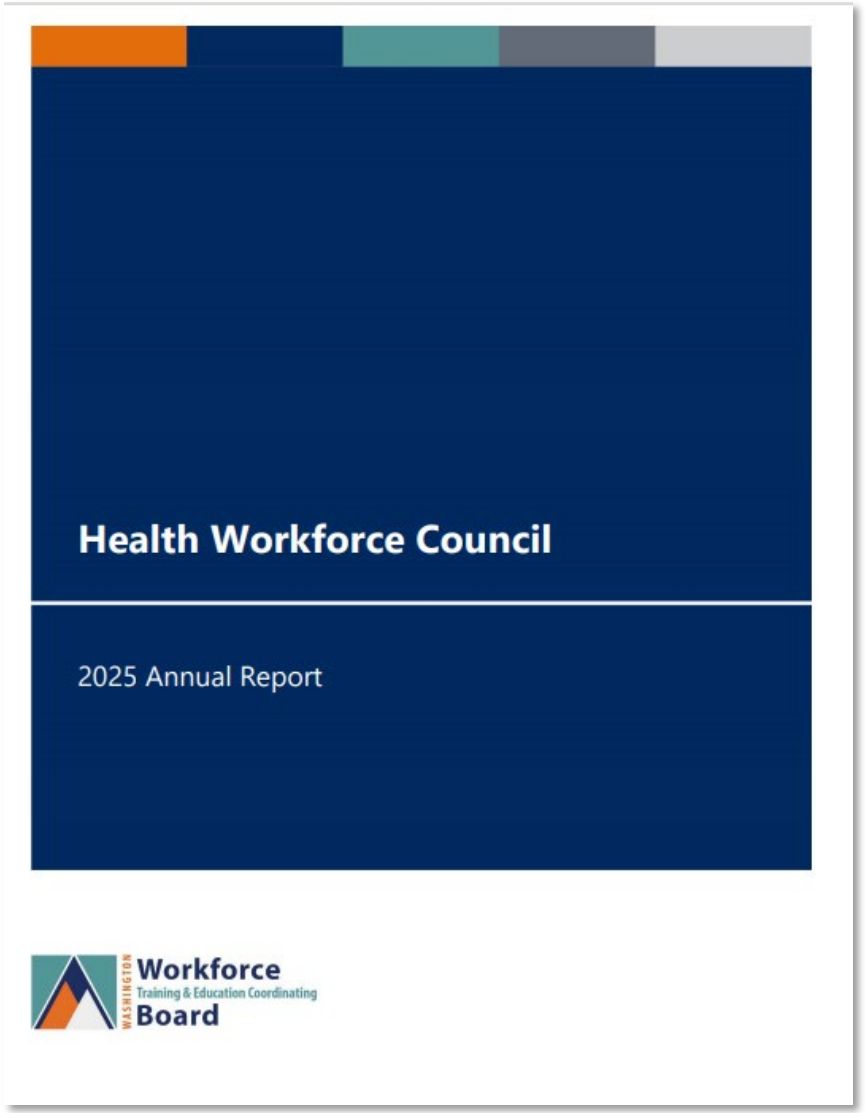
2025 Rural Youth Recommendations

Renee Fullerton, Council Staff, November 20, 2025

Council's Rural Goal

The Council will develop and advocate for policy recommendations that enable rural students and workers to access and succeed in health professional training programs and career advancement opportunities without having to leave their communities.



Rural Youth Opportunities

- Council worked to understand the experiences of rural schools and employers to make recommendations for future policy and budget work.
- Given the Council's role in convening partners, researching issues, shaping recommendations, and educating policymakers, where should the Council focus its ongoing efforts to strengthen youth health workforce pathways statewide?

Rural youth in health careers

- Many factors influence rural youth to gain early experiences with health professions and enter a local pathway
- Policy factors are likely to be best aligned with Council's charge
  - Confusing information environment for students, educators and employers
  - Challenges navigating state processes to establish programs
  - Funding

Questions for later discussion

- **Q:** Given the Council's role in convening partners, researching issues, shaping recommendations, and educating policymakers, where should the Council focus its ongoing efforts to strengthen youth health workforce pathways statewide?

Questions for later discussion

- **Q:** Recognizing Washington's tight fiscal environment going into the next biennium, which one or two actions would create the greatest near-term impact on youth health workforce pathways?

Questions for later discussion

- Employers consistently cite liability, allowable tasks, HIPAA, and minor employment rules as barriers to hosting under 18 students.

  Q: What specific guidance, clarifications, or policy changes should the Council advance to help employers participate more easily and confidently?

Questions for later discussion

- Urban and rural student barriers are similar with rural students facing additional challenges with distance, limited transportation, and fewer local training sites. As a positive, rural employers are often more flexible and willing to partner than large urban healthcare facilities.

  Q: Which rural-focused strategies should the Council prioritize to build on these strengths while addressing the structural gaps?

Questions for later discussion

- Students and educators report difficulty finding accurate, up to date information about healthcare opportunities, and past attempts at statewide websites haven't been sustainable.

  Q: What role could the Council play in creating a more durable, coordinated way for students, schools, and employers to connect?

Thank you!

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