Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

PIERCE COUNTY SKILLS CENTER
16117 CANYON RD. E.
RAINIER BUILDING
PUYALLUP, WA 98375

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BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, October 28, 2026 **MEETING NO. 285**

9:00 a.m.	**Call to Order** Welcome and Roll Call	
9:05 a.m.	**Chairs Report (ACTION)** Consent Agenda Minutes from August 26 Board Meeting State and WIOA Policy Updates Issued Since August 26 2027 Workforce Board Meeting Dates	**Tab 1**
9:10 a.m.	**Executive Director Report**	**Tab 2**
9:25 a.m.	**Pierce County Skills Center Student and Industry Panel**	**Tab 3**
10:25 a.m.	**Break**	
10:35 a.m.	**Performance Review: Workforce Program Participant Survey**	**Tab 4**
11:05 a.m.	**Good Jobs Challenge Grant Results – Washington Jobs Initiative**	**Tab 5**
11:25 a.m.	**WA Building and Construction Trade Council's Initiative "Construct a Career"**	**Tab 6**
12:00 p.m.	**Lunch provided by the Pierce County Skills Center Culinary Department and Students**	
12:30 p.m.	**Pierce County Skills Center Tour**	**Tab 7**
1:15 p.m.	**Public Comment** Please sign up via email at workforce@wtb.wa.gov by 9 a.m. on October 27.	
1:25 p.m.	**Legislative Update**	**Tab 8**
2:30 p.m.	**Performance Review: Performance Dashboard**	**Tab 9**
3:00 p.m.	**Adjourn**	

PLEASE NOTE: Times above are estimates only. The Workforce Board reserves the right to alter the order and content of the agenda. For information regarding testimony, handouts, other questions, or for people needing special accommodation, please contact Michelle Pierce at michelle.pierce@wtb.wa.gov.

Tab 1

Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 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 August 26 Board meeting
- State and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) policy updates issued since August 26
- Draft 2027 Workforce Board meeting dates

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.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

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

MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 284
August 26, 2026

Board Members Present:
Morgan Irwin, Co-Chair
April Sims, Co-Chair
Wade Larson, Representing Business
Todd Mitchell, Representing Labor
Cherika Carter, Representing Labor
Yolanda King-Lowe for Jane Hopkins, Representing Labor
Interim Commissioner Martin McMurry, Employment Security Department
Marie Bruin for Director Nate Humphrey, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Becky Wallace for Superintendent Chris Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Amy Martinez, Chief Executive Officer, Workforce Southwest Washington, Representing Local Elected Officials
Pablo Villarreal for Secretary Angela Ramirez, Department of Social and Health Services
Kairie Pierce for Interim Director Sarah Clifthorne, Department of Commerce

Call to Order
Co-Chair Morgan Irwin called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The meeting was a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom.

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

MOTION-2025-284-01
A motion was made by Todd Mitchell to approve the consent agenda. Wade Larson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report
Maddy Thompson, Workforce Board Acting Executive Director, provided an update on the Board's recent activities, partnerships, and emerging workforce priorities. During July and August, she noted Workforce Board staff had participated in several state and national conferences focused on apprenticeship support, responsible artificial intelligence adoption, career and technical education, work-based learning, and strengthening employer engagement. These discussions aligned with the Board's current strategic priorities and draft legislative agenda. Thompson spoke of a new scholarship from the Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists that was established in honor of John Murray, former Workforce Board

staff, recognizing outstanding leadership in veterans education. Thompson also introduced the Washington team working with Safal Partners, and funded by Ascendium, which brings together state agencies, workforce organizations, and education partners to strengthen connections among education, workforce development, and economic development.

The Board received conditional approval of Washington's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan from the U.S. Department of Labor, with remaining corrections from DVR due September 30. She further noted staff are coordinating with state agencies and local workforce boards to prepare for new federal food assistance (SNAP) and Medicaid work requirements and help individuals understand changing eligibility requirements.

Thompson wrapped up with a brief update about work completed by Workforce Board staff to support a regular four-year accountability audit by the State Auditor's Office.

Workforce Pell Pilot Application

Patricia Loera, Senior Policy Advisor for Governor Ferguson's Office, opened the discussion on the Workforce Pell Pilot Application, introducing the Cross-Agency Steering Committee online and a brief overview of the work completed.

Ahnna Smith, of Education Strategy Group, presented the proposed Workforce Pell Pilot Initial Program Eligibility Application, developed by the Governor's Cross-Agency Steering Committee. The Workforce Pell program expands federal Pell Grant funding to eligible students pursuing short-term workforce training programs, creating new opportunities for workers to gain credentials, advance their careers, and meet employer demands. Washington's approach builds on existing state agency infrastructure, data systems, and partnerships to establish an efficient application and approval process.

Under the proposed process, eligible institutions must already qualify for federal Title IV financial aid funding and offer programs that meet federal Workforce Pell requirements. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Workforce Board, and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) will verify applications based on their respective oversight responsibilities. WSAC will serve as the central application point, with the Cross-Agency Steering Committee reviewing applications and making recommendations for final approval by the Governor. Approved institutions will then apply to the U.S. Department of Education for federal program eligibility. The Workforce Board will also ensure approved programs are listed and flagged for Workforce Pell eligibility on Career Bridge and help monitor employment, wage, and credential attainment outcomes to maintain program eligibility.

The initial pilot will use an approved list of 123 occupations based on existing state workforce data and labor market demand. The application process was expected to begin in September 2026, with state reviews and approvals taking place in the fall. Federal approvals could then allow students to access funding by summer or fall 2027. A second application cycle is anticipated in early 2027 to allow additional institutions to participate.

Smith emphasized that the pilot builds on Washington's existing workforce and education systems but will require ongoing evaluation and improvements. Although no additional federal funding was provided to administer the process, participating agencies are incorporating the work into existing responsibilities. The Workforce Board is expected to remain involved throughout the pilot year, helping evaluate implementation, identify opportunities to streamline processes, and ensure programs lead to meaningful employment and wage outcomes.

MOTION-2025-284-02
A motion was made by Cherika Carter to affirm the direction of Washington's Workforce Pell pilot application and approval process and support the Board's role in its development and implementation – including agency verification, participation in the Cross-Agency Steering Committee, Career Bridge integration, and outcomes reporting and oversight. Marie Bruin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Governor's Economic Development Council Update
Co-chairs Sims and Irwin provided an update on the Governor's Economic Development Council, established in June 2026 to develop a statewide economic strategic plan by June 2027. The council brings together business, labor, education, workforce development, and tribal leaders to expand family-wage jobs, improve economic competitiveness, attract businesses, and reduce regulatory barriers. The leadership group establishes priorities, while the staff group develops specific, actionable recommendations for executive orders or legislation to streamline regulations, improve permitting timelines, and accelerate workforce development. Members emphasized the importance of stakeholder input and encouraged sharing practical solutions to improve services and strengthen the business environment. Despite continued GDP growth, rising unemployment suggests economic gains are unevenly distributed across industries and communities. The co-chairs expressed optimism about the council's collaborative approach and its potential to advance policies that broaden economic opportunity and strengthen Washington's economy for all residents.

Workforce and Higher Education Study
Martin McMurry, Interim Commissioner of Employment Security Department (ESD) provided an update on the Workforce and Higher Education Study, directed by legislative proviso and led by the Governor's Office, with ESD providing administrative support. Kinetic West, a Seattle-based consulting firm, was selected to conduct the study, which will follow two tracks: an analysis of Washington's current higher education and workforce development systems, including investments, outcomes, talent needs, and national best practices; and stakeholder engagement with businesses, labor, educational institutions, workforce boards, and industry associations. The study will develop practical policy recommendations to increase the number of Washingtonians earning degrees and credentials, accessing family-wage jobs, and achieving economic mobility. Initial deliverables are expected by the end of November, with a tight timeline for completion.

Legislative Agenda

Nova Gattman, Workforce Board Deputy and Legislative Director, presented the Board's draft 2027 legislative agenda for the workforce development system, developed collaboratively with Workforce Board members and partners, including the Legislative Oversight Committee. Gattman noted the agenda identifies four priority areas: preparing youth for career and postsecondary success; supporting vulnerable populations in securing good jobs; building workforce system capacity, including streamlining labor and business engagement; and monitoring and advising on artificial intelligence's impacts on education, training, and the workplace. Gattman emphasized that the agenda reflects Washington's challenging budget environment and prioritizes retaining existing investments that support workforce development and upskilling rather than requesting additional funding. The draft incorporates feedback from the June Board meeting, partner discussions, a broader task team, and Legislative Oversight Committee review.

Board co-chair Irwin reviewed the first two legislative agenda items.

1. Prepare youth for success in college and careers:
    a. Support initiatives to increase financial aid completion rates and maintain funding sources for state financial aid such as the WA Grant.
        - The Workforce Board endorses Governor Ferguson's proposal to make completion of the FAFSA or WASFA – with a clear and accessible opt-out process – a graduation requirement.
    b. Retain one credit of CTE as a core High School Graduation requirement.
2. Support proposals that create pathways to self-sufficiency for Washington's workforce by reducing the economic mobility gap for Washington's most vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities.
    a. Retain investments in programs that prevent students from dropping out of high school, emphasize work-based learning, and increase credential attainment for youth and adults.
    b. Support integrated service delivery in workforce and social services to assist individuals receiving basic food and health benefits in meeting federal work requirements and more easily accessing education and training services to obtain good-paying jobs.
    c. Continue the investment in programs that support pathways to work such as Economic Security for All (EcSA) and the Community Reinvestment Program (CRP) that have shown to increase the economic mobility and self-sufficiency of individuals served. Leverage federal funding, where possible, to expand capacity.

Board member Cherika Carter then presented on the last two legislative priorities:

3. Promote policies that give Washington workers the skills and training needed to drive a thriving state economy.
    a. Maintain or expand capacity in workforce programs to meet student, worker, and employer needs. These programs include: CTE in middle schools, high schools, and skills centers, community and technical college professional technical

programs, associate and bachelor's degree programs, traditional and non-traditional registered apprenticeships, and incumbent worker training, such as the Job Skills Program.

b. Identify models and industry sector partnerships where labor and business can more directly inform workforce, education, and training partners, reducing redundancies and encouraging stronger alignment of education and training programs with employer needs.
c. The Workforce Board will continue advising and supporting development of implementation of Workforce Pell in Washington to enable federal financial assistance for short-term training and credentialing opportunities, allowing expanding access for workers to upskill or reskill in high-demand industries and occupations.

4. Analyze policy proposals on workforce impacts of AI for Washington students, workers, and businesses — specific to training for responsible use, evolving job competencies, and education and training system readiness.

There was discussion around legislative agenda item 3.c. with the request to add "high wage" to read as follows: The Workforce Board will continue advising and supporting development of implementation of Workforce Pell in Washington to enable federal financial assistance for short-term training and credentialing opportunities, expanding access for workers to upskill or reskill in high-wage, high-demand industries and occupations.

MOTION-2025-284-03
A motion was made by Todd Mitchell to approve the addition of "high wage" to the Workforce Pell item, in 3.c. Yolanda King-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Carter noted she'd like to make an amendment to legislative agenda item 4 with the request to add "working conditions" to read as follows: 4. Analyze policy proposals on workforce impacts of AI for Washington students, workers, and businesses — specific to training for responsible use, evolving job competencies, working conditions, and education and training system readiness.

MOTION-2025-284-04
A motion was made by Cherika Carter to approve the addition of "working conditions." Todd Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION-2025-284-05 – Leg Agenda as a whole
A motion was made by Todd Mitchell to approve the amended legislative agenda. Yolanda King-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Industry Engagement for Workforce Board's Strategic Priorities
Emily Persky, Workforce Board, proposed two core strategies for industry engagement to be approved by the Board. Staff recommended prioritizing participation in existing industry and economic development forums rather than creating a separate committee, while strengthening

coordination and streamlining employer engagement across the workforce system. A virtual industry forum in 2027 remains a potential option as the work progresses. Persky highlighted the importance of continuing to engage labor as an equal partner, which is essential to ensuring that system improvements address the needs of both employers and workers. The proposal reflected two years of work with the Board's industry advisory committee, which included representatives from statewide business, labor, and professional associations.

MOTION-2025-284-06
A motion was made by Wade Larson directing Workforce Board staff to prioritize staff participation and streamline system engagement per the staff's recommended proposal, and revisit whether to hold a virtual industry forum convened by the Board in early 2027. Todd Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Successful Local Model in Industry Engagement: North Central
Lisa Romine and Mayra Garcia of SkillSource, the North Central local workforce development board, presented the region's approach to successful local industry engagement, emphasizing employer partnerships, flexible training strategies, and regional collaboration. Serving a largely rural area of nearly 15,000 square miles with nearly 13,500 employers and few formal training providers, SkillSource invests heavily in work-based learning, including on-the-job training and incumbent worker training, to address workforce needs.

For PY24, SkillSource reported second-quarter-after-exit employment rates of 86.8% for adults (the state's highest, compared with the 68% statewide average and 87% for dislocated workers. Its board, drawing on the Carver Governance Model, sets annual training investment targets, and staff have the flexibility to move funds between strategies as labor market conditions change. Its multi-partner business services teams organized across three sub-regions, use labor market data, assign each employer a dedicated point of contact, review performance weekly, and maintain ongoing relationships to respond quickly to changing needs.

Examples:

- Welcome Home, a home-care business SkillSource supported through on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and youth paid internships as it grew from two owners to 50 employees across three locations.
- Diamond Foundry, a Wenatchee lab-grown diamond manufacturer SkillSource supported as it pursued ISO quality certification to enter semiconductor and electric vehicle supply chains.

The presenters also highlighted partnerships among OSPI Open Doors, WIOA Title I Youth and DVR Pre-Employment Transition Services that expand youth opportunities, including paid work experiences and alternative education. Since 2020, SkillSource has made 615 youth paid work experience placements, with about $1.4 million in wages to participants, and more than 250 youth earned a high school diploma or equivalent through Open Doors. They emphasized that

strong relationships, coordinated partnerships, and work-based learning are central to effective workforce development.

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.

Healthcare Training Fund
Laura Hopkins, Executive Director of the Healthcare Training Fund, and Kelly Kennedy of Kaiser Permanente presented on the Training Fund's role in strengthening Washington's healthcare workforce through labor-management partnerships, employer collaboration, and accessible training pathways. Kennedy highlighted how the Training Fund works with Kaiser Permanente to address workforce needs through programs such as medical assistant apprenticeships, behavioral health apprenticeships, environmental services technician certification, and specialized wound and ostomy care training. These partnerships help employers recruit and retain workers, support career advancement, and develop clear pathways into additional roles.

Hopkins explained that the Training Fund partners with eight major hospital systems and more than 50 community healthcare providers, serving over 23,000 eligible members. Its work supports current employees seeking career advancement and individuals entering healthcare, through tuition assistance, apprenticeships, licensing support, tutoring, and other wraparound services that help address barriers to education and training. The Training Fund's Introduction to Healthcare Employment and Apprenticeship (IHAP) program helps individuals explore healthcare careers and connect with employment opportunities.

Hopkins emphasized that the Training Fund's labor-management structure supports broader discussions about improving Washington's healthcare system, while industry investment provides a foundation for leveraging additional federal, philanthropic, grant, and state funding. The Training Fund receives approximately $15 million annually from industry and has secured additional funding to expand its impact. Hopkins expressed interest in partnering with the Workforce Board and local workforce development boards to coordinate resources and strengthen healthcare career pathways statewide. Board members praised the Training Fund's impact, particularly its wraparound supports, equitable access to education, and opportunities for workers to advance into high-demand healthcare occupations.

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

WorkSource System and WIOA Title I-B Policy activity since August 26, 2026
For Workforce Board Acknowledgement at the October Meeting

Why this list: Federal law requires the state Workforce Board to review statewide job training policies (WIOA sec. 101(d)). This list shows policy changes, including proposed ones, since the Board last met. Each policy number in the far-left column links to the published policy on the WPC website. **All System Policies can be found here:** https://wpc.wa.gov/policy

Policy	Title	Issued	Description
1020 (Rev 3)	Data Integrity and Performance Policy and Handbook	9/8/26	Sets the rules for how staff enter and fix customer data in the new WA Works system, so the state's numbers stay correct.
1023 (Rev 1)	Integrated Service Delivery Policy and Operations Manual - Archived; removed from the active WPC policy list	Archived	ESD retired this 2017 guide on signing people up for more than one program at once, so it no longer applies.
7010 (Rev 8)	Community Reinvestment Plan Matched Investment Savings Accounts - Public Comment Period ended **October 17, 2026**	Pending	Would let people use their matched savings accounts to pay off personal debt; one more path to stable finances.
1028 (Rev 3)	Required Local Workforce Development Board Policies - Public Comment Period ends **October 30, 2026**	Pending	Updates the list of policies each local board must have; boards would get 120 days to adopt the new ones.

WIN	Title	Issued	Description
0073 (Rev 85)	WIOA operating guidance issued to date by USDOL	8/24/26	Adds federal guidance on 2026 Community Project Funding and on how DOL will review the state's 2025 results.
0073 (Rev 86)	WIOA operating guidance issued to date by USDOL	8/25/26	Adds new federal guidance on how the state can spend the WIOA money it holds for statewide needs.
0073 (Rev 87)	WIOA operating guidance issued to date by USDOL	8/28/26	Adds new federal guidance on job credentials that employers trust, so training leads to real jobs.
0073 (Rev 88)	WIOA operating guidance issued to date by USDOL	9/9/26	Adds a federal guide to strong pre-apprenticeship programs, which help people get ready to start an apprenticeship.
0168	Program Year 2026 (PY26) Workforce Monitoring Tools	9/25/26	ESD shared draft checklists for this year's reviews of local programs, so local areas know what to expect.
0167	Waiver of the requirement to expend at least 75 percent of the state's WIOA Title I-B youth formula grant on out-of-school youth	9/30/26	Allows local areas to spend more youth funds on students still in school for two years, giving local boards more choice.

DRAFT Board Meeting Dates for 2027

With a vote of approval of the consent agenda at the October 28, 2026 Board meeting, the following dates will become the final Board meeting dates for 2027.

2027 Workforce Board Meeting Dates
Meetings are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., unless noted.

1) Wednesday, February 24 – In-person/Hybrid: Workforce Board office in Olympia, Conference Space on Level 2
2) Thursday, April 15 – Virtual
3) Retreat: Wednesday June 2 – Thursday June 3 – In-person only, no virtual options available. Potential location: College/Carpenter Union
4) Thursday, August 12 – Virtual
5) Tuesday, October 26 – In-person/Hybrid. Potentially at the local workforce development council facilities/ or community college in Bellingham
6) Thursday, December 9 – Virtual short meeting

Tab 2

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 2

Executive Director Report

PRESENTED BY: Maddy Thompson, Acting Executive Director
CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY

The Executive Director's report includes selected workforce system events and developments, and agency activities.

BACKGROUND

The Executive Director's report provides an overview of agency and workforce system activities that have occurred since the last Workforce Board meeting. This report includes:

- Agency updates
- Conferences and events
- Federal and state updates

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Discussion: Board members have the opportunity to ask questions or discuss any of these items.

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

AGENCY UPDATES

Welcome to the Workforce Board's New Chief Financial Officer
Kai Matthews has joined the Workforce Board as Chief Financial Officer, leading a team that supports the agency's accounting services, budget oversight and planning, facility maintenance, technology support, human resource services, contracting, and compliance.

Kai brings more than 17 years of public-sector experience, with expertise in strategic planning, risk management and building business processes that support strong organizational performance. He has held financial leadership roles at the Department of Enterprise Services, Washington Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth, and Department of Commerce, giving him broad experience with Washington state government and its diverse programs and services. Kai lives in Lacey and, outside of work, enjoys good books, exploring local trails and occasional trips to visit family on the East Coast.

State Auditor's Office (SAO): "No Findings"
The SAO just completed a regular four-year accountability and risk audit of the Workforce Board. The audit reviewed aspects of:

- Private Vocational School Licensing
- "Cash" Handling
- Payroll
- Regional Monitoring of Local Workforce Boards

Thank you to Workforce Board staff who provided information to SAO and thank you to Board members Wade Larsen, Amy Martinez, and Becky Wallace for representing the Board during the process.

Workforce Pell Application Now Open in Washington
The Workforce Pell application is now live for Washington! Workforce Board staff are working with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Washington Student Achievement Council to prepare for a webinar for applicants. More information can be found at: https://wtb.wa.gov/workforce-pell/.

WIOA Local Area Negotiated Performance Targets submitted to DOL
In September, Workforce Board staff submitted the local negotiated targets to the US Department of Labor. The negotiations occurred in June and July between Workforce Board and local workforce board staff to reach agreed upon performance targets. Recent performance as well as the negotiated levels for each area can be found at: https://wtb.wa.gov/research-resources/performance-targets/.

Health Workforce Council
The Workforce Board's Health Workforce Council met on September 24. The meeting focused on challenges affecting Washington's primary care workforce, including provider shortages, recruitment and retention difficulties, and declining family medicine training capacity.

Members reviewed workforce supply and employer demand trends, discussed recent challenges to family medicine residency programs, and heard from the Health Care Cost Transparency Board, convened by the Health Care Authority, on recommendations to strengthen primary care workforce development and access to care. Renee Fullerton, Workforce Board staff to the Council, provided input to the Cost Transparency Board's workforce recommendation process over the summer.

The Council also explored policy options related to residency training support, international medical graduate pathways, workforce data, and impacts of artificial intelligence. Staff are developing briefings that include policy recommendations of the Council to help educate policymakers during the 2027 Legislative Session.

Participant Survey
Principal Researcher for the Workforce Board, Coral Garey, has been meeting with program providers to share the results of the participant survey. State statute (RCW 28C.18.060 (4)) directs the Workforce Board to survey workforce system participants to evaluate their experiences, outcomes and satisfaction with workforce programs. By capturing the lived experiences of program participants, the Workforce Board can support data-informed decision-making, improve accountability, and help ensure that Washington's workforce system is equitable, effective, and responsive to both workers and the economy.

Insights from this survey will help policymakers and program administrators strengthen workforce training programs to better support participant success and respond to labor market needs. Findings will help identify ways to improve training opportunities, service delivery, and employment outcomes across Washington's workforce system. Coral will present the results of this survey at the Board's October 28 meeting.

Workforce Education Council
Workforce Board Research Director, Dave Wallace, joined by Performance Accountability and Reporting Manager, Terje Gjertsen, presented on the Eligible Training Provider List at the Fall meeting of the Workforce Education Council (WEC) comprised of Workforce Deans of the community and technical colleges convened by SBCTC. The presentation focused on how data on program earning and employment is collected and displayed on Career Bridge, and how eligibility for the program enables students, who are customers of the workforce system, to access financial aid.

Coral Garey, Principal Researcher for the Workforce Board, reported on the participant survey, focusing on the programs provided by community and technical colleges.

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The Centennial Accord

The 37th Centennial Accord meeting was held last week, hosted by the Snoqualmie Tribe. This is an annual government to government meeting that has occurred since the Centennial Accord and Millennium Agreement were signed in 1989. Governor Ferguson attended on Monday and Tuesday and Workforce Board Acting Executive Director Maddy Thompson joined other state directors to represent Washington state's executive cabinet in a meeting with tribal leaders. Topics covered included treaty rights, healthcare, the new work requirements, and the multi-agency effort to enable people to either progress to work or otherwise retain basic food and healthcare benefits. Joe Wilcox, the Workforce Board's tribal liaison, attended on behalf of Maddy on the third day, and the Workforce Board's report is included with other agency reports in the "2026 Centennial Accord Agency Highlights."

Association of Washington Business Policy Summit

The AWB Policy Summit was held in Spokane on Sept 14-16. The summit brings together business leaders from across the state to examine key policy issues shaping Washington's business environment and workforce landscape. Highlights included hearing directly from employers about the strong value they place on Washington's postsecondary education and training system, as well as the regulatory challenges many businesses are navigating. Breakout sessions on energy and education underscored shared areas of interest between business and labor, particularly where emerging technologies are creating both disruption and opportunity across industries. These discussions provided valuable context that will help inform ongoing workforce strategy and cross-sector engagement efforts. Acting Executive Director Maddy Thompson and Interim Director of Policy, Strategy, and Research Emily Persky, attended on behalf of Workforce Board staff.

Construct a Career

The Construct a Career event hosted by the WA Building and Construction Trades Council was held on September 24. Acting Executive Director Maddy Thompson attended to discuss future sustainability of the program. The program has supported jobseekers and incumbent workers to prepare for and enter apprenticeship programs and has documented high retention rates. The program featured single mother Alex Murray who was able to achieve two certifications with supports provided by the program and then successfully compete to enter an Ironworker apprenticeship program. This program will be featured at the Board's October 28 meeting.

The Opportunity Alliance

The Lumina Foundation invited Washington to participate with five other states to empower higher education agencies to align with workforce development needs. As noted in the convening, the pioneering states "are not just connecting systems; they are building powerful talent ecosystems to fuel economic growth for years to come." The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), as the state agency for higher education, has invited the Workforce Board's Acting Executive Director, Maddy Thompson to be part of the team with leaders from Commerce, the Washington Economic Development Association, the Business

Roundtable, the local workforce boards represented by the Washington Workforce Association, and the Employment Security Department. The group has met several times with support from the facilitators (Education Strategy Group) to form a plan to recommend to policymakers. Maddy will bring recommendations to the Board for further input and consideration.

SHEEO Events (State Higher Education Agency Officers)
Workforce Board staff participated on state teams at SHEEO events and initiatives:

1. **SHEEO Communities of Practice – Convening on Noncredit Education**
   Nova Gattman, Deputy Executive Director, attended the SHEEO Communities of Practice convening on noncredit education as part of a state team led by the Washington Student Achievement Council. State higher education, workforce, and policy leaders shared strategies for improving learner outcomes and expanding educational and economic mobility, with sessions focused on noncredit definitions, data systems, outcomes reporting, and noncredit-to-credit pathways. The convening offered valuable insights to inform Washington's strategies on measuring noncredit outcomes and improving learner mobility.

2. **SHEEO State Policy Convening**
   Maddy Thompson, Workforce Board Acting Executive Director, was invited to join Inez Olive and Dan Oliver, staff to WSAC, at the state policy convening for SHEEO. The key theme was the value of higher education in today's shifting demographics and economic context. It was an opportunity to connect with colleagues across the country from state higher education agencies and workforce boards, along with leaders from the National Council of State Legislatures, Lumina, and other high-level national think tanks.

WA ACTE Fall Conference
Career Pathways Policy Associate Paulette Beadling attended the WA-ACTE Fall Conference (Washington Association for Career and Technical Education) in Grand Mound in October. The conference is an opportunity to connect directly with CTE teachers and other educators and learn more about what they are seeing and experiencing in the field. These conversations help inform the Board's work as Washington's Perkins administrator. Sessions covered worksite learning, dual credit data, and recent quantitative assessment findings.

Washington's Tech-Enabled High School-to-Postsecondary Roadmap
Education First Consulting, funded by the Gates Foundation, bought together partners from across Washington to discuss how to create better connected, supported transitions from high school to postsecondary education and training. The Board's Career Bridge was among the tech tools highlighted in these conversations because of its employment and earnings performance results for thousands of WA postsecondary programs along with state labor market data. Marina Parr, Workforce Board Director of Workforce System Advancement, and Julie Mix-Stark, Career Bridge Manager, attended meetings in August and September, together with K-12 and postsecondary state agency leaders, and representatives of colleges & universities, and school

districts, in addition to several students. The project's next steps are to finalize working groups by early November, whose members will continue to collaborate on a tech-enabled road map that better connects information, data, and technology to reduce the burden on students and families in reaching post-high school education and career objectives.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES THIS FALL

Washington Workforce Association Summit

The Washington Workforce Association conference will be held in Spokane on November 3-5. This conference brings together workforce partners from across the state to share information, best practices and make connections. A plenary session on the new Work Requirements that are required for recipients of basic food and health benefits will feature Kevin Williams, CEO of Workforce Spokane, panelists from DSHS, HCA and ESD and will be moderated by Workforce Board Acting Executive Director, Maddy Thompson.

Other presentations include an overview of the new Workforce Pell, Work Requirements for practitioners, a session that demonstrates new features of WA's Career Bridge, and a breakout session will focus on Washington's new occupational data with partners from the Washington State Labor Council, Washington Roundtable and the state's Employment Security Department.

STATE UPDATES

Washington Releases 2026 Dual Credit Report

Washington's Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) released its 2026 Annual Report on Dual Credit, examining student participation, credits earned, and longer-term education outcomes. The report and related Dual Credit Dashboard provide data on how dual credit connects high school students to college and career pathways. For Washington's workforce system, the data can provide another source for understanding how high school programs connect students to postsecondary education and future careers.

FEDERAL UPDATES

Federal Funding Extended Through December 11

Congress approved a short-term federal funding bill that keeps the federal government funded through December 11, 2026, and President Trump signed the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027 into law on September 2. The law generally continues federal funding while Congress works on full-year FY 2027 appropriations and also delays some proposed changes to federal grant rules until December 11. For Washington's workforce system, the extension provides continued federal funding in the near term while leaving final FY 2027 funding levels and some grant policy changes unresolved.

Federal Education Grant Rules Under Review

The U.S. Department of Education proposed changes in August to rules governing federal education grants, including grant applications, continuation awards, unspent funds, and indirect costs. The EDGAR proposed rule was open for public comment through September 23, and the Department plans to finalize the rules later in 2026. The proposal could affect how federal

education grants are administered and monitored. For Washington, changes to federal grant requirements could affect the administration and oversight of federally funded education and workforce programs.

Perkins Reporting Changes Move Forward

The U.S. Department of Education proposed changes to the Perkins Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) in August, including updated financial reporting instructions, alignment with the National Career Clusters Framework and other technical changes. The public comment period closed October 20, and the Department will now review comments before deciding whether and how to finalize the changes. For Washington, final changes could affect Perkins reporting requirements and the data systems used by the state and its secondary and postsecondary CTE partners.

DOL Issues Guidance on High-Quality Industry-Recognized Credentials

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 04-26 in August to help workforce and education systems understand what makes an industry-recognized credential high-quality. The guidance highlights connections to employer needs, labor market demand and clear career pathways, and discusses how WIOA, Perkins V, and Workforce Pell can support access to credentials with labor market value. The guidance includes examples and resources for workforce boards, CTE leaders, employers, colleges, and training providers. For Washington, the guidance could inform ongoing work to define, evaluate and align industry-recognized credentials across workforce and education programs.

DOL Looks to Improve Credential Data

The U.S. Department of Labor sought public input on a proposed approach for collecting and sharing information about credentials developed with federal funding. The proposal would use a common data format to make credential information easier to find and compare, including information on providers, skills, costs, industry connections and outcomes. The public comment period closed October 19, and DOL will now review the feedback as it considers next steps. For Washington, a common approach to credential data could affect how workforce and education partners share information about credentials, skills, outcomes and connections to employment.

Tab 3

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 3

Pierce County Skills Center Panel

PRESENTED BY: Scott Martin, Pierce County Skills Center Director
Student Panel

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

SUMMARY

The Pierce County Skills Center (PCSC) is a specialized public high school in Puyallup that provides career-focused education and technical training for students in grades 11 and 12. It operates as a partnership among multiple Pierce County school districts, functioning as an extension of each student's home high school. Students typically spend half of their school day at their home high school and the other half taking specialized technical or trade courses. PCSC offers 17 preparatory career and technical education (CTE) programs to students in Pierce County with a capacity of 900 students.

PCSC Director Scott Martin will provide an overview of the Skills Center and its partnerships with school districts and high schools to deliver CTE programs to high school students. The presentation will highlight hands-on learning across multiple industry areas, preparation for students to obtain industry-recognized credentials, connections to employers and higher education, and student outcomes.

Board member Becky Wallace will then moderate a discussion with a panel of students, Skills Center leaders, and local employers about how Skills Centers prepare students for careers, how training connects to industry needs, and how these experiences shape students' goals and pathways to employment, college, or registered apprenticeship.

BACKGROUND

Skills Centers were established under RCW 28A.245.010, which directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to "establish and support skill centers of excellence in key economic sectors of regional significance." While many high schools offer foundational and specialized CTE courses, Skills Centers are a more intensive model for delivering instruction. They extend programming with advanced, specialized training that may be too costly or specialized for a single district to offer on its own, often including dual credit and close ties to regional employers. In Washington, there are 17 Skills Centers that serve students from school districts in various regions of the state. You can access an Official Skills Centers in Washington Map PDF, alongside a complete listing of regional locations and branch campuses on the OSPI CTE Skills Centers Page.

CTE is a requirement for graduation in Washington. Skills Centers help to expand CTE offerings by pooling resources across school districts and high schools. However, not all high school students have access to a Skills Center.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Discussion only. Guiding questions:

- How can Skills Centers, employers, and labor partners work together to prepare students for in-demand careers?
- What outcomes best demonstrate that Skills Centers are helping students succeed in the workforce and beyond?

Tab 4

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 4

Participant Satisfaction Survey Coversheet

PRESENTED BY: Coral Garey, Workforce Board Staff
CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY

Workforce Board Principal Researcher Coral Garey will present an overview of the agency's Participant Satisfaction Survey, including how it is administered and key findings across workforce education and training programs. The presentation will cover registered apprenticeships, private vocational schools, WIOA I-B programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), and community and technical college programs, including Professional-Technical, Worker Retraining, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), and Basic Education for Adults (BEdA).

BACKGROUND

State statute (RCW 28C.18.060 (4)) directs the Workforce Board to survey workforce system participants to evaluate their experiences, outcomes and satisfaction with workforce programs. By capturing the lived experiences of program participants, the Workforce Board can support data-informed decision-making, improve accountability, and help ensure that Washington's workforce system is equitable, effective, and responsive to both workers and the economy.

The research objectives of the survey are to:

- Identify the participant's motivations for enrolling in an education or training program.
- Assess participant needs and services received.
- Measure participant satisfaction.
- Evaluate training content and effectiveness.
- Measure outcomes and identify barriers to employment.

Insights from this survey will help policymakers and program administrators strengthen workforce training programs to better support participant success and respond to labor market needs. Findings will help identify ways to improve training opportunities, service delivery, and employment outcomes across Washington's workforce system.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Discussion: Board members may ask questions about the expected purpose and outcomes of the survey. Guiding questions:

- How could the survey findings be used to improve workforce education and training programs?
- In what ways does the survey help identify barriers that may prevent participants from achieving their employment and training goals?

Tab 5

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 5

Good Jobs Challenge

PRESENTED BY: Shannon Ladymon, Assistant Director of Data Systems and Reporting, WA Jobs Initiative, Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)

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

SUMMARY

Shannon Ladymon, Assistant Director of Data Systems and Reporting for the Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI) at WSAC will present on the initiative, which was funded by the federal Good Jobs Challenge and concluded in September 2026. The presentation will include an overview of the initiative, sector highlights, program outcomes, and lessons learned.

BACKGROUND

The Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI) was funded with a $23.5 million federal Good Jobs Challenge grant administered through Washington's workforce system from 2022 to 2026. The initiative trained more than 5,000 Washington residents and placed more than 3,000 participants into quality jobs with competitive wages and benefits through sector-based partnerships in advanced manufacturing, clean energy, construction, healthcare, and IT/cybersecurity. The presentation highlights successful training and support models, including intensive navigation, wraparound services, employer partnerships, paid work-based learning, and apprenticeship pathways, illustrated through participant and employer success stories.

The presentation will highlight key takeaways and structure, challenges and opportunities, funding sources, linkages and partnerships with other programs, local training provider examples, outcomes and metrics, sustainability of programs, and written participant and employer testimonials.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Guiding questions for discussion:

- Which elements of the WJI model (intensive navigation, wraparound services, paid work-based learning, apprenticeship pathways, employer partnerships) produced the strongest outcomes?
- How can the state sustain or scale programs now that the federal Good Jobs Challenge funding has ended?
- Which lessons learned from the program should guide the Board in aligning state and local workforce investments with employer engagement, and what implications do they carry for future funding sources?

Tab 6

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 6

Construct A Career

PRESENTED BY: Nicole Miller, Program Manager of the Construct a Career Initiative
CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY

Nicole Miller, Program Manager of the Construct a Career Initiative will provide an overview of the Construct a Career program, an initiative of the Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council.

BACKGROUND

Overview: Construct a Career is a grant-funded initiative, run in partnership with the Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council. The program helps people enter and succeed in state-registered building and construction trades apprenticeships. Apprentices earn while they learn through paid, supervised on-the-job training paired with classroom instruction. Starting wages typically run $18-$24 per hour, with periodic raises, employer-paid health coverage, day-one retirement benefits, and official trade certification.

Services and Eligibility: Apprenticeship navigators provide free guidance, application assistance, and referrals to resources that help participants stay in training. Eligible participants can access gear and safety equipment, transportation assistance, and help with childcare, housing, utilities, and basic needs. The initiative serves people seeking an affiliated apprenticeship, those recently accepted, and registered apprentices within their first three years (or under 6,000 credit hours). Some may also qualify for the Washington Grant for Apprenticeship.

The presentation will provide an overview of the Construct a Career program, including recruitment, enrollment and retention strategies, program structure and linkages, funding models, outcomes and metrics, and testimonials highlighting participant success.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Guiding questions for discussion:

- What did Construct a Career show about which strategies and wraparound supports were most effective at helping people enter and stay in registered apprenticeships.
- Which of these should be sustained or scaled now that the Washington Jobs Initiative funding has ended?
- How can the Board use the program's outcomes and partnership model with the Building & Construction Trades Council to strengthen apprenticeship pathways across the workforce system (e.g. funding options, alignment with other programs, and access for underrepresented or underserved populations)?

Tab 7

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 7

Pierce County Skills Center Tour

PRESENTED BY: Scott Martin, Pierce County Skills Center Director
CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY

Pierce County Skills Center (PCSC) Director Scott Martin with Skills Center staff will take Board members and guests on a guided tour of the Pierce County Skills Center. Board members will be able to interact with students and teachers while learning more about the center's activities.

BACKGROUND

PCSC is a specialized public high school in Puyallup that provides career-focused education and technical training for students in grades 11 and 12. It operates as a partnership among multiple Pierce County school districts, functioning as an extension of each student's home high school. PCSC offers 17 preparatory CTE programs to students in Pierce County with a capacity of 900 students.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

This is a walking tour of the PCSC.

Tab 8

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 8

Legislative Update

PRESENTED BY: Nova Gattman, Workforce Board Staff
CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY

This agenda item will provide an opportunity for the Board to hear from operating agencies of the state workforce system about agency/organization budget requests and request legislation to inform meaningful engagement with policymakers about Washington's workforce system.

BACKGROUND

As directed in state statute, the Workforce Board coordinates and advocates for Washington's workforce development system. As part of this responsibility, the Board works with system partners to identify policy and funding priorities that support the needs of employers, workers, students, and communities.

Planning for the 2027 Legislative Session began in spring 2026 and included input from workforce system partners throughout the summer with guidance from the board's Legislative Oversight Committee. The Workforce Board approved the 2027 Legislative Agenda at the August meeting (see attachment).

This agenda item provides Board members and partners with an overview of workforce system agencies' legislative proposals, including funding requests, reduction proposals, and request legislation anticipated for consideration during the 2027 Legislative Session. The discussion is intended to support informed advocacy and strengthen coordination across the workforce system.

Representatives from the following workforce system agencies and organizations will provide updates on their legislative priorities and proposals:

- Council of Presidents: Ruben Flores
- Department of Commerce: Dave Pringle
- Department of Labor and Industries: Tammy Fellin
- Department of Services for the Blind: Michael MacKillop
- Department of Social and Health Services: Jon Noski
- Employment Security Department: Ismaila Maidadi
- Independent Colleges of Washington: Terri Standish-Kuon
- Northwest Career Colleges Federation: Maryann Brathwaite
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: Mikhail Cherniske
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges: Marie Bruin
- Washington Student Achievement Council: Joel Anderson

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Discussion. Board members are encouraged to engage actively with presenters by asking questions about how the work aligns with state workforce system needs, sharing relevant perspectives, and identifying opportunities for partnership as the system prepares for the 2027 Legislative Session.

Workforce System 2027 Legislative Agenda

The Workforce Board supports legislative policies and proposals that:

- **Increase the ability of Washington residents to obtain and retain high-skill, high-wage jobs that support economic mobility and long-term self-sufficiency.**
- **Increase the educational attainment of Washington's population to fuel a thriving economy.**

1. Prepare youth for success in college and careers:

a. Support initiatives to increase financial aid completion rates and maintain funding sources for state financial aid such as the WA Grant.
   - The Workforce Board endorses Governor Ferguson's proposal to make completion of the FAFSA or WASFA – with a clear and accessible opt-out process – a graduation requirement.

b. Retain one credit of CTE as a core High School Graduation requirement.

2. Support proposals that create pathways to self-sufficiency for Washington's workforce by reducing the economic mobility gap for Washington's most vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities.

a. Retain investments in programs that prevent students from dropping out of high school, emphasize work-based learning, and increase credential attainment for youth and adults.

b. Support integrated service delivery in workforce and social services to assist individual receiving basic food and health benefits to meet federal work requirement and more easily access education and training services to obtain good-paying jobs.

c. Continue the investment in programs that support pathways to work such as Economic Security for All (EcSA) and the Community Reinvestment Program (CRP) that have shown to increase the economic mobility and self-sufficiency of individuals served. Leverage federal funding, where possible, to expand capacity.

3. Promote policies that give Washington workers the skills and training needed to drive a thriving state economy.

a. Maintain or expand capacity in workforce programs to meet student, worker, and employer needs. These programs include: CTE in middle schools, high schools, and skills centers, community and technical college professional technical programs, associate and bachelor's degree programs, traditional and non-traditional registered apprenticeships, and incumbent worker training, such as the Job Skills Program.

b. Identify models and industry sector partnerships where labor and business can more directly inform workforce, education, and training partners, reducing redundancies and encouraging stronger alignment of education and training programs with employer needs.

c. The Workforce Board will continue advising and supporting development of the implementation of Workforce Pell in Washington to enable federal financial assistance for short-term training and credentialing opportunities, allowing easy access for workers to upskill or reskill in high-wage, high-demand industries and occupations.

4. Analyze policy proposals on workforce impacts of AI for Washington students, workers, and businesses — specific to training for responsible use, evolving job competencies, working conditions, and education and training system readiness.

WASHINGTON Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

Contact Info:
Nova Gattman
Deputy Executive Director
nova.gattman@wtb.wa.gov
website: wtb.wa.gov

Tab 9

Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

MEETING NUMBER: 285
MEETING DATE: 10/28/26
TAB NUMBER: 9

WIOA Combined State Plan Performance Dashboard

PRESENTED BY: Dave Wallace, Workforce Board Staff
CHECK ONE: ☐ Action Item ☐ Possible Action ☒ Discussion Only

SUMMARY

Workforce Board Research Director Dave Wallace will present the new WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) performance dashboard, a deliverable under Washington's federal Combined State Plan for workforce development. The dashboard brings together key measures that help illustrate how state and local partners coordinate services, align strategies, and support a stronger, more connected workforce system in Washington.

BACKGROUND

The state's WIOA Combined State Plan outlines how state and local partners coordinate services, align strategies, and support Washington's workforce system. The plan identified strategic priority groups, including the Performance and Evaluation Work Group.

As part of its responsibility for monitoring workforce development progress, the group identified the need for a systemwide performance dashboard. Incorporating feedback from the work group and the Board, the team developed the first phase of the dashboard to bring key workforce performance measures together in one place. Wallace will provide background and context for this initial set of metrics and discuss plans for future improvements.

STAFF GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATION

Discussion only but suggested guiding questions could be:

- Does this dashboard give you the information needed to gauge ongoing progress?
- How frequently should the data be reviewed to monitor ongoing progress and identify emerging issues?
- What additional measures or information would help the Board better understand workforce system performance?