WTECB PRESENTATION

Building Workforce Systems Through Employer Engagement

SkillSource Regional Workforce Board

Serving North Central Washington
and the Columbia Basin

Today's careers require better skills. **We help you build them.**

SkillSource provides **training and learning opportunities** in North Central Washington to help **residents** of all ages **build new careers** and help **businesses develop strong teams.**

North Central Workforce Area

- From the Cascade crest, east to the Columbia Basin, its 14,612 square miles make it one of the State's **largest workforce areas**. As of 2026 it is home to over 295,000 residents, over 137,000 of whom are in the active labor force. **Nearly 13,500 employers** are based in North Central Washington as well.

- **KEY INDUSTRIES:**
  - Agriculture & Food Production
  - Technology
  - Advanced Manufacturing
  - Energy
  - Care Economy
  - Infrastructure
  - Professional and Personal Services

1 to 4 employees	42.70%	5,668	42.70%
5 to 9 employees	26.50%	3,516	69.20%
10 to 19 employees	18.50%	2,451	87.70%
20 to 49 employees	9.00%	1,197	96.70%
50 to 99 employees	2.30%	310	99.00%
100 to 249 employees	0.80%	100	99.80%
250 to 499 employees	0.30%	35	100.10%
500+ employees	0.00%	6	100.10%
		13,283	

PY24 RESULTS

Outcomes

86.8%

Adult 2nd Quarter employment

87.0%

Dislocated 2nd Quarter employment

*"No single strategy explains these outcomes, but we believe they reflect the value of remaining closely **connected to employers** and intentionally **investing in training**."*

Notable: North Central WDC
Funded 34% of statewide OJTs and 43% of IWT in PY22–23 — highest in the state.

*North Central's average share of the state's federal formula allocation is approximately **5.5%***

Overview of Input & Impact

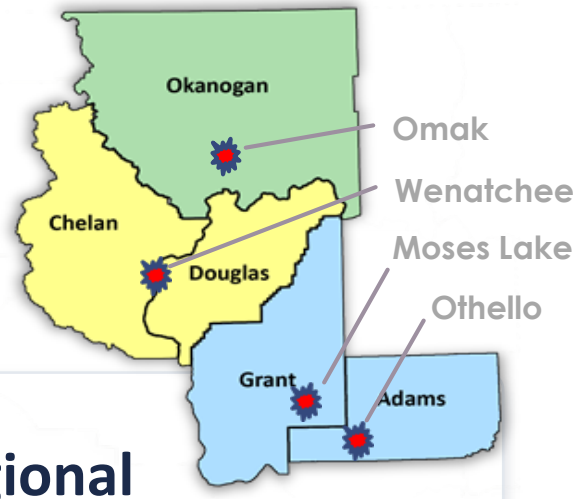
(Program Year '25)

- **1595 Total Career Seekers served through multiple program/funding streams.**
  - **528: Individuals Trained** (@ed institutions, on-the-job, apprenticeship)
    240: Post Secondary Ed/Training (CC, Trade Schools, Apprenticeship)
    288: Trained on-the-job (at local businesses through OJT, IWT, WEX)
  - **378: Basic Education Students (Open Doors/ HS/GED)**
  - **155: Pre-Employment Transition: Students with Disabilities (DVR)**
  - **121: Employee training (incumbents) at local businesses**

OUTCOMES: 87% Employment Rate, 81-95% Credential Rate, $11,700 median qtr wages

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Rural Context of North Central Washington



- Nearly 15,000 square miles
- Diverse regional economies
- Few formal training providers
- Significant travel distances

How do you build workforce capacity where traditional training models don't always fit?

Through partnerships and intentional investment.

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING INVESTMENT

Governance Drives Investment Decisions

*Borrowing from the **Carver model**, our Board regularly asks:*

1

Who benefits?

2

From what services?

3

At what cost?

These questions guide annual discussions about training investments and priorities.

Making informed investments

~ ~ ~

Three Training Models. One Workforce Strategy

Training Methods

Three Models that Make a Difference

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

Building Confidence, Improving Care

The owners of Welcome Home Care, Kellie Davies and Savannah Knowlton, learned about IWT when at the 2025 Okanogan Career and Resource Fair. They learned that IWT provides new skills for existing workers at a cost-savings to the business, which aligned with a need for staff development at Welcome Home Care. 16 of their employees earned CPR certifications, walking away with new, transferable skills, plus increased confidence, a renewed sense of purpose, and readiness to take on greater responsibility in their roles.

Occupational Skills Training (ITA)

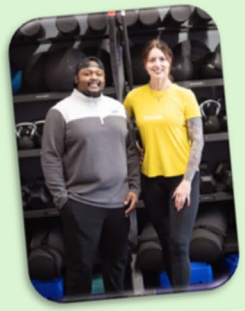
Building a Nursing Career

After earning acceptance into the nursing track at Big Bend Community College, Victor took on the full weight of nursing coursework and clinical training while managing real-world expenses. That's where coordinated support mattered. While in training, Victor accessed education-related financial assistance through SkillSource to supplement his financial aid. Victor now works as a Registered Nurse at Kadlec Regional Medical Center and continues building credentials as a Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at Wenatchee Valley College.

On-The-Job Training (OJT)

For the Long Run

When Vito and his wife relocated to Othello, he felt a calling toward a different kind of hands-on community impact. Through a CareerScope assessment at the SkillSource Career Center in Othello, Vito discovered that a career in fitness was a professional match for his natural talents. Jitka Garza, owner of Anytime Fitness in Othello, said, "I was in need of a new coach and went to a hiring event in Moses Lake. SkillSource really stepped in and made the necessary job training happen for us." This partnership offset the initial onboarding and training costs, allowing Jitka to invest deeply in Vito's development as a Coach and fitness instructor.



Three Stories. Three Different Types of Training. Three Great Successes.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

Upskilling the existing workforce to prevent layoffs and increase profitability

37 Local businesses served

242 Employees Trained

$137K in Training Costs Reimbursed

Sample: IWT Trainings

- Certified Financial Planner
- Surgical Tech
- Lean Manufacturing
- Forklift Certification
- Auto Glass Technician
- Advanced Dementia Training
- CDL
- First Aid/CRP/AED
- QuickBooks Certification

On-The-Job Training (OJT)

Working with businesses and new hires to create successful career starts

47 Employers served

87 Employees Trained

$278K Employee Wages Reimbursed

OJT Occupational Clusters/Wages

Occ. Field	Avg	High	Low
Healthcare	21.24	$25.00	$16.28
Clerical/Admin	19.86	$25.00	$16.66
Education	21.55	$21.55	$21.55
Industrial/Construction	23.93	$39.21	$16.66
IT/Technical	17.91	$22.71	$16.28
Managerial	23.50	$25.00	$22.00
Personal Services	17.50	$20.00	$16.66
Retail/Food Service	18.09	$25.00	$16.28

Occupational Skills Training (ITA)

Facilitating success in formal classroom training for credentials employers want

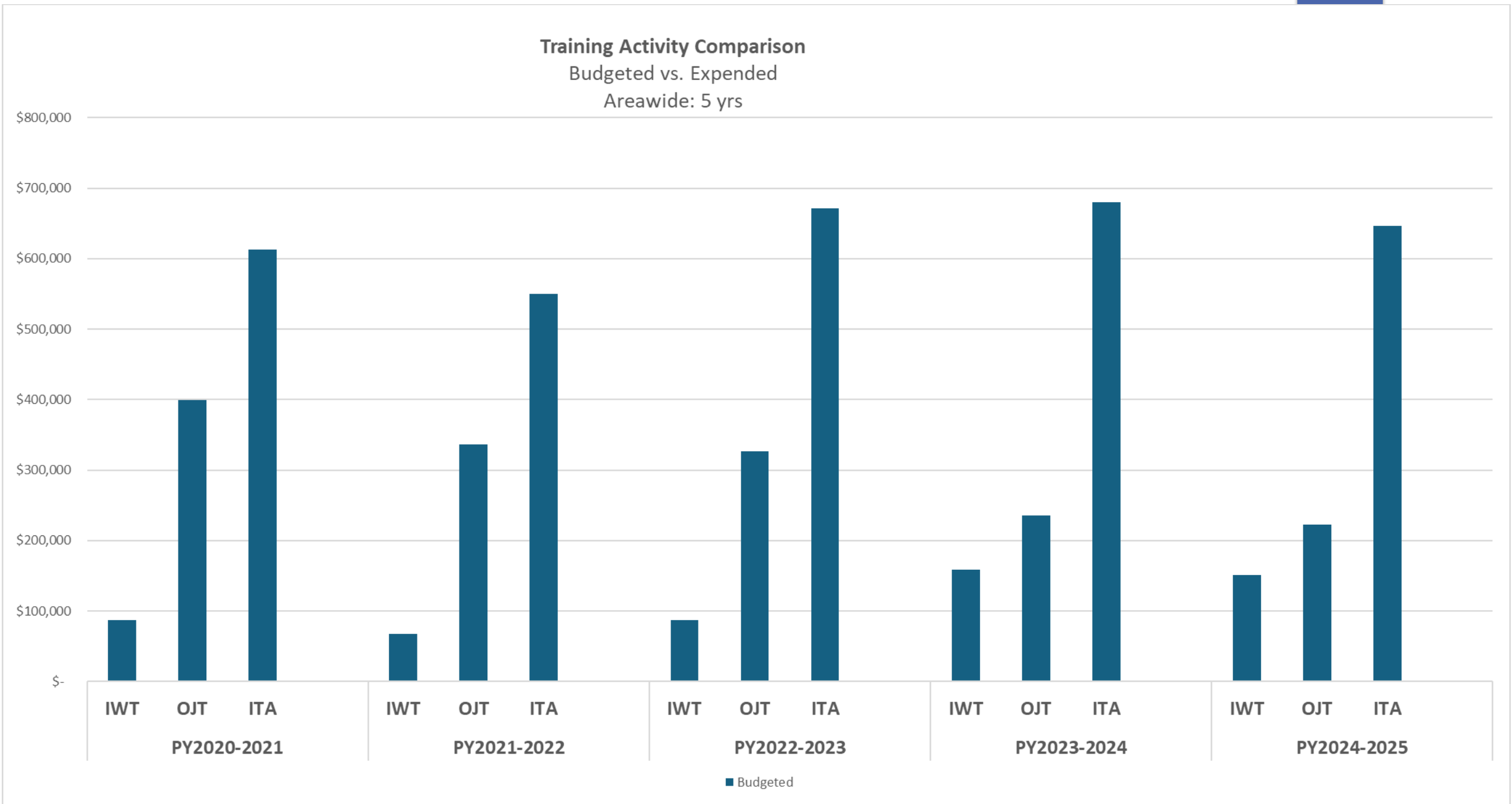
Tuition Funded (2 yr)

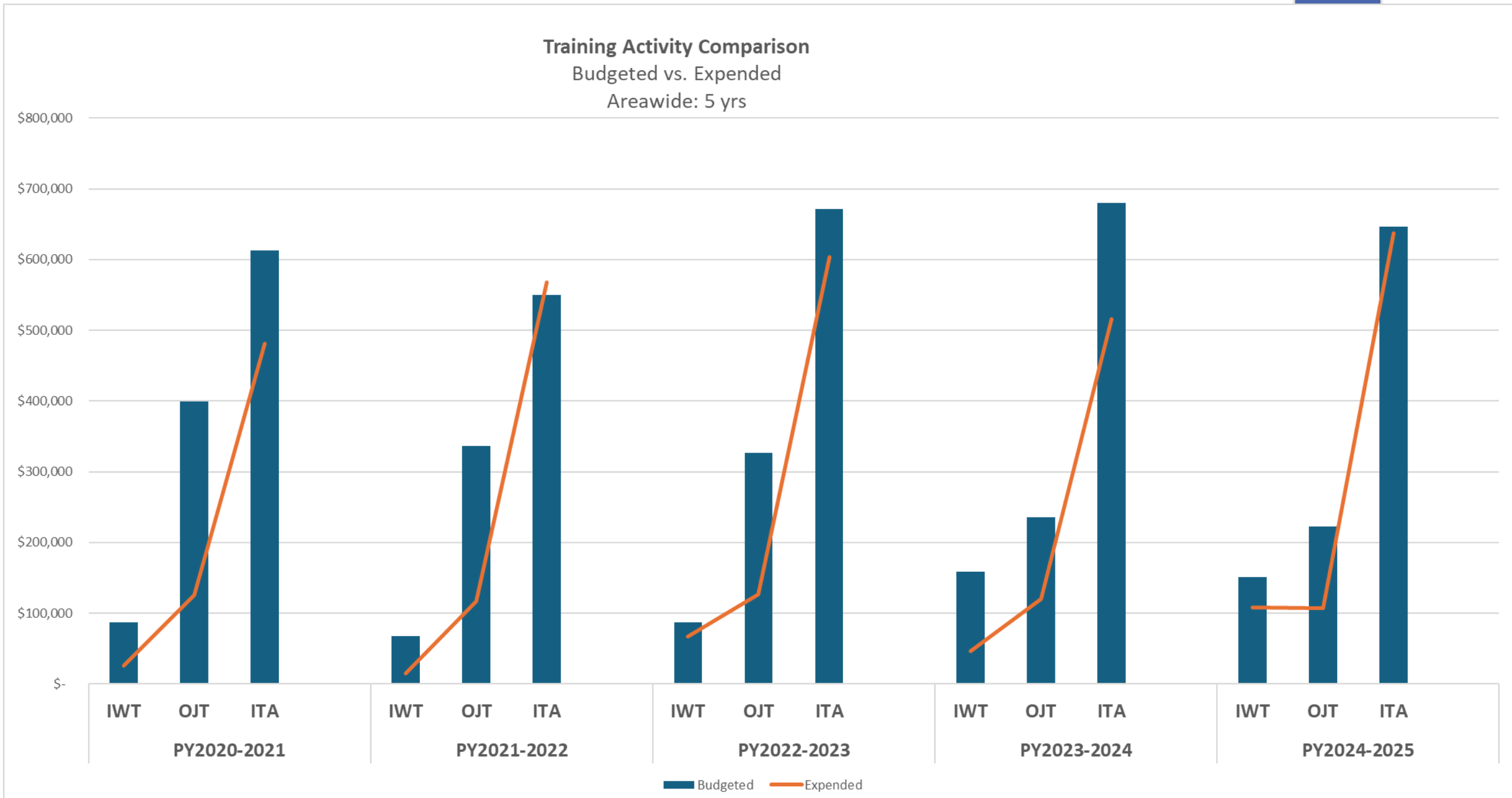
WVC	$247,320
BBCC	$228,515
Other	$616,218
TOTAL	$1,092,053

Trained by Occupational Cluster last 2 years

Occ. Field	# trained
Clerical/Administrative Occupations	6
Education Occupations	5
Healthcare Occupations	83
Industrial/Manufacturing/Skilled Occupations	162
IT/Technical Occupations	10
Managerial Occupations	2
Personal Service Occupations	8
Total	276

All three remain important components of the strategy.


Training Activity Comparison
Budgeted vs. Expended
Areawide: 5 yrs
$800,000
$700,000
$600,000
$500,000
$400,000
$300,000
$200,000
$100,000
$-
IWT
OJT
ITA
PY2020-2021
PY2021-2022
PY2022-2023
PY2023-2024
PY2024-2025
Budgeted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PY2020-2021
PY2021-2022
PY2022-2023
PY2023-2024
PY2024-2025
Budgeted
Expended

GOVERNANCE & TRAINING INVESTMENT

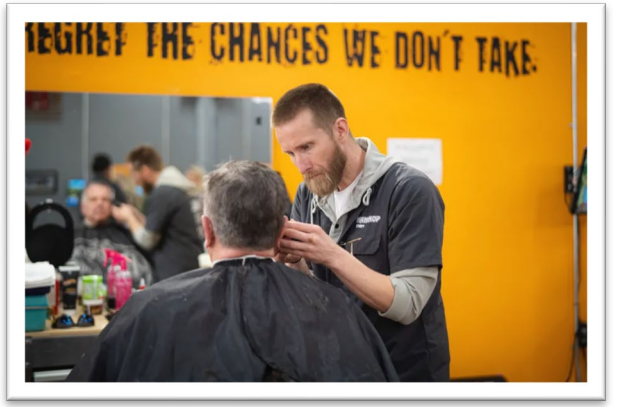
Our Investments Reflect Our Priorities (5 yr)

IWT $262K

OJT $598K

ITA $2.8M

1. These investments aren't accidental.
2. The Board intentionally sets annual targets.
3. Staff retain flexibility to respond to changing labor market conditions.



GOVERNANCE & TRAINING INVESTMENT

Why We Invest Heavily in Work-Based Training

Regional Realities

Changing workforce conditions

- Fewer dislocated workers
- Employers struggling to find skilled workers
- Needing customized solutions
- More people need to earn while learning

Limited training capacity

- Fewer formal training providers
- Limited program availability
- Geographic barriers

Our Response

- **IWT to upskill existing workforce**
- **OJT to develop new talent**
- **INTERNSHIPS to build future talent pipelines**

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT & WORK-BASED TRAINING

The Partnership Infrastructure Behind the Results

SkillSource doesn't do this alone.

Who sits at the table?

- Employers
- Community colleges
- Vocational schools
- Economic Development orgs
- WorkSource partners
- Industry stakeholders

How we organize internally

- Dedicated multi-partner business services teams (3 teams/sub-regions)
- Cross-program coordination
- Flexible funding strategies
- Rapid response to employer

The investment is important, but the relationships are what make it work.

EMPLOYER STORIES

What This Looks Like In Practice

Health Care: *Welcome Home Care*

WELCOME HOME
NON-MEDICAL IN-HOME CARE

Manufacturing: *Diamond Foundry*

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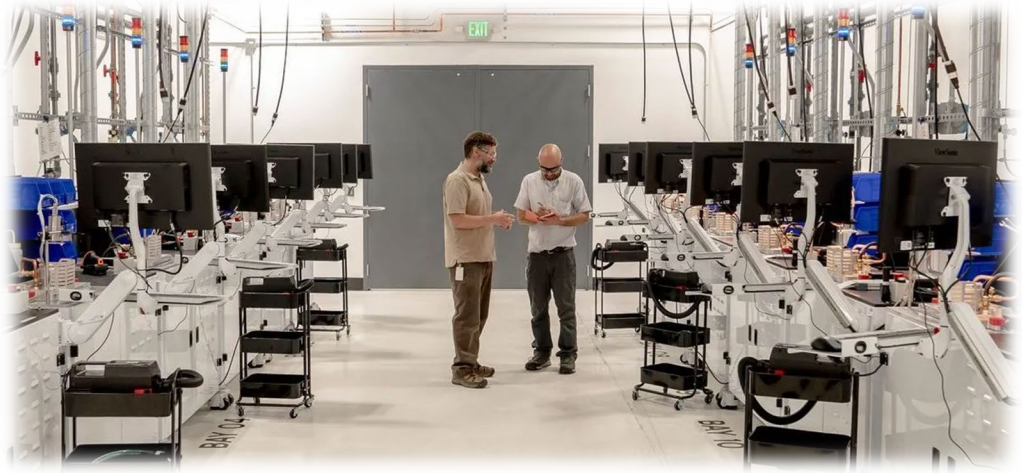


Pause for Questions?

SYSTEM BUILDING BEYOND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

The same partnership philosophy that guides our employer engagement efforts also influences how we approach youth career development.

YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

Youth Partnerships in Action

Partners

- ✓ OSPI Open Doors
- ✓ WIOA Title I Youth
- ✓ DVR Pre-ETS

What Partnerships Make Possible

- High School Completion
- Career exploration
- Job tours & shadows
- Work readiness
- Self-advocacy
- Paid work experiences

615 youth placements in paid work experiences since 2020

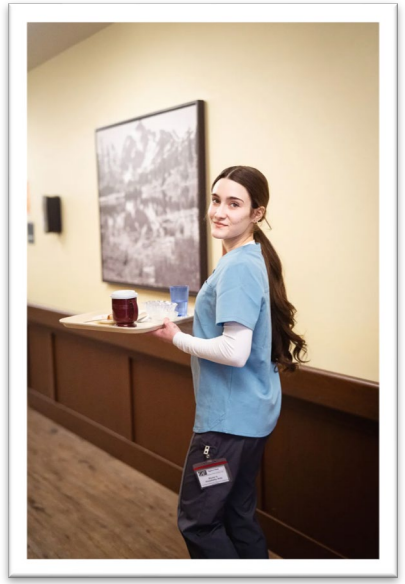
250+ youth earned their HS or Equivalent through OD since 2020

YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

Braiding, Leveraging, Building

1. **Braided Funding**
2. **Education**
3. **Mentoring**
4. **Work Experience**
5. **Employment or Adv Training/Ed**

Funding, education, mentoring, and work experience are braided to maximize success!



SUCCESS STORY

One Youth Story: Monse's Journey

A Pre-ETS paid work experience opened the door to a career in youth arts, braided funding continued to support her career development

- Monse joined CAFÉ, a Wenatchee youth-development nonprofit, as a **Teacher Aide through Pre-ETS**
- Her **SkillSource Career Trainer and CAFÉ mentors coached** her through tutoring, daily operations, family communication, and **graduation at Westside High School.**
- Experience led to a **paid, permanent role as CAFÉ's Youth Art & Program Assistant** after completing a WIOA Title I funded Work Experience.
- **Monse designed and painted the mural** now welcoming visitors at CAFÉ's new building

Success Story: The Art of Getting to Work

SUCCESS STORY

One Youth Story: Danny's Journey

Preparation and paid work experiences created a pathway from career exploration to permanent employment.

- **Danny enrolled in Pre-ETS**, participating in work-readiness workshops and employer job tours to explore career opportunities.

- SkillSource connected Danny with **Central Machinery Sales in Moses Lake**, where he made a strong impression and began his first **paid work experience in summer 2023**.

- Danny's reliability, enthusiasm, and willingness to take on any task impressed his employer. He returned for a **second paid work experience in summer 2024**.

- Those experiences led to **permanent employment with Central Machinery Sales** after high school. His supervisor summed it up: *"We will have Danny for as long as he is willing to work for us."*

Success Story: Gift of Good Work

FOUR THINGS WORKFORCE BOARDS DO WELL

Convene. **Align.** **Invest.** **Build.**

Our experience in North Central Washington has taught us that work-based training is far more than a participant service — it is one of the **most effective employer engagement strategies available** to local workforce boards. Guided by intentional governance and strengthened through partnerships, these investments become a powerful tool for building long-term regional workforce capacity.

THANK YOU!

Lisa Romine, CEO

Mayra Garcia, Business Solutions Manager

www.skillsource.org