

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

DATE	MEETING NO. 283
9:00 a.m.	Call to Order Welcome and Roll Call
9:05 a.m.	Chairs Report (ACTION) Tab 1 Consent Agenda Minutes from April 3, 2026, Board Meeting State and WIOA Policy Updates Issued Since April 3, 2026
9:10 a.m.	Executive Director Report Tab 2
9:25 a.m.	Workforce Program Outcomes: Spotlight on Career and Technical Education (CTE) Tab 3
9:45 a.m.	Strengthening CTE Dual Credit Pathways Tab 4
10:15 a.m.	Break
10:25 a.m.	Economic Security for All: Results and Local Examples Tab 5
11:30 a.m.	Lunch
12:15 p.m.	Public Comment Please sign up via email at workforce@wtb.wa.gov by 9 a.m. on June 25, 2026.
12:25 p.m.	FAFSA Campaign and Results Tab 6
12:40 p.m.	Industry Engagement in Workforce Development Tab 7
2:00 p.m.	Break
2:10 p.m.	Emerging Legislative Priorities for 2027 Tab 8
3:10 p.m.	Procurement Update and Local Board Certifications (ACTION) Tab 9
3:45 p.m.	Future Board Meeting Topics Tab 10
4:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Tab 1

Consent Agenda

PRESENTED BY: Workforce Board Co-Chairs, April Sims and Morgan Irwin

CHECK ONE: ☒ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☐ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

The consent agenda enables the Board to approve items listed without discussion or individual motions. If any Board member believes an item does not belong on the consent agenda, they may request the item be removed and considered for an individual discussion and vote at a later time, at the discretion of the Co-chair(s).

BACKGROUND

This consent agenda includes:

- Minutes from April 3, 2026 Board meeting
- State and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Policy Updates Issued Since April 3, 2026

The State and WIOA Policy Updates are routine workforce policy updates from the Employment Security Department (ESD). The changes cover several program areas: protecting people's private information, data security, reemployment services, veterans' priority of service, equipment rules, and the Economic Security for All and Community Reinvestment programs. These updates bring state rules in line with new federal and state requirements, make clarifications, and adjust definitions and dollar amounts. The Board's vote is needed to make the updates official.

Policy 1040 (Local Board Certification) and Policy 1016-2 (One-Stop Certification) were updated for clarity by Workforce Board staff and were already given preliminary approval pending public comment. Since no public comments were received, final Board approval is requested.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Without dissent, the consent agenda items will be approved as drafted.



MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 282

April 3, 2026

June 26 Workforce Board meeting: Amended minutes to reflect a correction request for comments by Board member Todd Mitchell that the CTE core credit should be maintained as a high school graduation requirement.

Board Members Present:

Morgan Irwin, Co-Chair

April Sims, Co-Chair

Wade Larson, Representing Business

Todd Mitchell, Representing Labor

Cherika Carter, Representing Labor

Jane Hopkins, Representing Labor (virtual)

Commissioner Cami Feek, Employment Security Department (ESD)

Marie Bruin for Nate Humphrey, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) (virtual)

Becky Wallace for Superintendent Chris Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Katie Condit for Miriam Halliday, Workforce Southwest Washington, Representing Local Elected Officials

Dana Phelps for Secretary Angela Ramirez, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

Kairie Pierce for Interim Director Sarah Clifthorne, Department of Commerce (virtual)

Call to Order

Co-Chair Morgan Irwin called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The meeting was a hybrid meeting using Zoom for remote attendees. In-person attendees convened on the Capitol Campus at the John A. Cherberg building, 304 15th Ave. SW, Room ABC, Olympia, WA 98501. Quorum was established.

Co-Chairs Report

Co-Chair Irwin moved to the consent agenda, including the February meeting minutes, and federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) policy updates.

MOTION-2025-282-01

A motion was made by Cami Feek to approve the consent agenda. Todd Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Directors Report

Maddy Thompson, Workforce Board Acting Executive Director, highlighted several ongoing initiatives and updates across the workforce system. Key points included the release of a draft job quality framework for feedback, the modernization of the Career Bridge website, and the start of a major five-year study evaluating the effectiveness of workforce programs. She noted the Health Workforce Council, staffed by the Workforce Board, continues its work on expanding healthcare pathways, particularly for rural youth, and has raised federal policy concerns. Thompson noted that a new equity impact team has been established within the agency.

Thompson reported that at the federal level, Washington met or exceeded all performance targets under WIOA, safeguarding federal workforce funding. She also reported that the state's annual report for the federal Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) program was approved, ensuring continued support for career and technical education initiatives. Thompson updated the Board on a proposed revision to the federal System for Award Management (SAM) registration requirements. She noted the Attorney General's office had submitted a letter opposing the proposed changes on behalf of Washington state. SAM is the federal database that organizations, businesses and government entities must register in to receive federal grants, contracts, or other federal funding.

Thompson also noted two upcoming events: Apprenticeship Building America Convening and an Occupational Data Forum where Workforce Board staff will present and be convened by the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

High School Graduation Requirements Initiative

State Board of Education (SBE), Mary Fertakis, Chair, Randy Spaulding, Executive Director, Alissa Muller, Director of Policy and Arielle Matthews, Associate Director of Policy, presented an update on the "Future Ready" initiative. This initiative is a central priority in the SBE's 2024–2028 strategic plan and focuses on reexamining high school graduation requirements.

Fertakis described the composition of SBE and their responsibilities including advocating for public education, setting and reviewing graduation requirements, ensuring compliance with basic education standards, approving private K-12 schools, overseeing charter school authorizers, and monitoring overall system performance in collaboration with other agencies. The "FutureReady" initiative is being led by key staff but involves the entire team. SBE's approach emphasizes collaboration with communities to co-develop policies rather than impose predetermined solutions. A strong focus is placed on authentic engagement, with historically underserved communities, students and parents. These activities are supported by a community engagement lead and a tribal liaison at SBE.

Spaulding presented SBE's responsibilities for establishing and periodically reviewing high school graduation requirements, including setting assessment scores, adopting rules for graduation pathways, and monitoring their availability. He noted the most significant recent overhaul was the shift to a 24-credit high school framework, finalized in 2014, which also modified instructional time to support a six-period school day. Since then, numerous additional bills have further modified graduation requirements, prompting the current review.

A major policy change came in 2019 with House Bill 1599, which eliminated the state assessment as a standalone graduation requirement and replaced it with eight pathways — either assessments or course sequences — that students can use to demonstrate proficiency.

The current graduation framework has three components: completing a High School and Beyond Plan, meeting subject and credit area requirements (24 credits total), and fulfilling a graduation pathway. Credits fall into three categories: required core courses, general electives, and flexible personalized pathway credits. Students may receive a two-credit local waiver, allowing graduation with 22 credits in some cases. Spaulding noted SBE also discussed flexible options such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) course equivalencies and interdisciplinary courses, where a single course can satisfy requirements in two subject areas.

Matthews presented on the "FutureReady" initiative, noting this was prompted by consistent stakeholder feedback that current requirements leave some students feeling unprepared for adult life, while also being too rigid for others. Workforce data reinforces this urgency — roughly 75% of job openings will require a postsecondary credential, yet only about 50% of graduates currently pursue that path. Additionally, around 30% of high school students report not seeing relevance in their coursework.

Matthews reported the process is grounded in a 2021 Graduate Profile emphasizing transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, and problem solving. A task force of 30–35 members representing students, families, employers, K–12 and postsecondary partners, and policymakers is guiding the work, supported by several subcommittees focused on areas like financial education, technology literacy, math, and implementation. The initiative will culminate in a legislative proposal for the 2027 session, with any resulting changes phased in overtime. The earliest implementation could affect the graduating class of 2031.

Muller provided a deeper look at the specific policy changes under consideration. She began by explaining that the task force first focused on level-setting and developing a shared vision before evaluating proposed changes; emphasizing that graduation requirements should uphold high expectations while keeping multiple postsecondary options open and balancing flexibility with structured guidance.

Muller indicated key proposed changes include expanding health to a full credit given student interest in mental health education, consolidating civics and contemporary world problems into a single strengthened civics course, and strengthening math requirements. For math, the task force recommends narrowing the third credit to algebra 2 (or equivalent) as the default, with alternatives available through advising, and adding a senior-year quantitative reasoning course to better align with college admission requirements.

Muller noted the task force is proposing greater consistency in competency-based crediting policies statewide and aligning CTE course equivalency rules with interdisciplinary course policies so students can earn two credits when meeting standards in both areas. The goal

throughout is maximizing student flexibility while ensuring equitable access and informed advising.

During the question-and-answer session, Dana Phelps, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), highlighted the need to ensure students with disabilities are supported in achieving a diploma, noting that pull-out support classes often consume elective credits and limit student choice. Muller acknowledged this concern, suggesting that shifting more requirements to flexible personalized pathway credits could open up scheduling options for these students.

Todd Mitchell, representing labor, noted that CTE core credit should be maintained as a high school graduation requirement. (Corrected at the June 26 Workforce Board meeting.)

Katie Condit, Chief Executive Office at Workforce Central, asked how worker readiness and soft skills would be embedded across coursework. Spaulding pointed to the proposed High School and Beyond Plan reflection component as a key mechanism for helping students translate classroom learning into language that resonates with employers; recognizing skills like critical thinking and resilience that students may not identify on their own.

Cami Feek, Commissioner, ESD, asked how prepared schools and teachers would be to implement these changes. Spaulding noted that the two implementation subcommittees are actively assessing this, and that many proposed shifts, such as the math changes, build on existing district practices rather than requiring entirely new infrastructure.

Cherika Carter, Secretary Treasurer, Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), raised questions about educator representation on the task force, the timeline for the High School and Beyond Plan universal platform, and whether Washington would consider multiple diploma tracks. Spaulding clarified that Washington has long maintained a single diploma by design to avoid tracking students, and that educator voices are heavily concentrated in the implementation and subject-area subcommittees.

State Superintendent, Chris Reykdal, OSPI, offered that Washington's school calendar has remained essentially fixed for 140 years, and that every stakeholder group — lawmakers, advocates, industries — continues to demand more from that same finite window. His core challenge to the Board was to think carefully about what truly matters within those constraints, rather than simply adding requirements.

Reykdal pointed out that Washington's single-diploma system, while well-intentioned to avoid tracking students, has effectively been calibrated to university admissions standards for decades — consuming electives and leaving students feeling disconnected from coursework. He argued that students are more capable and prepared than narratives of school failure suggest, but that the system has not authentically created flexible pathways for those headed to apprenticeships, the military, or direct workforce entry.

He requested the Board and its business and labor partners consider how genuinely accessible workforce pathways actually are for young people, noting that the average apprentice is 27 years old — suggesting the path from high school to skilled trades is far from straightforward. He urged attendees to examine whether the proposed changes truly help students access the workforce earlier and through diverse routes.

Reykdal closed by noting his support for a dedicated transition course that would integrate the High School and Beyond Plan, career exploration, and financial literacy — pointing to similar courses in other states as models — while acknowledging that adding any new requirement would necessitate removing something else.

During the closing discussion, Board members built on Reykdal's remarks with several key reflections. Carter shared how her career center teacher successfully wove life skills and financial literacy into the regular school week, demonstrating it can be done within existing structures. Reykdal reinforced that skill centers and CTE programs remain logistical exceptions in a system still fundamentally designed around university preparation and cautioned against treating online coursework as a universal solution.

Phelps highlighted pre-employment transition services through Vocational Rehabilitation as a valuable but underutilized resource for students with disabilities. Jane Hopkins, President, SEIU 1199 NW, raised an urgent equity concern about black and brown students with disabilities, asking how educators are being prepared to address bias and support these students. Reykdal stressed that early childhood inclusion is foundational, that cuts to early learning have serious long-term consequences, and urged attention to the upcoming executive director search for the state's Professional Educator Standards Board.

Coordination Update: H.R.1 SNAP Work Requirements

Emily Persky, Workforce Board, provided an update on implementation of H.R. 1 related to new federal work requirements for SNAP and Medicaid beneficiaries. On behalf of Workforce system partners, Persky is facilitating a cross-agency work group, which includes representation from multiple state agencies and workforce organizations. The work group is developing guidance to help eligible individuals maintain their benefits. The work group is currently developing two key policy documents: a policy Q&A and a crosswalk aligning workforce development activities with SNAP requirements. These documents, currently under review by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), will help clarify which workforce activities count toward benefit requirements and for how many hours.

On the Medicaid side, Persky confirmed that individuals who meet SNAP work requirements will generally also satisfy Medicaid requirements. When the group shifts to implementing Medicaid requirements, the focus will be on people who have Medicaid but do not receive SNAP. She noted the group is holding monthly coordination meetings with optional office hours and is taking a two-track approach — addressing immediate implementation needs while also planning for longer-term improvements.

Persky closed by noting that technology and data systems, while out of scope for this group, are being addressed separately, including the upcoming launch of the new WAWorks platform and related updates to WorkSource technology systems.

Integrating Services: Agency Technology Initiatives

Ismaila Maidadi and Lisa Kissler from the state's Employment Security Department, presented an update on the WAWorks project, a major technology initiative replacing two existing platforms — the case management system and the labor exchange platform — used across Washington's WorkSource workforce system. The new Salesforce-based platform, launching May 19, is being developed using an agile methodology with over 200 people involved across ESD, the Workforce Board, and local boards over four years.

The goal is to create a seamless, integrated customer experience where individuals seeking services are not bounced between agencies but instead receive coordinated support from a unified system. Staff can view a customer's full-service history and needs, while employers can more easily post jobs and access the available talent pool. One concrete improvement includes streamlining the service catalog from 108 services down to 74, reducing confusion for both staff and customers.

The longer-term vision is to bring additional partner agencies — including DVR and Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) — onto the same platform. Katie Condit of Workforce Central raised the importance of effective change management and staff buy-in during the transition. Maidadi responded that super users, change leaders, and dedicated communication channels have been established to support frontline staff through the shift.

Ariel Pyrtek, Senior Policy Analyst, Health Care Authority, presented on upcoming changes to Apple Health stemming from federal H.R.1 legislation. She reported that the legislation shortens retroactive coverage periods, changes eligibility for certain non-U.S. citizens beginning October 2026 and establishes new federal work requirements for the Apple Health for Adults program beginning January 2027.

Pyrtek explained that the new work requirements generally require adults to complete 80 hours per month of qualifying activities such as employment, education, volunteering, or meeting a specified income threshold. She noted that children, seniors, and participants in other Apple Health programs are not affected. The Health Care Authority estimates that approximately 64% of current enrollees will either already meet the requirements or qualify for an exemption.

Washington's implementation approach prioritizes minimizing client burden. Individuals will self-attest their compliance through the Washington Health Plan Finder, and the state will verify eligibility behind the scenes using existing federal data sources and a newly developed verification hub — only requesting additional information from clients when automated verification is not possible. She noted that data sources being integrated into the verification process include ProviderOne, community and technical college records, and the National Student Clearinghouse.

During the question-and-answer portion, data privacy concerns were raised, particularly around sensitive immigration status. Pyrtek clarified that undocumented individuals are not eligible for

Apple Health for Adults and noted that existing data protections remain in place for lawfully present non-citizens.

Kim Goutam and Liz Gallagher, Workforce Board, presented an update on the No Wrong Door initiative, a long-standing strategic priority aimed at creating a more connected, efficient workforce service delivery system. The core problem they outlined is that current case management systems operate in silos — staff must re-enter information repeatedly, clients must repeat their stories, and referrals rely on informal communication with no consistent tracking. This fragmentation risks people losing access to critical food and healthcare benefits, particularly under new federal work requirements.

Goutam reported the proposed solution has two components: data sharing across case management systems so databases communicate in real time, and a unified referral portal through WA.gov that gives customers a single access point to all available services. The project is aligned with statewide technology initiatives through Washington's technology agency, including the enterprise data platform and the governor's customer experience executive order.

Progress includes data-sharing prototypes developed over the past year and a condensed 15-question service screener tool in early design. However, the project remains complex, with over 50 decision makers across agencies navigating competing priorities, regulatory constraints, and lean resources. Attendees emphasized the importance of including local boards and community-based organizations in the design and tracking of not just employment outcomes but wage progression and job retention over time.

Proclamations

Co-Chairs, April Sims and Morgan Irwin, honored two former co-chairs with proclamations recognizing their distinguished service. Larry Brown, a lifelong labor leader and proud machinist, was recognized for his decades of advocacy for working families, his service as president of the Washington State Labor Council representing over 600,000 workers, and his tireless support for career and technical education students. Gary Chandler, a businessman and public servant from Moses Lake, was celebrated for his championing of youth workforce development, his ability to build bipartisan partnerships, and his role as one of the Board's first co-chairs. Together, the pair became affectionately known as "the Glary," a nationally recognized example of business and labor collaboration.

Public Comment

Co-Chair Irwin opened the floor for public comment as required by the state's Open Public Meetings Act, noting that individuals must sign up at least 24 hours in advance. As no one had signed up, the Board moved directly to the next agenda item.

Planning for Board Meetings and Future Work

The Board engaged in a planning discussion focused on organizing meeting dates, committee structures, and agenda priorities for the remainder of 2026. The May retreat and the July 10

meetings were removed from the calendar, with the June 26 and December 10 meetings confirmed to meet the statutory requirement of six annual meetings.

Two formal subcommittees were established to strengthen the Board's ongoing work. An Oversight Committee for the Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) state workforce plan, consisting of Morgan Irwin (potentially Emily Wittman), Todd Mitchell, Miriam Halliday and Kairie Pierce, will monitor implementation of the Board's four strategic objectives, and a Legislative Oversight Committee, consisting of Morgan Irwin, Cherika Carter, Amy Martinez and Cami Feek, will develop the Board's legislative agenda and decision packages ahead of the 2027 session. The existing legislative session review group will continue as a broader partner engagement mechanism, providing recommendations to the Legislative Oversight Committee.

The Board also discussed workforce data and accountability, recognizing an opportunity to build more consistent, accessible performance tracking. Members noted establishing a standardized dashboard that would allow the Board to regularly monitor system outcomes, establish meaningful baselines over time, and better demonstrate the collective impact of workforce investments was important. There was broad agreement that stronger data practices would support the Board's core statutory accountability responsibilities and help guide future priority-setting. Looking ahead, the Board expressed interest in enriching future agendas with best practice presentations from local workforce boards, community and technical colleges, and community-based organizations, as well as spotlights on emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, demographic shifts, and the evolving economic landscape.

WIOA Plan Finalization

Emily Persky, Workforce Board, provided an update on the finalization of Washington's WIOA Combined Program plan for submission to the federal government. The plan had been in public comment since March 3, with the comment period closing that evening. Persky acknowledged staff from the Workforce Board, DSHS, ESD and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) had already met key milestones, including entering expected performance levels for all four WIOA programs and publishing draft documents online for public review.

Persky outlined the next steps include a final review period April 13 through 17, followed by formal submission the week of April 21. Once submitted, Persky noted anticipating follow-up questions from various federal agencies through July 1.

With no public comments received as of the meeting, the Board moved forward with conditional approval, allowing staff to address any last-minute comments before final submission.

MOTION-2025-282-02

A motion was made by Wade Larson to conditionally approve the WIOA Combined Program Plan. Cherika Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2026 Legislative Review

Nova Gattman, Workforce Board, provided an overview of the 2026 Legislative Session and how the Board's priorities fared.

Gattman shared an update on the Board's legislative agenda. The WAWorks system replacement received an additional \$3 million in funding, and while the No Wrong Door project was not directly funded, legislation directed all three agencies building work requirement technology to engage directly with workforce system partners, with the Workforce Board specifically named as a collaborator. The Community Reinvestment Program maintained its \$50 million funding and was codified into state statute, providing greater long-term stability. The Passport to Careers program for former foster youth and homeless youth secured automatic eligibility for Washington College grants through an agency request bill from the Washington Student Achievement Council, a meaningful win for vulnerable young people. The High School and Beyond Plan online platform received partial funding for technical assistance and administration.

Gattman noted from Board partner organizations a mix of highlights and concerns. Education partners celebrated universal funding for K-12 school meals and AP/IB testing fee support for low-income students, while expressing concern about budget reductions to CTE programs, Running Start, and higher education. Labor celebrated the passage of behavioral health training requirements for building trades apprenticeships and new workplace protections. Business partners raised concerns about reduced employer engagement in policy development and shrinking CTE resources. Ongoing funding for the Clean Energy Technology Workforce Advisory Committee was eliminated beginning June 30, 2026.

Gattman noted that the 2027 session is expected to be another challenging budget environment, making strategic prioritization of the Board's legislative agenda especially important.

Local Workforce Board Policies

Liz Gallagher, Workforce Board, presented on the local workforce board certification process. The Workforce Board is required to conduct this process every two years to ensure federal compliance and local accountability. The review evaluates all 12 local workforce boards against 13 federally required functions, which include planning and guiding workforce service delivery, overseeing funding, tracking performance, and ensuring access to services for all job seekers including people with disabilities.

Following each review, the Workforce Board has three options: full certification, provisional certification requiring corrective action within a set timeline, or the rarely used decertification, which is typically reserved for cases of fraud or significant and repeated local workforce board function failures. Local boards are required to submit their completed certification tools by May 30, with staff presenting recommendations to the full Board ahead of a vote at the June meeting.

Gallagher also walked through updates to Policy 1040, which governs the certification process. Changes were largely clarifying in nature, including aligning certification timing with local planning cycles on odd years, streamlining the certification tool for ease of use, removing the separate certification committee in favor of full Board review, and adding a formal appeals process for decertification cases.

MOTION-2025-282-03

A motion was made by Todd Mitchell to conditionally approve the updated policy pending the close of the public comment period. Wade Larson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Gallagher presented a request for the Board to approve extensions of direct service provider status for two local workforce development boards: SkillSource, serving the North Central area, and the Northwest Workforce Council. Both organizations currently deliver WIOA Title 1B services for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs in their respective regions and requested approval to continue in that role through June 30, 2027.

Gallagher provided context around the Board's procurement policy, noting that while local boards are typically required to competitively procure Title 1B service providers, federal law and guidance make clear that local boards with strong track records are not required to undergo the full procurement process. Gallagher noted an updated procurement policy would be presented to the Board by the end of summer.

In the meantime, both SkillSource and the Northwest Workforce Council demonstrated strong performance justifying the extension. Both are among the top performing areas in the state, have operated successfully in this role for over a decade, and remain fully compliant. Gallagher emphasized SkillSource has strong fiscal management and education partnerships, while highlighting Northwest Workforce Council for particularly impressive youth outcomes.

MOTION-2025-282-04

A motion was made by Todd Mitchell to approve the extension of direct service provider status. Wade Larson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Workforce Pell

Maddy Thompson, Workforce Board Acting Executive Director, and Marie Bruin, SBCTC Director of Workforce Education, provided an update on Washington's implementation of Workforce Pell, a federal initiative that expands Pell Grant eligibility to students enrolled in short-term, high-quality workforce training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials and employment opportunities. A cross-agency steering committee convened by the Governor's Office held a well-attended webinar on March 20, drawing over 700 registrants from industry and education partners across the state.

As Workforce Pell implementation continues, staff reported that fewer programs than originally anticipated are expected to qualify under the federal eligibility criteria. Requirements include

accreditation, Title IV institutional status, employer validation, stackability, and alignment with ESD's in-demand occupations list. The Governor's Office will formally identify eligible programs, which are then submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for approval, with that process expected to begin July 1.

Bruin noted SBCTC has convened an internal cross-departmental team to prepare for implementation and is exploring a U.S. Department of Labor grant opportunity under the Strengthening Community Colleges Initiative, with five colleges already engaged using Carl Perkins funding to help develop the necessary policy frameworks. The Board will receive further updates at the June meeting as the program's initial eligible program list takes shape.

Executive Director Recruitment Update

Co-Chairs Sims and Irwin provided a brief update on the search for a permanent Workforce Board Executive Director. They noted a small selection committee has been formed consisting of the two co-chairs along with Wade Larson and Todd Mitchell representing business and labor respectively, who will work with the Office of Financial Management to identify core competencies and finalize a job description. To ensure broader stakeholder input, the co-chairs invited all Board members to submit any recommended core competencies they would like reflected in the job description. Once the job description is finalized and posted, the process will move to interviewing the top five candidates. The committee will then compile notes and submit final recommendations to the Governor's Office for the ultimate hiring decision.

The meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

AI Use Disclosure: Generative AI assisted in preparing portions of this document. Workforce Board staff reviewed and verified all content for accuracy and retain responsibility for its findings and recommendations. Prepared consistent with WaTech Policy DATA-04 (Artificial Intelligence Policy).

WorkSource System and WIOA Title I-B policy activity since the April 3, 2026 Workforce Board Meeting

For WTECB acknowledgement (action) at the June 26, 2026 Meeting

Policies Published

1026-1	Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information (PII)	4/9/26
1016-2	One-Stop Assessment and Certification	4/23/26
1040	Local Workforce Development Board Certification	4/29/26
1021-3	MIS System Access, Data Sharing, and Security Administration	5/6/26
2000-3	(Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program)	6/9/26
5624-1	State Guidance for the QUEST National Dislocated Worker Grant	5/8/26
5625-1	State Guidance for the Federal Economic Security for All Program	5/8/26
6010-1	Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses	5/22/26
7000-4	State Economic Security for All (EcSA) Program	5/8/26
7010-6	Community Reinvestment Plan Matched Investment Savings Accounts (MISAs)	5/8/26

Policies in Public Comment

5407-1	Property and Equipment Management and Inventory	Comment ends 6/18/26
1012-4	Customer Concern and Complaint Resolution	Comment ends 6/20/26
5625-2	Federal Economic Security for All Program	Comment ends 6/22/26
7005-3	Community Reinvestment Fund	Comment ends 6/22/26
7010-7	Community Reinvestment Plan Matched Investment Savings Accounts (MISAs)	Comment ends 6/22/26

Please visit <https://wpc.wa.gov/policy> to view policies

Tab 2

Executive Director's Report

PRESENTED BY: Maddy Thompson, Acting Executive Director

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

The Executive Director's report provides an update of workforce system developments, agency and partner activities, events and initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The Executive Director's report may include:

- Federal developments impacting the workforce system in Washington
- Research and performance updates
- Conferences and events
- Strategic initiatives

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Request that the board request additional information and follow up where needed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

STATE AND AGENCY UPDATES

State Negotiates with DOL on WIOA Performance Targets

On May 28, Workforce Board and Employment Security Department staff met with U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) representatives to negotiate WIOA Performance Targets. The teams discussed five measures (employment rate, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skill gains) for the Title I programs and the employment rate and median earnings for Wagner-Peyser, which funds basic employment and job-matching services through WorkSource. A negotiated agreement was reached for the employment rate, credential attainment, and measurable skill gain. In relation to median earnings targets for both Title I and Wagner-Peyser, the state is requesting a lower target and DOL negotiators will return with a response. The table below shows the proposed performance targets for Program Years (PY) 2026 and 2027. Targets shown in black have been agreed upon by USDOL and the state. Targets shown in red remain under negotiation and reflect the state's current counterproposal. The next step is a negotiation meeting with DOL, involving leadership from ESD and the Workforce Board.

Measure	Adult		Dislocated Worker		Youth		W-P	
	PY 26	PY 27	PY 26	PY 27	PY 26	PY 27	PY 26	PY 27
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.1%	65.5%	68.2%	68.5%	60.5%	61.0%	65.4%	65.4%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	66.0%	66.5%	68.3%	68.5%	62.1%	62.1%	65.2%	65.2%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$10,400	\$10,650	\$11,300	\$11,800	\$5,400	\$5,400	\$9,300	\$9,400
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	73.0%	73.5%	75.0%	75.5%	51.7%	51.7%	N / A	N / A
Measurable Skill Gains	52.0%	52.5%	52.1%	52.1%	50.0%	50.0%	N / A	N / A

FutureReady Task Force Update

The Washington State Board of Education's FutureReady Task Force continues to explore a redesign of the state's graduation framework centered on a "default plus flexibility" model. Under this approach, students would follow a recommended course sequence that preserves postsecondary options while using Personalized Pathway Requirements and strengthened High School & Beyond Plans (HSBPs) to tailor learning to individual goals. Discussions have also emphasized competency-based learning, career readiness, enhanced advising, and potential additions such as a credit-bearing HSBP course focused on career planning, financial literacy, and life skills. Career and Technical Education (CTE) remains a key focus, though there is not yet consensus on whether it should remain a core graduation requirement or move into the more flexible pathway structure. Supporters of flexibility highlight greater student choice, while

concerns have been raised about reduced exposure to CTE, declines in offerings and participation, equity impacts, and weaker workforce pipeline development. At the same time, there is broad support for expanding CTE equivalencies, dual credit opportunities, and interdisciplinary models that integrate career-connected learning throughout the education system.

Relationship Building for Future Collaboration and Alignment

Workforce Board staff leadership are working to build relationships with partner agencies, associations, local workforce board leaders and a variety of organizations across the state to increase collaboration and alignment. Meetings held to date include the Commissions on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Women's Commission, African American Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the WA State Opportunity Scholarship program, Goodwill Industries, OIC, the Washington Economic Development Association, ERDC, and the Washington Student Achievement Council, among many others. Follow up includes collaboration on events and projects, invitations to participate in community listening sessions and to present on Workforce Board priorities, and gathering perspectives and input on workforce training and education needs.

Career Bridge Modernization Project

The Career Bridge team celebrated a problem-free launch on June 3-4 of the latest updates to the site as part of Release 2. These updates include the release of a new collaboration portfolio tool that will enable middle and high school counselors and teachers, along with WorkSource job counselors, to track the progress of students and customers in their career and education exploration. Last summer, the Career Bridge team, working with developer Resource Data Inc., rolled out a new and improved Career Bridge in a fully updated, user-friendly, mobile-friendly format. User feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about the look and feel, along with functionality, of the site. The second release of site updates, earlier this month, delivered on features that teachers and counselors have consistently requested. The collaboration portfolio tool directly connects students and jobseekers with teachers and counselors, to better guide their career and education exploration progress. Users can now share their portfolios, enabling more informed education and career guidance conversations.

Health Workforce Council

The Health Workforce Council, staffed by Workforce Board, is holding a full-day, in-person meeting on June 24 in Olympia to set strategic directions for future work. The session will open with leadership transitions and a shared grounding in current workforce trends, policy conditions, and the Council's statutory mandate. From there, members will engage in a structured series of discussions and exercises. This will include defining the Council's unique role, assessing current activities, and generating and prioritizing future topic areas. The day is designed to produce a clear set of high value Council activities and a ranked list of priority topics, culminating in early next step planning for the top-ranked issue. This strategic reset will guide the Council's focus and impact over the coming several years.

FEDERAL UPDATES

Proposed Changes to Federal Grant Process

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released [a proposed rule](#) that would significantly change the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200), affecting the administration of nearly all federal grants, cooperative agreements, and pass-through funding. The proposal would create new requirements for grant review and approval, including political review of every discretionary grant before it is issued, and would expand federal authority to terminate awards based on alignment with current administration priorities. It could also place additional limits on how grant funds are used for professional development activities, such as conferences, trainings, and membership in professional organizations, as well as outreach and public relations costs, unless specifically approved by the federal agency. It would put additional restrictions on contracts, require all grant recipients and subrecipients to verify, through a Department of Homeland Security website, that all employees and contractors can legally work in the U.S., and prohibit using federal funds for activities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The proposal is open for [public comment](#) through July 13 with a proposed effective date of October 1.

Perkins V: Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE) Encourages Stronger Alignment Between Perkins V and WIOA Systems

OCTAE recently issued [guidance](#) encouraging states to more intentionally align Perkins V and WIOA activities, emphasizing shared planning, common definitions, coordinated performance strategies, talent marketplace development, work-based learning, and credential alignment. For Washington, this guidance reinforces many of the priorities already under way through cross-agency collaboration among the Workforce Board, OSPI, SBCTC, workforce development councils, and other partners. It also signals continued federal interest in integrated talent development systems that connect education, workforce, and economic development efforts around shared outcomes.

OCTAE Releases Estimated FY 2026 Perkins Allocations

OCTAE recently released [estimated FY 2026 Perkins allocations](#), providing states with preliminary funding information for planning and budgeting purposes. The federal Perkins appropriation was level-funded in the FY 2026 budget, and Washington's estimated allocation of approximately \$26 million is essentially level with last year's award. The estimates help state agencies and local recipients prepare for upcoming grant cycles and program investments.

OCTAE Emphasizes Credentials of Value in New Federal Guidance

In May, OCTAE released a [memorandum](#) encouraging states to take a more strategic approach to identifying, assessing, and expanding access to high-value postsecondary credentials within Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. This guidance encourages states to prioritize high-value postsecondary credentials that are industry-recognized, aligned with labor market demand, and connected to career pathways, while also exploring areas such as AI. The memo reflects a broader federal focus on credential quality and labor market value, with potential implications for Perkins planning, state credential policies, and workforce investments. The

guidance aligns with Washington's ongoing work around credentials of value, the Workforce Board's career and education portal, Career Bridge, and sector-based workforce strategies.

DOL Issues New Guidance Encouraging Expanded Outreach and Engagement Efforts

In May, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration issued [TEGL 11-25](#), providing updated guidance on the use of federal workforce and education funds for outreach activities. The guidance clarifies that WIOA, AEFLA, Perkins V, and other federal grant funds may be used for a broad range of outreach efforts designed to increase awareness of services, engage employers, and connect more individuals to education, training, and employment opportunities.

House Appropriations Bill Comes with Deep Workforce Cuts

On June 9, the House Appropriations Committee [approved the FY27 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill](#) on a party-line vote of 34–28, following subcommittee approval on June 5 (11–7). The measure provides \$189.3 billion in discretionary funding, \$5.6 billion (3%) below the FY26 enacted level, and follows the direction of the President's FY27 budget request. The deepest reductions fall on the public workforce system: the bill would cut WIOA Title I formula grants by roughly [62 percent](#), eliminate the WIOA Youth program entirely, nearly eliminate the WIOA Adult program through a proposed rescission later this fall, and leave Dislocated Worker as the only core Title I stream left largely intact. DOL's overall budget would fall to \$9.8 billion (down 27%), with ETA programs reduced approximately 32%. The bill has not yet gone to the House floor and is unlikely to pass the Senate in its current form, where substantial House–Senate differences are expected.

House Committee Advances WIOA Reauthorization

On April 21, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce approved the [A Stronger Workforce for America Act \(ASWA\) of 2026 \(H.R. 8210\)](#), sponsored by Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI), on a party-line vote of 19–14. The bill reauthorizes WIOA and largely tracks the 2024 version, retaining the requirement that 50% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds be spent on training, the Critical Industry Skills Fund option, and local area redesignation (including expanded single-area designations). It would also allow governors to reserve an additional 10% of Title I formula funds for state use—reducing the local share—rename the workforce block-grant pilots as “Make America Skilled Again” grants, and transfer adult education and literacy programs from the U.S. Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Labor. Unlike the version put forth by the prior Congress, this bill advanced without bipartisan support, has no Senate companion, and has not been scheduled for a House floor vote.

Federal Leadership Update: OCTAE and U.S. Department of Labor

A significant transition occurred at the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) in May when Nick Moore announced his departure from federal service after serving in a dual leadership role spanning both the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor. According to national CTE organizations, Casey Sacks has assumed the duties of Acting Assistant Secretary for OCTAE. The change comes at a critical time as states prepare WIOA state

plan modifications, Workforce Pell implementation activities, and continued alignment between education and workforce systems.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Leadership Change

Following the resignation of Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer in April, Deputy Secretary Keith Sonderling assumed the role of Acting Secretary of Labor. With DOL and OCTAE currently under acting leadership, states should expect continued focus on workforce development, apprenticeship expansion, education-to-workforce alignment, and federal-state coordination, while monitoring future appointments for potential shifts in long-term policy direction.

CONFERENCE AND CONVENINGS

The Reengage Washington Summit on April 24 in Renton convened educators, workforce professionals, community-based organizations, and policymakers focused on reconnecting opportunity youth to education, training, and employment pathways. Participation provided valuable insights into emerging strategies for reengagement, cross-system collaboration, and supports that can help improve outcomes for young people who are disconnected from school and work, informing both Perkins-related efforts and the Board's ongoing youth policy work.

Workforce Board Engages in Statewide Transportation Workforce Workshop

Workforce Board staff attended the PacTrans Workforce Development Institute's Transportation Workforce Workshop on May 29 at the University of Washington. Thompson also participated in a group discussion panel on funding resources for workforce development. The workshop brought together approximately 40 key education, business and government partners to identify priority workforce development training needs for the coming year and discussed potential funding strategies to support those efforts.

Panel Explores AI's Impact on the Future of Work and Learning

Workforce Board staffer, Joe Wilcox, was invited to present on a panel related to the impacts of AI on the workforce held May 13 at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia. The panel discussed a variety of artificial intelligence (AI) topics for the audience of college students, including AI's transformative role across education and employment sectors. The panel was part of the college's Career and Transfer Fair bringing together employers, universities, and resource tables to share information and employment opportunities. Panelists began by sharing real-world examples of how AI currently reshapes daily operations, decision-making, and service delivery. The discussion quickly focused on actionable insights for the emerging workforce, identifying which early-career tasks are most vulnerable to AI automation and outlining how students can still secure the core experiences employers value.

Long-Term Care (LTC) Workforce

Representatives of the Long-Term Care Workforce Collaborative (LTCC) attended the National Council on Aging's Age + Action Conference in Washington, D.C., where they met with peers from two dozen states to share strategies for addressing long-term care workforce shortages

and identify promising practices. LTCC partners continue developing recommendations for the 2027 Legislature focused on licensing, training pathways, and workforce support programs. In May, the Collaborative learned that federal support for certain long-term care workforce positions will end, creating funding challenges for related work at DSHS. The LTCC Leadership Council, Research Collaborative, and Sustainability Committee continue to meet regularly. The next Leadership Council meeting is August 4 and is open to the public.

Youth Employment and Career Pathways

Workforce Board staffers Joe Wilcox and Paulette Beadling attended the Reengage Washington Summit on April 24 in Renton. The summit convened educators, workforce professionals, community-based organizations, and policymakers focused on reconnecting opportunity youth to education, training, and employment pathways. Participation provided valuable insights into emerging strategies for reengagement, cross-system collaboration, and supports that can help improve outcomes for young people who are disconnected from school and work, informing both Perkins-related efforts and the Board's ongoing youth policy work.

Workforce Board Engages in Statewide Transportation Workforce Workshop

Acting Executive Director Maddy Thompson and Workforce Board staff member Joe Wilcox attended the PacTrans Workforce Development Institute's Transportation Workforce Workshop on May 29 at the University of Washington. Thompson also participated in a group discussion panel on funding resources for workforce development. The workshop brought together approximately 40 key education, business and government partners to identify priority workforce development training needs for the coming year and discussed potential funding strategies to support those efforts.

Panel Explores AI's Impact on the Future of Work and Learning

Workforce Board staff member Joe Wilcox participated in the South Puget Sound AI Panel held May 13 at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia. The panel discussed a variety of artificial intelligence (AI) topics for the audience of college students, including AI's transformative role across education and employment sectors. The panel was part of the college's Career and Transfer Fair bringing together employers, universities, and resource tables to share information and employment opportunities. Panelists began by sharing real-world examples of how AI currently reshapes daily operations, decision-making, and service delivery. The discussion quickly focused on actionable insights for the emerging workforce, identifying which early-career tasks are most vulnerable to AI automation and outlining how students can still secure the core experiences employers value.

National Governors Association's Skills in the States Symposium

Nova Gattman, Workforce Board Deputy Executive Director, attended the National Governors Association's *Skills in the States* Symposium May 19–21, a three-day grant-funded convening focused on advancing skills-first talent strategies. Nova joined the Washington team, led by state HR staff from the Office of Financial Management, along with an ESD staff member. Skills-based hiring focuses on a candidate's skills and abilities rather than degrees or years of

experience, expanding opportunities for veterans, career changers, and others whose qualifications may be overlooked by traditional hiring practices. Conference sessions emphasized that successful implementation requires more than removing degree requirements. States and employers must align hiring practices, data systems, and workforce programs to support skills-based approaches. Speakers from major employers highlighted that manager training and organizational culture change are critical to long-term success.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES THIS SUMMER AND FALL

Workforce Board staff will attend and present at several conferences in the coming months, including the Washington Association for Career and Technical Education (WA-CTE) annual summer conference in Spokane (Aug. 2-5). Workforce Board staff including Maddy Thompson, Marina Parr, Paulette Beadling, Renee Fullerton and Donald Smith will be at this popular conference which draws middle and high school CTE teachers and administrators from across the state. Staff will run a booth and hand out the latest edition of the agency's well-loved Where Are You Going career guide, along with information about the latest updates to the Career Bridge career and education exploration portal, along with other pertinent workforce information. Staff will also provide a presentation on updates to Career Bridge at the conference.

Workforce Board staff will also attend and present at the Washington Workforce Association fall conference (Nov. 3-5) in Spokane. The conference draws local leaders, industry experts, workforce professionals, economic development specialists, and elected officials to drive discussions focused on the evolving challenges of the state's workforce system.

NGA Summer 2026 Workforce Development Policy Institute

The Workforce Development and Economic Policy team at the NGA Center for Best Practices will convene the Summer 2026 Workforce Development Policy Institute on August 18 and 19, 2026 in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Institute will bring together state leaders who carry out their Governor's vision for workforce development policy, strategic investment, and oversight of federal and state workforce programs and will offer an opportunity to share challenges and best practices while engaging with subject matter experts and policymakers across all levels of government. Registration and agenda can be found [here](#).

Note: AI Use Disclosure: Generative AI assisted in preparing portions of this document. Workforce Board staff reviewed, verified, and edited the content for accuracy, and staff retain full responsibility for the findings and recommendations herein. Prepared consistent with WaTech Policy DATA-04 (Artificial Intelligence Policy).

Tab 3

Workforce Program Outcomes-Spotlight on CTE

PRESENTED BY: Terje Gjertsen and Paulette Beadling, Workforce Board

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Staff will present findings from the Workforce Board's annual Workforce Training Results analysis of workforce programs with a focus on Career and Technical Education (CTE). The presentation will also include findings from other recent studies related to CTE outcomes.

BACKGROUND

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs prepare students for a variety of college and career pathways through academic and hands-on learning while helping employers meet workforce needs. CTE programs are offered in middle and high schools (secondary) and at community and technical colleges, helping students build skills that lead to strong employment and earnings outcomes.

Secondary CTE. Recent studies from the Workforce Board, the state's Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), and Education Northwest, find that students benefit from participating in CTE programs. The studies also find strong demand for these programs from both students and employers and that high school students who take more CTE are more likely to:

- Graduate high school;
- Continue into postsecondary education and training;
- Achieve stronger workforce outcomes; and
- Have higher rates of employment and earn more over time.

Postsecondary CTE. Washington's postsecondary CTE programs, offered primarily through community and technical colleges, continue to produce strong employment and earnings outcomes. Over the last nine years, workers who finished a postsecondary CTE program had an average rate of employment of over 71%, with employment rates averaging 73% during the last five years. Earnings during this same nine-year period increased by over \$7,000. These outcomes and other details are available on Workforce Board's [Workforce Training Results](#) landing page.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Staff ask that Board members review these materials and come with any questions to improve their understanding. As a starting point, the Board could consider the following for discussion:

- How does this presentation on CTE and CTE Dual Credit change/support your position related to draft proposals of the State Board of Education FutureReady Task Force on removing the one CTE credit as part of the minimum statewide graduation requirements?
- What barriers may be limiting successful transitions from secondary CTE into postsecondary education, training, and employment?
- Where does the Board see opportunities to address those barriers?

Tab 4

Strengthening CTE Dual Credit

PRESENTED BY: William Belden and Kimberly Ingram, SBCTC

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

William Belden, Workforce Education Policy Associate, and Kimberly Ingram, Program Administrator, from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) will present a multi-year initiative, in collaboration with Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and other partners, to strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) dual credit pathways and increase the recognition of CTE dual credits to count toward postsecondary credentials.

BACKGROUND

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature provided funding to SBCTC to administer a pilot program to increase CTE dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional-technical programs. SBCTC was directed to collaborate with OSPI, to establish a pilot program, and select up to three colleges to participate. In 2025, the proviso was renewed and additional partners provided funding and support such as the Gates Foundation and Jobs for the Future (see the [Big Blur](#) initiative).

This work addresses a longstanding challenge: while many students earn CTE dual credits in high school, few of these credits are applied toward certificates, degrees, or career pathways after graduation. Strengthening these transitions helps more students access postsecondary education, earn credentials more quickly, and enter high-demand careers.

The [2024 report](#) outlined the following challenges, successes, priorities and recommendations:

Challenges and barriers

- **Alignment across dual credit programs:** Students and their families can be confused by the dual credit options available to them, requiring a higher level of communication and clarity by secondary and postsecondary institutions.
- **Credit transcription issues:** Students taking CTE Dual Credit courses, unlike Running Start (RS) and College in the High School (CiHS), do not register through a college enrollment process and their credits are not automatically transcribed.
- **Institutional policies:** Aligning partners' understanding of CTE Dual Credit programming requires ongoing communication and professional development.

Year one successes

- **Shared vision:** Developed a vision centered on aligning dual credit pathways with regional workforce needs.
- **Articulation practices:** Reviewed and standardized regional forms and procedures for CTE Dual Credit articulation.
- **Community of practice:** Launched a community of practice for computer science teachers to enhance alignment and dual credit opportunities.

The [2025 report](#) outlines the following key recommendations:

- **Statewide Articulation Framework:** Adopt statewide standards, templates, and timelines; recognize impact on faculty workload; ensure all courses apply toward credentials.
- **Data Collection & Reporting:** Implement a statewide system with standardized data, automated processes, and public dashboards aligned with equity and pathways.
- **Credit Transcription & Transfer:** Establish statewide transcription standards, automate credit posting, and publish clear course equivalencies.
- **Student Advising & Career Guidance:** Integrate CTE Dual Credit into statewide advising systems (High School and Beyond Plans), standardize pathway maps, and expand counselor/teacher training.
- **Pathway Alignment with Workforce Demand:** Define statewide criteria for viable pathways and require stackable, workforce-aligned credentials.
- **Priority Courses and Programs:** Publish and annually update a statewide priority course list; target underserved regions and high-value pathways.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Staff ask that Board members review the materials in advance and come ready to ask presenters questions that will improve understanding of this topic.

Possible questions include:

- What policies and practices would improve the recognition of CTE dual credits toward postsecondary credentials?
- What practical improvements are feasible given current resource constraints?

Tab 5

Economic Security for All: Results and Local Examples

PRESENTED BY: Shannon Brundle, Workforce Initiatives Manager, Employment Security Department
Brian Feld, Research Investigator, Employment Security Department

Amy Martinez, CEO, South Central Workforce
Kevin Williams, CEO, Spokane Workforce Council and
service partners/ customers (invited)

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

The Economic Security for All (EcSA) program is designed to reduce poverty in Washington and advance individuals towards self-sufficiency through providing workforce, education and training and other services. This agenda item includes a report on program results presented by staff of the Employment Security Department, and examples of how local workforce development councils are working with local service providers to implement the program. Local examples are from South Central Workforce and Spokane.

BACKGROUND

EcSA is a state program designed to advance low-income Washington residents towards self-sufficiency. It is part of Washington's larger poverty prevention and reduction initiative. The program is designed to enhance and align existing programs and resources in local workforce systems across the state to increase skills and assets, and lead to good paying jobs.

The research has found that EcSA participants are more likely to be employed, work more hours and have higher earnings after enrollment than comparable customers enrolled only in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Youth programs, which have similar eligibility criteria to EcSA.

Local workforce board representatives and service partners will provide insights on how they are implementing EcSA, leveraging Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) and other programs to have the greatest positive benefits for workforce customers.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

The goal is for Board members to better understand the EcSA program: how it has affected outcomes for individuals, and how it is being implemented.

Question prompt:

- What are the policy and practice implications of this research and implementation examples?

Tab 6

FAFSA Campaign Presentation

PRESENTED BY: Amy Keltner, Senior Director, Washington Student Achievement Council
Sarah Weiss, Director of College Access Initiatives, Washington Student Achievement Council

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Amy Keltner, Senior Director, and Sarah Weiss, Director of College Access Initiatives at the Washington Student Achievement Council will provide a brief presentation that highlights this year's successful campaign to boost the number of Washington high school students completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Gov. Bob Ferguson championed this campaign as part of his executive order to expand access to financial aid for colleges, apprenticeships and other post-high school training. The Workforce Board amplified this message through a statewide newsletter and in Career Bridge landing pages.

BACKGROUND

Washington consistently ranks among the lowest in the country for FAFSA completion, with fewer than half of graduating high school seniors completing the application each year, leaving millions in federal aid unclaimed. This shortfall triggered a statewide campaign to ensure eligible students receive more funding for college and career training. In addition, while Washington is known for having the most equitable and generous state financial aid program in the country—the WA Grant—the application is linked to the FAFSA, and most students must fill out the FAFSA in order to apply.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion.

Question prompts:

- What are the barriers to completing the FAFSA?
- What policies and practices help to increase FAFSA sign up rates?
- How can the Workforce Board and workforce system partners help amplify the message?

Tab 7

Tab 7a

Joint Industry Recommendations Pell for Workforce in Washington State

PRESENTED BY: Chelsea Mason-Placek, Workforce Development Director, WA State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Ingrid Stegemoeller, Industry Engagement Director, WA Roundtable & Partnership for Learning

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Representatives from the Washington Roundtable and the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), AFL-CIO will present joint industry recommendations for Pell for Workforce (Workforce Pell) implementation in Washington.

BACKGROUND

The Governor's Office is leading a steering committee of state agencies to implement Workforce Pell and has directed the Workforce Board to gather industry input. WSLC and Washington Roundtable have worked together to deliver joint-recommendations, representative of both labor and business, which are included in this packet. Workforce Pell takes effect July 1, 2026.

Developed through a three-phase engagement process with employers, sector organizations, and labor leaders across the state, the joint industry recommendations presented by WSLC, AFL-CIO, and the Business Roundtable reflect a phased approach: initially relying on rigorous federal Workforce Pell eligibility requirements in year one to maximize program access, then building toward a more durable, employer- and labor-driven system aligned with in-demand jobs and measurable outcomes. The recommendations are designed to support the state's initial implementation efforts while also providing a framework for longer-term success, in partnership with the Governor's Office and state agencies.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion. The Board will have an opportunity to identify which recommendations should be prioritized by the steering committee as Workforce Pell implementation and policy development continue to evolve.



The Honorable Bob Ferguson
Governor of Washington
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Governor Ferguson:

On behalf of the Washington Roundtable and the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, we are pleased to submit our joint industry recommendations for successful Pell for Workforce implementation in Washington.

These recommendations reflect strong collaboration between employers and labor and our clear alignment on a shared goal: ensuring Pell for Workforce expands access to high-quality training that leads to real workforce outcomes for Washington workers and employers.

We recognize the need to move quickly to implement Pell for Workforce, while also laying the groundwork for a process that improves over time. To that end, we offer the following:

- In year one, the state should rely on federal requirements to determine program eligibility for Pell for Workforce. Federal thresholds are already rigorous, and Washington should take an expansive view of the types of programs that meet worker and employer needs. Successful programs share common characteristics, which our stakeholders highlighted, and the state should use these characteristics to set clear expectations for high-quality programs.
- In year two and beyond, Washington can lead by establishing a more durable, systemic, employer- and labor-driven and validated process for defining job and skill demand. That process should be structured and sector-informed, as well as grounded in employer hiring behavior, forward-looking workforce trends, and regional context. Pell for Workforce program eligibility should then align to that demand. This shift will help ensure that approved programs are relevant, scalable, and responsive to the state's evolving economy. We stand ready to partner in building out this effort.
- Pell for Workforce implementation should be anchored in strengthening and building on Washington's proven workforce training models—including registered apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and other work-based pathways that connect training to family-sustaining jobs and career advancement. Implementation should also prioritize: continuous improvement and responsiveness to industry needs; learning from and supporting those closest to the work of administering Pell for Workforce for students; accessibility across all of the state's communities; and a relentless commitment to strong workforce outcomes for all Washingtonians.

Taken together, the recommendations in the attached document are designed to support immediate implementation and long-term success. Pell for Workforce has the potential to expand opportunity, strengthen workforce pipelines, and better connect education to work. We appreciate your leadership and look forward to continued collaboration to realize the potential of this opportunity for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Smith'.

Rachel Smith
President, Washington Roundtable

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'April Sims'.

April Sims
President, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

PELL FOR WORKFORCE

Industry Recommendations



Codeveloped by **Washington Roundtable** and the **Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO**

May 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In July, federal legislation will open Federal Pell Grant financial aid to short-term workforce training programs for the first time. Washington holds significant discretion in determining the process and criteria that will impact which programs qualify.

Designing Washington's Pell for Workforce requires leadership from the people closest to the labor market: employers and workers. To meet this moment, Washington Roundtable and the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO co-led a process to directly embed employer, high-demand sector, and labor expertise into state decision-making, convening their constituents, grounding the work in real hiring and career development experience, and producing a unified set of recommendations for Pell for Workforce in four categories:

1. A set of principles to guide Pell for Workforce implementation
2. Approval criteria to guide eligibility
3. Process design recommendations about how the state determines eligible occupations, skills, and program alignment
4. Factors that will enable Pell for Workforce to have the greatest impact in Washington

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

Washington Roundtable (WRT) and the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC) led a robust multi-round engagement process to develop these recommendations, with support from consulting partner Kinetic West. The process gathered direct perspectives and experiences from 21 employers, 8 sector organizations (such as trade associations), and 20 labor leaders across Washington's key industries and the education sector; synthesized the information into findings; and translated those findings into recommendations for the Governor's office. The engagement followed a three-phase arc: gathering broad input; focused deliberation; and recommendations development and review.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Employers and labor – referred to as “industry” in this document – recognize the need to move quickly to implement Pell for Workforce, while also laying the groundwork for a process that improves over time. Along with the full breadth of perspectives described in the full recommendations set, here are five themes that surfaced consistently across stakeholder engagement:

1. **Washington can maximize access to and use of Pell for Workforce grants by relying on already rigorous federal requirements for program eligibility.** Federal standards set an expectation for high-quality programs that support student completion and hiring. Adding state-specific eligibility thresholds at this time risks excluding programs with proven outcomes. Industry stakeholders were clear about common characteristics of successful programs, which the state should use to set clear expectations for high-quality programs.
2. **Demand should be defined through a multi-factor, sector-driven approach explicitly informed by employer hiring behavior.** No single data source captures the reality of demand as evidenced by feedback from employers and labor leaders. Employers and sector organizations should drive the designation of in-demand occupations and skills through a structured, repeatable process that incorporates hiring behavior, replacement needs, regional variation, and emerging skill needs, ultimately building toward a more forward-looking, sector-led system over time, with state labor market data as one input among several. This shift toward forward-looking, employer-validated job and skill demand should be prioritized for year two and beyond of Pell for Workforce implementation.
3. **Opportunities for Pell for Workforce to support registered apprenticeships and recognized pre-apprenticeships should be optimized.** By design, registered apprenticeships already meet the federal Pell for Workforce standard for high-wage, high-skill or in-demand occupations and are vital to building Washington's next generation of skilled workers. The state should seek out, in consultation with labor and others, ways for Pell for Workforce to optimize support for Washington's high-value registered apprenticeship and recognized pre-apprenticeship education pathways.

4. **Pell for Workforce requires enabling factors to succeed and can catalyze future system improvements.** The impact of this new program depends upon many conditions that sit outside the policy itself. Those conditions include, but are not limited to, sufficient capacity for and consultation with financial aid and advising staff who carry out implementation, strong wraparound supports that help students and apprentices persist, attention to rural accessibility, and strong program awareness across students, workers, and employers.
5. **Employers and labor are committed to ensuring Pell for Workforce expands access to high-quality training that leads to real workforce outcomes for Washington workers and employers.** After a highly collaborative process to develop these recommendations, we are ready to partner with the Governor's office and state agencies to define roles and accountability for the Pell for Workforce demand validation process and other implementation choices.

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT PELL FOR WORKFORCE

Pell Grants are federal financial aid awards, previously designed to support undergraduate students with significant financial need. Unlike loans, they do not need to be repaid, making them a critical program for helping students access and complete higher education.

Workforce Pell, often known in Washington as Pell for Workforce, is a new federal policy, passed by Congress in July 2025, that allows students to use Pell Grants for short-term, workforce-focused training programs aligned with high-demand jobs. Beginning July 1, 2026, eligible short-term programs may qualify for federal financial aid if they meet a set of requirements including minimum completion and job placement rates. While details on the law's implementation are still in late stages of development through the federal rulemaking process, the law gives individual governors and states responsibility and flexibility in determining which programs within their states qualify.

WASHINGTON'S IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The state faces an urgent challenge to quickly establish criteria, processes, and governance structures to ensure compliance with federal requirements. The Governor's Policy office is leading the effort in coordination with public and private entities to launch Pell for Workforce in Washington.

STATE AGENCY COORDINATION: A cross-agency steering committee with representation from the Washington Student Achievement Council, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the Department of Commerce, the Employment Security Department, and the Department of Labor & Industries is guiding implementation for Pell for Workforce. Their key decision areas include eligibility definitions, employer validation, program stackability, and processes to maintain an accurate list of eligible programs.

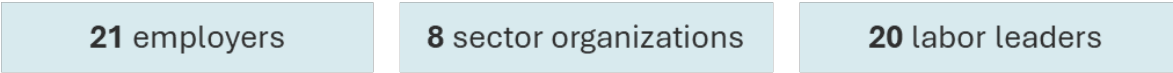
EMPLOYER AND LABOR LEADERSHIP: Washington Roundtable and the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO co-led a process to directly embed employer and labor expertise into state decision-making, convening their constituents, grounding the work in real hiring and career development experience, and producing a unified set of recommendations for Pell for Workforce. The process also included high-demand sector organizations, such as trade associations, to capture sector-level workforce intelligence (rather than relying only on individual employers to speak for the jobs and skills needs of entire sectors). This partnership – as well as Pell for Workforce more broadly – creates a long-term opportunity to model how business and labor can engage their respective constituencies and collectively provide clear, credible, formal guidance that strengthens alignment of education and training systems with workforce demands over time.

The decisions Washington makes about Pell for Workforce will shape how federal dollars flow into workforce training across the state. Getting those decisions right requires direct guidance from the people closest to the labor market: employers and workers. Pell for Workforce offers Washington a rare opportunity to align public investment with real hiring demand, high-quality training, and clear pathways to good jobs and further education.

EMPLOYER & LABOR ENGAGEMENT

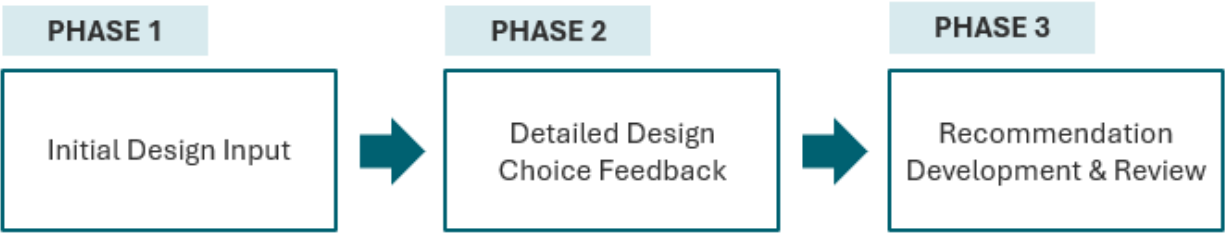
Recommendations were developed through a robust multi-round engagement process codesigned by Washington Roundtable (WRT) and the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC) with support from consulting partner Kinetic West. The process gathered direct perspectives and experiences from employers and labor leaders across Washington's key industries, synthesized the information into findings, and translated those findings into recommendations for the Governor's office. The engagement ran from early March through late April 2026. WRT and WSLC aligned on the engagement approach at a high level; each organization also customized their engagement to meet the preferences of their constituents.

PARTICIPANTS:



Employer participants were organized through sector clusters to ensure participants could hear from and iterate on ideas from colleagues working in similar fields. Participants joined from many sectors including construction & skilled trades, clean energy, maritime, agriculture & natural resources, business & finance, and hospitality. Labor participants included union leaders across a similar range of industries and the education sector. Many of whom actively develop, administer and manage education and training programs, including within manufacturing, maritime, healthcare, construction, food services and hospitality.

The engagement followed a three-phase arc, moving from gathering broad input to focused deliberation and recommendation development and review. Each phase progressively narrowed the conversation from open-ended exploration of principles and priorities to specific design choices and, ultimately, to a unified set of recommendations.



Additional detail on the engagement is available in Appendix II.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Leaders across business and labor designed the following overarching principles to guide Pell for Workforce implementation in Washington this year and beyond:

INDUSTRY AND STUDENT TRUST & VALUE

Students and industry should trust and confirm that programs prepare students for labor market success. That trust can be built through timely and ongoing responsiveness to industry needs, leading to more students learning industry-relevant skills – both professional and technical – and entering quality career pathways.

EMPLOYER & SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Employers and sector organizations should drive the designation of in-demand occupations and skills to ensure approved programs reflect forward-looking employer talent needs and hiring realities, grounded in hiring behavior. Criteria for validating job and skill demand should be clear and consistent. For program approval, employer validation should be structured, documented, and repeatable – not merely advisory or symbolic. Eligible programs should show continuous, tangible co-design with employer partners.

ACCESSIBILITY

Pell for Workforce programs should serve Washingtonians at varying points in their lives and careers, accounting for the range of need for high-value, short-term training for career entry, upskilling and career progression, and career changes. Programs should also account for learners' practical abilities to participate and complete with supports such as wraparound services, hybrid course delivery, and considerations to ensure both access in rural communities and cultural inclusivity.

SCALE WITH QUALITY

Pell for Workforce should support high-quality program growth to collectively serve a range of industries and all regions in the state, including rural communities, adding value to more employers by preparing learners with relevant skills and increasing accessibility for more students.

INNOVATION

Pell for Workforce should catalyze innovation and responsiveness to emerging industry needs in program delivery, development, and partner engagement, while remaining grounded in providing students with high-quality education and training.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Washington's Pell for Workforce process will not be done in July 2026. Washington should use multi-faceted data sources to learn, iterate, and improve Pell for Workforce implementation over time and ensure eligible programs evolve with industry need, based on responsive and ongoing feedback loops with training providers, labor, and employers to ensure programs remain tightly aligned with industry and workforce demands.

CONNECTION TO LONGSTANDING EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

Pell for Workforce should support existing priorities in workforce and higher education, including credential attainment, relevant professional and technical skill development, work-based learning, pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships, and supporting underserved students and communities.

PRIORITIZING THE FINANCIAL AID AND ADVISING WORKFORCE

The success of Pell for Workforce rests on the shoulders of the workforce that directly advises and supports students. They should be prioritized in implementation design and iterative improvements.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

CONTEXT

The proposed federal minimum standards for Pell for Workforce set a high bar for program eligibility. A minimum verified completion rate of 70% and verified job placement rate of 70%, alongside stackability and earnings requirements (among others) serve as a strong quality screen. Programs that clear these requirements have already demonstrated that they produce completers, that those completers get hired, and that the resulting wages justify the investment.

Given the strength of federal requirements, leadership across business and labor recommend not imposing additional program eligibility criteria beyond what is federally required. The state can offer clarity and expectations about characteristics that define high-quality programs, but state-specific thresholds on top of demanding federal standards risk excluding programs that have demonstrated strong outcomes.

In work sessions to develop these recommendations, both labor and employers discussed the elements of a successful program. These characteristics are included at the end of the document and provide actionable guidance that training providers should use when designing and updating programs. The state should consider using these characteristics to provide clear guidance for programs seeking to be eligible for Pell for Workforce.

One significant way the state can strengthen Pell for Workforce implementation is by investing in how it validates occupational and skill demand, ensuring that an in-demand designation reflects real talent needs that are forward-looking enough to keep pace with a changing labor market.

LABOR VOICE

“When we look at future projections of need...we might have a lot of people in those job slots now, but they’re going to start retiring.”

While recognizing that many employer and labor constituents do not come from a place of expertise on the state’s exact collection methods and use of data for determining demand today, both groups noted that the [Occupations in Demand](#) list and other publicly accessible data have gaps and limitations that can skew the reality of job demand. Some challenges noted include:

- There is a heavy focus on growth, even when many employers may foresee large labor needs associated with filling gaps from retirement and/or turnover
- Demand and volume are not always synonymous, which can lead to smaller but important occupations and sectors being overlooked
- There is an insufficient focus on regional variation
- Pipeline shortages because of low training capacity are underrepresented in the data, especially in lower-growth fields
- Emerging needs show up too late in the data (resulting in lost opportunities or imported talent)
- “Zombie” and “ghost” job postings can artificially inflate demand lists
- There can be a significant lag between large layoffs and list updates
- Cross-cutting skills that support multiple industries may span multiple SOC codes

In addition to an employer-led process to define occupational and skill demand, the Governor’s office and state agencies should ensure the Pell for Workforce program approval process is timely and responsive to enable the development and evolution of high-quality, short-term programs that align with emerging demand not met by existing training pathways.

Given strong federal requirements, employers and labor provide the following recommendations as Washington considers definitions for high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand for Pell for Workforce-eligible programs.

*These recommendations do not apply to registered apprenticeship programs which will meet the “high-wage, high-skill or high-demand” standard by design.

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATION DESIGNATION

EMPLOYER VOICE

“I would suggest that the validation process prioritize evidence tied to employer behavior, such as hiring timelines, training investment, and advancement patterns, rather than relying primarily on input or surveys or just who raises their hand.”

Demand should be defined through a multi-factor approach that includes evidence of employer hiring behavior. Given the limitations of any individual data source, demand must take many factors into consideration—as happens with employer and sector demand projections. Employers emphasized four factors that matter most to define occupational demand:

1. Employer hiring experiences, such as the time taken to fill positions and vacancy rates
2. Replacement demand, such as retirements or turnover
3. Sector-level validation
4. Training pipeline shortages

Additional information on what that process could look like is in the “Process Design” section of these recommendations.

Employers and sector organizations should drive the designation of in-demand occupations and skills, building toward a more forward-looking process. Additional information on what that process could look like is in the “Process Design” section of these recommendations.

HIGH-WAGE DESIGNATION

Washington could set a wage floor for eligible occupations, but setting it too high could exclude programs that are important to employers, students, and our communities.

Students who complete an eligible program must see meaningful economic benefit from their training. Federal requirements set up guardrails to ensure completers’ economic benefit. Any wage floor for eligibility should therefore strike a balance: it should promote strong economic outcomes for students while not excluding high-demand occupations where wages may start lower but grow reliably over time and, in some cases, with additional credentialing. Pell for Workforce can be a catalyst for students entering careers with upward wage progression and strong benefits, including healthcare coverage and retirement benefits.

Additionally, some high-demand occupations, such as entry-level positions in early childhood education, may not meet a strict wage threshold but are still critical to the economy and can lead to upward mobility in the field. If these programs are ineligible, students pursuing these careers may lose access to federal financial support.

For this reason, eligibility should not rely solely on immediate wages. Programs that provide clear pathways to advancement—through stackable credentials, additional education, or defined career ladders—should also be considered. Any further “high-wage” designation should be holistic and flexible to accommodate for occupations that are critical to our economy and stack clearly to educational, career, and wage advancement.

HIGH-SKILL DESIGNATION

Washington should not impose additional high-skill requirements: programs meeting all other requirements should be considered as meeting the high-skill threshold by state and federal standards. As the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking notes, Pell for Workforce is designed to help the “skills gap” in the labor force. Programs that meet the state’s in-demand requirements

and exceed the high federal bar for Pell for Workforce eligibility should be considered high-skill. More important is ensuring eligible programs are tightly aligned to on-the-ground job skills with a clear and accessible path to continued skill growth.

Employers repeatedly emphasized that professional and workplace skills—such as communication, teamwork, and reliability—are critical to job success and should be integrated alongside technical training. Successful programs will include professional skill development.

MEETING HIGH-WAGE, HIGH-SKILL, OR IN-DEMAND CRITERIA

Occupations that meet at least one of the three criteria (in-demand, high-wage, or high-skill) should be considered for Pell for Workforce eligibility, especially as programs already must meet rigorous federal thresholds. Eligible programs should show clear workforce value and ongoing alignment that evolves with occupational and skill demand.

COMPETENCY-BASED STACKABILITY FOR UPSKILLING, CAREER PROGRESSION, AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Improving stackability is essential. Competency-based stackability accelerates student progression by ensuring that both professional and technical competencies that employers demand translate clearly and smoothly toward credentials. Training programs should be equipped to design and implement high-quality, skills-based assessments that strengthen career and academic advancement.

In addition to clearly defining stackability, the state should help reduce institutional barriers like transfer friction and duplicative requirements that make it harder and more expensive for students to work towards additional credentials over time.

Employers see stackability as a workforce strategy for building long-term talent pipelines and are ready to work with education and workforce systems to develop accessible pathways for continued credential attainment for employees.

LABOR CONSULTATION ON APPRENTICESHIPS AND RELATED PATHWAYS

LABOR VOICE

“[We are] protecting individuals on a career pathway when they're going to go through a short-term program and not have the wages or the career outcome that the apprenticeship pathway would have.”

The state should consult with labor to maximize the opportunity for Pell for Workforce eligibility for recognized pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships and other labor-management administered programs. To the extent such programs partner with Title IV institutions for the delivery of instruction, there may be technical or structural considerations that could enhance eligibility opportunities. The state should also consult with labor to ensure that short-term programs developed with Pell for Workforce eligibility in mind do not undermine the more expansive skill development offered via registered apprenticeships and related programs.

EMPLOYER VOICE

“Workforce Pell should not just be reactive; it should proactively prepare for future employer needs and economic development.”

Across Pell for Workforce employer work sessions, one of the strongest and most consistent themes from employers was that job and skill demand should be defined before program design and content. In the current system, many policies require a high volume of employer outreach by colleges to prove employer demand on a program-by-program basis. This often happens through individual letters of support or consulting advisory boards. Employers and sector organizations described this approach as burdensome and fragmented. Current policy requires duplicative outreach from institutions and repetitive engagement from employers, while falling short in producing clear, system-wide, broadly actionable signals about workforce needs. Employer participants noted that relying on this model can result in inconsistent, uneven alignment between training programs and actual hiring demand, which can produce weaker job outcomes for students. Additionally, there is no clear, consistent mechanism to ensure programs remain aligned with workforce demand over time. Employers also emphasized that many existing validation approaches function as “check-the-box” exercises that do not meaningfully influence program design or outcomes. Fragmented employer data collection is degrading participation and reducing the quality of demand signals.

Employers also underscored that workforce demand is dynamic and evolving. They expressed concern that current systems rely too heavily on static, point-in-time data and slow approval processes, limiting the ability of programs to respond to emerging industry needs, technological change, and workforce transitions.

Instead, employers emphasized that the most successful workforce programs are grounded in real-time hiring needs, employer behavior, and forward-looking talent demand, and informed by ongoing and well-coordinated engagement across multiple employers. They expressed a strong preference for an approach to Pell for Workforce that defines job and skill demand collectively and upfront, creating a sector-based, validated signal that programs across institutions can align to, rather than requiring each program to independently prove demand.

Employers also highlighted the need for greater efficiency and coordination in how workforce demand information is gathered and communicated to education providers – including leveraging the sector-wide knowledge of organizations like trade associations – reducing duplication for all while strengthening the overall signal to and trust in the system.

Over time, the state will be able to cultivate and approve more successful programs eligible for Pell for Workforce funds through a process that leads with employer workforce demand. Starting with forward-looking occupational and skill demand will more tightly align training programs with future-forward talent needs, which will ultimately result in more successful hiring outcomes for students.

EMPLOYER VOICE

“Nobody knows the industry better than the people who are in it.”

The state should use an employer-led, structured, repeatable process with sector-wide data and insights to create a shared signal about high-demand jobs and skills to be used across programs. Pell for Workforce program alignment and eligibility determination follow the shared demand signal.

Core Design Principles:

- Employer demand is determined first, orienting workforce programs to align with sector-based talent needs and increase likelihood of eligibility for Pell funds.
- The employer-led validation process is structured, repeatable, and consistent across sectors and institutions. Validation must move beyond advisory or symbolic engagement and demonstrate clear influence on program design, content, and outcomes.
- Validation is:
 - Sector-informed and aggregated.
 - Grounded in real employer behavior, including hiring timelines / time-to-fill data, training investments by employers, advancement patterns within companies, and actual hiring and retention outcomes.
 - Forward-looking, incorporating emerging industry needs, technological change, and projected workforce transitions.
 - Designed with multiple options for employer participation (e.g., sector panels, surveys, association input) to reduce burden and expand representation across business size and geography to avoid overrepresentation of large, urban employers.
 - Based on clear, consistent evidence across sectors to produce predictable results.
- The process is accessible and not overly burdensome for employers, institutions, or state agencies, minimizing duplicative data requests and leveraging streamlined engagement methods.
- Over time, industry and state agencies should define clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability for managing conflicting information and driving toward successful outcomes.

PROCESS DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE: TOWARD A SECTOR-DRIVEN, REGIONALLY RESPONSIVE SYSTEM

1. Define Workforce Demand:

- a. Identify employer demand via sector-based employer panels or other methods.
- b. The process collects evidence, such as high-demand roles, replacement demand and turnover, specific skills needs, training pipeline shortages, etc.
- c. Sector organizations play a central intermediary role in convening employers, aggregating data and input across firms, and ensuring representation across employer size, geography, and subsector needs.
- d. State data serve as one input into the process.
- e. Information is aggregated into a shared demand signal with regionalized nuance.

2. Translate Demand into Program Alignment. Programs/colleges use shared job demand signals and localized resources to better align content of existing programs and/or develop new training, as well as ensure regional relevancy

3. State Review and Approval. Agency process to ensure program alignment with employer-validated job demand, including program quality and how it prepares learners for entry into the specific occupation.

4. Ongoing Feedback and Continuous Improvement. Revalidation cycles every 1–3 years (or as triggered by changing industry conditions), supported by continuous review of outcome data, enabling the system to respond more rapidly to evolving workforce needs.

Washington should take a phased approach to building a more effective, employer- and labor-driven validation system, beyond Pell for Workforce, recognizing both near-term feasibility and long-term opportunity. In the short term, the state can implement a

more structured validation process that brings employers and sector organizations together to define workforce demand through consistent, repeatable mechanisms—reducing fragmentation and improving alignment across programs.

Over time, Washington should build toward a more fully sector-driven system, where employers, sector organizations, and labor play an ongoing, central role in defining priority occupations, skills, and career pathways. This evolution would move the system from periodic validation of demand to sustained, forward-looking industry leadership, creating stronger, more dynamic alignment between education and workforce needs while improving trust, efficiency, and outcomes for both students and employers.

Required System Components

- A formal employer validation mechanism for high-demand occupations (example: sector panels)
- A defined and central role for sector organizations (aggregation, convening, representation)
- A standard validation cycle (example: annual; triggered by employers, labor, agencies, and/or colleges/training providers; with flexibility to respond to emerging needs)
- A feedback and data loop tied to outcomes (placement, retention, wage progression), ensuring validation reflects real hiring behavior and workforce outcomes.

Guardrails

- Avoid over-centralization (regional variation matters; processes must reflect local labor markets and not disproportionately favor large or urban employers)
- Ensure small and rural employer participation
- Minimize duplicative data collection burden across agencies and organizations, coordinating data requests and leveraging shared systems.

CLEAR ROLES AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEMAND VALIDATION PROCESS

Employers and labor are ready to partner with the Governor’s office and state agencies to define roles and accountability for the Pell for Workforce demand validation process. Industry should guide the development of the formal validation mechanism as implementation continues. Employers and labor are committed to ongoing collaboration with the state to work out details of the validation process and ensure that responsibilities are clarified over time and accountability for strong outcomes is embedded in the process.

EMPLOYER AND LABOR ROLE IN ONGOING PELL FOR WORKFORCE DESIGN DECISIONS

Washington should establish a structured process that brings employer and labor representatives into regular assessment of how Pell for Workforce is working. Strong implementation will take time. On-the-ground perspective is essential for identifying where the process is creating unintended barriers or consequences, where state systems are misaligned with workforce realities, and where course corrections are needed. Industry should be strongly represented as the state gathers feedback and revises Pell for Workforce over time.

ENABLING FACTORS

CONTEXT

For Pell for Workforce to have maximum positive effect in Washington, business and labor leaders shared areas beyond the policy itself that will affect its success. These are conditions that participants across sessions identified as essential to making the program work in practice. Many reflect long-standing system gaps that predate Pell for Workforce but will shape whether the program achieves its goals.

STAFF INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

LABOR VOICE

“We have programs that will fail if we don't have the right advising for them...The financial aid and registration staff are grossly overworked right now because of short staffing.”

Ensure financial aid and advising functions have the support they need. Staff in these vital functions are already stretched thin across the state's central administration and its community and technical colleges. Pell for Workforce will bring new complexity to their work. These functions require additional capacity, training and technical support for Pell for Workforce to reach the students it is designed to support. Adding a new layer on top of existing responsibilities without requisite support not only risks the success of Pell for Workforce, but could also erode support across existing programs and services because of under-resourcing.

DURABLE SKILLS

Durable skills are vital for every employee and should be considered important learning outcomes for Pell for Workforce program participants. Regardless of an industry's level of required technical knowledge, durable skills (also known as transferrable skills or professional skills) are non-negotiable for employers. While Pell for Workforce programs are short by nature, all training providers should consider ways to imbue training and practice with durable skills, including communication (written and verbal), professionalism, conflict resolution, reliability, and adaptability. The state should consider ways to support defining and teaching durable skills to ensure alignment with workplace needs and strengthen career outcomes over time.

Work-based learning opportunities can support, putting these skills into action during, rather than after, a program. As one employer noted—a sentiment that was echoed broadly, “[Professional skills are] a major skill gap... this skill gap does not really show up in government data... and yet employers across the board are... trying to solve this challenge.” Another employer emphasized that professional skills are as valuable as technical ones: “We focus on... the ability to communicate, be on time, show up for each other, teamwork... we're focused on those just as much as we do our technical skills.”

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS & RECOGNIZED PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS

Pell for Workforce should support and protect the high-quality education offered by registered apprenticeships and recognized pre-apprenticeships.

Pell for Workforce runs the risk of incentivizing the development of Pell-eligible offerings around narrow skillsets that are already, or should be, embedded in established registered apprenticeship programs. This undercuts the quality and coherence of registered apprenticeship pathways and limits the career outcomes for students. Given the importance and success of the registered apprenticeship model, the state must ensure skill development through apprenticeship pathways isn't piecemealed into shorter-term, narrower training outside of the apprenticeship system to fit Pell for Workforce eligibility.

Additionally, the state should, in consultation with labor and Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees, seek ways to fully leverage Pell for Workforce in support of recognized pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs and other training programs jointly administered by labor and management.

WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS

LABOR VOICE

“There’s the didactic component...a lab component...[and] then there's all the wraparound supports, which are so critical to the outcomes of seeing retention and completion. [Completion] is dramatically driven by wraparound supports.”

Wraparound supports such as access to technology and Wi-Fi, academic support, access to emergency funding, food pantries, transportation, childcare, housing assistance, and language support are essential and must be prioritized. Pell for Workforce is designed to support Washingtonians with lower incomes through their career journey. Barriers to fulfilling basic needs often prevent students and apprentices from entering or finishing their education. Integrating Pell for Workforce with programs and funding sources that provide wraparound supports will help students persist and therefore enable programs meet or exceed the 70% completion threshold.

RURAL ACCESSIBILITY

For Pell for Workforce to serve all of Washington, rural areas must be prioritized. Rural communities have close-knit connections and relationships that can be significant assets for collaboration and student support. Rural areas also face barriers to accessing workforce training: limited transportation, limited wraparound supports, geographic distance from community and technical colleges, and demand that may be obfuscated in aggregated state data. Rural accessibility should be a priority, including building and improving hybrid and flexible delivery models that can reach students who cannot relocate or commute to a campus.

DATA INFRASTRUCTURE

Washington should be a national leader in leveraging public data across state agencies and private data to ensure the success of Pell for Workforce. To do so, the state must adequately resource both data systems and the staff that support the work. Pell for Workforce calls for new ways to collect and use data to accurately track outcomes. This is an opportunity to invest in Washington's data infrastructure to serve the state’s interests beyond Pell for Workforce.

One recent success that could launch additional enhancements: The state, supported by data contributions from Washington employers, recently began collecting occupation-specific data via Unemployment Insurance wage records. This marks a significant advancement in our ability to understand the movement of students and workers between education and jobs across programs and industries, among other important factors that help drive an efficient labor market. Washington is a national leader on this front.

Another opportunity for improvement is for state agencies to coordinate and streamline employer data collection. Currently, employers are asked for similar workforce data by many public sources, which is resulting in duplication of effort, survey fatigue, and lower-quality input over time.

PROGRAM AWARENESS

Program awareness across students and employers must be strong to maximize the contributions of Pell for Workforce. Pell for Workforce programs will serve students at many moments in their lives and career, whether they are taking the next step after high school or are looking for a change much later. Employers of all sizes must also be made aware of the industry-aligned programs that can serve their workforce needs. Program awareness across both groups will drive enrollment, completion, and employment.

APPENDIX I: CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As part of gathering perspectives for this report, participants across employers and labor were asked to share characteristics of successful programs. The state should use these factors to set clear expectations for programs seeking to be eligible for Pell for Workforce.

IDEAS SHARED BY EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYER VOICE

“When the employers are involved in the training and then hiring, the program is more successful.”

Employer co-design (non-negotiable): Programs need to be co-designed and built with employers, not just reviewed by them, to be highly aligned and most successful.

Embedded applied learning: Programs should reflect real work conditions and integrate hands-on experience throughout, to maximize exposure and start/continue building general workplace skills that can't be taught in the classroom alone.

Continuous improvement: Workplace needs evolve, and programs need to be set up to evolve alongside. This means structured, ongoing processes for updates based on employer feedback/collaboration.

Responsiveness to employer feedback: Programs that update and evolve with employers' needs are able to stay aligned instead of drifting slowly away from true workforce realities.

Flexible and accessible delivery: The most successful programs are accessible to working students and those who need flexible program delivery for other reasons. Accessible programs also help contribute to credential stackability, enabling working people to more easily enroll in and finish one or more programs over time.

IDEAS SHARED BY LABOR

Joint labor-management programs: Programs administered in partnership with labor and employers embed real-time industry needs and expertise from those doing the work. They also often offer sustainable funding and ensure employment during training or at completion.

Employer commitment: Programs where employers help develop curriculum, provide equipment, offer experiential learning, and/or commit to hiring have the strongest outcomes for students.

In-person, on-site exposure during training: This mirrors the #2 interest for employers. Real-world experience built into training programs make them more robust, help increase connectivity with workforce needs, and introduce students early to the work.

Wraparound supports: Programs that recognize and support students' and apprentices' needs help increase the breadth of students who can participate and complete programs.

Faculty that reflects the student body: There is a direct relationship between student success and a faculty that reflects student diversity.

Quality working conditions for faculty: Students benefit and build more supportive relationships with faculty when faculty have stronger working conditions, including full-time and reliable course loads, office hours, and appropriate space to meet with students. Programs also benefit when faculty and staff have meaningful input in their design and delivery.

APPENDIX II: ENGAGEMENT PHASE DETAIL

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 1: INITIAL DESIGN INPUT

The first phase of engagement consisted of five sessions (three with employer groups and two with labor representatives). These sessions introduced participants to Pell for Workforce, federal requirements, the governor's office timeline, and their role in shaping recommendations. Discussion was organized around four areas:

1. Guiding principles
2. Approval criteria
3. Process design
4. Enabling factors

Sessions used a combination of facilitated discussion, interactive polling, and open chat to elicit participant viewpoints.

Transcripts and detailed notes across all sessions were synthesized into two analyses (one focused on what employers shared, and another focused on what labor leaders shared). The themes and open questions raised during the initial design input phase helped surface areas of agreement across groups, as well as areas that would benefit from deeper exploration in the next phase. Syntheses from the initial design input were provided to the governor's office as an interim resource prior to recommendation development.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 2: DETAILED DESIGN CHOICE FEEDBACK

The second phase of engagement shifted from broad input to more focused deliberation. All participants from the first phase were invited to continue into phase 2.

WRT engaged its constituents in two meetings, with one focused on approval criteria (how programs should be evaluated for Pell for Workforce eligibility) and the other focused on process design (how the state should identify and validate in-demand occupations). WSLC engaged its constituents in a parallel session that explored both topics.

Questions and discussion topics in this phase were informed directly by findings in phase 1. For example, phase 1 surfaced agreement that state labor market data alone is insufficient for defining demand, leading to more specific exploration of weaknesses and new approaches in phase 2. In some cases, participants were asked to react to different process design models to help surface priorities and preferences.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 3: RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW

In the third phase, WRT and WSLC synthesized findings from the first two phases of engagement into a joint draft set of recommendations. The draft recommendations were shared with employer participants for asynchronous review and feedback via a structured survey, while labor participants primarily provided feedback via 1:1 emails and phone conversations. Participants were asked to pressure-test the substance of the recommendations, identifying areas of agreement, disagreement, and suggested changes. Feedback from this final round was incorporated into the final set of recommendations submitted to the Governor's office.

Tab 7b

Industry Engagement: Landscape Analysis

PRESENTED BY: Ingrid Stegemoeller, Director of Industry Engagement, Washington Roundtable and Partnership for Learning
Ashley Carter, Pathfinder Strategies

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Partnership for Learning, the education foundation of Washington Roundtable, contracted with Pathfinder Strategies to analyze the ways Washington's public education, training, and workforce systems engage employers—the requests they make, the input they seek, and the commitments they ask employers to take on. The Board will consider and discuss implications for how the agency engages with industry in the broader system context.

BACKGROUND

Washington's workforce development and career and technical education systems offer an abundance of opportunities for industry to participate—from providing information to engaging learners to co-designing programs and curriculum. This landscape analysis covers requests for input and participation that employers receive from the public workforce development system—including education and training providers—at the local, regional and state levels.

Developed in collaboration with partners across the state's workforce and education systems, this research catalogs more than 65 distinct types of touchpoints. This presentation will offer an overview of the research and initial observations about reimagining employer engagement. View the analysis: [WA Workforce Ecosystem Touchpoints with Employers](#).

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion only.

Question prompts:

1. What opportunities do you see as a result of the landscape analysis?
2. What are the best ways to work with industry partners to avoid duplication while also ensuring that training meets industry's skill needs?

Tab 7c

Industry Engagement: 2025 Industry Advisory Committee Input

PRESENTED BY: Emily Persky, Workforce Board

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Workforce Board Planning and Strategy Manager Emily Persky will present input from the Board's 2025 Industry Advisory Committee. The Board will consider and discuss implications for how the agency engages with industry in the broader system context. Note that industry refers to both business and labor.

BACKGROUND

The Washington Roundtable's landscape analysis for employers gives valuable context for considering input from the Board's 2025 Industry Advisory Committee (see Overview). The committee met six times in 2025 to give input on industry needs and develop high-level recommendations for its top three issue areas:

1. Economic and workforce development coordination
2. Cross-sector pathways for un/under-employed and dislocated workers
3. Funding, accessibility and sustainability of on-the-job training, including apprenticeship

The attached briefing memo includes recommendations, needs and next steps. Committee members had from June 10-17 to review and confirm or correct the memo. Two committee members will speak about their experience and be available to answer questions during the Board's discussion.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion only.

Guiding questions could include:

1. Which committee recommendations would you like to consider for 2027 legislative priorities?
2. What are your expectations for the agency's industry engagement strategies? For the system?
3. Is there anything you want to add or adjust to the list of options that staff will develop for the August Board meeting?
4. What more do you need to know?

Briefing memo: 2025 Industry Advisory Committee Input

June 2026

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Executive summary

This memo summarizes the Industry Advisory Committee's (IAC) input from May–November 2025 and presents the recommendations and needs committee members identified across their top three issue areas:

- Economic and workforce development coordination
- Cross-sector pathways for un/under-employed and dislocated workers
- Funding, accessibility, and sustainability of on-the-job training (OJT), including registered apprenticeship

Across six meetings, members emphasized three consistent themes:

- Importance of in-person engagement
- Value of cross-sector connection
- Desire for practical, actionable tools

Staff have validated this summary with committee members to ensure it accurately reflects discussions.

The memo also outlines high-level proposals for Board consideration in June and August 2026. These proposals translate committee recommendations into actionable system-level strategies, including:

- **Streamlined industry-engagement opportunities** such as joint forums and collaboration expectations for state partners
- **Frameworks to strengthen statewide and regional coordination** for industry engagement, pathways, and credential development
- **Improved coordination of employer outreach and communication** across state agencies
- **Industry-facing tools and resources** such as a statewide OJT/apprenticeship menu, a cross-sector pathways framework, and a system map

These proposals will be refined based on Board direction in June and developed into decision options for August.

Quotes included here are drawn from meeting notes and may be paraphrased for clarity. Staff used AI tools to help synthesize meeting materials and develop this memo. See the following *Overview* for more details about the IAC.

Background

The IAC was formed in May 2025 to strengthen alignment between Washington’s workforce system and industry needs. Over the summer, members identified system gaps and opportunities while developing a charter and workplan, which they adopted in October 2025. The committee met monthly, alternating between in-person and virtual meetings.

Across the six-meeting series, members consistently emphasized the value of cross-sector engagement:

- “This is how we do it—being in the same room matters.”
- “We’ve been so siloed. The tables coming together is powerful.”
- “Labor can be a resource—we’ve solved problems others are facing.”

By November, the committee had formed three workgroups aligned to the top issues identified through dot-voting and discussion. In early 2026, with new Board leadership and a transition in the executive director role, staff reassessed the feasibility of asking volunteer committee members to conduct research and assist with developing resources. Staff concluded that the committee already provided clear input.

Staff have synthesized the committee’s contributions in this memo for Board members to consider as they guide statewide coordination and industry-engagement strategies. With Board direction, staff will develop resources and proposals and validate them with industry representatives on an ongoing basis.

Economic and workforce development

Recommendations

1. Strengthen state-level coordination between economic and workforce development.
2. Create joint, cross-sector industry engagement forums.

1. Strengthen state-level coordination between economic development and workforce development partners. This was the committee’s top-ranked issue. Members emphasized the need for shared strategies, joint planning, and clearer roles across state agencies. While coordination occurs locally, members noted it is inconsistent statewide and asked for state-level support to “connect what’s already happening on the ground” and reduce duplication.

2. Create joint (business and labor), cross-sector industry engagement forums. Members expressed strong interest in structured opportunities for business and labor to engage with one another and with peers across sectors. They described the IAC itself as a model:

- “Relationship-building is invaluable.”

- “We need more spaces like this across sectors.”
- “We’re all dealing with the same challenges, but sectors are at different stages of engaging with the workforce development system. We can learn from each other.”

Needs

1. Clear points of contact and navigation support
2. Comprehensive framework for industry engagement

1. Clear points of contact and navigation support. Members repeatedly asked: *Who does what? How do employers and training providers navigate the system?* This need aligns with similar requests from state agency partners for the Workforce Board to help with guidance on how to coordinate referrals and program sequencing for job seekers (e.g. when to refer customers to specific programs, which program(s) to start with, etc.).

2. A comprehensive framework for industry engagement. Washington offers many entry points for industry engagement at the state and local levels. However, input often remains siloed within individual programs, agencies, and regions, limiting its reach and reducing opportunities for shared learning, coordinated follow-up, and improved service delivery.

Targeted cross-sector pathways

Recommendations

1. Develop clearer cross-sector pathways for workers affected by economic disruption.
2. Recognize and elevate essential workplace skills.
3. Improve youth exposure to careers.

1. Develop clearer cross-sector pathways for workers affected by economic disruption. Members emphasized the need to identify, at both the state and regional levels:

- Transferable skills for occupations experiencing layoffs, automation, or high turnover.
- Required skills and competencies for in-demand occupations.
- Pathways that build on transferable skills and do not require workers to “start over.”

Members highlighted the challenge for dislocated workers who “are always playing catch-up” and struggle to access training while meeting basic needs.

2. Focus on and recognize essential workplace skills (soft skills). Members suggested developing a cross-sector customer service credential to recognize essential skills gained in high-turnover industries. They noted potential benefits such as improved retention and broader recognition of the foundational skills people develop in customer service and hospitality roles.

One member observed that retail “is a training ground for all other sectors—this is where many people enter the workforce.”

3. Improve youth exposure to careers. Members recognize that youth have fewer opportunities for early work experience and exposure to different industries. They noted that youth would also benefit from a framework that recognizes transferable skills. They emphasized the need for:

- Stronger CTE connections.
- Awareness of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship prep programs.
- Cross-sector career exploration.

Needs

1. Data on disrupted and in-demand occupations.
2. Framework for recognizing transferable skills.
3. Clarity on credential transferability across industries.

1. Data on disrupted and in-demand occupations. Members asked for statewide and regional analysis to guide development of education and career pathways.

2. A framework for recognizing transferable skills, with a focus on disrupted and in-demand occupations. This would help industry as well as education and training providers find ways to accelerate pathways while still ensuring workers have necessary skills.

3. Clarity on how credentials translate across industries, with a focus on disrupted and in-demand occupations. Members asked: *How do we make industry-recognized credentials count the same way degrees do?* Areas for exploration include:

- Academic and industry-recognized credentials that could or should be transferable.
- How they transfer (e.g., fully satisfy requirements or only partially, and what additional steps are needed).

Clarity and support for on-the-job training

Recommendations

1. Expand access and awareness of funding for on-the-job training (OJT).
2. Develop a menu of OJT programs and funding options.
3. Support multi-sector adoption of registered apprenticeship.

1. Expand access and awareness of OJT funding. Members consistently cited limited employer awareness, complexity in accessing funds, and administrative burden on small

employers. They recommended improving communication and making OJT “less costly and cumbersome.”

2. Develop a menu of OJT programs and funding options. This was one of the clearest and most actionable recommendations. Members want a consolidated, industry-friendly list of:

- OJT programs
- Eligibility criteria
- Allowable uses
- Funding levels
- Opportunities to braid or blend funds

They emphasized the need for this from both business and labor perspectives.

3. Support multi-sector adoption of registered apprenticeship. Members surfaced a tension between:

- Maintaining high-quality, rigorous state-registered apprenticeship programs.
- Expanding state-registered apprenticeship to industries with different structures.

They asked for guidance on:

- When to use state-registered apprenticeship.
- When other work-based learning models are more appropriate.
- How to translate state-registered apprenticeship requirements to new or emerging industries.

Needs

1. Cross-agency guidance on OJT and registered apprenticeship.
2. Guidance on braiding funding.
3. Clear understanding of quality, sustainability, and return-on-investment.

1. Cross-agency guidance on OJT, including registered apprenticeship. Members want clearer guidance on:

- State-registered vs. federally registered apprenticeship
- OJT programs under WIOA
- Employer-funded OJT
- Sector-specific models for state-registered apprenticeship (e.g., healthcare, tech, creative economy)

2. Guidance on braiding funding. Members asked for examples of how employers can combine:

- Federal WIOA funds
- State training funds
- Registered apprenticeship incentives
- Federal grants
- Employer contributions

3. Clearer understanding of quality standards, sustainability, and return on investment.

This applies to both public OJT programs and self-funded models, such as state-registered apprenticeship programs in the building trades, which are funded by workers and employers. Additionally, sectors that are new to the workforce development system need information for their employers and workers about the benefits of different programs and funding opportunities.

Themes

Across all meetings, members emphasized three consistent themes:

- Importance of in-person engagement.
- Value of cross-sector connection.
- Desire for practical, actionable tools.

Importance of in-person engagement. While attending in-person meetings can be challenging, members repeatedly said these sessions created trust and understanding that virtual meetings could not. The in-person meetings were in Auburn and Olympia. These locations were within driving distance for most members and kept event costs low, but they also created a geographic disparity. This is an important consideration for future work.

Value of cross-sector connection. Members noted the rare opportunity to connect across sectors with both business and labor represented:

- “We’ve been so siloed.”
- “Hearing other industries’ struggles helps us see solutions.”
- “I’ve learned a lot from the sectors that already have strong workforce infrastructure...[our sector] is barely at the beginning of our journey here in Washington.”

Desire for practical, actionable tools. Members consistently asked for resources that help employers and workers navigate the system more easily. They also noted the importance of user testing for industry-facing resources. This is critical to improving customer experience for employers and industry stakeholders.

Next steps and decision points

Next steps

The next step is for the Board to determine which proposals staff should prioritize and how staff and partner agencies should develop and validate them with industry representatives. This approach honors the committee's time, aligns with the charter's commitment to transparency and shared decision-making, and positions the Board to act on well-developed proposals.

Implications for the Board

Across all three issue areas, the committee's recommendations point to several system-level decisions the Board will need to make:

- Direction on statewide industry-engagement strategies.
- Expectations for cross-agency coordination.
- Priorities for developing tools and resources for employers and workers.
- Guidance on data, pathways, and credential frameworks.
- Direction on OJT/registered apprenticeship communication, funding, and quality.

These decisions will shape the proposals staff bring forward in August.

June and August 2026 Board Meetings

June 2026: Discuss and shape. In June, staff will brief the Board on the committee's recommendations and needs and present high-level proposals. The Board will have an opportunity to:

- Discuss and refine proposed strategies.
- Request additional information or analysis.
- Add or adjust elements for development.

This meeting is intended to shape the options staff will develop for August.

August 2026: Decide and direct. In August, staff will present a decision brief with options for:

- Proposed industry-engagement strategies and resources.
- A validation process with industry representatives.

The Board will choose which strategies to advance and what staff should build.

Preliminary proposals

These proposals reflect the committee's recommendations and needs. Staff will refine them based on Board direction in June and partner input.

1. Streamlined industry engagement opportunities.
2. Frameworks to strengthen statewide and regional coordination.
3. Improved state-level coordination of employer outreach and communication.
4. Industry-facing tools and resources.

1. Streamlined industry-engagement opportunities

- Joint industry forums with partner agencies.
- Closer coordination between economic development, workforce development, and education/training partners.
- Targeted engagement for priority sectors and pathways.

2. Frameworks to strengthen statewide and regional coordination

- A framework for aligning state and regional industry-engagement activities.
- A framework for identifying occupations and coordinating development of cross-sector pathways and credentials for youth and adults.
- Improved access to information on disrupted and in-demand occupations.

3. Improved coordination of employer outreach, communication

- Clearer points of contact.
- Consistent messaging and follow-up.
- Shared expectations across state agencies.

4. Industry-facing tools and resources

- Statewide menu of OJT programs, including state- and federal-registered apprenticeships.
- Cross-sector pathways framework.
- System map with points of contact for different industry needs.

Validation Process

Industry review of proposals. Acting on Board guidance and after incorporating partner input, staff will share draft proposals with committee members ahead of the August Board meeting for

feedback. Proposals will reflect both industry perspectives and feedback from state and local partners. The purpose of this review is to ensure transparency, surface refinements, and confirm that proposals are workable from an industry standpoint—not to re-create consensus or revisit earlier recommendations.

Ongoing validation after Board decisions. Depending on the Board's choices, staff will propose strategies for confirming that implementation meets industry needs.

Overview

June 2026



2025 Industry Advisory Committee

The Workforce Board's 2025 Industry Advisory Committee was a forum where statewide business, labor, and professional association leaders shared insights to shape Washington's workforce.

Purpose

The 2025 Industry Advisory Committee's purpose was to:

- Advise the Workforce Board on workforce policies, programs, and system investments.
- Provide feedback on how implementation meets industry needs.
- Spark improvements that are innovative, practical, and mutually beneficial.

Priorities

The Workforce Board received the committee's input and recommendations in June 2026. The committee's top three issue areas were:

1. **Economic & workforce development coordination.**
2. **Cross-sector pathways** — with a focus on credentialing for essential workplace skills.
3. **Funding, accessibility & sustainability** of formal on-the-job training programs, including registered apprenticeship.

Benefits and early promise

Member feedback highlights the committee's value:

- **A supportive forum for business and labor** to identify common interests.
- **Cross-sector conversations** on career ladders, pathways, and transferable skills.
- **Shared learning about Washington's workforce system**, enriched by expert input from the Workforce Board and partner agencies.

Membership & Representation

More than 25 organizations participated, spanning healthcare, creative economy, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, technology, and education. The following organizations and associations sent a representative to at least one in-person meeting. Bolded organizations have sent a representative to multiple meetings.

AGC Education Foundation, Amalgamated Transit Union, Apprenti, BRIC Foundation, IAM 751, Impact Washington, LIUNA, Machinists Institute, Maritime Blue, Northwest Marine Trade Association, Pacific Northwest Aerospace Alliance, **SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training Fund, Technology Alliance,** United Auto Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers 367, **United Steelworks/National Oil Bargaining Program, WA Association of Community Health, WA Building Trades, WA Healthcare Association, WA State Medical Association, Washington Education Association, Washington Filmworks, Washington Hospitality Association, Washington Nightlife Music Association (WANMA), Washington Retail Services,** Washington State Dental Association (WSDA), **Washington State Labor Council, Wheelhouse.**

Background

- Conceived in [*Talent and Prosperity for All* \(TAP\)](#), Washington's strategic workforce plan.
- Formed May 2025; adopted charter and workplan October 2025.
- Met six times in 2025, monthly since May, alternating virtual and in-person.

Tab 8

Emerging Legislative Priorities for 2027

PRESENTED BY: Maddy Thompson and Nova Gattman, Workforce Board
Board Member Agencies and Organizations

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

This agenda item begins the Board's process for building the 2027 workforce system legislative agenda. Maddy Thompson, acting Executive Director, will present direction from the Governor's Office and OFM in relation to next session and Nova Gattman, Deputy Executive Director, will facilitate the presentations from business, labor, and agencies represented on the Board as well as other partners who will share their emerging priorities for the 2027 Legislative Session.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Board is charged in state law to coordinate and advocate on behalf of the state workforce system to meet the needs of employers and workers. This agenda item opens the process for creating a unified agenda for the workforce system for the 2027 Legislative Session by providing an opportunity for the Board to hear from business, labor, and agency representatives. This section will surface emerging ideas, and Board members can begin to identify topics for a collective agenda.

Following the presentations, Board staff will outline the process of developing a draft of a 2027 Washington's workforce system legislative agenda to recommend to the full Board at the August Board meeting. Between the June and August meetings, Board staff will convene the Board's Legislative Committee and meet with other partners to review the items presented, weigh emerging priorities, and develop a draft agenda for the full Board to consider in August. The goal is a limited list of items or themes that allow for effective advocacy and advancement of Washington's workforce development system to better meet the needs of workers, students and employers.

Presenters:

- Association of Washington Business: Morgan Irwin
- Washington State Labor Council: Cherika Carter
- Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council: Todd Mitchell
- Department of Commerce: Kairie Pierce
- Department of Social and Health Services: Pablo Villarreal
- Employment Security Department: Josh Dye
- Office of Equity: Megan Matthews
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: Mikhail Cherniske
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges: Arlen Harris
- Washington Student Achievement Council: Joel Anderson
- Washington Workforce Association: Amy Martinez
- Workforce Board: Maddy Thompson

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion. Board members are encouraged to engage actively with presenters by asking clarifying questions and sharing perspectives on where the workforce system's needs are greatest heading into 2027.

Key question: Which legislative priorities presented by business, labor, government agencies, and local workforce boards show promise to be added to a collective agenda for the workforce system?

Tab 9

Tab 9a

WorkSource System Policy 1015 – Procurement and Selection of One-Stop Operators and Service Providers: Policy Development Update

PRESENTED BY: Liz Gallagher, Workforce Board

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Staff will update the Board on development of WorkSource System Policy 1015, which outlines how local workforce areas select one-stop operators and service providers under WIOA. This update will summarize the purpose of the policy, highlight key decisions made by the Procurement Policy Workgroup on May 28, 2026, and review the expected timeline for finishing the policy. No Board action is needed at this time. This is an informational update before the final workgroup meeting on July 7, 2026. In August 2026, staff will bring the Board a proposed final draft of Policy 1015 for review and vote, grounded in federal compliance requirements and workgroup recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Washington is updating its policy governing how local boards select and deliver workforce services. The current policy does not accurately reflect processes that local workforce boards use to renew direct service provider requests, nor does it allow a pathway for local boards to request direct service provider status at the initial stage. Federal law requires State Workforce Board approval before a local workforce board can directly provide services, making this policy important for both compliance and good governance. Workforce Board staff are developing Policy 1015 with input from local workforce boards, Employment Security Department (ESD) monitoring staff, and other partners through a policy workgroup.

The new policy will:

- Create a clear and consistent application process for local workforce boards that want to provide services directly instead of hiring an outside contractor.
- Align with the state's existing Direct Service Provider (DSP) review process.
- Allow additional boards to apply for DSP status through a structured process.
- Tie DSP approval and renewal to results, fiscal responsibility, and continuous improvement rather than requiring procurement on a fixed schedule.
- Expand scope to include additional federal grants administered by ESD.
- Reduce duplicated procurement processes for boards that have already shown success.

The updated policy also:

- Clarifies one-stop operator procurement requirements.
- Explains the difference between directly providing services and managing service contracts.
- Maintains oversight through ESD monitoring and safeguards against conflicts of interest.

The Procurement Policy Workgroup has met to review the most recent draft of this policy and resolve remaining issues. During its May 28, 2026 meeting, the group confirmed broad agreement on Direct Service Provider renewal and application processes.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion only. Staff ask that Board members review the materials in this tab and the accompanying presentation slides and come prepared to ask questions about the policy framework, the key decisions reached in the May 28 workgroup session, and any aspects of the Direct Service Provider application process that may warrant Board discussion.

As a starting point, the Board could consider the following for discussion:

- **Does the performance-based Direct Service Provider (DSP) renewal framework strike the right balance?** The workgroup agreed that DSP renewals should be tied to performance outcomes, enrollment trends, fiscal utilization, and continuous improvement—rather than requiring periodic re-procurement. The state’s Workforce Board would retain authority to approve, provisionally approve, or reject renewals, and DSPs would be held to the same standards as contracted service providers. Does the Board agree this is the right level of rigor, or are there conditions or safeguards the Board wants to strengthen before the policy comes to a vote in August?
- **Is the initial DSP application process appropriately rigorous?** The workgroup intentionally kept the initial application comprehensive—requiring evidence of operational expertise, staffing capacity, compliance systems, and service delivery planning—to demonstrate that the local board is the best provider option. The policy also provides tailored technical assistance to newly approved DSPs, calibrated to risk. Is this the right threshold, or does the Board see elements that are either too burdensome for well-prepared boards or insufficiently rigorous to protect program integrity?
- **How should the policy handle federal grants that ESD distributes to local areas in addition to WIOA Title I-B formula funds?** The workgroup discussed whether local areas that have already completed procurement or received DSP approval for formula funds could use that same approval for other related federal funding streams, rather than requiring duplicative procurement for each funding source. This approach is still under development. Does the Board support this approach in principle, and are there guardrails or conditions it would like staff to build in before the policy is finalized?

Staff aim to return to the Board at the August 2026 meeting with the final draft of Policy 1015 and associated attachments for review and vote. The next Procurement Policy Workgroup meeting is scheduled for July 7, 2026, after which staff anticipate having a complete draft ready for Board consideration.

Tab 9b

Local Workforce Development Board Certification – Results of the 2026 Certification Review

PRESENTED BY: Liz Gallagher, Workforce Board

CHECK ONE: ☒ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☐ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Workforce Board staff Liz Gallagher will present the results of the 2026 review of all 12 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) Certification submissions. The presentation covers statewide trends, findings, and recommendations. The Board will vote to certify each local board, meeting the biennial certification requirement ahead of the June 30th deadline. Staff will review their recommendations for certification, including provisional recommendation for some while they continue working toward full compliance.

BACKGROUND

Section 107 of WIOA requires the Governor to certify one LWDB for each workforce area in Washington every two years. The Governor has assigned the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to manage the certification process.

Local boards help job seekers and workers gain skills, find jobs, and advance their careers—while helping employers build the skilled workforce they need. In each of Washington’s 12 workforce development areas, local boards lead by setting regional strategies, supporting sector partnerships, and overseeing WorkSource services delivered through centers, community sites, and virtual options across their regions. They bring together employers, education and training providers, labor, economic development organizations, and community partners to align services, reduce barriers, and expand access to economic opportunity.

In April 2026, the Workforce Board approved an updated certification process in WorkSource System Policy 1040. Staff used the new process to review all 12 local workforce board’s composition and oversight practices to determine whether they meet federal and state requirements.

Staff will present statewide trends and findings from the reviews and explain how those findings informed certification recommendations. The 2026 review evaluated whether each board is effectively leading workforce development—serving job seekers and employers, setting strategy, governing responsibly, and building a well-integrated local system. It covered:

- Board membership, governance, and transparency
- Oversight of workforce programs and funding
- WorkSource certification
- Selection of service providers
- Equal opportunity compliance
- Performance outcomes
- Employer engagement

- Career pathway development
- Coordination with partners and stakeholders
- Leveraging resources and funding
- Labor market analysis
- Technology and system improvement efforts

Statewide Findings Highlights

- **Labor market analysis was a consistent strength:** Every board conducted thorough, multi-sourced regional economic analyses grounded in Employment Security Department, U.S. Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and real-time labor market data to direct training investments.
- **All boards conducted stakeholder engagement and 30-day public comment periods** consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), and documented broad partnership with employers, education providers, labor, economic development, and community organizations.
- **Board composition is fundamentally sound system-wide, with the business majority intact or structurally provided for all 12 boards.** Full certification was recommended for boards whose only gaps were recent, single-cycle vacancies being actively filled through a documented local nomination process.
- **Member mis-categorization and nomination-source documentation are the leading documentation findings.** Recurring patterns include business seats nominated by the board or its executive committee rather than by a business organization as required in federal law (e.g., a Chamber of Commerce) and certification attachments that omit Chief Local Elected Official approval names/dates or the small-business indicator. For most boards these are correctable documentation issues rather than substantive composition failures; staff have requested clarifications and reconciliation between board attachments, signed rosters, and public websites where counts differ.
- **Long-term vacancies—those extending beyond a single monitoring cycle—are the dividing line for provisional certification.** The recommendations for provisionally certified boards each carry composition or mis-categorization issues that persist across cycles. These are conditions targeted for resolution by the June 2027 cycle.
- **Non-federal funds leverage is a system-wide strength,** with boards documenting employer co-investment, state grants, economic development partnerships, and philanthropic funding—though most plans lack dollar-level specificity that would further demonstrate impact.
- **Federal financial reporting (ETA-9130) is a system-wide strength:** 9 of the 12 boards submitted accurate, on-time reports. The three exceptions were isolated or already corrected and none rose to a disallowed-cost or willful-disregard determination. ESD Grant Accounting technical assistance was the consistent corrective mechanism, and the cycle-over-cycle trend is toward resolution.
- **Where financial reporting issues exist, they correlate with the lower certification tiers,** but composition—not finance—is the binding constraint for provisional certification.
- **ESD Workforce Monitoring confirms sustained fiscal integrity across the system.** All 12 boards have a current Chief Local Elected Official–approved budget on file. Disallowed costs identified in the most recent (PY 2024 and PY 2025) monitoring reviews were limited in number, almost entirely programmatic (participant-file and eligibility documentation rather than fiscal/administrative), and resolved within the post-monitoring resolution period.

- **Recurring participant-data and MIS accuracy is the principal monitoring concern** Where boards applied targeted subrecipient monitoring and technical assistance, data quality measurably improved—reinforcing data quality as the system-wide watch item already noted in connection with the WA Works transition.
- **Board vacancies were common at the time of monitoring but are mostly recent, business-category seats under active recruitment.** Per ESD Monitoring, 10 of the 12 boards had at least one unfilled required seat at their monitoring exit.
- **One-stop center certification and provider procurement are broadly compliant**, with isolated and mostly resolved items. One-stop centers are generally on the required three-year recertification cycle.
- **Equal Opportunity compliance is the cleanest area of the review: no EO findings at any of the 12 boards.** The ESD Equal Opportunity Office's most recent reviews—dated between April 2025 and May 2026—identified no Equal Opportunity (nondiscrimination) findings for any board or its programs, and no corrective action plans were required anywhere in the system.
- **Local plans describe employer engagement activities but rarely quantify outcomes—** such as number of employers served, On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training contracts executed, or job seekers placed—making it difficult to measure the impact of business services work. This is a recurring improvement opportunity for the local boards.
- **All 12 boards are participating in the statewide case management system transition** and have expanded virtual and digital services to improve access for job seekers across their regions.
- **PY 2024 Local Area federal performance is split: six boards met all sanctionable thresholds; six received formal failure notices.** Measurable Skill Gains in the Youth program is the dominant local area failure. Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are broadly strong. Credential Attainment is an emerging watch area. The Workforce Board staff and ESD are coordinating on technical assistance, with data quality and the WA Works transition identified as likely contributing factors.

Local Board Certification Summaries can be found here:

[Olympic](#)
[PacMtn](#)
[Northwest](#)
[Snohomish](#)
[SeaKing](#)
[Pierce](#)
[Workforce Southwest Washington](#)
[SkillSource](#)
[South Central](#)
[Eastern](#)
[Benton-Franklin](#)
[Spokane](#)

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

Action Item: Workforce Board staff will provide a final staff recommendation no later than Tuesday, June 23 for both full and provisional certification with supporting documentation to allow for a vote at the June 26 Board meeting.

Tab 10

Future Board Agenda Planning

PRESENTED BY: Maddy Thompson, Acting Executive Director, Workforce Board

CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY:

Workforce Board acting Executive Director, Maddy Thompson, will present agenda topics for the purposes of planning future meetings of the Board, and to ensure that the Board's policy development, planning, advocacy, research and oversight responsibilities are executed.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Board is charged in state and federal law to develop policies and conduct planning for the workforce system; coordinate entities within the workforce system to increase alignment and improve policies and programs; and conduct research and review the performance of state workforce programs. Workforce Board members make key decisions on priorities to recommend to policymakers and partners, review state and local performance, and provide guidance to the Board and system partners. Key topics that require Board oversight through guidance and votes include:

- Development of the state strategic plan for workforce development
- WIOA and Perkins plans and reviews of performance
- Developing legislative priorities for the state's workforce system
- Local workforce board policies related to recertification and performance

Proposed agenda topics for August Board meeting

Board decisions required:

- Industry priorities for Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) state strategic workforce plan
- Develop a legislative agenda for 2027
- Review Governor's process for approving programs for the purposes of Workforce Pell
- Local board policies

For Board Review

- Workforce Training Results: - Choose program spotlight e.g. Apprenticeship
- Update on the Jobs Challenge Grant (Washington Student Achievement Council)
- The Community Reinvestment Program – Results and Implementation/Local collaborations

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION:

For Board discussion and to provide guidance to the staff in developing the August agenda, and a broad plan for agenda items for the remainder of 2026.