS–583;</u>

Same as above.

9. <u>THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);</u>

Same as above.

10. <u>THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;</u>

SNAP eligibility is determined by DSHS staff located within the local Community Service Office (CSO). Staff who determine SNAP eligibility and certification are Public Benefit Specialist (PBS) or Work First Program Specialist. During the eligibility process staff recognize that a client may be eligible for BFET services.

Washington State eligibility workers ask five screening questions in the Barcode system:

1. Are you currently seeking employment or want help finding a job?

2. Would you be able to work at least 20 hours per week?

3. Are you interested in any education or training?

4. Are you interested in getting a high school diploma, high school equivalency or English as a second language (ESL) Classes?

5. Are you interested in getting a degree, or certification or other specialized training to increase your employability?

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Each answer to the questions goes into a decision tree within Barcode to correlate with specific activities.

BFET services are administered by CBO's. SNAP recipients must make contact with a CBO in their area who determine eligibility for the BFET program and engage participants in approved BFET activities. BFET activity is tracked in the eJAS system. The eJAS system relays participant information to/from the ACES system, which informs DSHS staff of a participant's participation in the BFET program. BFET is a voluntary participation program and noncompliance by the participant does not impact SNAP certification.

11. <u>THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION; THE STATE AGENCY MUST DOCUMENT HOW IT CONSULTED WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD. IF THE STATE AGENCY CONSULTED WITH PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS IN LIEU OF THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, IT MUST DOCUMENT THIS CONSULTATION AND EXPLAIN THE DETERMINATION THAT DOING SO WAS MORE EFFECTIVE OR EFFICIENT. THE STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE IN ITS E&T STATE PLAN A DESCRIPTION OF ANY OUTCOMES FROM THE CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OR PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS. THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO ADDRESS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN THE EXTENT TO WHICH E&T ACTIVITIES WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN COORDINATION WITH THE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I OF WIOA;</u>

Washington's BFET Program contracts services with CBO's, the Employment Security Department and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to administer services. Each contract specifies performance measurements and identifies deliverable services.

The Washington State workforce development system is a collaborative partnership between state agencies and organizations that include:

- Employment Security Department (ESD)

- Department of Commerce

- State Board of Community Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI, serving K-12)

- Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

- Workforce Development Councils (WDC)

- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB or Board)

- Various businesses, labor and job-seekers, constituents, local elected officials, and the and community based partners

WTECB is structured as a tripartite board with representation from business, labor, and government. The Board is federally approved as a WIOA board. While the structure is not WIOA compliant, the Board and its composition was approved and grandfathered in during the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to WIOA transition. The DSHS Secretary has a nonvoting seat on the Board. Each of the 12 WDCs is headed by a Board, structured to be WIOA compliant or with structure approved with a waiver based on local need and status.

CSD has formally appointed, local representatives to liaise with each of the WDCs to represent the interests of the customers served, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and BFET customers. Many of these representatives hold voting seats on the Boards. If they do not, they are official members of established system committees convened by the WDCs in order to collaborate and inform local system structures and services. Washington State has developed a WIOA Combined Plan, entitled, "Talent and Prosperity for All," to create a common vision for workforce development vision, structure, priorities and strategies. This plan serves not only as the WIOA state plan, but as the overarching workforce development plan for the state. BFET is included as a voluntary partner in the plan.

ESD conducts labor market research for the state, and maintains publicly accessible, current list of in-demand occupations and those in decline. Demand occupations and sectors are determined regionally, and updated quarterly. All allowable WIOA training activities must be in alignment with this data, ensuring that program participants receive training resulting in skills that make them eligible to be hired in local, in demand sectors and occupations. Each of the 12 WDCs publish on their websites the local in-demand sectors and industries, and their local area/regional priorities. Workforce development partners, including BFET providers, have access to this data and use it to inform program and practice used to inform clients find high-demand employment.

Many BFET Providers convene in Local Planning Area meetings or BFET only provider lead meeting to collaborate and discuss their programming for the needs of their specific communities. DSHS supports this effort by attending the meetings as a resource for any policy questions, comments or program improvements.

12. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

The Centennial Accord signed by the Governor of WA state on August 4, 1989 was established to better achieve mutual goals through an improved relationship between WA state government and tribal sovereign governments and includes 26 federally recognized tribes. The accord strives to attain, "a government –to – government relationship into more-efficient, improved and beneficial services to Indian people and non-Indian people".

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Washington State has a history of working with local tribal councils and programs, such as the Tribal TANF program. The CSD staff to include the BFET Administrator participates on the WA state DSHS Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC), which was established in 1977 to guide the implementation of the Original Concurrent Jurisdiction Tribal State Agreement of 1987; the Centennial Accord; the Millennium Accord and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs.

BFET program staff regularly attend 7.01 tribal meetings, the Indian Policy Advisory Committee meetings, and various tribal councils throughout the year. Participation in these meeting is an efficient way to address Tribes questions and identify needs for follow up support with current provides as well as with those that express new interest in the program. BFET Presentations are available at any time, to provide information on services and partnership opportunities. This has proven to be an effective method of outreach for new and existing tribal partnerships and improves access to BFET.

Washington partners with the following tribes to deliver BFET services:

- *Northwest Indian College*: Located in the northwest corner of Washington has provided vocational education through BFET for basic food recipients enrolled in their college for over six years.

- *Confederated Tribe of the Colville Reservation*: Located in Nespelem in eastern Washington. The program provides employment readiness opportunities to basic food recipients. Services will be provided in Omak, Nespelem, Keller and Inchelium.

- *Yakama Nation*: Located in Yakima County, in Eastern Washington. The program provides employment readiness opportunities to basic food recipients. They offer several certification programs to the enrolled members of Yakama Nation.

13. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD; AND

BFET does not have a process. The program is voluntary.

14. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILDCARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILDCARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

BFET participants who are participating in activities and in need of childcare services are required to apply for childcare assistance through Washington's Childcare Subsidy Program (CCSP). Funding for the CCSP is paid out of the Childcare Development Fund and the TANF block grant. If participants are not eligible to receive CCSP funds, CBO's may assist the participant and request reimbursement from the program.

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15. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

The BFET program will reimburse partners for providing support services (participant reimbursement) for transportation expenses for participants in an approved BFET activity. This includes bus passes, gas voucher, auto repair, etc. These costs cannot exceed $1,600 annually.

16. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.

The BFET program will reimburse CBO's for providing support services (participant reimbursement) if the client is participating in an approved activity. BFET will reimburse the CBO for the following support services:

- Transportation, maximum $1,600 per participant per program year;

- Books/Training Supplies, No maximum cost limit per participant per program year

- Housing, maximum $5,00 per participant per program year.

    o Ongoing housing expenses are not allowed. May be used to assist an emergent housing expense, with a plan for the Participant to pay ongoing.

    o Cannot be used for mortgage payments, mortgage insurance or mortgage taxes.

    o Cannot be used for electricity, gas or other utilities.

- Childcare, no maximum cost limit per participant per program year.

    o If a participant is ineligible for childcare through Childcare Subsidy Program (CCSP), but performs approved BFET activities, you may approve childcare services for the participant through a third party lease ensure that verification of CCSP denial is provided in the participant's file.

    o If a participant needs assistance with an initial copay for CCSP childcare, this can be provided as long as the participant can pay the copay moving forward.

- Clothing, maximum $800 per participant per program year. Examples:

    o Uniforms

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- Special Shoes
- Special Clothing / Interview clothing
- Protective Devices
- Work Appropriate Clothing
- Under Clothing
- Other apparel as needed

- Digital Support, maximum $700 per device per program year. Examples:
  - Laptop
  - Mouse/mouse pad
  - Monitor/screen
  - Headphones
  - Web cam
  - USB
  - Required software for training.

- Personal Hygiene, maximum $800 per participant per program year, Personal hygiene items include but is not limited to:
  - Soap
  - Shampoo
  - Toothpaste/mouthwash
  - Deodorant
  - Shaving supplies
  - Feminine hygiene supplies
  - Make up
  - Laundry supplies
  - Hair cut/color

- Phone/Internet, no maximum cost limit per participant per program year.
  - Only if required to participate in an activity.

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- If internet is bundled with other services such as cable and phone services, only the internet portion can be reimbursed.

- Medical, no maximum cost limit per participant per program year

  - Medical fees and supplies:

  - Funds for medical assistance are allowable after exhausting all other resources, including coverage through the Affordable Care Act, such as minor dental work, inoculations, eye examinations, and eyeglasses.

- Educational/Credential Testing Fees, no maximum cost limit per participant per program year.

17. <u>FOR EACH COMPONENT THAT IS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE 100 OR MORE PARTICIPANTS, REPORTING MEASURES THAT THE STATE WILL COLLECT AND INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT IN PARAGRAPH (C)(17) OF THIS SECTION. SUCH MEASURES MAY INCLUDE:</u>

State Component Reporting Measures

1. Quarterly Wage Records (QWR) - this report is 6 months delayed as we receive the information from L&I, then our date warehouse team rolls it up by each contracted provider. The report captures the listed data below.

   - # clients in a cohort

   - #Employed

   - Median hourly wage

   - Earns Match

   - Total Employed

   - % Employed

2. State Management Information System.

   - DSHS uses the Automated Client Eligibility System Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) Data Warehouse and Electronic Jobs Automated System Electronic Jobs Automated System (eJAS).

   - This system captures the progress and longevity of each BFET clients participation and when a client gains employment, such as:

     - Date the client is enrolled in BFET

     - Progress notes

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- Participant reimbursement/Support Services

- Employment

- Date the client exits or change their BFET component activities

Manual follow-up with SNAP E&T Participants.

- Our BFET providers follow up with clients who become employed, complete education or training. They attempt to do so using all communication methods: verbal, email and mail. If successful this information is entered into eJAS.

Annual SNAP E&T Report, Exiters- this report includes:

- Measures

- Time Period

- Values(numerator/denominator)

- Characteristics

- ABAWD

- Components

- Participant Characteristics

- National Reporting Measures include:

  - Unsubsidized employment in 2nd quarter after completion of participation in E&T

  - Median Quarterly Wages in 2nd Quarter after completion of participation in E&T

  - Unsubsidized employment in 4th quarter after completion of participation in E&T

  - Completion of an educational, training, work experience, or an on-the-job training component.

- National Reporting Measures Disaggregated Characteristics: measures, characteristic & values.

  - Measures

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- o Unsubsidized employment in 2nd quarter after completion of participation in E&T

- o Median Quarterly Wages in 2nd Quarter after completion of participation in E&T

- o Unsubsidized employment in 4th quarter after completion of participation in E&T

- o Completion of an educational, training, work experience, or an on-the-job training component.

  - ▪

- • Characteristics-in each measure

  - o a. Voluntary Participant

  - o b. Mandatory Participant

  - o c. Received high school diploma or equivalency prior to participation in E&T

  - o d. Received high school diploma or equivalency prior to participation in E&T – education level unknown

  - o e. ABAWD

- • Participants Characteristics

  - o Voluntary vs. Mandatory

  - o Education

  - o ABAWD

  - o Speak English as a Second Language

  - o Gender

  - o Age

- • ABAWD

  - o Monthly average # of individuals in the State who meet the conditions of an at-risk ABAWD

  - o Monthly average # of individuals whom stat State offered a position in a qualifying E&T activity or workfare program

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- Monthly average# of individual who participated in such programs

- A description of the types of employment and training programs the State agency offered to at-risk ABAWDS and the availability of those programs throughout the state

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TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above?

Agency Response:

Yes.

(6) Describe the State's policy on WIOA and TAA co-enrollment and whether and how often this policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required one-stop partners Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(a)(3)(i).

Agency Response:

Policy 5617, Revision 3 Co-enrollment of Trade Adjustment Assistance participants into the WIOA Title I-B Dislocated Worker program, communicates the requirement to co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-B Dislocated Worker program if they are eligible, unless they decline. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) must have policies for co-enrolling TAA participants into the WIOA Title 1-B DW program. In addition, DW providers are required to accept referrals of TAA participants and have a process for doing so.

A referral to WIOA is required for all TAA program participants and the WIOA program is to inform the TAA program of the participant enrollment or if the participant declines enrollment in a timely manner.

The state is bound to the co-enrollment requirements and can enforce the co-enrollment requirement at the state and local levels. Employment Security Department (ESD) has a monitoring unit that monitors co-enrollment of TAA and WIOA. Policy 5414 establishes monitoring standards that apply to all partners at all levels of participation in the Workforce System funded by Title I of WIOA. ESD's Workforce Monitoring unit conducts on-site monitoring of each Workforce Development area (WSA) on an annual basis.

These policies are made available to all Washington WorkSource system staff and One-Stop partners on the Workforce Professional Center (WPC) website. An announcement is sent out to the WorkSource System when a policy is developed or revised.

The DOL Co-Enrollment requirement and state policies created to adhere to this requirement strengthen the collaboration and integrated service delivery that greatly benefits a dislocated worker. This represents a future service delivery that will be necessary to best service our mutual customer. As resources and funding gets tighter and the need for additional services to reach more workers and those who are under-served with significant barriers in gaining good jobs

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increases, collaboration with braided services and funding across our one-stop system is even more important.

(7) Describe the State's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)

Agency Response:

Co-enrollment with WIOA is a requirement of TAA program enrollment and service delivery as set forth by the DOL. The TAA program is administrated in Washington State by the ESD, Employment Connections Division. The state's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services is increased communication, training and partnership between both ESD and the LWDB's.

TAA staff and LWDB staff well versed in the TAA program share co-enrollment information within their teams.

TAA case managers are trained to inform the benefits of co-enrollment to all new TAA participants, not only to WIOA but other programs that would best serve a dislocated worker. This is required during the creation of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP). TAA staff have also been trained to identify established TAA participants who may have declined to co-enroll at the beginning but when additional supports are identified during an update to the IEP during the enrollment duration.

The TAA Program keeps a focus on integration and wrap around service delivery by collaboration with other service providers to support these workers in returning to suitable employment. It has been documented by DOL that a higher percentage of workers complete training when co-enrolled with WIOA. The TAA program provides training and income support while in training for dislocated workers who are certified eligible for TAA under a petition. The training funding can be used for classroom training at a training provider, on-the-job training or apprenticeship training. This funding can be braided with other program funding to fully support a dislocated worker enrolled in training.

Continued conversation with TAA and partner programs leadership as well as information sharing is needed to successfully co-enroll TAA workers with necessary partner program supports such as WIOA and others. TAA is required to conduct continuous outreach to workers eligible for the program on previous TAA certifications. Historically, only 25% of workers on certified petitions have enrolled in the program and accessed their benefits and services. This may be a result of eligible workers securing re-employment quickly or they may have experienced barriers that prevented them from accessing the program. As we increase collaboration and partnership with WIOA and other programs, we are expecting to increase the number of TAA dislocated workers that enroll in the program.

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The TAA Program team has been attending partner coordination meetings with WIOA Dislocated Worker, Rapid Response, WARN, TRA, Policy and the Washington State Labor Council and other LWDBs and training providers. This is to inform all one-stop staff and partners about the TAA program and how the program can benefit workers.

The TAA program is increasing outreach efforts and has launched large mailings and phone calls to TAA workers who are eligible for the program and have not enrolled or have benefits still available to them. When a TAA worker contacts a TAA Case manager, they are assessed for what they need and not just for the TAA Program. Referrals are made to partner programs to assist.

(8) Describe the State's process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

Agency Response:

The TAA program is increasing its presence and sharing how the program can benefit job seekers to all one-stop staff as part of the program requirement to continue outreach to formerly certified workers that may need to be co-enrolled in WIOA. The TAA program has informed other program leadership such as RESEA about the TAA program and asked them to instruct their program staff to ask questions during RESEA appointments to identify TAA workers. In addition, the team will be meeting more with WIOA providers to inform them of how TAA will benefit their customers and how to identify a TAA worker.

The TAA program will be conducting all-staff training at all WorkSource offices to ensure that both ESD and partner staff have the tools necessary to discuss resources available for trade affected workers and connect those customers to TAA staff. Partnerships will enable the TAA program to reach more workers as other one-stop partners include TAA in their service delivery or assessment discussions as we look at collaboration and sharing information to braid resources and funding. The future implementation of a shared case management system to include a common registration will also help identify every program that benefits a dislocated worker.

All ESD staff are required to complete program trainings to learn about all programs offered in the WorkSource one-stop system. This enables staff to know the programs and learn how the one-stop partnership collaboration best supports customers.

Focused TAA Case Management training is also required for all new TAA case managers. TAA Case Managers and Supervisors attend regular all staff meetings and attend monthly Technical Training Sessions and discuss co-enrollment and how to work with WIOA partners to increase customer enrollment as well as continuing engagement and service delivery.

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TALENT AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL
INTRODUCTION

Talent and Prosperity of All guiding principles and strategic priorities are reflected upon those who took a sacred oath to serve and protect our nation. Upon release from military service and without a dishonorable discharge, the Veteran will find themself economically disadvantaged compared to their same-aged peers who did not volunteer for service and were instead able to complete their education and enter the workforce sooner. When this already marginalized population is additionally compounded by key significant barriers to employment, it is critical for WorkSource entry-points (including partners) to screen for and refer those eligible to JVSG for the receipt of individualized services from specialized JVSG staff. Held accountable, JVSG staff are committed to assessing barriers, creating plans to overcome them, consistently remain in contact, and record the history and story from their WorkSource entry and to their exit. Performance metric results will consistently reflect a cherished customer entering the workforce, retention of employment, and median wages above the national average.

(OMB Control Number: 1225-0086)

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to States (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported quarterly on a Program Year basis . Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff, and Consolidated DVOP/LVER staff. In Washington State, Consolidated positions are titled Consolidated Veterans Service Representatives (CVSRs) and their actions are included when referring to both DVOP and LVER actions throughout this plan.

As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

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A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG PROGRAM;

The Veterans Individual Case Management Model (G. Appendix pg. 511) implemented statewide on December 1, 2013, ensures a standardized and integrated approach to assisting Veterans and other eligible persons with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs) in overcoming barriers and ultimately securing living wage employment.

Non-JVSG staff:

Once a Veteran or other potential eligible person is identified by non-JVSG staff (from any WorkSource entry point, including those provided through virtual services), they are informed of Priority of Service (POS), are offered a Veteran screening questionnaire (either verbally or in writing) to self-attest barriers to meet eligibility for a referral to a DVOP or CVSR. The customer is offered a basic assessment for job readiness and further screened for potential eligibility of all programs within a local WorkSource. Once determined to meet DVOP eligibility, the customer is referred to the DVOP or CVSR. If the DVOP or CVSR is not immediately available, or the customer did not meet eligibility, the non-JVSG staff will begin providing basic level services and as mentioned earlier, screen for and refer to other programs of eligibility.

DVOP and CVSRs Staff:

Whether meeting in-person or through virtual platforms, if the DVOP or CVSR determines, through a comprehensive or specialized assessment, the eligible Veteran or person is experiencing a SBE and they are motivated to overcome those barriers, the DVOP or CVSR will enroll them into case management services and begin development of an Individual Participant Plan (IPP). The IPP identifies specific and measurable short and long-term goals to overcome barriers to obtain suitable employment or financial stability. An example of a measurable short-term goal could be Improving job search skills by attending Job Hunter Workshops this week, and a long-term goal could be Expunging law violations, which would include all the steps necessary to do so. The IPP is a fluid document tool as it ebbs and flows with the new and continuing issues and needs that the client may face in meeting their goals over the course of case management. This plan, other assessments, basic and individualized services, along with case notes are recorded in our management information system.

Through consistent contact, DVOPs and CVSRs serve case managed clients at least once every 14 days to assist the client in obtaining their goal of employment, meeting more frequently depending on the barrier(s) the client is experiencing. Individualized, one-on-one career services between the client and DVOP or CVSR are framed by customer-first service delivery, building for trust and rapport, and helping our clients overcome self-defeating behaviors and actions. The DVOP or CVSR coordinates with the client and other AJC staff to co-enroll in other suitable programs such as Basic Food Employment Training (BFET), WIOA Dislocated Worker, Adult or Youth programs, WorkFirst, State Vocational Rehabilitation, and other local partner

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programs to address skill-based, educational, or support service gaps. The DVOP or CVSR collaborates with both internal and external partners during periods of co-enrollment while continuing to provide Individualized Career Services (ICS). Non-JVSG WorkSource staff providing ICS to Veterans in other programs will coordinate those services with the local DVOP or CVSR to provide a seamlessly integrated case management approach, including but not limited to, those instances when the DVOP or CVSR is on leave, or the position is vacant.

An example of an external partner with a period of co-enrollment while continuing to provide ICS would be how a DVOP or CVSR works with partners who manage our state's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grant programs. The HVRP resource, along with local shelters, food banks, community and faith-based organizations connect Veterans with support systems, paving a pathway towards employment. These have proven critical for not only those Veterans experiencing homelessness, but also for those Veterans transitioning from incarceration. Incarcerated and previously incarcerated Veterans (per VPL 03-14, Changes 1 & 2, and VPL 02-23) receive ICS and support through DVOP or CVSR case management. Many are eligible for HVRP, and in coordination with correctional institutions, local jails, or through Veterans Court programs aid and help them integrate back into society as a legitimate workforce talent source and contributing members of the community.

Multiple activities take place in Washington State to aid the integration of services for Veterans and other eligible persons with SBEs. DVOPs assigned to major military installations outreach to and facilitate follow-up workshops with the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), the Soldier For Life transition assistance program, Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Family Resource Center, multiple Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers, and the Fairchild Airforce Base Airman and Family Readiness Center; to meet eligible Transitioning Service Members (TSMs), Veterans, and other eligible persons while also promoting the resources and services available to job seekers at WorkSource and other AJCs across the nation. This includes making warm handoffs to other state AJCs.

The DVOPs out stationed to the American Lake Veteran Affairs medical center provide employment information and ICS to a large homeless population, in addition to ill, wounded, and injured Veterans using the facility. DVOPs and CVSRs across the state work closely with local Veteran coalitions that serve Veterans who are in crisis. These partnerships offer employment services coupled with ICS services to help Veterans overcome life and employment barriers to successfully enter the workplace or, in some cases, retain existing employment.

A portion of outreach that DVOPs and CVSRs accomplish includes building and strengthening relationships with Veterans Navigators at colleges, universities, and other training centers. They partner in helping Veterans and other eligible persons with SBEs determine appropriate career paths based on interest and labor market information, ultimately leading to marketable skills and employment, and reducing the time between training completion and career employment.

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Depending on the many potential needs of the client, DVOPs and CVSRs assist Veterans and other eligible persons in moving forward with their lives, such as:

- Skills identification (gained both inside and outside the military) and matching those skills through assessments with suitable career pathways.

- Paving pathways for retraining, whether using VA education benefits (including Veteran Readiness and Employment [VR&E]), registered apprenticeships, or short-term training in addition to partial and on-occasion full funding sources.

- Helping reframe how the client speaks about their military and civilian experiences, so they can quantify and qualify their most marketable skills, abilities, experiences, and knowledge for the specific careers they are pursuing.

- Collaborate and coordinate with LVERS to assist job ready case managed customers to be introduced to hiring managers. DVOPs will provide LVERs with targeted resumes and position descriptions for submitted position applications. This gives the LVER the ability to promote Veteran talent to specific opportunities and different hiring authorities, while also introducing applicable tax credits, the YesVets and HIRE Vets Medallion Program (HVMP) initiatives and the overall benefits of hiring a Veteran.

LVER and CVSRs and Business Service Teams:

The LVER and CVSR work in collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB), Business Services Teams (BST), and the Washington State Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT) to help educate businesses on the talent offered by Veterans while creating access to and building opportunities for all Veteran job seekers. This may be in the form of conducting employer site visits, executing in-person and virtual hiring events with priority for Veterans, assisting with job postings, or coordinating On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities or work experiences for Veterans.

Washington's Statewide LVER is adept at overcoming the challenges that exist in developing relationships with our state's largest employers, leveraging virtual tools to meet corporate stakeholders anywhere, providing warm handoffs to local area LVER and CVSRs through a collaborative and peer-type partnership. LVER and CVSRs use their Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) memberships to develop hiring manager relationships and to promote WorkSource services to employers. LVER and CVSRs conduct outreach to employers at business centers of influence and professional organizations (such as SHRM) to engage employers in the Workforce system on a regular basis through presentations at industry focused events. As an example of how SHRM is leveraged, a LVER or CVSR can arrange a Veteran spot-light event at a local chapter meeting, allowing select Veterans an opportunity to share their 60-second commercial and resumes to HR professionals in attendance.

LVER and CVSRs utilize available lists of federal contractors/sub-contractors, Veteran, women, and minority-owned businesses, newly created business WorkSourceWA.com accounts,

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information provided through chambers of commerce, coordination with union, apprenticeship programs, and business organizations to proactively outreach, promoting training programs, credentialing, and licensing for Veterans.

LVER and CVSRs also participate in cross functional teams to further build and maintain professional relationships, such as partnering with local employers to conduct mock interview workshops, job clubs, and other job search strategies. These activities have proven beneficial in providing employers a better appreciation for the challenges faced by Veterans in transitioning to civilian employment as well as providing employer's insight to the benefits of military skills and experience while creating innovative ways to introduce Veteran talent to these employers.

LVER and CVSRs additionally participate in the Washington State Military Transition Council's Community of Practice for Apprenticeship and Career Connected Learning Committee to actively engage registered apprenticeships and other training providers to learn of and secure priority opportunities for Veterans and other eligible persons with SBEs a pathway into the trades.

B. LIST THE POPULATIONS TO BE SERVED BY DVOP SPECIALISTS AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER (CVSR) STAFF, INCLUDING THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR REFERRAL TO DVOP SERVICES;

In accordance with VPL 03-14, VPL 03-14 Changes 1 and 2, VPL 07-14, and VPL 03-19 guidance, the specific groups of Veterans and eligible persons targeted for ICS by DVOP and CVSR staff are:

- **Transitioning Service Members (TSMs)**: Transitioning service members (12 months from separation or 24 months from retirement) who have been designated as not meeting career readiness standards by their active-duty command leadership (as demonstrated on line 27 on DD FORM 2648 [Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan Checklist]), or who are involuntarily separated through a service reduction in force (RIF).

  Washington state supports TSMs through DVOP outreach to the five major military installations in our state: Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), Fairchild Air Force Base (FAFB), Naval Station Everett, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and Naval Station Kitsap/Bremerton). DVOP and CVSRs seek those who have SBEs and who can benefit from ICS, engaging them at the earliest stages so employment preparations can begin prior to separation. TSMs aged 18-24 are described independently as a group in this section but are also included in this group of eligible TSMs. It is critical that the transition of recently exited Veterans benefit from partnerships of multiple service providers: the Washington Military Department, the DoD Transition Assistance Advisor of the Washington National Guard, Yellow Ribbon Program providing redeployment activities,

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Washington State Military Transition and Readiness Council (WSMTRC), and the DOL-VETS Employment Navigator & Partnership Pilot (ENPP). These activities also connect qualifying members of the Reserves and the state's National Guard with WorkSource services.

- **Recently Exited Service Members**. Recently exited service members (who separated within the last three years) who at any point in the previous 12 months have been unemployed for 27 or more weeks.

- **Veterans Lacking a High School Diploma or Equivalent Certificate**. DVOPs and CVSRs maintain close connections with secondary education offices, skill enhancement centers and employment placement specialists at local colleges to help locate educationally disadvantaged Veterans who require such services to obtain or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency, and to encourage enrollment in high school equivalency programs, as appropriate.

- **Low Income Veterans**. As defined by WIOA Section 3 (36), DVOP and CVSRs work closely with WIOA, BFET, and WorkFirst program staff to provide ICS and co-enroll low-income Veterans in programs such as OJT and short-term training, which open opportunities for in-demand, living wage employment.

- **Native American Veterans with SBEs residing on tribal lands**. Washington State has 29 federally recognized tribal nations. DVOPs and CVSRs are actively engaged with regional tribes through outreach activities to Native American centers of influence in seeking SBE eligible Veterans. Additionally, ESD staffs one CVSR position on tribal lands at the Yakama Nation Veteran Affairs center. This CVSR also offers cultural education to all our WorkSource staff on how to best strengthen relationships with all the members of our state's tribal nations to improve services for Veterans.

- **Homeless Veterans**. As defined in Section 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a) and (b)), DVOP and CVSRs target Veterans and eligible persons who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or escaping or planning to escape dangerous conditions. Working connections exist between Washington State's HVRP grantees and WorkSource. Additionally, DVOP and CVSRs conduct outreach activities at specific areas and events where homeless Veterans would likely be found, such as Veteran Stand Downs, homeless shelters, partners receiving Supportive Services for Veteran Families funding, and directly from the VA's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program. Any Veteran or eligible person who is fleeing or attempting to flee a life-threatening condition in the individual's or family's current housing situation will meet homeless eligibility for all employment and training support services.

- **Special disabled and disabled Veterans**. As defined by 38 U.S.C. 4211 (1) and (3), a Veteran who is entitled to compensation for a disability rated at 30% or more (special

disabled) or rated at 10 or 20% in the case the Veteran has a serious employment handicap, or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability are considered a Special Disabled Veteran.

Those Veterans rated below 20% (without a serious employment handicap), or those Veterans who self-attest that a VA service-connected disability claim has been submitted and are awaiting receipt of award designation are considered a Disabled Veteran.

- **Justice-involved Veterans who are currently incarcerated or released from incarceration**. DVOP and CVSRs (in regions where prisons and jails exist) perform outreach to identify Veterans for potential case management. The Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), working with the Washington Department of Corrections, refers identified Veterans who are nearing a release date to engage with the DVOP or CVSR on topics such as resume writing, interview preparation, and developing an incarceration speech. In areas of Washington where HVRP funding is available, recently incarcerated Veterans can receive transitional financial assistance with training costs and materials, work-appropriate clothing, food, and resources that will lead to employment. DVOP and CVSRs also attend and provide outreach to regional Veterans Court forums, where convicted Veterans are matched with community mentors (who are also Veterans), for peer support as they advance through the justice system.

- **Veterans Aged 18-2**4: DVOP and CVSRs continue to outreach to this youth population through strong relationships at the military installations, colleges, and community youth employment programs. These Veterans are provided ICS to assist with overcoming the challenge of being young with little work experience, most often combined with a military RIF or unfavorable exit from the military.

- **Vietnam-Era Veterans**: Per VPL 03-19, Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28th, 1961, thru May 7th, 1975, and the period beginning on August 5, 1964, and ending on May 7, 1975 (for all other Veterans of the Vietnam Era), are approved to receive DVOP or CVSR ICS. These Veterans often face challenges with the administrative and technological aspects of today's job search and employment application processes. Staff partner with community resources that teach computer skills and take full advantage of the series of employment-related workshops offered in each WorkSource office. Washington believes that DVOPs and CVSRs are best equipped to assist aging Veterans overcome unique barriers so they can obtain employment.

- **Eligible Spouses**: Per VPL 03-14, if experiencing an SBE, the spouse of a service member who is classified as missing, captured, or detained for 90 or more days; or the spouse of a 100% service-connected Veteran; or the spouse of a Veteran who has died of a service-connected disability are identified as a special population eligible for DVOP or CVSR ICS services.

- **Wounded Warriors and their caregivers**: Members of the Armed Forces who are

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wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities (MTF) or warrior transition units (WTU) are eligible for DVOP and CVSR services. Caregivers, who provide personal care services to the Veteran are also eligible for DVOP and CVSR services. Caregivers can be a family member (spouse, parent, child, step-family member, or an extended family member) or someone who lives with, but is not a member of the family of the Veteran. This caregiver eligibility is also screened for at all WorkSource centers using the Veterans screening questionnaire when they are asked "Have you or your spouse served in the military?" DVOP and CVSR staff also can discover this eligible customer through self-attested profile information related to this caregiver category when a customer creates a WorkSourceWA.com account.

- **National Guard and Reserve Members**. Targeted outreach to National Guard and Reserve (NG/R) units in instances where they may meet eligibility, such as: NG/R members who've served active-duty more than 180 days (including Title 10 military orders) and meet an SBE; NG/R who've served in support of a conflict or campaign, in which a campaign or expeditionary badge or medal was authorized and are experiencing a SBE are eligible to receive DVOP or CVSR ICS.

C. DESCRIBE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS, LVER STAFF, AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER (CVSR) POSITIONS BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104 GUIDANCE;

Consolidated Veteran Services Representative (CVSR):

In accordance with Title 38, Section 4104, and as outlined in VPL 03-14 Changes 1 and 2, VPL 07-14, VPL 03-19, and VPL 01-20 guidance; CVSRs perform both roles of DVOP and LVER to serve Veterans who are economically and/or educationally disadvantaged, serving the most vulnerable and underserved eligible customer populations by strategically locating them in targeted WorkSource locations and outstations. This includes a dedicated CVSR to serve tribal Veterans and bring additional awareness of the services AJC's also offer to those members of the 29 federally recognized tribes in our state.

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists Assigned Duties:

In Washington State and in accordance with VPL 01-20, Consolidated Positions are titled CVSRs, and their actions are included when referring to DVOP actions. In accordance with Title 38, Section 4103A, and as outlined in VPL 03-14 Changes 1 and 2, VPL 07-14, and VPL 03-19. the state's DVOP and CVSRs will support eligible Veteran and other eligible persons with SBEs who were assessed by non-JVSG staff through a Veterans screening questionnaire and if they are deemed eligible, are referred to a DVOP or CVSR for ICS.

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The DVOP or CVSR will provide ICS to eligible Veterans and other eligible persons with SBEs using Individual Case Management Model (G. Appendix pg. 511.): conducting comprehensive assessments to identify and document barriers to employment; if added to a caseload, create an IPP to set goals and action items to overcome both barriers to employment and areas that are preventing the customer from being job ready. DVOP and CVSRs follow up with case managed customers on at least a 14-day cycle for consistent contact; recording those services, taking case notes, and documenting exit outcomes in our state's case management system.

When barriers are adequately resolved, DVOPs facilitate connection of their job ready, case managed customers with LVERs and/or BSTs through delivering targeted resumes and job descriptions to facilitate professional introductions with hiring authorities; along also with assisting in facilitating Veteran placements through the WIOA OJT program.

DVOP and CVSRs support VA VR&E program participants that are referred through the ISC. These participants are identified by VA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) as "Job Ready," or in need of vocational guidance that requires a review of labor market information to assist participants with making appropriate career goals before being accepted into the VR&E program. DVOPs and CVSRs submit case management and employment status on Monthly Progress Reports (MPR) on VR&E participants to both VRCs and the ISC. This report includes contact information and methods, progress narratives, job preparation workshops attended, employment barriers discovered, IPPs (and updates), successful employment outcomes, and other information valuable to a VRC on their participant. When VR&E participants reach employment outcomes, DVOP and CVSRs will continue to case manage the customer for an additional 60 days before coordinating with the VRC for a successful closure, to ensure the job placement is satisfactory and the participant can be identified by the VRC as being successfully rehabilitated.

When a caseload is not full, DVOP and CVSRs conduct outreach to locate SBE eligible customers in a multitude of ways, evaluating effectiveness of efforts of outreach techniques and outstation locations through the community and modify as needed. Examples of outreach efforts include staffing Stand Down events to connect with homeless Veterans; jails, prisons, and Veteran court forums to connect with justice-involved Veterans and those touched by the justice system; outstation within a VA medical center for VA staff referrals for the homeless, ill, or injured Veteran; and use of internal data reports for potential eligible customers who create a new WorkSourceWA.com profile or apply for new Unemployment Insurance benefits. These outreach efforts are all designed to seek out and locate SBE eligible Veterans for DVOP and CVSRs to provide ICS.

Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC)

The ISC will work with VA VR&E Employment Coordinators, VRCs, and Veteran participants that have completed a vocational training goal through VA's Veterans Benefits Administration education benefit Chapter 31, and have been deemed job ready by a VRC. The ISC refers these

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Veterans to a local DVOP or CVSR for case management and are tracked until they have found suitable and matching employment to their vocational goals, or they exit the program. The ISC tracks progress and outcomes through a Monthly Progress Report (MPR) and helps to facilitate closures in coordination with the VRC. The ISC additionally facilitates an optional recurring VR&E orientation that VRCs can refer incoming participants to for introduction to the WorkSource/AJC system. This earliest point of introduction sets the stage for a successful partnership when the participant completes their vocational plan and is referred to a DVOP or CVSR when deemed job ready.

The ISC manages referrals through the DOL-VETS ENPP. For ENPP, Employment Navigators from over 30 select global military installations pre-screen and refer those TSMs who have been determined to not meet career readiness standards to our state. Washington State is not a location for this pilot; however, our state does receive referrals from these Employment Navigators. When a referral is received, the ISC responds to the Employment Navigator to accept the referral and then immediately engages the TSM to create a WorkSourceWA account. Once an account is created, the ISC will make a warm handoff to the WorkSource closest to the returning TSM's Washington home. Based on the self-attested profile in creating their account, if the customer is DVOP or CVSR eligible, the ISC will make a direct referral. For those not meeting eligibility, the referral is made to the specific WorkSource office nearest their intended Washington location.

In coordination with the Washington State Department of Corrections, those incarcerated Veterans who are anticipating release within 90 days, are pre-screened and referred to the ISC, who in turn, refers to the appropriate DVOP or CVSR based on the region they are anticipated to be released. Connecting the DVOP or CVSR to the Veteran before release offers a unique opportunity for the customer and case manager to assess challenges and begin the early stages of plan development. When the Veteran is officially released and chooses to engage the DVOP or CVSR, immediate case management can occur and ultimately reduce the gap between release and satisfactory employment.

In partnership with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), the Hilton organization is making the career transition easier for current and former military members and their families, through the Hilton Honors Military Program, providing up to 100,000 lifetime points. Eligible participants include TSMs, Veterans, Active-Duty Military Spouses, and other eligible persons to support needed travel for verifiable employment-related activities, such as a job search, interviews, or training for a new job. Points can be redeemed for a hotel room at any Hilton affiliated property. The ISC screens submissions, ensures applications are complete, and processes eligible requests and submits them to NASWA for final approval. Points are not awarded for vacations or non-employment activities, and no one is guaranteed to receive points. The ISC also participates in related NASWA monthly meetings, submitting results and reporting on success stories and best practices related to Hilton Honors Military Program.

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Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) Assigned Duties:

In accordance with Title 38, Section 4104, and as outlined in VPL 03-14, changes 1 & 2, VPL 01-20, and VPL 03-22; the role of the LVERs and CVSRs is to promote the hiring of Veterans with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), businesses, employer associations, and business groups. LVER and CVSRs will integrate with BSTs, where gains can be made in promoting the hiring of Veterans with local employers.

LVER and CVSRs conduct outreach to the employer community and facilitate connecting targeted resumes from Veterans, who are referred by DVOP and/or other AJC staff, to hiring managers to highlight and bring attention to the skills and talent the Veteran possesses. Working in collaboration with LWDB, SBLT, and integrated within BSTs, enables the LVER or CVSR to conduct employer site visits, executing hiring events, assisting with recruitment, job posting, and/or coordinating OJT opportunities for Veterans.

Employers are educated on available financial incentives in combination with the benefits of hiring Veterans, including the intrinsic qualities, training, resilience, and flexibility many Veterans possess. The LVER or CVSR will explain these practical advantages of hiring Veterans, as well as the tangible benefits, such as the Shared Work program, Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Washington State Public Utility Tax Credits, Business and Occupation Tax Credits, and the potential for partially funded OJTs. The LVER and CVSR routinely host or partner on employment events and specialized hiring events focused on the hiring of Veterans, while also promoting credentialing, education, and training opportunities. This includes direct entry into apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and skilled-based training programs.

Washington's LVER and CVSRs understand the inherent value of an employer being recognized through the hiring of Veterans. At hiring events, the LVER or CVSR collect contact data and conduct employer outreach to promote One-Stop services and known DVOP job ready Veterans, where appropriate. Since 2016, our state has promoted the YesVets hiring initiative to recognize Washington employers who hire Veterans. YesVets is an initiative in partnership with ESD, Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA), Department of Commerce, Washington State Military Transition Council, Washington State SHRM, and local chambers of commerce across the state. At the time of this plan's submission, 7,261 Veteran hires have been recorded from 1,832 participating employers since the 2016 inception. The ESD Commissioner also recognizes Veteran hiring employers of excellence by awarding small, medium, and large Washington employers with an annual Hire-A-Vet Employer of the Year (HAVEOY) award. Besides being a YesVets-registered employer, the criteria for this award are strategically aligned with the HVMP Gold standard criteria offering both credible data driven winner selections and ensuring HAVEOY eligible submission meet HVMP's gold level eligibility. LVER and CVSRs promote both YesVets and HVMP, ultimately offering earned positive recognition for businesses from both the state and national spotlights for hiring Veterans.

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LVERs and CVSRs assist both the DVOP and AJC staff with identifying and increasing skill development opportunities and employment for all Veterans by coordinating with employers in a variety of ways. As described earlier in Section A, Washington's Statewide LVER develops relationships with our state's largest employers and provides warm handoffs to the local-area LVER or CVSR through a collaborative and peer-type partnership. LVERs and CVSRs leverage their SHRM memberships to develop relationships and promote WorkSource services to employers. An example of how a LVER or CVSR can leverage SHRM includes the opportunity to serve on SHRM board roles and in local chapter leadership positions, building for greater capacity and local business credibility.

LVERs and CVSRs offer training to internal and external WorkSource AJC partners, chambers of commerce, SHRM, Rotary, and other business/employment focused organizations on topics like POS, translating transitional skills of a Veteran, and Veteran cultural competency, along with all the WorkSource services that support businesses and job seekers. LVERs and CVSRs also participate in cross functional teams to further build and maintain professional relationships, facilitate specialized job search workshops, establish job search groups and job clubs in collaboration with BSTs and local employers. This has proven beneficial in providing employers a better appreciation for the challenges faced by Veterans in transitioning to civilian employment as well as providing employers insight into the knowledge benefits of improved understanding of military skills and experience. LVER and CVSRs also work with partners like Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) to assist employers, federal contractors and sub-contractors with meeting and understanding their Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and OFCCP requirements.

Per 38 U.S.C. 4101 (f) and VPL 03-22, every WorkSource office assigned with LVER and CVSR staff will submit a quarterly site manager report for delivery to the Washington State Director VETS, due 45 days following the end of each quarter, reflecting "compliance with Federal law and regulations with respect to special services and priorities for eligible Veterans and eligible persons." In Washington, the LVER and CVSR complete this report for their assigned office (though multiple offices may be combined in the same report), with a narrative of the time period covered, the office and area covered, report author, and content that addresses: outreach efforts to employers; eligible Veterans and persons enrolled in DVOP case management; outreach efforts to locate and serve Veterans and other eligible persons with barriers to employment; and compliance with Priority of Service requirements. Program management staff will monitor these quarterly site manager reports for best practices, success stories and are submitted per VPL 03-22 guidance.

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D. DEMONSTRATE THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP, LVER, AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER (CVSR) STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM, REFLECTING ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN JVSG AND OTHER AJC STAFF;

Washington State WorkSource American Job Centers (AJCs) with Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) staff, provide ICS to eligible Veterans and other eligible persons with SBEs identified in Veteran Program Letter (VPL) 03-14 Changes 1 and 2, VPL 07-14, VPL 03-19, and VPL 02-23.

Washington integrates DVOPs, LVERs, and CVSRs in a variety of ways, depending on location and the needs of the local community. Most DVOP and CVSRs are situated in and with Wagner-Peyser staff or other programs, such as WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker, BFET, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), or other specialty programs. Some DVOP and CVSRs are also located in centers of Veteran influence, such as a VA hospital, within the gates of a military base, or are out stationed with a Veteran focused support organization. DVOP and CVSRs serving in out stations, away from a WorkSource, are still integrated through virtual networking platforms and attending staff meetings both in-person and virtually. Most DVOP, LVER, CVSR, and some non-JVSG WorkSource staff and partners attend WDVA's annual Serving Those Who Served conference, a multi-day networking and learning event targeted towards all those who serve the Veteran populations to gain improved understanding of challenges and knowledge of community and state-wide resources. Thus, DVOP and CVSR staff continue to work alongside their WorkSource peers, who receive and make referrals to and from other programs within the WorkSource centers.

LVER and CVSRs are usually integrated and co-located with BST to support employers and to consult with BST staff about Veterans who should be considered for referral to employers or considered for a potential OJT. While many BST staff have an assigned industry focus, LVER and CVSRs do not – they work with all industries to coordinate opportunities for all Veterans.

LVER and CVSRs provide local training to WorkSource staff, BSTs, and partners on Veteran centric topics such as military culture, available resources, POS, and employment opportunities attractive to Veterans such as federal employment, federal contractors (and sub-contractors), and apprenticeships.

All JVSG staff are included in WorkSource-wide trainings, staff meetings, and participate in a variety of cross functional workgroups to include various committees, service delivery improvement programs, and agency-wide initiatives. WorkSource offices are mindful to include JVSG staff in planning events, programs and operational changes that may affect Veterans and other eligible persons. JVSG staff are consulted when identifying individuals eligible for training opportunities and other limited resources to help ensure POS is being delivered.

Several internal policies describe the integration of services, POS guidelines, and the roles and responsibilities of the LVER, DVOP, CVSR, WorkSource staff and partners:

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- WorkSource System Policy 1009, Rev 3, Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses.

  - Purpose to clarify and communicate point of entry requirements under POS for Veterans and eligible spouses.

- WorkSource System Policy 1019, Rev 8, Eligibility Policy and Handbook.

  - Purpose to communicate eligibility guidelines for Wagner-Peyser, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker, JVSG, and TAA programs.

- WorkSource System Policy 1022, Rev 1, Referral of Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program.

  - Purpose to communicate the system-wide policy and procedures for core and partner programs included in Washington's WIOA State Plan to identify and refer Veterans and other populations with SBE to the state's DVOP.

- Employment Service Policy 4030, Services for Veterans.

  - Purpose to communicate guidelines for the effective operation of the Washington JVSG program.

- Employment Service Policy 4035, Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Representative and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) Communication Regarding Job Ready Veterans.

  - Purpose to provide guidelines for effective communication between DVOPs and LVERs in providing services to job ready Veterans. This policy also provides the LVER Referral Form, which will be used to communicate essential information for referral and assistance with placement of job ready Veterans.

- WorkSource Information Notice 0044, Change 1, Veteran Status Validation and Documentation.

  - Purpose to clarify validation and documentation requirements regarding Veteran status for POS, WIOA Title I-B eligibility, and Data Element Validation (DEV).

- WorkSource Information Notice 0086, Enrollment of Homeless Veterans Program Participants in the WorkSource System.

  - Purpose to support coordinated case management, co-enrollment, documentation and tracking of services provided to homeless Veterans through WIOA and Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) homeless Veterans programs.

- WorkSource Information Notice 0095, Recognizing WorkSource Business Partners: HIRE

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Vets Medallion Award.

- o Purpose to provide guidance to the WorkSource System in the promotion of the HIRE Vets Medallion Program (HVMP) to its local employer partners.

E. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OFFICES TO IMPROVE AND/OR ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO VETERANS, AS MANDATED BY 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(C);

Per 38 U.S.C. § 4112, VPL 01-24, and VPL 01-24 Attachments: 1 thru 5 Washington maintains a performance incentive award (IA) equivalent to 1% of the annual JVSG award, for the selection of top performing employment service offices. In accordance with our state's laws and policies, the cash IA issued to WorkSource office(s) recipient(s) will be used for any purpose. The winning office selections will be based on the combined efforts of an entire office; inclusive of the full spectrum of DOL employment and training related programs and non-federal partners who contribute to excellent service and improvement of employment and training services offered and provided to Veterans, TSMs, and other eligible persons.

Reflecting strong partnerships at the state and local levels, our state uses JVSG and non-JVSG production and common qualitative data measurements on services recorded to these targeted populations during the previous program year (the period between July 1 through June 30). These common metrics will originate from local AJC WorkSource offices in Washington state using recorded data in our state's case management system, in combination with other efforts or accomplishments which demonstrate improvements to the system for the delivery of such services that are not reflected in data. All WorkSource offices are eligible for being selected for the IA, and selections are based on these common measures and known efforts and/or accomplishments, which are used to assist an independent and non-biased selection board in selecting the top employment service offices to receive a cash Incentive Award (IA).

Examples of efforts and accomplishments include:

- Improve and modernize employment and placement services, as well as training opportunities for Veterans and other eligible persons.

- Celebrate excellence in the provision of "Priority of Service" and integration of services to Veterans and other eligible persons at the WorkSource American Job Center.

- Improvement of performance outcomes for Veterans and other eligible persons.

- Establishing strong outreach to Veterans with SBEs and with other Veteran organizations and/or the community at large to improve services to Veterans and other eligible persons.

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- Design and develop innovations, approaches, and supportive services that demonstrate commitment to excellence in the provision of quality employment and training services to Veterans and other eligible persons.

- Strong Veteran career planning and coaching techniques leading to employment outcomes.

The number of WorkSource offices the review board selects as top performers determines how disbursement of the cash IA will occur. For example:

- If the state received $48,000 for an IA and six WorkSource offices are selected for service excellence; each office would receive $8,000, to be used by the office for any purpose.

  OR

- If the state received $48,000 for an IA and eight WorkSource offices are selected for service excellence; each office would receive $6,000, to be used by the office for any purpose.

A separate funds category is established by ESD's fiscal team to track cash IA disbursements, based on selected offices. ESD liquidates the cash IA to offices no later than September 30th of the budget cycle and offices are instructed they must spend these funds by no later than December 31st. A performance IA report on all selected employment services teams and offices identifies the office or team name, location, type of office, and the cash amount of each award. This report is submitted along with the fourth quarter TPN (due by November 14th each year).

F. LIST THE PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR DIRECT SERVICES TO VETERANS PROVIDED BY JVSG STAFF, AS MEASURED BY PARTICIPANTS':

1. Employment Rate 2nd Quarter of Exit: 55.4%

2. Employment Rate 4th Quarter of Exit: 54.4%

3. Median Earnings 2nd Quarter of Exit: $9,068

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Individualized Case Management Model

Criteria Match	Orientation & Assessment	Program Enrollment	Detailed Assessment	Develop Participant Plan in ETO	Follow-Up, Re-Assess & Modify Plan as Needed	Program Exit (Other than employment)	Report Employment Data	Program Exit (Employment)
Any Staff (Frontline)	DVOP	DVOP	DVOP	DVOP & Veteran	DVOP & Veteran	DVOP	DVOP	DVOP

- **Criteria Match:** Utilize Veteran's Questionnaire; Review/update Profile
- **Orientation & Assessment:** Review Profile; Comprehensive and Specialized Assessment TP in ETO; Assess Motivation
- **Program Enrollment:** Enroll in: DVOP or VR&E Program
- **Detailed Assessment:** Included in Comprehensive and Specialized Assessment TP
- **Develop Participant Plan in ETO:** Plan Includes: Goals, Objectives, & Services Needed; Take Individualized Service: "Career and Vocational Counseling" TP; Include Job Hunter Mods as needed; Align collaboration with other services; Co-enroll as needed; Individual assessment as needed (KeyTrain, WOIS, JobFit, etc.)
- **Follow-Up:** One employment plan - modify as needed; Update notes as changes happen (Follow-up); Veterans Share Employment Logs
- **Program Exit (Other):** Conclude program in ETO; Employment
- **Report Employment Data:** Have Veteran Provide: Return to Work Information; Record in: ETO, VR&E
- **Program Exit (Employment):** Conclude program in ETO

Employment Security Department WASHINGTON STATE

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A. Contents of complete unemployment insurance state quality service plan

1. TRANSMITTAL LETTER

STATE OF WASHINGTON
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT
PO Box 9046 • Olympia WA 98507-9046

November 3, 2023

Dr. Tamika L. Ledbetter
Regional Administrator U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
90 7th Street, Suite 17300
San Francisco, CA 94103

Transmitted via email to: R06-RA-SF@dol.gov

Dear Dr. Ledbetter:

I am pleased to submit Washington State's Fiscal Year 2024 Alternate Year State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) for your consideration. The enclosed documents include the state plan narrative, the corrective action plans, integrity action plan, budget forms, assurances, organizational charts, and signature page.

We appreciate the strong partnership with the Department of Labor and your constructive feedback and support. Thank you for your ongoing guidance.

If you have any questions or concerns about the accompanying materials, please contact Nicole Sherman, UI Quality Assurance Manager, at (360) 490-6151 or nicole.sherman@esd.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Cami Feek
Commissioner
Employment Security Department

Attachments (4)

cc: Joy Adams, Interim Director of Employment System Policy and Integrity, Employment Security Department
Dan Zeitlin, Chief of Staff, Employment Security Department
Carol Padovan, Federal Project Officer, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region 6

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2. BUDGET WORKSHEETS

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424		Version 04

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant	All	* b. Program/Project:	WA-All

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date:	10/01/2023	* b. End Date:	12/31/2026

18. Estimated Funding ($):

* a. Federal	90707410
* b. Applicant	0
* c. State	0
* d. Local	0
* e. Other	0
* f. Program Income	0
* g. TOTAL	90707410

3. STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

Alternate Year Submittal
(Washington – Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024)

A. <u>Overview</u>

1. State priorities and the strategic direction the state has adopted to ensure continuous improvement.

Vision, Mission and Objectives

Washington's Employment Security Department (ESD) launched a four-year strategic plan for 2022 through 2026. This plan brings together strategies focused on employee engagement, organizational excellence and customer service, all with specific measures and actions to track progress towards goals. Measures are assessed routinely against their conditions for success, including strategic plan quarterly review. Now in year two of the plan, ESD continues to focus on employee engagement, organizational excellence and customer service goals that promote a people-centered, equity-focused culture and service delivery model.

ESD's strategic plan theme of "Now. Together" reflects that this work is together, and recognizes that the future is shaped by actions taken now to build a better future. The "Now. Together" vision, mission and values support both the statewide Pro-Equity, Anti-Racism (PEAR) vision and ESD's own strategic plans. Please see attached Strategic Plan and Values for additional details on current agency priorities.

<u>Vision:</u> Everyone in Washington has full access to the opportunities, power and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential.

<u>Mission:</u> We contribute to healthy communities by providing people equitable access to resources that improve economic security.

<u>Values:</u>
- Access

- Love
- Equity
- Belonging
- Stewardship

Looking Forward

ESD continues to address difficulties stemming from the pandemic, from backlogs and shifting workloads, to fraud management and overpayment waivers. However, ESD's focus is moving from recovery to rebuilding: where learning from the past, looking forward and acting now combine to move Washington toward better outcomes for our customers. This is a mindset fostered agency-wide, reflected in its four year Employee Engagement and Organizational Excellence strategies.

One of ESD's strategic plan goals is "a culture of belong, learning and growth where we are all valued, everyone matters and each of us can lead." Similarly, ESD is focused on ensuring "our most complex processes are made simple and easy for our staff and customers." Overall, ESD is working to support every employee, in turn supporting all customers. This includes supporting individual learning through virtual textbooks, encouraging growth with a newly developed and applied internal mentorship program, sharing and advancing knowledge through developmental job assignments, and continuing to work on communicating and achieving performance goals.

As a result of our partnerships with USDOL, NASWA and other external agencies, ESD continues to move forward with grant-funded projects, including a number of Tiger Team and Equity Grant projects. The resources and collaboration supporting projects such as these and others in our UI portfolio along with our strategic plan, are guiding ESD's work to improve as an organization that meets our UI customer needs.

2. ***Assessment of past performance and expected future performance. Includes, at state discretion, a discussion of external factors that may have performance implications.***

Core Measures and Secretary Standards

Washington met or exceeded USDOL Core Measures and Secretary Standards in five of twenty categories, all measures which met Acceptable Levels of Performance (ALP) during the previous SQSP. ESD will again be providing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the Improper Payments Measure, which did not meet the ALP for its performance period of PIIA 2022 (7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022). Based on more recent pulls of USDOL's UI Payment Accuracy datasets incorporating available 2023 data, the improper payment rate has decreased, though remains above the ALP of 10 percent.

ESD will continue reporting for all areas under CAP. We will also continue to internally track those measures not currently required to be reported on the SQSP. ESD has recently launched a cross-divisional Integrity Task Force (ITF) to define and clarify integrity by division, identify resource usage and overlap, promote collective wisdom, and create further awareness of program impacts and performance. The ITF will also be used to determine how best to apply grant funds recently awarded to Washington through UIPL 11-23.

UIPL 09-23 (released June 30, 2023) continues the requirement of CAPs for both newly failed measures and continued poor performance. The UIPL also acknowledges lessening and continuing pandemic impacts, while shifting to an overall focus on rebuilding. Many of the same measures remain under CAP in Washington, reflecting that moving from active recovery to rebuilding is a long-term, multiphase

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process. For example, as we are still recovering, and ESD's top priority is its Overpayment Project, which seeks to provide relief to customers who had overpayments established during the pandemic. The project focuses on addressing pandemic era overpayments, but the processes used and knowledge gained during the project will be more widely applicable and contribute to improving agency performance.

3. *Coordination with other plans, including WIOA.*

ESD is an integral partner in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan and is contributing to development of the state's 2024-2028 plan. We collaborate with state and local agencies that participate in the workforce system and serve UI claimants, job seekers and businesses. We are actively seeking to break down barriers within the agency and promote a vision of UI benefits as a bridge between employment and re-employment activities across the workforce system.

Due to the overwhelming number of claims stemming from the pandemic, including complicated or fraudulent claims, ESD continues to collaborate with Washington's Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) to streamline backlog reduction processes, improve timeliness and support better coordination overall with stakeholders. ESD and OAH have continued a Brief Adjudication Process to address single party issues. In addition, ESD and OAH have completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that we believe will further address issues in how information is shared, supporting timely appeals by reducing hand-offs and improving efficiencies.

B. <u>Federal emphasis (GPRA goals)</u>

1. *State performance compared to the GPRA goals.*

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

- *Percent of Intrastate Payments Made Timely (Make Timely Benefit Payments)* – Washington 63.1%
  - **Target**: 87.0% of intrastate first payments for full weeks of unemployment compensation will be made within 14/21 days from the week ending date of the first compensable week.
    - ESD has identified and addressed filters within the identity verification workflow that we believe will help improve timeliness by decreasing unnecessary crossmatch review. However, we continue to work through lingering pandemic-era problems. We are working to balance resource and staffing constraints, current Claims Center needs and the pandemic-related Overpayment Project. We anticipate that it will take time to both find and maintain this balance before it is positively reflected within the measure.

- *Detection of Recoverable Overpayments (Detect Benefit Overpayments)* – Washington 63.69%
  - **Target**: Overpayments established at a rate that is at least 57.5% of the estimated detectable, recoverable overpayments.
    - Washington's results for the performance period met the GPRA target of at least 57.5%.

      At this point, the measure is still drawing from quarters both with and without the work search requirement, which was suspended temporarily during the pandemic and re-implemented in July 2021. In addition, Washington has previously indicated concerns since the numerator (overpayments established by BPC) includes work search-related overpayments and the denominator (estimated

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overpayments by BAM) does not. We will continue to monitor both this measure and the 3-year Detection of Overpayments as they draw from the same data.

- *Percent of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely (Establish Tax Accounts Promptly)* – Washington 82.5% (results for the year ending 3/31/2023 did not meet USDOL goal)
    - o **Target**: 90.0% of status determinations for new employers will be made within 90 days of the end of the first quarter in which liability occurred.

2. *Actions planned to achieve GPRA goals and targets (National Priorities for FY 2024)*

Rebuilding and improving program performance by addressing the significant impact that the workload created by the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have on the UI system

ESD remains focused on balancing and meeting varying UI needs, including current needs, pandemic recovery and rebuilding efforts. Ongoing challenges continue to include limited federal administrative funding to support remaining pandemic-related problems.

Following the 2022 revamp of its portfolio management process, ESD continues to prioritize those high impact projects where resources can be properly applied and the project completed. At the same time, projects are not considered only short- or long-term, but require a focus on continuous improvement and initiatives supporting better services and equitable outcomes for customers. ESD continues to study and identify possible ongoing issues within workflows that are preventing the agency from meeting its goals. We want to not only meet acceptable performance levels in the near future but maintain them over time.

Focusing on improving the timely delivery of benefit payments and the reduction of the UI adjudication and appeals backlogs

ESD continues to focus on identifying issues and developing lasting solutions. For example, with first payment promptness and nonmonetary timeliness, we wanted to improve timeliness and reduce backlogs by understanding potential impacts from workflow processes.

During the quarter ending 6/30/2023, ongoing analysis of the identity verification workflow found higher false positive rates associated with ESD – NASWA IDH crossmatch logic, increasing both the workload and timeframe needed to address issues on claims and make timely payments. ESD implemented several modifications to support a more accurate crossmatch, and will continue to analyze fraud controls on a regular basis to ensure functioning and minimize impacts to claimants.

For intake agents, adjudicators, and Tax & Wage staff, ESD launched a Virtual Textbook incorporating text, audio, video and knowledge assessment checks. This supports UI workflows by allowing staff to train in the way that best fits their learning style, and helps staff better connect with the training materials. We are also focusing on improvement impacts and opportunities team by team. For example, based on input from the Adjudication team, ESD identified an opportunity to transition standard work documentation to a more modern system. The team now has easier access to information, reducing unnecessary searching and improving the timely adjudication of claims.

ESD has continued to prioritize aligning internal systems and processes with OAH to manage appeals backlogs. Through a joint project with OAH, we have conducted process mapping for the current and future state of appeals, and defined a future state map for pilot implementation, for which we anticipate a full pilot launch during summer 2024.

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ESD and OAH have also completed a MOU where ESD will have five business days to get appeals to OAH. We believe this MOU will further address issues in how information is shared, supporting timely appeals by reducing hand-offs and improving efficiencies. OAH plans to be out of the backlog by June 2024, with lower authority appeals timeliness measures anticipated to start reflecting those improvements.

Per UIPL 24-21, ESD has continued to submit updates to USDOL on backlogged adjudication and appeals cases. The updates include both regular UI and PUA cases by month, and help ESD monitor progress towards addressing the backlogs.

Ensuring equitable access to UI programs

ESD's focus on access considers data, customer experience and service accessibility over the long term. The following projects through the UIPL 23-21 Equity Grant reflect our work to understand and ensure equitable access to UI programs.

The *Adverse Impact Analysis, Implementation Evaluation, and Net Impact Evaluation Project* conducts data analyses from three perspectives: a quantitative investigation of causes and consequences; a qualitative investigation exploring how UI benefits are delivered to people from diverse backgrounds; and a net impact evaluation of services on specified outcome measures. This project expands ESD's capacity to prepare, organize and analyze UI program equity and diversity data. We anticipate improvement recommendations from the analyses.

ESD does not have an independent data reporting system outside of its benefits management system. This has led to challenges understanding the customer journey from a data perspective because claimants go through multiple systems. The *Customer Experience Data Project* will create a new data platform that reports data both by stage in the journey and claimant demographic data. ESD will use this platform to better understand disparities in outcomes by stage in the claimant journey.

To further improve and support the customer experience, we have planned an *ESD Website Modernization*, a project that will replace ESD's primary public information website. Skilled user experience research indicates user difficulties with the current website, including finding vital information, navigating menu options, and language access barriers. The project will deliver a more usable, accessible and sustainable website. In addition, the project will support a new content governance policy that will establish a framework for creating and maintaining site content.

Following a legislatively mandated project to improve comprehensibility, clarity and readability of UI letters, ESD has identified letters from the early stages of a customer's journey for translation into seven additional languages. ESD's *UI Translation Services Project* will expand language access to claimants who read languages other than English and Spanish, and will help them better navigate their claim.

ESD is partnering with USDOL to better understand worker access to UI benefits at different stages of UI administration, based on demographic and geographic groupings. Through an *Equity Data Partnership*, USDOL will examine state UI data, returning summarized data to help guide ESD's strategic planning and analysis.

Supporting the reemployment of unemployment claimants through Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA), Short-Time Compensation (STC), robust work search activities, and other targeted initiatives

Work search errors are one of Washington's top three contributors to improper payments for the review period. ESD re-implemented work search requirements during the PIIA 2022 performance period and

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expanded the list of acceptable work search activities. Moreover, the state enacted legislation providing ESD more flexibility in how it implements work search requirements. These changes require adjustment and stabilization time for claimants and staff to understand and communicate reporting requirements. The Policy team continues to provide clarification and assistance on work search-related questions, with responses available across the agency as guidance.

USDOL's recent review of Washington's RESEA program activities did not result in any findings, with the program operating as expected. ESD continues to monitor RESEA compliance for possible improvements, with review information shared with program operations. ESD updated training with staff having completed refresher training in September 2023. These training courses spread knowledge gained across the state, and serve as additional resources for staff if they are struggling with managing specific components of the program. Overall, this approach helps WorkSource staff become more effective in supporting RESEA participants.

Ensuring UI program integrity by assessing and evaluating fraud risks, implementing and maintaining sufficient controls to effectively mitigate the likelihood and impact of fraud, and reducing improper payments

ESD is committed to combating fraud through various identity verification methods, improving prevention, detection and recovery of overpayments, and reducing the improper payment rate. The agency's Fraud Management Division (FMD) specifically targets potential issues, conducts further verification as needed on flagged claims, and conducts regular data analytics to watch for trends. ESD continues to partner with NASWA, USDOL, OIG and other agencies to gain knowledge and work through the potential issues impacting our efforts to combat fraud.

Although ESD continues to address workflow issues where possible and collaborate across divisions on staffing and resource availability; backlogs, system enhancements and corrective actions remain largely impacted by the number and complexity of pandemic-era claims. Recent resource reductions following the end of pandemic-era funding, particularly within FMD, are impacting performance across the UI program. ESD has made many operational and systematic changes in response to the pandemic, and it will take time for the changes to stabilize and reflect improvements. FMD will continue to work to address resource constraints to better support these improvements long term.

Addressing worker misclassification

ESD is currently merging auditing functions for our three tax/premium collecting programs (UI, Paid Family and Medical Leave, and Long-Term Services & Supports). This will strengthen our ability to both find and address non-compliance across programs, including addressing worker misclassification. We are working to reinstitute travel and field audits, which were stopped during the pandemic, and build a cross-program vision for effective employer audits that ensure employer compliance and enhance worker access to unemployment benefits for which they are entitled.

Ensuring accurate and complete reporting of ETA Required Reports

The cross-divisional Report Validation Project (RVP), which ran from March 2022 through June 2023, focused on both population and report accuracy through a combined data validation and developer lens. With staffing changes and the subsequent time needed for familiarizing new staff with data validation and reporting specifics, later months of the RVP focused on gaining population-specific knowledge, testing and reviewing solutions in collaboration with the development team, and defining continuous improvement processes. Although the cadence changed over time, the project helped foster a mindset of

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connection where data validation is linked with ETA reports, and issues and solutions with developer collaboration.

Data validation efforts identified two logic issues in Benefits Population 12 and the ETA 227 report stemming from the administration of CARES Act programs and benefits. We are continuing to focus on both the population and report, and will be looking further into Detection of Overpayments ETA 227 data to better understand the current state and trends.

For some ETA reports, the potential overlap between other agency projects and validation efforts has further impacted report accuracy and completion. For example, the identified issues for Benefits Population 12 are on hold for solution development, given current work on the agency's Overpayment Project. Because Population 12 is compared with ETA 227 data during the report validation process, developing and implementing solutions while the Overpayment Project is active may contribute to other reporting issues. ESD is working to balance prioritization of projects and ensure solutions are not implemented prematurely.

C. **Program review deficiencies**

Data Validation (DV)

Data validation work for Validation Year (VY) 2023 occurred as part of the RVP. The project focused on both population and report accuracy through data validation and developer perspectives; however, many efforts were placed on hold due to staffing changes and the time needed to familiarize new RVP staff with validation and reporting specifics. Later months of the project focused on prioritization of identified issues, testing and review of solutions, and item analysis form documentation for those issues that were unlikely to be addressed by the end of the project.

Although staff were not able to perform validations for all VY 2023 populations during the course of the RVP, the end focus on gaining and documenting population-specific knowledge, combined with considering longer term program needs, reflects a more sustainable approach to the data validation process.

D. **Program deficiencies**

Detection of Overpayments: ALP 50% - 95% (Washington 351.81%)

Washington's results for Detection of Overpayments for the period ending 3/31/2023 continue to be higher than expected for federal review purposes. The results incorporate BAM estimates for 10/1/2019 through 9/30/2022, and BPC data for 4/1/2020 through 3/31/2023.

Pre-COVID, Washington established a very high proportion of work search-related overpayments in relation to total overpayments. Given the legal structure in Washington regarding work search overpayments, it was mathematically impossible for the state to meet the 95 percent ALP for overpayments established to overpayments detected ratio by virtue of how the ratio is calculated.

Work search requirements were waived during the pandemic until July 2021. Although this should have improved Washington's measure, recent periods rose to above 400 percent, far exceeding previous periods closer to 120 percent. The magnitude of this discrepancy points to probable reporting errors. It is possible that the numerous IT changes implemented in response to pandemic benefit payments impacted the ETA 227 report.

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The RVP has identified two logic issues in Benefits Population 12 and ETA 227 that may be affecting the Overpayment Detection Rate: UI amounts incorrectly exclude overpayments paid from the COVID-19 Waiting Weeks, Reimbursement Relief, or Employer Relief entitlements and incorrectly include overpayment weeks that have been transferred to PUA or PEUC claims. These issues were explored during the RVP; however, staff determined that with a large scale Overpayment Project still active, Population 12 and ETA 227 report solutions pushed through to production now may be impacted by the project, possibly requiring new solutions. The Data Validation team is monitoring the issues for further consideration once the Overpayment Project has progressed closer to completion.

Incorrect Recording of the Issue Detection Date

Issue detection date (IDD) recording happens at multiple points of the claim process, and may be affected by where and when issues come into the system. For example, at one point during the pandemic, weekly claims were subject to a two-day hold to help prevent and address fraud. This delayed setting issues that may have been present at the beginning of the two-day hold for the weekly claim. Although ESD did identify a fix to address issue dates like these, we cannot undo issue settings for these claims. More generally, we continue to look at other process improvement efforts related to BTQ-reviewed operations to better help staff correctly identify and set issues, and communicate across divisions. **Reporting deficiencies**

ESD continues to work though identified data validation and report concerns together with USDOL.

E.   Customer service surveys (optional)

F.   Other (e.g., approach to maintaining solvency, requests for technical assistance)

ESD appreciates the continued support and collaboration offered by USDOL and NASWA through the various means of monitoring, trainings, and collaboration. We will continue to invest and engage both internally and externally, supporting our staff and welcoming partnerships.

Tiger Team Grant Funds and Consultative Assessments

During summer 2021, ESD went through the Tiger Teams consultative assessment project with USDOL and Grant Thornton staff, and was later approved by USDOL to address several areas of focus. Based on the recommendations of the Grant Thornton team and insights gathered from internal teams, ESD prioritized three enhancements under the Tiger Team UIPL that directly impact claimants: deadline notifications, a shared work letter, and a PUA Able & Available modification.

Based on direct claimant feedback gathered in 1:1 interviews, ESD identified an opportunity to reduce missed deadlines by adding an email notification to claimants two days before their deadline to respond. After implementation, we observed a 20 percent decrease in missed deadlines compared to similar periods in the calendar year in preliminary assessments.

Through feedback from our Shared Work team, we identified a manually created letter that informed claimants transitioning from Shared Work to regular UI of their new requirement to look for work. We have automated this letter, and saved 165 hours of labor in two months of monitoring.

ESD identified a software issue that impacted PUA Claims with Able and Available issues during overlapping regular UI claimed weeks. The system correctly prevented payment for both entitlements, but blocked an agent's ability to resolve the issue in the system, leading to inefficient workflows. This issue has now been resolved.

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G. Assurances:

The State will comply with the following assurances:

a. Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO).
b. Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards.
c. Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting, and Recordkeeping.
d. Assurance of Program Quality.
e. Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds.
f. Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR Part 93).
g. Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR Part 98).
h. Assurance of Contingency Planning.
   Provide the most recent dates for the following:
   - Information Technology (IT) Contingency Plan Implemented: **October 2016**
   - IT Contingency Plan Reviewed/Updated: **September 2023**
   - IT Contingency Plan Tested: **September 2023**
i. Assurance of Conformity and Compliance.
j. Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security.
   Provide the most recent dates for the following:
   - Risk Assessment Conducted: **June 2023**
   - System Security Plan Reviewed/Updated: **September 2023**
k. Assurance of Confidentiality.
l. Assurance of Disaster Unemployment Assistance
   - Conducted Annual DUA Training for DUA Staff ☒ Yes ☐ No
     Provide the date of the training: **April 2022**
   - Developed and/or Maintained a Standard Operating
     Procedures for use during a major disaster declaration ☒ Yes ☐ No

4. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS

First Payment Promptness
Correction Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

ESD continues to work pandemic-related cases. Although efforts to clean up the pandemic workload are ongoing, ESD is making good progress towards improving first pay promptness.

Backlogs and low first pay promptness measures are linked. The overall UI backlog was completed in February 2022 and remains under control. Consequently, we are exploring other potential root causes for not meeting the ALP. This includes the possible impact of the identity verification workflow.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD continues to struggle through staffing and budgetary issues, with a large reduction in staff and resources that have impacted performance across the UI program. Fraud Management released a large percentage of its non perm workers, which ultimately impacts workload and timely payment of benefits. ESD has historically struggled to meet this measure and was further impacted by the number of pandemic-era claims. We are at this time in a stabilization period and still working through backlogs, system enhancements, and addressing various corrective actions and impacts to our claimants.

Although ESD made good strides in addressing backlogs coming out of the pandemic, the continued amount of work and backlogs also contributes to low first pay promptness measures. As we lost pandemic-era funding and resources, this resulted in reductions in staff despite lingering pandemic-era problems. UICS will continue to work with HR and Budget to identify opportunities to address the staffing and resource constraints. During this review period, much of our focus was spent working through and implementing the Overpayment Project, which further impacted staffing resources in the claims center as many of the claims center SMEs were re-assigned to the Overpayments Project.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

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FY23

ESD will study different factors within the identity verification workflow to identify impacts to first pay promptness.

The first factor to study is claimants who are required to verify their identity but do not respond in a timely fashion. An identity denial is then set, which stops payment and prevents all further adjudication on a claim unless the claimant responds and ESD can redetermine the denial. Once the claim is allowed, the claimant is paid or other issues (including separations) can be adjudicated. CY2021 Q4 and 2022 Q1 data indicate about 18 percent of all identity issues set remain denied because claimants do not respond, and about 15 percent are redetermined.

ESD will also study the time elapsed from an identity issue being set, to completed verification of a valid identity. Overall, about 51 percent of all created identity issues result in ESD positively verifying the claimant's identity, allowing payment or the eligibility determination process to continue. The average time from the date an issue was created to completed positive identity verification was 17 days for 2021 Q4 and 18 days for 2022 Q1. These initial delays in the workflow may also be impacting first pay promptness.

ESD will continue to gather, validate and analyze data to verify if these factors are in-fact impacting first pay promptness. Based on a complete analysis, ESD will develop additional plans for next steps using the results from each study.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD will continue to work with Budget and HR to identify opportunities that address staffing and resource constraints. We will also continue to work with our partners internally and externally to identify and take advantage of resources such as grant opportunities, process improvements, and staff training. We will continue to gather and analyze data to better understand where additional gaps may be impacting our performance measures.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

The actions contained in last year's plan were helpful in improving our measures although we acknowledge that it was not enough to fully meet all ALPs for this CAP. We do believe that even though we are struggling with budgetary and staffing constraints, we have the ability to work closely with our Budget and HR Divisions to address these concerns as we continue to stabilize

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coming out of the pandemic. ESD has made many operational and systematic improvements both during and after the pandemic, and the effects of these changes will begin to show improvement over the next several years.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will be tracked using data to measure performance outcomes, trends and areas for improvements. More specific tracking will be determined based on the complete analysis and results of each study.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Progress will be tracked using data to measure performance outcomes, trends and areas for improvement.

Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness
Corrective Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

ESD continues to work pandemic-related cases. Although efforts to clean up the pandemic workload are ongoing, ESD is making good progress towards improving nonmonetary timeliness. For all three months of CY2022 Q1, ESD met nonmonetary timeliness for non-separations.

There is a direct correlation between backlogs and nonmonetary timeliness measures. The overall UI backlog was completed in February 2022 and remains under control. Consequently, we are exploring other potential root causes for not meeting the ALP. This includes the possible impact of the identity verification workflow.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD continues to struggle through staffing and budgetary issues, with a large reduction in staff and resources that have impacted performance across the UI program. Fraud Management released a large percentage of its non perm workers, which ultimately impacts workload and timely payment of benefits. ESD has historically struggled to meet this measure and was further impacted by the number of pandemic-era claims. We are at this time in a stabilization period and still working through backlogs, system enhancements, and addressing various corrective actions and impacts to our claimants.

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Although ESD made good strides in addressing backlogs coming out of the pandemic, the continued amount of work and backlogs also contributes to low first pay promptness measures. As we lost pandemic-era funding and resources, this resulted in reductions in staff despite lingering pandemic-era problems. UICS will continue to work with HR and Budget to identify opportunities to address the staffing and resource constraints. During this review period, much of our focus was spent working through and implementing the Overpayment Project, which further impacted staffing resources in the claims center as many of the claims center SMEs were re-assigned to the Overpayments Project.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

ESD will study different factors within the identity verification workflow to identify impacts to first pay promptness.

The first factor to study is claimants who are required to verify their identity but do not respond in a timely fashion. An identity denial is then set, which stops payment and prevents all further adjudication on a claim unless the claimant responds and ESD can redetermine the denial. Once the claim is allowed, the claimant is paid or other issues (including separations) can be adjudicated. CY2021 Q4 and 2022 Q1 data indicate about 18 percent of all identity issues set remain denied because claimants do not respond, and about 15 percent are redetermined.

ESD will also study the time elapsed from an identity issue being set, to completed verification of a valid identity. Overall, about 51 percent of all created identity issues result in ESD positively verifying the claimant's identity, allowing payment or the eligibility determination process to continue. The average time from the date an issue was created to completed positive identity verification was 17 days for 2021 Q4 and 18 days for 2022 Q1. These initial delays in the workflow may also be impacting first pay promptness.

ESD will continue to gather, validate and analyze data to verify if these factors are in-fact impacting first pay promptness. Based on a complete analysis, ESD will develop additional plans for next steps using the results from each study.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD will continue to work with Budget and HR to identify opportunities that address staffing and resource constraints. We will also continue to work with our partners internally and externally to identify and take advantage of resources such as grant opportunities, process improvements,

and staff training. We will continue to gather and analyze data to better understand where additional gaps may be impacting our performance measures.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

The actions contained in last year's plan were helpful in improving our measures although we acknowledge that it was not enough to fully meet all ALPs for this CAP. We do believe that even though we are struggling with budgetary and staffing constraints, we have the ability to work closely with our Budget and HR Divisions to address these concerns as we continue to stabilize coming out of the pandemic. ESD has made many operational and systematic improvements both during and after the pandemic, and the effects of these changes will begin to show improvement over the next several years.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will be tracked using data to measure performance outcomes, trends and areas for improvements. More specific tracking will be determined based on the complete analysis of each study.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Progress will be tracked using data to measure performance outcomes, trends and areas for improvement.

**Nonmonetary Determination Quality
Corrective Action Plan Summary**

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

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Due to the unprecedented magnitude of the claims workload, ESD simplified some of the adjudication requirements at the suggestion of USDOL and NASWA, suspended the quality review process and hired a large number of new, inexperienced staff. These actions impacted quality scores, which dropped below pre-pandemic levels.

At this time, standard adjudication requirements have been reinstated.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD continues to stabilize coming out of the pandemic and address pandemic-era claims clean up. Standard adjudication requirements were re-instated during the review period, although a recution in budget and staffing has impacted our ability to meet quality standards. Many of the non-permanent staff were laid off and existing staff are continuing to work through backlogs and high workloads. Additionally, some of the pandemic-era auto write decisions are still in effect, creating further issues in regards to separations decisions and quality.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

In November 2021, the team began development of a formal Quality Assurance (QA) plan based on real time quality reviews of cases. The plan is a phased approach consisting of the following: validating the quality review guide for reviewers, developing training for reviewers and staff, rolling out training, and re-introducing the quality review using organizational change management practices. The last phase, developing a data plan to measure performance and trends, will allow for ongoing calibration of the review process. Each phase for this plan is identified and listed below as a Milestone to be completed in this CAP.

Development and implementation of the reviewer training for the QA plan will be completed in early 2023. Staff training will be completed by June of 2023, with a full rollout of the program and data collection to be conducted by September 2023.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Development and implementation of the reviewer training for the QA plan was completed and we are now in the stages of monitoring and tracking impacts to our performance. Staff training will continue and adjustments will be made as necessary to both identify and address gaps.

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(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD spent the FY23 developing, testing, and implementing the QA plan. At this time we are in full training and expect to see results in FY24 in regards to quality. We are partnering with NASWA to complete a review of the Standard Work tools and documents.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will be tracked using data to measure performance outcomes, trends and areas for improvements. Results will be compared to outcomes from the quarterly BTQ review to identify any gaps or training needs.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

In May of 2023, we pivoted to focus on the Tiger Team - Adjudication Tool Standard Work Content Modernization. We have partnered with NASWA to complete a review of the Standard Work tools and documents. Progress will be tracked using data to measure performance outcomes, trends and areas for improvement. Results will be compared to outcomes from the quarterly BTQ reviews to identify gaps or training needs.

**Lower Authority Appeals Promptness
Corrective Action Plan Summary**

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

The pandemic created volumes of new, appealable issues, and more claimants who were both eligible for benefits and outside the usual entitlement requirements. In addition, the CARES Act required a variety of new issues and determination letters that are also appealable. This increased volume made it difficult to meet the ALPs.

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FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

The pandemic created volumes of new, appealable issues, and more claimants who were both eligible for benefits and outside the usual entitlement requirements. In addition, the CARES Act required a variety of new issues and determination letters that are also appealable. This increased volume continued to make it difficult to meet the ALPs.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc.   Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

We are working on mapping current and future state maps, and will create a pilot for appeals to reduce hand-offs and increase efficiencies. OAH will continue to problem solve the volume and backlog of CARES Act appeals. In April 2022, we started the Brief Adjudicative Process and continue to see progress in single party issues.

Process mapping will be conducted of current and future state to identify deficiencies by December of 2022, with a future state pilot creation expected to be complete by March of 2023. Full pilot launch of the future state of appeals is expected to be conducted shortly after creation, by June of 2023.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Mapping has been completed. There is low hanging fruit that we will capitalize on, such as creating more standard work and improving claimant letters and eServices information by providing more concise language. We will also create SQRs when needed to improve the process and eliminate any additional hand-offs where possible. We currently do not have the resources to do the pilot as the overpayment project is our number one priority. A full pilot launch will be on pause till Summer of 2024.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

Before the pandemic tripled the workload, work was primarily done with OAH, and there is still a letter project and some technical improvements to prioritize. ESD is continuing their partnership with OAH now, including ongoing Plan-Do-Check-Act.

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FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

We are continuing to provide small increments of improvements within the constraints of budget and resources.   The letter project is close to completion in making all our letters more clear and concise. A process is in place for feedback and continue improvement for sustainability.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will be monitored based on outcomes of the mapping sessions, plan and pilot implementation, and Plan-Do-Check-Act until performance goals are met.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

MOU has been completed and ESD has 5 business days to get appeals to OAH. By minimizing hand offs, we will be able to meet this criteria. OAH plans to be out of backlog by June of 2024, and we should start seeing vast improvements in our LAA timeliness.

Tax Quality
Corrective Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

Collections - Collection activities were suspended and staff redeployed during COVID-19. Unfortunately, during the review period the system-generated NOA (Notice of Assessment) did not generate on all eligible accounts as required by law. Therefore, the function was considered to have failed. The agency has continued to work with employers to conduct soft collections until full collection activities are resumed and re-launched.

Debits/Billing Reimbursing - During the review period, the random number provided by USDOL did not generate an adequate number of sample cases for review. Therefore, the function was considered to have failed. The agency has received additional guidance from National and Regional Office on how to mitigate this issue should it come up again in future reviews.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Collections: ticket for NOAs written but not deployed.

Debits/Billings Reimbursing: 17 samples failed due to a billing variance because of negative assessments or incorrect account balance. All of the issues have been identified by IT.

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Inactivations: Staff did not have clear directions on dates to use when inactivating accounts. Both new and update training is now provided.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

Collections activities will re-launch by early 2023 using the project plan that has been identified and built. These activities will include incorporation and implementation of existing and new and/or updated state and federal rules, regulations and policies. The re-launch project will be managed by UI and the Fraud division to ensure goals and timelines are met according to the identified plan in partnership with IT and contractors. Training for staff will continue throughout the project and measuring effectiveness will be determined by the TPS review for 2022 as well as monitoring the amounts collected and timeliness of those received funds.

Debits/Billing Reimbursing will be approached this year using the guidance we received from USDOL in 2021 to conduct sample reviews to ensure full case numbers are met for the review period. WA conducted a business rule review for this function in 2021 during the time the issue was identified and we will continue to monitor business rules and data validation efforts for each function during each review year period. The TPS Coordinator has continued to work with USDOL, IT, T&W, and the data teams to work through potential issues and mitigate concerns that potentially negatively impact sample reviews.

WA also launched a Report and Data Validation project in mid-2022 which has seen significant improvement in Tax Validation efforts for both required reporting validation and population validation. The Quality Assurance Team is in direct partnership with the DATA team to track and monitor progress and milestone completion within the scope of the project. The project is expected to be complete with all reporting, populations and modules passing for tax and benefits by mid 2023.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Collections: We are working with developers to determine where the issue lies and why the system is not consistently sending NOA's. At this time IT is working to replicate the problem.

Debits/Billings Reimbursable: IT liaison will create a plan with IT to address each billing issue. Due to the complexity of some of the issues, this will not be completed by the end of the 2024 fiscal year

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Inactivations: Deployment of user story 131207 remedied the issue of 49 samples that failed. The Account Management Center administered refresher training for staff on inactivating accounts.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

The actions contained in the previous year(s) plan were not successful in improving performance due to a number of reasons including staff changes, issues in obtaining timely guidance and the implementation of new state and federal rules and regulations throughout the program year.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Collections: Until the next TPS review is completed we will not know our level of success.

Debits/Billings Reimbursable: The actions contained in the previous year(s) plan were not successful in improving performance due to staffing issues and resource constraints associated with the implementation of state rules and regulations.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will continue to be monitored through the TPS annual review and through monitoring the efforts of the Report and Data Validation project.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Collections: After next TPS review we will make adjustments as needed.

Debits/Billings Reimbursable: As IT deploys code fixes for billing issues. IT liaison will monitor the system and IT queries to ensure the issues does not return.

Inactivations: Spot checking is being done to ensure staff are following the process and to identify any additional training needs.

Effective Audit Measure (EAM)
Corrective Action Plan Summary

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(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD was unable to meet this EAM in calendar year 2022. The deficiency is largely attributed to staff turnover and the inability to conduct field audits due to the pandemic.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc.   Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

We will continue to monitor this to ensure compliance. Since Q1 2023, we are on target to meet or exceed factor 1. We are putting a plan together to reinstitute field audits. Additionally, ESD recently created the ""Customer Compliance"" division which is charged with ensuring compliance to our programs. The UI employer audit team is part of this new division. The division was created to ensure important compliance work is appropriately supported and prioritized. We will be conducting process mapping activities to find areas in which we can improve processes to complete quality audits more quickly.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

N/A

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(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Using a "future state" process map, we will be measuring the time it takes to complete an audit and the amount of audits the team can complete. If we are not achieving the expected results, we will adjust processes as necessary. Additionally, we plan to recruit and fill vacancies to increase audit staffing.

**Improper Payments Measure
Corrective Action Plan Summary**

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD continues to stabilize through pandemic-era claims and reviews. During analyses of and review of claims, agency errors appear to be the top contributor to our Improper Payment rate. This is attributed to lack of staff resources, training needs and many changes in rules and regulations over the past few years. ESD re-implemented work search requirements during the performance period, which has been an adjustment for both claimants and new staff throughout the agency. It is also the top root cause to our Improper Payment rate. Although ESD expanded on the acceptable work search activities for claimants, this change requires an adjustment and stabilization period for both staff and claimants to understand reporting requirements and make appropriate claims determinations.

Separations and Benefit Year Earning issues are also top root cause contributors to our Improper Payment rate. We attribute the deficiency here to system gaps and auto-write decision making.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

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FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

ESD will continue to monitor progress through Quality Reviews in adjudication through the QA project in UICS, staff training, partnership with NASWA, USDOL and external stakeholders, and data analyses. UICS will continue to work closely with the Quality Assurance unit to work through quarterly data and findings/scoring of cases to identify gaps and areas in need of additional training. The agency has implemented an Integrity Task Force that includes management from various divisions collaborating to define and improve integrity and quality across the UI program. Several opportunities through Tiger Teams, the Equity Grant, and the Integrity Task Force will be used to assist with resource gaps and implement process improvements.

Measuring effectiveness will include data analyses, collaborative work and communications across divisions, and customer surveys.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

N/A

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

N/A

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Monitoring will include data gathering and analyses, customer surveys, and internal quality review scoring within UICS using USDOL standards.

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Detection of Overpayments
Corrective Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

Overall, there appears to be an underlying problem as the numerator (overpayments established by BPC) includes work search related overpayments, and the denominator (estimated BAM overpayments) does not. This appears to be a systemic issue, which has been analyzed by ESD in prior years.

Pre-COVID, Washington established a very high proportion of work search related overpayments in relation to total overpayments. Given the legal structure in Washington regarding work search overpayments, it was mathematically impossible for the state to meet the 95 percent ALP for overpayments established to overpayments detected ratio by virtue of how the ratio is calculated.

Work search requirements were waived during the pandemic until July 2021. Although this should have improved Washington's measure, recent periods rose to above 400 percent, far exceeding previous periods closer to 120 percent. The magnitude of this discrepancy points to probable reporting errors. It is possible that the numerous IT changes implemented in response to the pandemic benefit payments impacted the ETA 227 report.

At the time of this draft, the Report Validation Project has identified two logic issues in Population 12 and ETA 227 that may be affecting the Overpayment Detection Rate: UI amounts incorrectly exclude overpayments paid from the COVID-19 Waiting Weeks, Reimbursement Relief, or Employer Relief entitlements and incorrectly include overpayment weeks that have been transferred to PUA or PEUC claims.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Data Validation efforts maintain the identification of two logic issues in Population 12 and ETA 227 that are affecting the Overpayment Detection Rate due to the impact of the administration of CAREs Act benefits and programs.

Work search requirements were waived during the pandemic until July 2021. Although this should have improved Washington's measure, recent periods rose to above 400 percent, far exceeding previous periods closer to 120 percent. The magnitude of this discrepancy points to probable reporting errors. It is possible that the numerous IT changes implemented in response to the pandemic benefit payments impacted the ETA 227 report.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and

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activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

In order to identify and address likely reporting errors impacting the rate, ESD needs to validate the overpayments established data (ETA 227).

Through the Report Validation Project, staff will validate and submit corrections for the ETA 227 report by March 2023. If the rate is still not within the ALP, ESD will reference work search-related IAP steps to further reduce work search errors.

ESD has previously conducted a full data analysis of the Detection of Overpayment data and due to the results of that analysis, ESD previously requested a waiver. ESD will continue its work with data validation to see if further analysis provides differing results from that of the analysis conducted in 2019.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Data Validation efforts continue to focus on Population 12 as well as the need to validate and correct issues in the ETA 227 reports. In addition, additional resources that will assist with Data Validation work will allow us to perform a deeper dive into the data that contributes to the Detection of Overpayments calculation. This will help us understand the current state as well as the reasons for the declining measure observed since Q1 2022.

In addition, the agency's current top priority is the Overpayment Project, which seeks to provide relief to customers who had overpayments established during the pandemic era. Although the focus of the project is to support individual customers, an externality of this work is knowledge and artifacts (i.e., tables and scripts) that are necessary to support these customers with overpayments, and will provide the agency with better information to support both DV and ETA reporting efforts regarding overpayments. The goal is to leverage this knowledge once the focus on the customer is completed or in a position to allocate resources elsewhere.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

For a period of time, efforts were limited by the response to COVID-19. The launch of the cross-divisional Report Validation Project in March 2022 will prioritize the specific populations and issues to address.

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FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

This work was intended to be addressed during the Report Validation Project (March 2022 to June 2023). However, complications due to resources that impacted the business side of the work, as well as the Overpayments Projects described above, prevented the execution of last year's plan.

The Overpayments Project resulted in greater understanding of overpayments and the impacts of the implementation of the CAREs Act benefits and allowances, and will provide the agency with greater knowledge to resolve the underlying issues associated with the Detection of Overpayments.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will be tracked through quarterly updates, and by creating a repeatable verification process with dedicated staff. However, the structural (inclusion/exlusion criteria) problem with the measure will prevent full compliance.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Progress will be tracked through quarterly updates, and by creating a repeatable verification process with dedicated staff. However, the structural (inclusion/exclusion criteria) problem with the measure will prevent full compliance.

Overpayments Recovery
Corrective Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

For the previous reporting period, BPC's recovery of overpayments fell below the minimum ALP of 68 percent. The main reasons for this dip are fewer staff and stopping active collections during 2022 due to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. With the pandemic and increased workloads, collectors assisted in other areas such as processing adjudication-related tasks. Staff also assisted with work related to the increases in claims for benefits and fraud activities.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

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We continue to conduct soft collections with claimants. Staff continue to work with claimants to arrange repayment agreements as they call. We are not actively pursuing liens at this time, and have not completely reopened active collections.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc.   Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

We plan to focus on the reopening of collections and actively collecting overpayments.

Staff currently continue to work on the cleanup of collections-related tasks. We will expand these efforts through collaboration with partners, leadership and other agencies to monitor recovery rates, with the goal of completing clean up tasks and restarting active collections by 12/31/2022.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Staff continue to work on the cleanup collection-related tasks while performing soft collections with customers. We will continue to move forward with reopening collections by working with IT to resolve discrepancies such as outstanding issues on current claims.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

Collection efforts ceased in March 2020 due to the high volume of work in other areas of the agency. The recovery rate fell due to staff assisting in other areas of the agency. We anticipate reopening the Collections Unit and beginning active collections by 12/31/2022. This should increase the recovery rate significantly.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Collections efforts did not fully reopen during FY23. We will continue to work with leadership, IT, UTAB and Policy to fully reopen collections activity.

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(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

We plan to resume active collections no later than 12/31/2022, utilizing existing processes and standards to monitor progress and enforce performance quality.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

We are developing a work group to manage the reopen collection activity in phases. A project manager will be assigned with a project plan tracking efforts and outcomes.

**Benefits Data Validation
Corrective Action Plan Summary**

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

Although Washington identified deficiencies in the benefit system related to federal reporting and data validation populations, historically there has been a struggle to balance resources between Data Validation needs and the prioritized response to COVID-19. Staff turnover further exacerbated these challenges. These challenges were addressed by hiring and training new Data Validation staff in October 2021 and devoting developer resources to the Data Validation program via the Report Validation Project, launched in March 2022.

A total of 70 issues across benefit populations and ETA reports have been identified. Report and population data validation has become increasingly correct. However, with the multitude of issues and the need to reprogram both the population and report counterpart for most, not all are completely passing.

Population 3 – Extract is not properly programmed, fails to import into the Sun.

Population 3a – Extract includes Add Tallies, or new separations from employer without a break in the claim series.

Population 4 – Development is in progress. The remaining issue is to properly code weeks paid with COVID-19 Waiting Week entitlements as first payments.

Population 5 – Development is in progress. The remaining issue is to exclude determinations without active UI/UCX/UCFE monetary determinations.

Population 12 – Exclude overpayments from weeks transferred to PUA and PEUC claims, overpayments cancelled in the same quarter as they were established, overpayments adjusted in the same quarter should show net overpayment amount.

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Population 13 – Overpayments from original determinations are being coded as additions, overpayment reconciliation amounts are incorrect.

Population 15 – Overpayment amounts are missing COVID-19 entitlement charges, employer reported cases where coded as "Non-Controllable."

Module 4: Non-Separations – Population 5 must pass, number of records in BTQ universe not matching ETA 9052 counts.

Module 4: Appeals – Must be further evaluated. Population 8 is scheduled to be reviewed for the project in CY2023 Q2.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

At the conclusion of the Report Validation Project (6/30/23), updates and changes were made to Benefit populations 1, 3, 3a, 4 and 5. Testing and validating these populations and documenting any issues will start 10/1/2023. Any new issues will be noted and logged for when resources for developers become available. Due to new staff in Data Validation and ETA reporting roles, time was taken to train and gain the knowledge to be in these roles. Due to the ongoing overpayment project, populations that are tied to overpayments have been set for review in VY 2024.

Population 1 – Extract is picking up weeks that are in excess. Have identified issues with program type that will need to be addressed. Will be tested further in VY 2024.

Population 3 – Extract is not properly programmed. Will be tested further in VY 2024.

Population 3a – Extract includes Add Tallies, or new separations from employer without a break in the claim series. Will be tested further in VY 2024.

Population 4 – Completed development and will validate Q3. If unable to pass will document and log outstanding issues.

Population 5 – Completed development and will validate Q3. If unable to pass will document and log outstanding issues.

Population 12 – Exclude overpayments from weeks transferred to PUA and PEUC claims, overpayments cancelled in the same quarter as they were established, overpayments adjusted in the same quarter should show net overpayment amount. Will be tested further in VY 2024.

Population 13 – Overpayments from original determinations are being coded as additions, overpayment reconciliation amounts are incorrect. Will be tested further in VY 2024.

Population 14 – Will be tested in VY 2024. If unable to pass will document and log any outstanding issues.

Population 15 – Overpayment amounts are missing COVID-19 entitlement charges, employer reported cases where coded as "Non-Controllable." Will be tested further in VY 2024.

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Module 3 Benefits: Through testing each population have identified multiply edits for steps. Will correct steps as each population is reviewed.

Module 4: Non-Separations – Population 5 must pass, previous issues with 9052 have been corrected.

Module 4: Appeals – Must be further evaluated. Population 8 is scheduled to be reviewed for the project in CY2024.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc.   Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

DV staff have evaluated the populations on a quarterly basis and defined 70 issues with the populations or federal reports. These issues are tracked on a high level on SharePoint and on a more granular level on the FAST contractor's proprietary software.

Items have been prioritized by pervasiveness, followed by USDOL priority. Each project phase is dedicated to specific populations. The project development team designs solutions. Then, DV staff test the solutions by spot checking, importing to the SUN and comparing to ETA counts. After all items related to a population are pushed to production, the population extract is generated and evaluated in the SUN for DV and transmittal.

The project tracks the progress of each item, the overall passing status of each population, and the RV and DV status of each population.

The current project plan is as follows:

- Phase 2 (2022) July – September: Populations 4, 5, 12

- Phase 3 (2022) October – December: Populations 13, 15

- Phase 4 (2023) January – March: Populations 3, 3a, Module 4, Module 5

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Find cadence on reviewing populations, testing, identifying issues and creating a course of action. Collaboration with internal staff and units to bridge any gaps identified in knowledge and technical expertise.

Request for allocation of resources to correct issues and barriers preventing the successful validation and completion of populations and modules. Resources identified to create a

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successful Data Validation program are developers, business analysis and subject matter experts in areas related to the populations.

Priority on populations and modules:

- July-September 2023 – review populations and identify any outstanding issues not already documented. Data Validator to attend USDOL training. Work on benefits Module 3 edits and rewrites.

- October – December 2023 – test changes and validate Population 4, and 5. Identify any new issues found and document. Test and validate Module 4 sep/nonsep. Test, review and validate population 1.

- January -March 2024 - Test, review and validate population 3, 3a, 7, 9, 10, 11 and Appeals module 4.

- April – June 10th 2024 - Test, review and validate population overpayment populations 12-15* and Module 3 benefits. Any populations with updates to extract will be re-tested and validated.

*Overpayment extracts will be worked last due to current overpayment project currently being worked.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

ESD did not have adequate resources for most of the previous year to address the needed data validation items. Developer resources remained focused on the COVID-19 response, and the sole DV staff member was new to UI.

Although performance improved, ESD did not meet the overall metrics. The Data Validation team has been focusing on correctly capturing the steps and resources needed to address population and report accuracy.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Due to new staff and development staff levels changing projections of previous project goals were reevaluated, with an emphasis on training and acquiring the knowledge to be successful in the future. Data Validator has gained more knowledge in duties for this position. Being able to be more efficient in completing data validation. Staff additions to replace retired staff will also be leveraged to help with ETA and Data Validation work.

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(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will continue to be monitored through daily development huddles, weekly Macro Project meetings and bi-weekly Project Manager meetings.

The team uses a variety of tools to track specific development items on high and granular levels, as well as scope and schedule. Updates are emailed to USDOL on a monthly basis.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Ongoing communications with ESD supervisor and managers to report status and update on progress. Ongoing documentation of progress, goals, and any unexpected barriers in completing and monitoring work. Communications with USDOL of progress and barriers in completing work.

Tax Data Validation
Corrective Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

Population 5 - Due to the timeline of the Tax User Stories production schedule, we were unable to push solutions to production and submit Tax Population 5 for VY2022 by 8/10/2022. Population 5 was evaluated for 2022 Q2, and we submitted passing results on 9/6/2022.

Module 4: New Employers – If an employer's liability date changes, Population 3 does not appear to be reflecting these changes while TPS does.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Population 2 – currently being worked on by new data validator. Target completion is by March 2024. Due to focus on Benefit populations, this population was not completed.

N/A: Mod 3 Tax was submitted timely for VY 2023 within the certification timeframe.

Mod 4 status determination- have identified issue with related population (tax pop 3) with pulling correct activation processing date. Will need to address this 1st prior to completion of this module. Target for completion is by March 2024.

Mod 5 wage item – Due to new staffing for data validation position and focus of benefits populations this module was not completed. Validator has a working knowledge of process and has collaborated with other staff on process and target completion date is by March 2024.

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(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

Population 5 - Data Validation staff submitted passing results on 9/6/2022.

Module 4: New Employers - Data Validation staff will first re-evaluate Tax Population 3 for a more recent quarter to determine if the liability issues are reflected in DEV. Staff will submit a User Story and work with NGTS developers to confirm the issue and develop a solution. Staff will then test the solution and confirm release to production. Finally, staff will run TPS and submit the solution if valid.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Find cadence on reviewing populations, testing, identifying issues and creating a course of action. Collaboration with internal staff and units to bridge any gaps identified in knowledge and technical expertise. Tickets to fix queries or issues identified will be submitted when appropriate.

Target date for completion of Tax Population 2, Module 4 Status and Module 5 Wage is March of 2024.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

Our plan was successful in improving performance overall. However, our schedule was slightly delayed so staff could complete Tax development items that needed to be addressed prior to pushing any Population 5 changes to production. Similarly, TPS was not addressed because the team needed to focus on the Populations first.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Due to staffing changes time was needed to have new validator train and gain knowledge of their job duties. Module 4 status determinations was not completed in FY23, however with training and knowledge gain by new validator completion of module 4, module 5 and population 2 by March 2024 is a reasonable assessment.

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(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

Progress will continue to be monitored through daily development huddles, weekly Macro Project meetings and bi-weekly Project Manager meetings.

The team uses a variety of tools to track specific development items on high and granular levels, as well as scope and schedule. Updates are emailed to USDOL on a monthly basis.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

Ongoing communications with ESD supervisor and managers to report status and update on progress. Ongoing documentation of progress, goals, and any unexpected barriers in completing and monitoring work. Communications with USDOL of progress and barriers in completing work.

Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM)
Corrective Action Plan Summary

(A) The reason for the deficiency.

FY23

BAM has historically struggled to meet timeliness due to staffing and budgetary issues. The unit has particularly taken tremendous hits over the past year with multiple staff retiring early due to the pandemic, staff turnover, and training time for new staff which comprise of 80% of the unit. The staff in the BAM unit were called to assist in the processing of claims, as well as adjudicate claims in partnership with the UI claims and adjudication staff to work through the backlog of claims and appeals issues

The Paid Comparison Reports we believe are the result of an issue with Data Validation and Reporting due to the failure of Populations 4 and 5 on the reports. There have also been instances of cases being pulled for BAM review that do not meet the criteria and were later removed such as PUA claims which should not have been included in the case sample pulls for the BAM reviews.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

BAM continues to struggle through staffing and budgetary issues which have heavily impacted our ability to remain in compliance with Timeliness and Sample Selection. Although the unit had been fully staffed for a brief period in 2022, shortly after the new year the unit experienced additional turnover which created a gap in our ability to maintain timeliness for the performance period. Performance has improved in this area in the past 3 quarters, but due to such low

performance in the prior quarters in 2022, we acknowledge that we are still under corrective action for this measure. At this time, the unit is considered fully staffed and we continue to conduct supervisor reviews and training to meet our timeliness expectations.

The Paid Comparison Reports measure continues to be an issue, and is linked with issues identified as part of the Report Validation Project for Benefits Populations 4 and 5 and associated reports. Data Validation and ETA reporting staff continue to work with these issues, and are collaborating with Quality Assurance to track, prioritize and implement fixes for these reports.

(B) Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc.   Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

FY23

WA continues to work with HR and Budget to address the staffing and resource contentions. Although several new staff were hired in recent months, training is still taking place to get those new Quality Control Specialists working to a full case load to meet USDOL timeliness expectations. The BAM Supervisor and the Quality Assurance Manager are committed to training staff as quickly as possible while also ensuring quality is met as cases are reviewed. The QA Manager is working within the constraints of resources to hire at least one additional team member to get the unit back to full capacity through means of budgetary savings from other units within the division by the end of 2022. The BAM supervisor will continue to conduct peer reviews and supervisor reviews of all new staff cases to monitor timeliness and maintain quality control. Management will also conduct regular check-ins with staff to conduct process improvement exercises and measure effectiveness.

The QA management team will conduct a deeper dive into the data around the populations that are impacting the Paid Comparison Report issues to assist the Report and Data Validation project in their efforts to pass all populations and reporting. The management team will also work with ITBI to review and address any concerns, issues, or discrepancies within the business rules to address why/how cases are being included in the BAM case pull that do not meet the appropriate criteria.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

WA continues to work with HR and budget to address staffing and resource contentions. Due to the amount of turnover within the unit over the past 3 years, it has been difficult to maintain consistency with performance. Training is still in progress for the most recently hired staff to get those new Quality Control Specialists working to full caseload to meet USDOL timeliness

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expectations. We continue to be committed to training staff as quickly as possible while also ensuring quality is met as cases are reviewed. Through strategic budget planning in 2022, we were able to hire an additional FTE for the unit with the hopes that this will help us maintain timeliness and sample selection compliance. The BAM supervisor will continue to conduct peer reviews and supervisor reviews of all staff cases. We had previously only focused review efforts on new staff, although it came to our attention during an internal quality review that reviews of all staff cases were warranted. The supervisor is building a plan to conduct those reviews and use them as additional training opportunities for the unit. Management will continue to hold regular check-ins with staff to conduct gap analyses and process improvement exercises, and measure effectiveness.

The QA team conducted a deeper dive into the data around the populations impacting the Paid Comparison Report. We will continue to assist Data Validation and ETA reporting staff in their efforts to prioritize fixes and pass all populations and reporting requirements.

The QA team has reviewed and begun to address concerns and identify issues and/or discrepancies within the business rules to determine why/how cases are being included in the BAM case pull that do not meet appropriate criteria. Work continues in this effort to prioritize and implement fixes for this issue.

The QA Manager is currently exploring options for additional opportunities within the unit using WA ESD's newly piloted Developmental Job Assignment (DJA) process. The DJA role would assist the BAM unit through job shadowing, information gathering and case support. It would also promote opportunities for staff outside of QA to understand the importance of BAM work, including how it impacts our customers and performance as a state.

(C) If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

FY23

The actions contained in last years plan were similar to what WA is proposing now, and although they may not have shown significant improvement to meet the performance expectations, the unit continued to make the necessary improvements with the staffing structure. Due to unforeseen circumstances of staff turnover and personnel issues, the unit did not see improvement as we had initially anticipated last year. The unit continues to make improvements and work through staffing issues in order to have better means and resources for contingency planning.

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

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The actions contained in the previous plan continue to be similar to what WA is proposing now, and we believe we are beginning to see tangible improvement in regards to timeliness and meeting those performance expectations. The unit worked through some necessary improvements within our training model, coaching and staffing structure. Although we can see improvement internally, it will likely not reflect on our SQSP until the next BYP. Due to unforeseen circumstances of additional turnover and personnel issues, we did not see the full extent of improvement we had hoped for. The unit continues to work through improvements, budget constraints, staffing and personnel issues in order to have a better outlook in the coming year.

(D) A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

FY23

The unit plans to monitor and assess accomplishment by way of conducting regular reviews and check ins with the BAM unit staff to watch timeliness and quality of the cases being reviewed

FY24 - Alternate Year Plan Updates

The unit plans to monitor and assess accomplishments by conducting regular reviews of all cases and regular check-ins with staff (both team and individual) to monitor timeliness and quality of the cases being reviewed.

The unit will also continue to partner with the Data Team to work through prioritization and fixes for the populations impacting our reports.

5. UI PROGRAM INTEGRITY ACTION PLAN

State Quality Service Plan (SQSP)
Integrity Action Plan (IAP)

Washington – Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

Accountable Agency Official(s).

List the person or persons accountable for ensuring integrity in the state's unemployment insurance (UI) program.

Name: Cami Feek
Title: Commissioner
Email: cami.feek@esd.wa.gov

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Phone: 360-338-2977

*Note: Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 09-23, issued on June 30, 2023, refers to UIPL No. 22-21, Change 2, throughout the guidance. However, on July 13, 2023, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) issued UIPL No. 10-23, which rescinded UIPL No. 22-21, Change 2. UIPL No. 11-23, also issued on July 13, 2023, changed the amount of the integrity grant funding originally issued under UIPL No. 22-21, Change 2, but maintained the guidance on required and recommended fraud prevention and detection and overpayment recovery activities.

- **(Topic #1: National Priority) – Ensuring UI program integrity by assessing and evaluating fraud risks, implementing and maintaining sufficient controls to effectively mitigate the likelihood and impact of fraud, and reducing improper payments.**

  ➢ In evaluating fraud risks, states should consider both eligibility fraud risks and identity (ID) fraud risks.

  o **State plans to evaluate UI fraud risks and implement and maintain sufficient controls to effectively prevent fraud and reduce improper payments, including state actions to develop their own state-specific antifraud strategy.**

  ➢ Key elements of an antifraud strategy include:
    - **Who** is responsible for fraud risk management activities?
      o Establish roles and responsibilities of those involved in fraud risk management activities, such as the antifraud entity and external parties responsible for fraud controls and communicate the role of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate potential fraud.

      The Fraud Management Division partners with other agencies, internal stakeholders and law enforcement to address fraudulent claims. The Fraud Management skilled investigations teams identifies the fraudulent claims and works with other agencies. The Division is comprised of other units that support fraud risk management, including Operations, Intelligence, Compliance and Training, Office of Special Investigations, and a SAW/SEAP unit that regularly monitors eServices access and accounts.

      The agency recently created a new Division, "Customer Compliance", that will bring together financial recovery, fraud detection and prevention, and employer audit teams. This includes work in Financial Services, Fraud Management, UICS, and Leave and Care. By bringing these functions together we hope to make improvements to the customer and employer experience while creating operational efficiencies along with giving this work the visibility and support it needs.

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- **What** is the program doing to manage fraud risk?
  - Describe the program's activities for preventing, detecting, and responding to fraud, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

    The Fraud Management Office of Special Investigations (OSI) uses fraud detection (ex: missing employer, failure to respond issues) and fraud prevention (ex: workers compensation, public tips) strategies, as well as data crossmatching.

    The division monitors and evaluates using continued analysis of fraud filters and controls. These occur on a regular basis to ensure they are functioning as designed and are minimizing impacts to claimants. The Fraud Management also has a Compliance and Training team that helps ensure quality control and process improvements for performance.

- **When** is the program implementing fraud risk management activities?
  - Create timelines for implementing fraud risk management activities, as appropriate, including monitoring and evaluations.

    The division's Fraud Operations team uses data analytics to continually monitor current patterns to help prioritize tasks.

- **Where** is the program focusing its fraud risk management activities?
  - Demonstrate links to the highest internal and external residual fraud risks outlined in the fraud risk profile.

    The Fraud Management Division continues ongoing analyses of fraud filters to ensure functioning, identify possible false positives and work to minimize impacts to claimants. The division has worked with NASWA to implement IDH changes and reduce identity issues, and is working on crossmatch adjustments with WA Department of Licensing. These adjustments help support claimants by reducing unnecessary case workload and helping with timeliness overall.

- **Why** is fraud risk management important?
  - Communicate the antifraud strategy to employees and other stakeholders, and link antifraud efforts to other risk management activities, if any.

    The Fraud Management Division protects Washington's unemployment trust fund and ESD. We partner with other agencies, internal stakeholders, and law enforcement to ensure that we continue to stop bad actors from making

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fraudulent claims for benefits, while providing timely claims decisions to the honest people of Washington.

> *See* A Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs at https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-15-593sp.pdf for additional information.

o **State use of tools, services, strategies, process improvements, and/or procedural changes adopted by the state to combat fraud, verify identities, and enhance recovery efforts. States must identify which tools, solutions, and service provider(s) are used in the state's fraud management operations, including but not limited, to the following areas: data analysis, risk-based ID verification, fraud prevention and detection, and cybersecurity.**

> Include strategies, solutions, and/or activities using funds the Department has made available to states for combatting fraud and strengthening UI program integrity under UIPL Nos. 28-20; 28-20, Change 1; 28-20, Change 2; 28-20, Change 4; 22-21; 11-23; and 02-22.

Data analysis
- o Exploratory data analysis of claimant and web activity data is conducted regularly.
    - Monitoring volume and composition of new Secure Access Washington (SAW) accounts
    - Insights are visualized for easy comparison and analysis using Microsoft Excel, Tableau, and PowerBI.
    - Anomalies or shifts in the data are shared with investigators.
- o We conduct frequent reviews of identity verification data to identify instances where claimants were deemed legitimate originally but new information has come to light that warrants a second look.
- o Regular maintenance and upkeep of blocklists
- o Monitoring number of violations to detect potential upcoming or existing threats

Risk-based ID verification
- o Implementation of an upfront identity verification tool
    - The use of this tool will assist in the validation of the identities of customers as they navigate through the claims process to request benefits. The successful implementation of such a tool is meant to prevent bad actors from using false documents to obtain benefits, and for the agency to know better who their customers are.
    - Separating the duties of document validation and allowing investigation team to focus on escalated issues and complex claim reviews

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Fraud prevention and detection
- o Implemented a two-day pay delay to allow time for investigators to review new claims and bank changes. Any suspicious claims identified are flagged for further review prior to payment releasing.
- o Implemented a variety of crossmatches to detect potential identity theft
  - ▪ In-house Discovery process to detect multiple-use information and known bad information (blocklisting)
  - ▪ Fully integrated NASWA IDH capabilities
  - ▪ Dept of Licensing crossmatch
  - ▪ SSA crossmatch (via UIQ)
  - ▪ Dept of Health crossmatch for deceased individuals
- o Implemented quarterly review of online accounts to detect and suspend sleeper accounts

Cybersecurity
- o F5 – Silverline & Shape

➢ Provide details on overpayment recovery efforts including:
- • Actions with banks, financial institutions, and with Federal law enforcement's forfeiture and seizure efforts.

  Effective July 1, 2022, ESD changed their banking institution from Key Bank to USBank taking advantage of the opportunity to update procedures ensuring timely, correct and efficient processing of transactions. The new procedures incorporate technological enhancements and a more effective interface with ESD staff to correct errors and provide missing information to keep transactions timely.

  At this time, Washington does not prosecute for fraud. ESD has resumed soft collections, and is working towards fully reopening all collections during the FY2024 SQSP.

- • Information on how the state is using waivers of recovery of overpayments both for regular UI and temporary UC programs created by the CARES Act, including if the state is using approved blanket waivers as described in UIPL No. 20-21, Change 1.

  ESD assembled an Overpayment Project team to provide relief to claimants impacted by overpayments during the COVID-19 pandemic assistance period, and has automated UTAB to automatically identify and process blanket waivers that fit in the scenarios given by USDOL in UIPL 20-21, Change 1.

  Based on a cost-benefit analysis, the Project Leadership Team determined it is not cost-effective to perform collection activities for pandemic era overpayment

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amounts below $1,000. ESD will charge off all state and federal overpayments, except LWA) for individuals with an overpayment balance of less than $1,000 on weeks during the pandemic period.

For claimants who do not qualify for a blanket waiver, we will review their waiver request forms.

- How the state is using the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) for benefit overpayment recovery, how the state is ensuring covered debts are being submitted, and any barriers/challenges in working with TOP.

We are using TOP for Collections, which have not fully reopened.

○ **State use of UI Integrity Center resources, with a particular focus on state connection to the Integrity Data Hub (IDH) and use of its datasets to cross-match unemployment compensation (UC) claims and aid in the prevention and detection of fraud and improper payments (*see* Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 24-21);**

➢ Discuss the state's connection to the IDH, including frequency of IDH use.
  - Does the state submit all initial and continued claims for IDH cross-matching? If not, what is preventing the state from sending all claims?

Connection, leverage and frequency of use
  ○ Connect to IDH via webservice integration, all new claims are sent for evaluation close to real-time
  ○ In the event of an error resulting in a failed connection, we have built in a mechanism to retry/resend the claim information to IDH
  ○ We are fully leveraging all available IDH capabilities, including SAR, MSCM, IDV, BAV, Fraud Alerting, Foreign IP Address Detection, Suspicious Email Domains
  ○ System sets leads and issues for further investigation based on IDH results. Scoring thresholds were developed in partnership with NASWA IDH team.
  ○ ESD is fully leveraging all available IDH capabilities.
    ▪ Suspicious Actor Repository (SAR)
    ▪ Multi-State Crossmatch (MSCM)
    ▪ Identity Verification (IDV)
    ▪ Bank Account Verification (BAV)
    ▪ Fraud Alerting
    ▪ Foreign Internet Protocol (IP) Address Detection
    ▪ Suspicious Email Domains

➢ If the state is not connected to the IDH and/or is connected but not regularly submitting UI claims data through a webservice/real-time connection to IDH, provide details on the state's plan for how to increase usage and an anticipated timeline to:

N/A. Washington is connected to the IDH and regularly uses IDH capabilities. *See Connection, leverage, and frequency of use details above.*

- Connect to the IDH.
- Increase frequency of IDH use.
- Fully leverage all available IDH capabilities. IDH capabilities include:
  o Suspicious Actor Repository (SAR)
  o Multi-State Crossmatch (MSCM)
  o Identity Verification (IDV)
  o Bank Account Verification (BAV)
  o Fraud Alerting
  o Foreign Internet Protocol (IP) Address Detection
  o Suspicious Email Domains and Patterns
- Update the IDH connection to a webservice/real-time connection.
- Identify barriers to using any of the available IDH capabilities.

➢ If the state has not executed IDH Participation Agreement - Version 5.0 (see TEN No. 24-21), provide details on the anticipated timeline to update to IDH Participation Agreement – Version 5.0.

N/A – ESD is fully leveraging all available IDH capabilities.

➢ Discuss the state's use of the UI National Integrity Academy's virtual training and/or eLearning lessons.
➢ Discuss the state's use of UI Integrity Knowledge Exchange Library resources, including the Behavioral Insights Toolkit (*see* TEN No. 15-21).

Divisions across the agency, including UI, Fraud Management and OSI, use these trainings and resources as part of the onboarding process. Washington also continues to fully integrate NASWA Learning modules into regular training for staff at all levels.

➢ Discuss the state's participation in State Consultative Services.

Along with the use of UI integrity-related trainings and resources, ESD regularly attends meetings with USDOL Regional Office staff for ongoing assistance with program-specific questions and guidance. ESD appreciates feedback received as part of these check-ins, as well as the more formal guidance through monitoring processes.

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Note: The IDH Team has a one-page dashboard report for each state summarizing current IDH utilization and areas where IDH use might be expanded. Please reach out to IDHTeam@naswa.org to request a copy of your state's IDH utilization dashboard report.

o **State use of required and recommended integrity controls and overpayment recovery activities as outlined in UIPL No. 11-23, including any additional effective cross-matching and overpayment recovery activities and identified best practices.**

➤ Provide details regarding the state's use of each crossmatch/integrity control and overpayment recovery activity (required and recommended) as outlined in UIPL No. 11-23. Include details on the frequency of crossmatch/integrity controls use (*e.g.*, conducted on all initial claims, all continued claims, only when suspicious activity is identified?) and frequency of overpayment recovery activities.

Crossmatches
- o National Directory of New Hires (NDNH)
- o Quarterly Wage Records Crossmatch
- o Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE)
- o State Directory of New Hires (SDNH)
- o Social Security Administration (SSA) Unemployment Insurance Query (UIQ)
- o Interstate Benefits (IB) Crossmatch.
- o State Identification Inquiry (SID) and IB8606 enhancements made to the Interstate Connection (ICON) network cross match to prevent concurrent claim filing in multiple states.
- o Incarceration Cross-matches – If the state is already connected to an incarceration crossmatch, provide details regarding what incarceration crossmatch the state is currently using (*e.g.*, the Social Security Administrator's Prisoner Update Processing System (PUPS), third-party vendor, etc.)
  - ▪ Dept. of Corrections
  - ▪ WASPC jail data
- o Other Crossmatches
  - ▪ Labor and Industries
  - ▪ Social Service Payment System (SSPS)
  - ▪ Dept. of Health Deceased Individuals

Crossmatch frequency

Crossmatch (* not listed in UIPL 23-20)	Frequency	Claim type
NDNH	Daily	Weekly claims
SDNH	Daily	Weekly claims
Quarterly wage records	Quarterly	Weekly claims

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IDH – IDV	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
IDH – SAR	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
IDH – MSCM	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
IDH – Foreign IP Address Detection	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
IDH – Bank Account Validation	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
IDH – Fraud Alert Application	[OSI]	[OSI]
IDH – Suspicious Email Domains	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
SSA UIQ	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
Dept of Licensing	Real-time	Initial/subsequent claims
Dept of Health*	Daily	Weekly claims
Detention Institute Match	Daily	Weekly claims
Labor & Industries*	Daily	Weekly claims
Social Service Payment System*	Daily	Weekly claims

Overpayment recovery activities

ESD continues to focus on the following overpayment recovery activities as we work to fully reimplement all collections.

- o Benefit Offsets
- o Treasury Offset Program (TOP): used for Collections at this point, which have not fully reopened
- o Cross Program Offset Recovery Agreement (CPORA)
- o Interstate Reciprocal Offset Recovery Arrangement (IRORA)
- o State Income Tax Offset Program
- o Wage Garnishments
- o Civil Actions
- o Property Liens
- o Collection Agency Referrals
- o Credit Bureau Referrals
- o Other recovery methods as determined by state law or policy
  - ▪ Unclaimed property, lottery winnings

➢ Crossmatches/integrity controls and recovery activities include:
  Crossmatches/Integrity Controls
  - ID Verification.
  - National Directory of New Hires (NDNH).
  - Quarterly Wage Records Crossmatch.
  - Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE).
  - Referral of allegations reasonably believed to constitute UC fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, or misconduct to DOL-OIG.
  - UI Integrity Center's IDH.
  - Digital Authentication, such as Multifactor Authentication (MFA).
  - Device Fingerprint/Reputation Management.
  - Fraud Risk Scoring (*i.e.*, Case Management Prioritization).

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- Comparisons and crossmatches that detect shared characteristics.
- Social Security Administration crossmatches (*i.e.*, Unemployment Insurance Query (UIQ), Prisoner Update Processing System (PUPS), Death Master File).
- Federal, state, and local incarceration crossmatches.
- Deceased Records crossmatches.
- Vital Statistics crossmatches.
- State Directory of New Hires (SDNH).
- Department of Motor Vehicle crossmatch.
- Interstate Benefits (IB) crossmatch.
- State Identification Inquiry (SID) and IB8606 enhancements made to the Interstate Connection (ICON) network crossmatch to prevent concurrent claim filing in multiple states.
- Use of a unique identifier to identify claimants instead of using the full SSN.
- Fictitious employer crossmatches.
- Periodic IT security assessments and audits consistent with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)-compliant information technology security guidelines.
- Adequate internal controls to protect the integrity and security of state assets.
- Implement a cross-functional integrity task force to develop and implement state-specific action plans to reduce UI improper payments.

Overpayment Recovery Activities
- Benefit Offsets.
- TOP.
- Cross Program Offset Recovery Agreement (CPORA).
- Interstate Reciprocal Offset Recovery Arrangement (IPORA).
- Negotiating repayment plans.
- Accepting repayments through various methods (*e.g.*, online, via debit/credit card).
- State Income Tax Offset Program.
- Wage garnishments.
- Property liens and assessments.
- Offsets of lottery winnings, homestead exemptions, and other benefits.
- Active participation in probate and/or bankruptcy proceedings.
- Skip tracing.
- Work proactively and collaboratively with banks and financial institutions.
- Civil actions.
- Credit bureau referrals.
- State/federal prosecution.
- Penalties and interest on overpayments in compliance with state and federal law.
- Collection agency referrals.

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- Implementing a voluntary fraud self-disclosure program.
- Other recovery methods as determined by state law or policy.

➢ Identify any additional integrity controls or recovery activities the state uses that are not listed in UIPL No. 11-23.

Marked with asterisk* in table above.

➢ Provide promising practices.

Although ESD is still working to fully reopen collections, claimants have been able to call and continue to make repayment arrangements. This enables us to work with claimants to determine how much they can afford to pay monthly.

➢ Identify challenges with crossmatches or in overpayment recovery activities.

- Rules-based system is less agile than Machine Learning (ML) system. There are steep costs (both time & money) to procure and implement an ML system.
- High false positive rate –changes that reduce false positives can take a long duration to implement. From both a technical perspective and when doing so ensuring that those changes will not significantly increase the risk of improper payments. False positives generate workload that at times impact timeliness metrics governed elsewhere in SQSP.
- Analysis to evaluate cost/benefit of false positives is complex and time-consuming
- The level of development and testing effort to modify and refine filters/crossmatches is significant.
- Limited access to data elements from external data sources (e.g., Dept of Licensing) that drive high false positive rates

➢ If the state does not currently use one of the integrity controls or recovery activities listed in UIPL No. 11-23, provide the state's plan and anticipated timeline to request and obtain access to the cross-match/integrity control or to implement the overpayment recovery activity.

Note: If the state does not plan to obtain access to a crossmatch/integrity control or implement a specific recovery activity, please explain.

N/A

o **State use and employer participation in State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) (*see* TEN No. 12-16).**

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➢ Provide details on the state's current usage of SIDES.

ESD currently only uses the Separation Information exchange. We have used SIDES webservice since 2014 but have since added E-Response. After resolving some issues with the E-Response notifications, we are now fully using it for any employers who have signed up.

➢ If the state does not currently use all available SIDES exchanges, provide the state's plan for how to connect to all SIDES exchanges and an anticipated timeline to implement each SIDES exchange. Sides Exchanges include:
- Separation Information - Currently active
- Monetary & Potential Charges - Interested
- Additional Fact-Finding - Interested
- Determinations & Decisions - Interested
- Earnings Verification - Interested
- Benefit Charges - Interested

ESD is interested in adopting additional exchanges. However, we are still fully involved in and prioritizing CARES Act clean up. Because of the volume of work associated with this effort and some operational hurdles to overcome, we are unable to provide a timeline, and do not yet have data to share regarding barriers to participation.

➢ Identify any barriers to SIDES exchange participation, either in state promotion or in employer adoption.

ESD is currently looking in to the impacts of adopting additional exchanges, but we do not yet have data to share regarding barriers to participation.

o **State strategies designed to facilitate claimants' compliance with state work search requirements while also supporting their reemployment such as adoption of the work search requirements in the Model Work Search Legislation (*see* TEN No. 17-19).**

➢ Outline the state's work search requirement and explain state challenges with work search improper payments.

Job search requirements for Washington state are defined in WAC 192-180. Legislation has recently been updated to better fit with today's work search culture and activities. WA has a minimum of three approved work search activities that are required each week a claimant is filing for UI benefits. During the weekly claim process, the claimant must include all three activities and/or contacts to be approved for benefits. The claimant is stopped at the claim filing process if they have not input

the required three activities/contacts for each week, resulting in a denied weekly claim and an issue set to the claim. The claimant can appeal this issue if they choose to provide further information to the ESD.

Work search errors were one of Washington's top three contributors to improper payments based on the PIIA 2022 performance period, during which ESD re-implemented work search requirements and also expanded on the acceptable work search activities.

➢ Discuss the state's plan to improve work search compliance by reducing work search errors and strengthening reemployment.

With the lessening COVID-19 response and increasing focus on rebuilding long term, state strategy has worked on updating legislation and rules to better fit with the current times. For example, for e-Services users, claimants must enter a minimum of three approved activities per week for the process to continue. Changes to work search requirements mean adjustment and stabilization time for claimants and staff to understand and communicate reporting requirements, and for claims determinations. The Policy team continues to provide clarification and assistance on work search-related questions, with responses available across the agency as guidance.

ESD continues to monitor RESEA compliance and possible improvements, with review information shared with program operations. ESD has updated training with monitoring items so WorkSource staff across the state can better understand situations. Staff completed refresher training in September 2023, with intensive training incorporating information from the last year of monitoring planned next. These trainings spread knowledge gained across the state and serves as additional resources for staff if they are struggling with specific components. Overall, this approach helps WorkSource staff be more effective in supporting RESEA participants.

Operationally, the RESEA program has continued with the added text messaging with appointment and scheduling deadline reminders, which we hope will further support participant awareness and engagement with the process.

- **(Topic #2) – State plans and actions to address the state's top three improper payment root causes in Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) 2022.**

  ➢ Identify the state's top three improper payment root causes.

  According to the PIIA 2022 improper payment data prepared by the ETA Office of Unemployment Insurance on 10/31/2022, the top three root causes for Washington state are: *Work Search, Separation Issues and Benefit Year Earnings*.

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➢ Explain the state's challenges in reducing improper payments in the top three root cause categories.

ESD continues to stabilize through pandemic-era claims and reviews. During analyses of and review of claims, agency errors appear to be the top contributor to our Improper Payment rate. This is attributed to lack of staff resources, training needs and many changes in rules and regulations over the past few years. ESD re-implemented work search requirements during the performance period, which has been an adjustment for both claimants and new staff throughout the agency. It is also the top cause of our Improper Payment rate. Although ESD expanded on the acceptable work search activities for claimants, this change requires an adjustment and stabilization period for both staff and claimants to understand reporting requirements and make appropriate claims determinations.

Separations and Benefit Year Earning issues are also top root cause contributors to our Improper Payment rate. We attribute the deficiency here to system gaps and auto-write decision making.

➢ Discuss the state's plan to reduce improper payments in each root cause category.

ESD will continue to monitor progress through Quality Reviews in adjudication through the QA project in UICS, staff training, partnership with NASWA, USDOL and external stakeholders, and data analyses. UICS will continue to work closely with the Quality Assurance unit to work through quarterly data and findings/scoring of cases to identify gaps and areas in need of additional training. The agency has implemented an Integrity Task Force that includes management from various divisions collaborating to define and improve integrity and quality across the UI program. Several opportunities through Tiger Teams, the Equity Grant, and the Integrity Task Force will be used to assist with resource gaps and implement process improvements.

Measuring effectiveness will include data analyses, collaborative work and communications across divisions, and customer surveys.

- **(Topic #3) – State coordination and collaboration with the DOL-OIG and other state and Federal law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute UI fraud and recover overpayments. This should also include state plans to continue providing all confidential UC information to DOL-OIG for purposes of both investigating fraud and performing audits.**

ESD will continue to support collaboration with DOL-OIG and has implemented the following supports to enable that collaboration:

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- Built good working relationships to identify points of contact with federal, local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors:
    - DOL-OIG
    - FBI
    - AUSA
    - WA AGO
    - Local LE Agencies
- Increased prosecution of bad actors to deter future fraud attempts
- Informed and encouraged victims of UI fraud to report the incident to their local law enforcement agencies
- Established an Internal Fraud Investigations Program to mitigate attempts to commit fraud from within the agency

- **(Topic #4) – State plans to strengthen program integrity in UI tax operations, including current activities and plans to identify and prevent worker misclassification, State Unemployment Tax Act (SUTA) Dumping, and fictitious employer schemes, and development/use of effective employer audit strategies (*i.e.*, use of remote audits).**

  ➢ Identify current activities and plans to address:

  ESD is currently merging auditing functions for our three tax/premium collecting programs. This will strength our ability to both find and address non-compliance across programs, including addressing worker misclassification and the gig economy.

- Worker Misclassification

  ESD is currently working to reinstitute travel and field audits, which were stopped during the pandemic. In preparation for audits, we cross-reference 1099 files from the IRS to find leads. We will be providing refresher training to staff about audits stemming from these leads.

  We will also be building a cross-program employer audit plan regarding the gig economy. The plan will help in identifying gig economy employers during the field audits.

  - SUTA Dumping

    With the passage of HB 2491, the number of accounts that qualify for SUTA dumping was reduced. State law allows for businesses that are expanding to acquire a business with a higher tax rate and not be attached as a successor, thus not being impacted by the higher tax rate. As long as HB 2491 is in place, Washington will continue to have a lower than average number of accounts qualifying as SUTA dumping.

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As part of its SUTA dumping plan, ESD's process incorporates the following:

1. Weekly: SUTA Investigator will review all new predecessor/successor links to ensure the correct percentage is applied.
2. Weekly: SUTA Investigator will review all report transfer between account with no predecessor/successor to investigate potential SUTA dumping.
3. Quarterly: SUTA Investigator will run the automated SUTA Dumping Detection Systems built into NGTS to detect employers that may be engaged in SUTA dumping, because manual procedures during and after the status determination process do not effectively identify all SUTA dumping schemes.
4. Tax Accounting staff will upload or email the SUTA Investigator to create a workflow item for potential SUTA dumping based on information provided on the Excess Wage Imbalance letter.

NGTS can track potential SUTA dumping items 2- 4, providing counts for the ETA 581 report and a measure of SUTA dumping activity.

- Fictitious employer schemes

If a fictitious employer is suspected, the identifying unit will contact Registration, who will then work with Audit, SUTA and Benefit Disputes to address the validity of the employer and employment. The team researching, determining the fictitious employer, and communicating out the findings is chosen based on how the account was established and how wages were added.

Fictious employer determinations are communicated out both internally and externally. Notifying staff of fictitious employers would reduce the amount of claimant fraud in Washington. If we address it at the employer level, we can stop it at the claimant level.

The team reaches out to units to act on the account:

1. Registration unit to close and note the account.
2. Tax Accounting unit to mark wages as stranger wages, so they cannot be used in a claim.
3. Claim center to notify them of the determination and that wages will be flagged as stranger wages.
4. Notify Fraud unit, so they can inform IDH.
5. Collection unit for awareness.

Staff email the following stakeholders:

1. Registration supervisor will notify contacts with other state agencies on the Operations team with the fictitious employer findings.

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2. Registration supervisor will notify the Fraud unit to report to IDH.
3. Tax Accounting supervisors will notify their counterparts in Benefits and Collections of the findings and that wages have been marked as stranger wages.

➢ Development/use of effective employer audit strategies (including, but not limited to, use of remote audits).

The UI employer audit team already has audit goals in place, and there is an existing process for identifying industry-specific audits. The unit previously altered requirements (procedures documented) to identify employers more likely to not be compliant. In addition, the team is part of a newly created "Customer Compliance" division that will help ensure compliance work is appropriately supported and prioritized. As part of this, the team will be conducting process mapping activities to find areas in which we can improve processes to complete quality audits more quickly. The team will also be focusing on reinstituting field audits, and recruiting and filling associated positions.

- **(Topic #5) – State plans and actions to strengthen internal security and ensure that all appropriate internal controls and processes are in place and are adequate to assess internal risks and threats, ensure program integrity, and minimize program vulnerabilities (*see* UIPL No. 14-17).**

The State continually works to improve internal security and controls. Work has been focused on separation of duties, including system permissions and defining clear roles and responsibilities. This ensures that there is a clear separation between work streams.

- **(Topic #6) – State plans and actions to evaluate the effectiveness and equity of fraud prevention and detection, ID verification, and improper payment reduction activities. State should include strategies to ensure that processes used to detect and prevent fraud are effective and do not limit the ability for a legitimate claimant to apply for and become eligible for UC. States implementing or using facial recognition technology in their ID proofing processes must also report findings from bias testing and provide updates on efforts to mitigate biases or barriers in this section of the IAP.**

➢ Identify potential barriers that are created by fraud prevention and detection functions for legitimate claimants. Provide plans and actions designed to mitigate such risks.

Continued analysis of fraud filters and controls occurs on a regular basis to ensure that they are functioning as designed and are minimizing the impact to our claimants. Through this ongoing analysis, fraud management identified two primary filters where false positives were higher than desired, thereby creating unnecessary workload for the fraud division and prolonging the timeframe needed to address

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claims. As a result, system changes were made to modify the logic behind ESD's crossmatch with the NASWA Integrity Data Hub. A "Last good date" function was implemented to prevent claimants from having identity issues set repeatedly based on the same information. Further changes are being made to deprioritize certain IP matches as they tend to be less reliable indicators of ID theft.

➤ As required in <u>UIPL No. 11-23</u>, states must ensure there is at least one timely, effective, and accessible non-digital alternative to online ID verification, which should not be overly burdensome on applicants, limit access to public benefits programs or the timely receipt of benefits, or stigmatize members of the public in any way. Provide details on the state's non-digital ID verification option(s).

The state uses various methods to conduct identity verification, providing the claimants with options as to how they would like to provide documents. Methods can include email, uploading of documents to eServices, mail, fax, or in-person at a local WorkSource office. The state provides equitable access and alternative paths to prove identity and/or resolve issues.

➤ Include how the state flags cases for suspected fraudulent activity and how investigation resources are assigned, including:
  • What risk scoring elements and/or prioritization elements are used.

    o Risk scoring
      ▪ Multiple use information
      ▪ Known bad information (blocklist)
      ▪ Validation of claimant information (e.g., SSN, Driver's License Number)
      ▪ IDH IDV scoring
      ▪ IDH SAR/MSCM matches

    o Prioritization elements
      ▪ We implemented criteria based on scoring thresholds and other results returned to determine next actions that include:
        ▪ No review needed
        ▪ Create a lead for review (no impact to payment)
        ▪ Create an issue (payment may be withheld in accordance with conditional pay rules/requirements)

  • How the risk scoring elements and/or prioritization elements are weighted.

    Elements are weighted based on volume and previous use by known fraudulent claims.

  • How the state evaluates the weights based on false positives and negatives.

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Weights are evaluated using issue outcome data (allow/deny) and imposter fraud categorization. We will also consider whether the issue was detected by multiple crossmatches.

- How risk scoring elements and/or prioritization elements are updated.

  Steps in the process – Identification of proposed refinements à Data analysis to support the cost/benefit à Approval (Fraud Chief/Commissioner) à Support ticket à Prioritization à Development work à Testing à Implementation à Monitoring

  Once approval has been provided to update these elements, a support ticket is submitted, and prioritized for work at the agency level. System criteria are modified by the development team, and then tested in lower environments, before being implemented in production. Data continues to be monitored post-implementation.

- How the state ensures the fraud risk scoring and/or prioritization of cases does not negatively affect legitimate claimants.

  The state continues to monitor data and scoring elements to minimize adverse effects on legitimate claimants through the fraud risk scoring method(s) outlined above.

➢ Include details on how the state measures claimants' usage of both digital and non-digital identity verification options, how the state reviews digital services for false positive and false negatives, and how the state ensures legitimate claimants have alternative paths to prove their identity and/or resolve issues, including providing a possible recourse.

The state uses various methods to conduct identity verification, providing the claimants with options as to how they would like to provide documents. Methods can include email, uploading of documents to eServices, mail, fax, or in-person at a local WorkSource office. The state provides equitable access and alternative paths to prove identity and/or resolve issues.

- **(Topic #7) – State plans and actions to mitigate negative consequences for victims of UI ID fraud, including ensuring simplified processes to remove the victim's liability for overpayments resulting from ID fraud.**

  ➢ Include details regarding how the state provides a reporting mechanism for UI ID fraud on their websites, communicates status updates for such investigations, and

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takes action to protect the victim when the state determines that UI ID fraud has occurred (*see* UIPL No. 11-23 for more details on protecting victims of ID fraud).

ESD provides information on unemployment benefits fraud, including commonly asked questions and "how to" procedures for reporting imposter fraud versus fraud/misconduct, through ESDWAGOV - Unemployment benefits fraud

➢ Include the state's procedures for mitigating negative impacts on the UI ID fraud victim (*e.g.*, establishing a pseudo claim record, temporarily marking the overpayment as "uncollectible", etc.).

ESD continues to conduct additional review for potentially fraudulent claims, including delaying all payments to all claimants by two business days to support the reviews. Additional information on what claimants can expect through the process is available at ESDWAGOV - Unemployment benefits fraud

- **(Topic #8) – If the state has not provided complete and accurate overpayment reporting on the ETA 227 reports (Overpayment Detection and Recovery Activities), and the ETA 902P report (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Activities), the state must provide information on plans for improvement, including timeframes and milestones, for addressing the issue and ensuring complete, accurate, and timely reporting in FY 2024.**

  ➢ If the state has submitted all data for the ETA 227 or 902P reports, this section is not applicable, and the state can input "N/A".

  ESD continues to work though identified data validation and report concerns together with USDOL.

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6. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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7. <u>SIGNATURE PAGE</u>

U.S. Department of Labor
SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

OMB Control No.: 1205-0132		Expiration Date: 02/29/2024
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration	**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR** **FFY 2024**	**STATE** **WASHINGTON**
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE **STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN** **SIGNATURE PAGE**		
This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and __Washington State Employment Security Department__ **(NAME OF STATE AGENCY)** The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the State's overall operating plan and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL, and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds. All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms.		
TYPED NAME AND TITLE	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**
Cami Feek, Commissioner _____ **STATE ADMINISTRATOR (print name)**	_Cami F. Feek_	November 3, 2023
_____ **DOL – REGIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name)**		
_____ **DOL – NATIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name)** (if required)		

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SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

A. **ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT**

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

This topic is discussed in the overall Combined State plan, but this section will focus on the SCSEP target population.

The Washington State Employment Security Department's (ESD), Labor Market and Performance Analysis branch (LMPA) publishes an Employment Projections (2019) report which produces forecasts for two, five and 10 years in the future. The report uses both time series and indicator data sets to produce the forecasts.

According to the report "The largest employment shares in 2027, from largest to smallest, are projected for the office and administrative support occupations, sales and related occupations and food preparation and serving-related occupations" (pg3). By 2027, these three major occupations are projected to represent 28.48% of total employment positions for the state (pg8). While the forecast anticipates that these historically high-turnover, low-wage industries will grow enough to remain the largest sectors in terms of employment, the largest/fastest growth industries over the next 10 years are indicated to be computer information services and mathematics represented as information services. The next fastest growth industries are predicted to be health services/social assistance (which include personal care and service occupations) and construction. Education is the only other predicted growth industry over this period.

Overall, the highest likelihood for employment opportunities for older workers in the future based on sheer numbers of positions will be office assistant and administrative support, sales and related occupations and food preparation and serving-related jobs. Of the top growth industries through 2027, health services/social assistance services and education are likely to have the most employment opportunities for older workers.

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

The state's Employment Projections report (2019) identifies the top six skills based on projected numbers of jobs openings for the long-term employment trends. These skills are: Food

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preparation, Microsoft Office, Bilingual, Quality Assurance, Forklifts, Mathematics (pg21). Of these identified skills, SCSEP programs across the state are most prepared to provide support to participants to develop skills and certifications through training programs for food preparation and Microsoft Office/computer skills. Additionally, forklift operator skills and certifications are obtainable through SCSEP programs in some areas to support participants interested in pursuing employment in that field for unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP programs will use Individualized Employment Plans (IEP) to identify participant's skills, interests and abilities for targeted unsubsidized employment based on potential employment options in the different areas of the state. Participants that identify food preparation skill needs training will be enrolled in Food Handler Permit training programs required by Washington State's Department of Health to obtain a Food Worker Card necessary to work in food preparation jobs. Participants identified as needing to acquire computer skills, especially Microsoft Office skills and/or certifications, will be enrolled in local and/or online programs to acquire the skills, and/or the certifications, necessary to support entry in to unsubsidized employment in office and administrative support occupations.

Health and personal care services positions may require experience and/or certifications to enter in to employment. For example, to become a Home Care Aid/Long-Term Care Worker in Washington State there is a Certified Caregiver process that involves required basic training courses. Education positions potentially available to SCSEP participants may include child caregiver/pre-school jobs which also involve training such as Child Care Basics, Blood Borne Pathogens, and possibly Food Handlers Permits. SCSEP programs in the state are capable of supporting participants identifying these necessary skills, trainings and certifications in their IEP to access the necessary training in support of their unsubsidized employment goals.

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

The long-term economic environment projections indicate employment growth and opportunities that are most clearly associated with computer skills. Unfortunately, most of the computer industry jobs will require significant and specific skills for entry. Eighteen of the top 20 skills anticipated to grow and experience significant employment opportunities are related to information technology.

The following table identifies the Top 20 skills for expected job openings through 2027 (abbreviated table sourced from Employment Projections report (2019)):

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Combined rank	Hard skill titles	Average annual growth rate 2017-2027	Total average annual openings
1	Java	2.92%	2,940
2	Amazon Web Services	3.21%	1,319
2	JavaScript	3.08%	1,441
4	Software development	2.57%	4,394
5	C#	2.91%	1,609
6	Web services	2.57%	2,832
7	Python	2.58%	2,675
8	Big Data	2.79%	1,673
8	C/C++	2.72%	1,846
10	Linux	2.67%	1,976
11	Agile Software Development	2.83%	1,461
11	Structured query language	2.41%	6,704
13	Distributed system	3.28%	886
14	Systems Development Life Cycle	2.89%	1,351
15	Scrum agile methodology	3.00%	1,126
16	Catheters	2.38%	5,431
17	Tableau Software	2.50%	2,225
18	Cloud Computing	2.43%	2,759
19	Machine learning techniques	2.61%	1,553
19	Bedpans	2.35%	3,489

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Historically, SCSEP participants have been individuals with significant barriers to employment including lower levels of education and less work experience, in contrast to what the projected in-demand skills will be for growth industries in the state. Of the top 20 projected growth skills, only two are not information technology related. The two projected non-information technology growth skills are both related to healthcare and personal aide workers and are viable skills for SCSEP participants to acquire for unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP programs are targeting skills trainings as discussed in the section above to address employment opportunities that are the most viable for SCSEP participants based on overall economic environment. The most likely fields for unsubsidized employment for SCSEP participants are in food handling/serving, office and administrative support, healthcare support and home/personal health aides and childcare/pre-school (education). The following table identifies anticipated annual job openings in these fields and demonstrates the most viable unsubsidized employment options for SCSEP participants in the future.

Occupation	Average Annual Total Job Openings 2017-2027
Food Service related (non-supervisory/management)	343,450
Office and Administrative Support	241,666
Healthcare Support and Home/Personal Health Aides	64,764
Childcare/Pre-school (non-supervisory/management)	7,900

Data from Washington State Employment Securities DepartmentLong-term occupational projections and does not include any jobs that involve supervisory, management, technical or scientific skills.

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B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

(A) *PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))*

As SCSEP is included in the Washington State WIOA Combined State Plan SCSEP, the Core Programs are creating operational strategies for increasing the levels of cooperation and partnership. The partnerships and collaborative efforts will better connect the SCSEP Program, the WIOA Title I-B Employment and Training Programs and Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services.

SCSEP programs will continue to refer participants to WIOA programs and accept all WIOA programs' assessments. Co-enrollment continues to be encouraged to maximize and leverage the training, workshop, resume preparation and employer referrals available through the WIOA programs. SCSEP programs in the state will be encouraged to participate regularly in WIB partnership meetings.

All SCSEP program participants are required to register and utilize the services of the WorkSource (one-stop) Centers as best they can. When language inhibits this process for NAPCA participants, the SCSEP program director coordinates translated workshops to provide resume writing or other training to participants from the WorkSource Center. English capable participants are assigned by NAPCA to the WorkSource Centers whenever possible to help create a bridge to other older workers who need help accessing one-stop services.

SCSEP programs are working to increase presence in the WorkSource system by engaging with Aging Forums around the State, providing presentations on issues facing the aging workforce, to individuals receiving services through the Worksource systems in an effort to both market SCSEP and also in regards to providing additional opportunities for collaboration between the organizations and systems.

(B) *PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))*

There are 13 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in Washington State providing services across 13 different Planning & Service Areas (PSA). The AAAs have a long history of collaborating with different entities to facilitate comprehensive service support systems for older adults. Their public planning processes include analyses of local trends and needs. In Washington State, this

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facilitation extends to adults with disabilities, family caregivers of persons of all ages, including children with developmental disabilities and in-home care agencies for persons with developmental disabilities. Washington's AAAs are both providers of direct services and funders of community service providers. They maintain close relationships with their partnering subcontracted providers to ensure that services are provided in conformance with their area plans, state and federal requirements, and consumers' individual choices. The SCSEP programs coordinate closely with the AAAs for understanding community service needs and facilitating cross-referrals and to understand available services and assist participants to access services. These relationships also assist individuals determined ineligible for SCSEP, but in need of help to navigate the aging & disability network. The AARP Foundation, which operates both as a National grantee and the State grantee sub-grantee, has been a long-time national partner with the Administration on Aging for improved services for older adults, including family caregivers and older workers.

The AAAs are continually working via government to government relationships with tribes located in their PSAs, including those that receive funding under Title VI of the OAA. This is a work in progress with ongoing improvement and refinement.

(C) PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(l))

SCSEP programs have many established relationships with organizations providing services to older adults and persons with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, aging information & referral/assistance (I&R/A), transportation, family caregiver support, kinship caregiver support, nutrition, legal services, and in-home care. The Aging and Disability Centers (ADRCs) provide knowledge and collaborative efforts to expand relationship building with disability-related service systems, including independent living centers, Labor and Industries, and Ticket-to-Work programs. The SCSEP programs are natural partners with the ADRCs as one ADRC goal is to connect consumers with workforce options.

Local 2-1-1 development and implementation has also provided impetus for relationship-building and coordination. SCSEP programs have, or are developing relationships with Community Action Programs (CAP), healthcare organizations and business-related services. The combination of SCSEP programs, AAAs, CAPs and workforce-related entities results in a dynamic opportunity for creative and successful private/public partnerships.

SCSEP providers use other public and private agencies as part of their community outreach. Recruiters visit public places older people frequent such as senior centers, faith-based centers, senior apartments, job fairs, and food stamp and Social Security offices. Programs leverage relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Affairs, disease groups and March of Dimes to help with physical barriers to employment.

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SCSEP programs also coordinate with local organizations that serve a range of minority populations. Some programs have relationships with Hispanic cultural organizations and Native American tribes. NAPCA seeks partnership and information resources in Asian communities which can help older job seekers with special needs or disabilities. The partnerships with local cultural and/or ethnic organizations is very important to identify and serve participants most appropriately to their needs.

(D) PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

SCSEP programs coordinate at the local level with Vocational Rehabilitation agencies ensuring potentially eligible SCSEP participants are referred appropriately and that referrals are also received. Community Colleges are utilized for participants to expand their educational experiences, including having access to literacy improvement programs and tools, GED preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, computer classes, and job readiness skills. All programs coordinate closely with other WIOA programs through the local Workforce Development Councils and One-Stops to access training resources.

Additionally, Goodwill has job programs located within the facilities. These include veterans' programs and other jobs training and readiness programs supported by non-SCSEP funding sources, including Goodwill direct funding.

AARP has formal hiring partnerships with several private employers from a wide variety of industries, including retail, transportation, information technology, health, finance, security and staffing. Additionally, they coordinate with local resources that provide employment and training opportunities that are funded through local, state and federal resources including programs targeting older workers funded by King County and coordinate with NAPCA's Senior Environmental Employment Program (SEE) funded though the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

(E) ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

SCSEP is a mandatory partner under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) and as such, it is a part of the One-Stop Delivery System. SCSEP programs are required to follow all applicable rules under WIA (20 CFR 652) and must provide all WIOA core services. Core services include determination of eligibility; outreach, intake, and orientation; initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs; job search and placement; career counseling, where appropriate; assistance in establishing eligibility for other social service programs and unemployment; and data or record keeping related to employment statistics and performance measures (20 CFR 662.240).

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An assessment or Individual Employment Plan (IEP) completed by the SCSEP satisfies the condition for an assessment, service strategy or IEP completed at the One-Stop and vice-versa.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

The memorandum of understanding is an agreement developed and executed between the local Board and the One-Stop partners relating to the operation of the One-Stop delivery system in the local area.

The MOU must cover the services to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system; the funding of the services and operating costs of the system; the methods for referring individuals between One-Stop operators and partners; and the duration and procedures for amending the MOU. It must also contain a statement that Title V resources may only be used to provide Title V services to Title V eligible individuals. The MOU should also discuss the reciprocal arrangements and the contents of the SCSEP IEP and WIOA IEP.

Although SCSEP participants are not automatically eligible for intensive and training services under Title I of WIOA, local boards may deem SCSEP participants, either individually or as a group, as satisfying the requirements for receiving adult intensive services under Title I of WIOA.

(F) EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

SCSEP programs are engaging with and seeking to be more integrated with the Combined State Plan aspects of business engagement. This is discussed in the overall State Plan.

Additionally, the SCSEP programs will continue to develop and expand upon the respective efforts of their individual organizations to create opportunities for the participants in the program. These efforts involve coordinating with and developing partnerships with multiple entities in local markets. Utilizing state and county funded resources in a number of areas is being prioritized. In rural areas in particular, programs are targeting potential Host Agencies for Community Service Assignments with organizations that understand the goal of SCSEP of moving participants in to unsubsidized employment and will consider hiring participants directly or leveraging their own resources to connect participants to local unsubsidized employment.

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

See previous section.

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

The Department of Labor indicates that at the end of SCSEP Program Year 2021, Washington State's SCSEP eligible minority population based on Census data was 25.7%. Through the end of Program Year 2021 the SCSEP programs in the state were all providing services to minority participants at a higher rate than the Census data identifies. The minority service rates range from a high of 97.5% minorities served, by the NAPCA Set-Aside grant (designed to serve Native Americans or Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders) to Goodwill's 30.3% minority's service rate. The State grantee and AARP National grantee served minorities at 37.6% and 42.3% respectively in Program Year 2021.

The SCSEP programs will continue to target minority populations through outreach and recruiting programs. Additionally, the programs are continuously building relationships with ethnically and culturally focused community entities to not only identify prospective minority participants, but to serve as Host Agencies for Community Service Assignments and potentially unsubsidized employers for participants. These relationships exist and are being developed with Native American tribes and community resources, Hispanic organizations, Asian community programs and multi-cultural organizations. Relationships with ethnically and culturally focused entities also provide SCSEP programs help identifying culturally relevant supports for participants and to support networking with culturally relevant potential employers for participants.

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Community service needs are identified by SCSEP programs and its partnering agencies through several means including through participating in community needs assessments, information and referral networking and local planning processes. Programs also review workforce data and assessments to better determine which community services might provide training and skill development that is transferable to high-growth or substantial employment opportunities.

Needs assessments are conducted by several entities, including but not limited to health districts, United Way agencies, mental health providers, healthcare providers, workforce development councils, and Area Agencies on Aging. From their different perspectives, these needs assessments can help pinpoint specific unmet needs and offer an opportunity of solutions for meeting those needs.

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Information and Referral (I&R) programs and agencies maintain databases or lists of services that are available or accessible in communities. I&Rs share this information with stakeholders for potential improved service coordination, accessibility and delivery. This would include which organizations providing services within needed areas might be good candidates for Host Agency opportunities. Some of the I&R entities that can provide this information are: Aging Information & Referral/Assistance (I&R/A) programs (or Aging & Disability Resource Centers); 2-1-1 Call Centers; Crisis Clinics; Child Resource & Referral; and libraries.

Washington's AAAs participate in the development of the Washington State Plan on Aging. The state's AAAs provides multiple services to both older adults and persons with disabilities. They are well recognized for four-year area planning processes that include stakeholders from multiple use levels and from a wide variety of backgrounds – each with the same purpose: to improve the coordination and the delivery of services in their planning and service areas. Each area plan sets priorities for a four year period and is updated after two years. Most AAAs provides online access to their most recent area plans. Their web sites can be located through the DSHS/ ALTSA's website where there is an interactive map to locate services. The area plans feed into the State Plan on Aging, approved by the Administration on Aging.

The most common need in the rural areas of the state is transportation. In the majority of the rural counties, employment opportunities are much fewer and many older individuals do not have adequate or reliable transportation to allow them access to employment and training in the larger population centers. Dental, medical services and low-cost housing are also needed in all areas.

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

SCSEP programs' ultimate goals are to support participants to move off the program into unsubsidized employment. The SCSEP programs are working toward a more effective process of achieving these outcomes and supporting exited participants to remain employed well after they have exited the program. Over recent years, the State grantee has worked to reorganize its program to be more focused on participants exiting into unsubsidized employment and post-exit supports to stay employed. It has done this through unifying its previous 11 sub-grantees in to a single, state-wide sub-grantee with more uniform approaches and practices and a focus on gaining unsubsidized employment. The other SCSEP programs in the state have been more advanced in this process and more successful in achieving their goals and the State program is coming more in line with their best practices. AARP, which is now the State sub-grantee, as well

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as the largest National grantee program in the state, is developing an internal efficiency program they will apply to participants in both of their programs. They will share this process with other SCSEP programs in the state in a process of best practices. The new program will focus on participant, host agency and employer engagement and a focus on unsubsidized employment from the first day of enrollment. It will also provide guidance to their staff and participants on retention services and processes for participants that have exited the program into unsubsidized employment to help increase the long-term retention rates of employed individual's post-SCSEP.

SCSEP programs will also meet and strategize with local workforce development and economic development councils, in coordination with local WorkSource Centers to participate in building a unified regional approach to developing and maintaining successful employer partnerships and achieve successful unsubsidized placements that meet community needs. In addition, programs will provide support for the exiting SCSEP participants follow-up and satisfaction survey process. Consistent and ongoing communication and follow-up with partners will provide programs with feedback and understanding on how to better serve both participants and community partners. Participation in a regional approach will provide increased opportunities for recognition and participation in future activities thereby establishing more long-term relationships.

SCSEP programs are also beginning the earliest stages of discussions as a unified group to identify and potentially execute more inter-program cooperation to achieve more effective utilization of available resources and how best to organize individual programs and inter-program relationships to better achieve identified objectives. Developing best practices and uniform approaches to community resources has been identified as areas of cooperation to develop over time. One issue being examined is the nature of the SCSEP programs State and National grants that create overlapping service areas in some counties in the state. One potential approach to resolving duplication of efforts in an area may include identifying areas of the state to exchange participant slots between SCSEP programs to reduce duplication of effort and services in operating areas. If this potential process does move forward it would involve exchanging Modified Positions in some counties with multiple SCSEP programs operating so that a more uniform program can be executed in those counties. This would have the additional benefit of reducing the operating areas for some SCSEP programs therefore allowing them to focus their assets in a more targeted operating area to achieve increased performance toward goals.

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6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

All SCSEP programs are focused on increasing levels of performance with a particular focus on entry in to, and maintaining over time, unsubsidized employment. Previously, the State grantee program was the furthest behind in these goals, but with a recent reorganization of the program over the previous program years, it has come more in line with the other SCSEP programs.

The focus is on improving employment outcomes through multiple avenues, including greater engagement with participants, host agencies and employers. Programs are initiating employment focus during participant orientation in to SCSEP through a "starting with the end in mind" approach of identifying unsubsidized employment as the goal from the first day. Programs provide monthly follow ups on employment goals and are working on a target of supporting participants to moving into unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible, potentially within 18 months of entry into the program. Programs are also developing more extensive supports and working to identify more resources for participants that are exiting into unsubsidized employment to make them more likely to succeed in their employment. Host Agencies are being supported to identify participants as potential unsubsidized employees earlier in the process and supported to complete hiring participants into unsubsidized employment directly. Employers are being engaged to develop stronger relationships to support more options for participants to move to unsubsidized employment as well as to develop more robust relationships between the SCSEP programs and employers to support both the participants and employers post transition out of SCSEP to increase retention rates.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

SCSEP services are provided throughout the State of Washington based upon the Federal Census reports, Department of Labor reports, and the Department of Labor's determination every year for the number of participant slots available throughout the state based upon the Equitable Distributions reports to be discussed in further detail within this section of the State Plan.

The populations SCSEP serves include individuals with the following criteria: 55 years and older; unemployed; have a total family income of less than 125 percent of the federal poverty level; have low employment prospects; are unable to find employment through the WOIA workforce system; are Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness; Veterans and qualified spouses; have Limited English Proficiency; have low literacy skills; and/or have a disability.

The following table displays the distribution of SCSEP service programs by county across the state.

County	State Grantee	AARP	Goodwill	NAPCA
Adams				
Asotin		*		
Benton		*		
Chelan	*	*		
Clallam	*		*	
Clark	*		*	
Columbia				
Cowlitz			*	
Douglas		*		
Ferry	*			
Franklin		*		
Garfield				
Grant		*		
Grays Harbor	*		*	
Island	*	*		
Jefferson	*			
King	*	*		*
Kitsap	*			
Kittitas			*	
Klickitat			*	
Lewis			*	
Lincoln		*		
Mason			*	

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County				
Okanogan	*	*		
Pacific	*		*	
Pend Oreille		*		
Pierce			*	*
San Juan	*			
Skagit	*	*		
Skamania			*	
Snohomish	*	*		
Spokane	*	*		
Stevens		*		
Thurston			*	
Wahkiakum				
Walla Walla		*		
Whatcom	*	*		
Whitman		*		
Yakima	*		*	

2. <u>LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.</u>

The following table identifies the location and numbers of Authorized Positions (AP) assigned in Washington State. There was minimal change in total number of AP from PY2022 to PY2023, and only two areas were identified as gaining one additional AP due to population changes between areas.

County	AP Q4 PY2022	Change from PY2022
Adams	0	0
Asotin	2	0
Benton	14	0

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Chelan	8	0
Clallam	11	0
Clark	29	0
Columbia	0	0
Cowlitz	12	0
Douglas	1	0
Ferry	2	+1
Franklin	5	0
Garfield	0	0
Grant	7	0
Grays Harbor	9	0
Island	6	0
Jefferson	5	0
King	223	0
Kitsap	20	0
Kittitas	3	0
Klickitat	3	0
Lewis	9	0
Lincoln	1	+1
Mason	8	0
Okanogan	6	0
Pacific	4	0
Pend Oreille	2	0
Pierce	69	0
San Juan	2	0
Skagit	11	0

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Skamania	1	0
Snohomish	48	0
Spokane	55	0
Stevens	7	0
Thurston	20	0
Wahkiakum	0	0
Walla Walla	5	0
Whatcom	18	0
Whitman	3	0
Yakima	21	0

3. <u>DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.</u>

The following table identifies Modified Position slots assigned to each county and total numbers of participants enrolled in all programs in the county. It identifies the Over or Under enrollment by SCSEP program in each of the counties they serve and provides a final total of Over/Under enrollment by county for all programs. The plan to address discrepancies in equitable distribution will be discussed more in-depth in the next section.

County	Total Assigned Modified Positions	State Grantee Over (+) /Under (-) Enrolled	AARP Over (+) /Under (-) Enrolled	Goodwill Over (+) /Under (-) Enrolled	NAPCA Over (+) /Under (-) Enrolled	Total Number Enrolled	Total Number Over (+) /Under (-) Enrolled
Adams	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Asotin	1	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	1	0
Benton	9	N/A	-3	N/A	N/A	6	-3
Chelan	3	+1	+3	N/A	N/A	6	+3
Clallam	5	+2	N/A	-3	N/A	4	-1

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Clark	14	-2	N/A	+4	N/A	16	+2
Columbia	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Cowlitz	6	N/A	N/A	+7	N/A	13	+7
Douglas	1	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	1	0
Ferry	1	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	-1
Franklin	2	N/A	+2	N/A	N/A	4	+2
Garfield	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Grant	3	N/A	-3	N/A	N/A	0	-3
Grays Harbor	4	-2	N/A	+5	N/A	7	+3
Island	2	-1	-1	N/A	N/A	0	-2
Jefferson	2	-2	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	-2
King	96	+10	+36	N/A	+13	155	+59
Kitsap	9	-3	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	-3
Kittitas	1	N/A	N/A	-1	N/A	0	-1
Klickitat	1	N/A	N/A	-1	N/A	0	-1
Lewis	4	N/A	N/A	-4	N/A	0	-4
Lincoln	1	N/A	-1	N/A	N/A	0	-1
Mason	4	N/A	N/A	-1	N/A	3	-1
Okanogan	3	0	+5	N/A	N/A	8	+5
Pacific	2	+1	N/A	-1	N/A	2	0
Pend Oreille	1	N/A	+2	N/A	N/A	3	+2
Pierce	32	N/A	N/A	-6	+6	32	0
San Juan	1	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	-1
Skagit	5	+1	-3	N/A	N/A	3	-2
Skamania	1	N/A	N/A	-1	N/A	0	-1

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Snohomish	22	+3	+1	N/A	N/A	26	+4
Spokane	21	+8	+18	N/A	N/A	47	+26
Stevens	3	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	3	0
Thurston	9	N/A	N/A	-4	N/A	5	-4
Wahkiakum	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0
Walla Walla	2	N/A	+23	N/A	N/A	25	+23
Whatcom	9	-2	-3	N/A	N/A	4	-5
Whitman	1	N/A	-1	N/A	N/A	0	-1
Yakima	10	-2	N/A	+9	N/A	17	+7

4. <u>THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:</u>

(A) MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

The State sub-grantee is AARP Foundation, which provides services through a separate, unique SCSEP unit from their National grant unit that also serves the state. Both units being housed in the same office creates a situation where two of the four SCSEP providers work very closely together and in conjunction with the State. The other large National grantee is Goodwill, and the State and AARP intend working with Goodwill more closely together to achieve a series of goals, including greater Equitable Distribution for SCSEP.

AARP and the State have developed an outreach plan for participants and host agencies for the rural and underserved areas of the state. This plan will overlap with AARP National SCSEP services in parts of the state where both grants are serving. The intention is to utilize available resources more efficiently and not replicate work or directly compete in areas of joint service. These plans involve targeted outreach through multiple sources utilizing online resources when applicable and local resources when online sources are less effective. The intention is to develop and/or utilize already existing local resources, especially culturally and ethnically associated resources such as tribes, cultural centers, churches and organizations already serving potential participants, especially in populations with Limited English Proficiency. The goal is to develop a long-term sustainable network of host agencies that can serve the local populations, be sources of potential referrals and assist in developing and coordinating transitions to unsubsidized employment. The current need to fill Modified Positions in rural counties is being used to

leverage the immediate need against long-term sustainability since the rural counties have many barriers, but particularly since the current arrangement for most rural counties served by SCSEP in Washington is a system in which the SCSEP providers do not have staff co-located in most of the rural counties being underserved (or often even in adjacent counties), so the process of developing, maintaining and transitioning participants and host agencies is logistically difficult.

The targeted recruitment in rural areas will occur simultaneously with strategic reductions of enrollments in the over-served counties such as King County and Spokane County. The reductions will occur through attrition as participants exit the programs, with individual SCSEP programs working to maintain as close to Equitable Distribution in those counties as possible. Over-served areas will work to curtail enrollments as attrition occurs, instead shifting the recruitment of new participants to the rural counties utilizing the plan identified.

(B) EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

According to 2010 census data, the total population in the state was estimated to be 6,724,540. It is also estimated that 5,651,869 (84%) of WA State's population live in metropolitan urban areas which consists of less than four percent of the total geographic area. The remaining 16% of the population resides in rural areas. The average population density in urban areas in the state is 2,380 persons per square mile while the population density in rural areas is under 17 persons per square mile.

The Program Year 2022 end of year report indicated SCSEP providers were overall serving rural areas at 15.4% of participation. This number excludes the participants in NAPCA's Set-Aside grant which is focused on urban areas. While this indicates SCSEP as a whole in Washington State was slightly underserving rural areas below the Census levels, Goodwill's program served 23% of their participants in rural areas. The other SCSEP programs served rural areas at 13% for the State program and 4% for AARP National grant. The lower percentages of the State and AARP National program are being directly addressed by the rural outreach and recruitment plan identified above.

(C) SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

SCSEP programs ensure that individuals afforded priorities of service are given precedence in enrollment. Priority of services includes individuals who have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Are over 65 years of age

- Have a disability

- Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills

- Reside in a rural area

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- Are veterans or spouses of veterans

- Have low employment prospects

- Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop delivery system

- Are homeless or are at risk of homelessness

Other priority populations identified in the statute are eligible individuals:

- With the greatest economic need

- Who are minorities

- With the greatest social need

5. <u>THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))</u>

The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population is as of SCSEP Program Year 2023 is displayed in the chart below.

County	State Grantee AP	AARP AP	Goodwill AP	NAPCA AP	Total Equitable Share	Distribution Ratio
Adams	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Asotin	0	2	0	0	2	0.31%
Benton	0	14	0	0	14	2.17%
Chelan	3	5	0	0	8	1.24%
Clallam	5	0	6	0	11	1.70%
Clark	6	0	23	0	29	4.50%
Columbia	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Cowlitz	0	0	12	0	12	1.86%
Douglas	0	3	0	0	3	0.47%
Ferry	3	0	0	0	3	0.47%
Franklin	0	5	0	0	5	0.77%

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Garfield	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Grant	0	7	0	0	7	1.09%
Grays Harbor	4	0	5	0	9	1.40%
Island	3	3	0	0	6	0.93%
Jefferson	5	0	0	0	5	0.77%
King	35	99	0	89	223	34.63%
Kitsap	20	0	0	0	20	3.11%
Kittitas	0	0	3	0	3	0.47%
Klickitat	0	0	3	0	3	0.47%
Lewis	0	0	9	0	9	1.40%
Lincoln	0	2	0	0	2	0.31%
Mason	0	0	8	0	8	1.24%
Okanogan	2	4	0	0	6	0.93%
Pacific	2	0	2	0	4	0.62%
Pend Oreille	0	2	0	0	2	0.31%
Pierce	0	0	54	15	69	10.71%
San Juan	2	0	0	0	2	0.31%
Skagit	3	8	0	0	11	1.71%
Skamania	0	0	1	0	1	0.16%
Snohomish	7	41	0	0	48	7.45%
Spokane	12	33	0	0	45	6.99%
Stevens	0	7	0	0	7	1.09%
Thurston	0	0	20	0	20	3.11%
Wahkiakum	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Walla Walla	0	5	0	0	5	0.78%
Whatcom	6	12	0	0	18	2.80%

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Whitman	0	3	0	0	3	0.47%
Yakima	4	0	17	0	19	2.95%
Total Authorized Positions	**122**	**255**	**163**	**104**	**644**	**100.00%**

6. <u>THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:</u>

(A) RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Washington State's Office of Financial Management (OFM) uses state code RCW 82.14.370 to identify rural counties as defined as "…a county with a population density less than 100 persons per square mile." Using this definition, OFM identifies 30 of the state's 39 counties as rural. It should be noted that all counties within Washington State have rural areas.

Even though the urban counties in Washington only make up 23% of the total number of counties, they are assigned 70.5% of the SCSEP Authorized Positions (AP = 454 as of PY2023) based on population and other factors identified by Department of Labor. The 30 rural counties in the state are 77% of the total number of counties, but are only assigned 29.5% of the total Authorized Positions (AP = 190 as of PY2023) due to population and demographics.

(B) HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

"Greatest economic need" refers to persons at or below the poverty level. The end of year report for Program Year 2022 indicated SCSEP programs were serving individuals at or below the poverty level at a rate of 92.5% of participants. This number includes rates for the different programs from NAPCA's rate of 98%, Goodwill's and AARP's National grants both at the rate of 93% and the State grant rate of 89%. The programs will continue to focus on this segment of the population continuing forward.

(C) ARE MINORITIES

As indicated earlier in the state plan, through the end of Program Year 2022 the SCSEP programs in the state were all providing services to minority participants at a higher rate than the Census data identifies.

(D) ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

The SCSEP programs provided services to participants at a rate of 6.3% overall by end of year Program Year 2022. The rate of the programs ranged from 4% for the State program, 6% for Goodwill, 9% for AARP National grant up to 94% for the NAPCA Set-Aside grant.

(E) HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

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"Greatest social need" status refers to individuals with physical or mental disabilities, language barriers or cultural, social or geographical isolation and/or other factors identified by the Department of Labor. The following table demonstrates an aggregated percentage of SCSEP program service to participants with the greatest social need for Program Year 2022.

Greatest Social Need Demographics- End of Year PY 2018 Data	YTD %
Family Income at or below the poverty level	63%
Individuals with disabilities	14%
Individuals with limited English proficiency	38%
Individuals with low literacy skills	56%
Individuals residing in rural areas	15%
Individuals with low employment prospects	100%
Individuals who failed to find employment after using WIOA Title I	7%
Individuals age 75 and over	4%
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	75%
Displaces homemakers	21%
Veterans (or eligible spouse of veteran)	17%
Post-9/11 era Veterans	1%
Individuals receiving public assistance	61%
Individuals with severe disabilities	2%
Individuals who are frail	1%
Individuals old enough for but not receiving SS Title II	1%
Individuals with severely limited employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment	3%

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(F) FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

See previous sections.

7. <u>A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))</u>

The SCSEP programs in Washington State work collaboratively to avoid disruptions in service whether from shifts in the location of the eligible population or from over-enrollment for any reason. For shifts in the location of the eligible population, the programs will work together to revise the equitable distribution report and develop strategies for reducing the differences in how positions are distributed across the state in relation to any new distribution factors. In general, positions are shifted gradually from one county to another or from one program to another through attrition and placement into unsubsidized employment on one end, and capacity building on the other.

In the case of over-enrollment for any reason, the programs will work together to ensure eligible participants maintain enrollment within appropriate durational limits. The program where over-enrollment occurs will work with other local programs to reduce any disruption in services for otherwise eligible participants. Multiple options will be considered to achieve objectives and may involve a participant transitioning to another SCSEP program. Although this would be a last resort, it has occurred occasionally and has worked well for participants and host agencies due to the collaborative nature of the programs.

The SCSEP programs work collaboratively with the State SCSEP Program Manager to identify and develop effective approaches. Any changes to the equitable distribution report must first be reviewed and approved by the Department of Labor SCSEP Federal Project Officer. All participant transfers receive final approval from the Department of Labor's grant officer.

When transfers occur between programs, all involved will work together gathering needed participant and Host Agency information, conducting informational and enrollment meetings with the participants and conducting Host Agency meetings. Programs have established strategies to handle funding or enrollment fluctuations such as freezing enrollment, increasing or decreasing average work hours and other administrative approaches.

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HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for HUD employment and training programs. If the state includes HUD employment and training programs in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate such HUD programs in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III and IV of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

HUD considers such employment and training activities to include the following: Community Development Block Grant program, Continuum of Care, Family Self-Sufficiency program, Jobs Plus program, and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency program.

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COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) oversees the employment and training programs under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) state and federal funding. Eligible entities that receive CSBG funds through the State CSBG Lead Agency include local governments; migrant and seasonal farmworker organizations; limited purpose agencies; and non-profit organizations operating as community action agencies. CSBG provides state and federal funding to Washington's 30 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to carry out locally designed programs providing a range of services and activities that have measurable impacts on the causes and effects of poverty.

With approval from the State CSBG Lead Agency, CSBG eligible entities determine how funding will be used to support allowable activities in their local communities, such as employment and training activities. These funds may be used to provide actual services to individuals, or they may be used to support the administration of allowable services and activities. When the CSBG eligible entity elects to use CSBG funding to provide workforce development employment and training services to individuals, those services will be required to align with the State's WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the local one-stop center. When CSBG funding is used to support allowable services and activities funded thru a different source, WIOA requirements will be determined by the primary funding source.

CSBG funding assists low income populations with transportation, clothing, health services, food, shelter and programs designed to increase self-sufficiency, such as job preparedness, education and housing assistance. Small business loans are also available thru the Department of Commerce. Commerce will use the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state, regional and local planning process to align and integrate this program into the workforce and education system to strengthen Washington's communities.

Washington will continue to focus on the development of employer-based training options that work directly with businesses to identify hiring requirements, assess the skill levels of job seekers, and provide competency-based training to quickly fill skill gaps, prepare individuals to go to work, and allow employers to increase their productivity while reducing their hiring risk. Using approaches such as apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, work experience, and on-the-job training provides employers with a quicker method to fill critical job openings while providing trainees with a quicker route to improved sufficiency for the program participants.

Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Proposed Levels of Performance for WIOA Titles I & III					
	1 Employment Rate (Q2)	**2 Employment Rate (Q4)**	**4 Credential Rate**	**5 Measurable Skill Gains**	**3 Median Earnings**
Title I Adults	63.9%	64.5%	70.1%	49.8%	$8,446
Title I Dislocated Workers	66.2%	66.7%	69.8%	49.9%	$9,671
Title I Youth	59.5%	60.2%	48.1%	37.6%	$4,118
Title III Wagner-Peyser	63.9%	63.3%	.	.	$7,950
Title III Wagner-Peyser JVSG	55.4%	54.4%	.	.	$9,068
Title III Wagner-Peyser Veteran	56.0%	55.8%	.	.	$8,988

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