

Washington Intracoastal Marine and Manufacturing Industry Alliance
(*High Skills High Wage Strategic Fund – Grant Recipient*)

The Washington Intracoastal Marine and Manufacturing Industry Alliance is a dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial partnership designed to strategically drive economic transformation within the region. The Alliance is one of six projects to receive High Skills High Wages Strategic Funds. The goals of this project provide a comprehensive approach to integrating and building upon current independent local activities. Further, the Alliance partnership provides focus on growing innovation-based companies from within and supporting the building blocks of knowledge, skills, innovation and entrepreneurship required to meet the Intracoastal Region's current and future needs.

The Region: The Washington Intracoastal Region incorporates 25% of Washington State's workforce development areas. The 12 Intracoastal counties are: Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Lewis, Pacific, Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom. The region shares an economy anchored by marine, wood product and advanced manufacturing, and its common economic, demographic and geographic characteristics help define its people, culture and economic competitiveness.

The mainstay of the Intracoastal Region's economy has long been well-paid, but often low-skilled resource-based jobs. These jobs have been declining in the past decade and the communities of the region are now at an economic crossroads. Traditional employment opportunities with sustainable incomes once available to workers lacking a high school diploma are being replaced by jobs that require advanced training and skills, employability and adaptability.

The high growth *industries and economic sectors* that are the focus of the initiatives include a vast array of enterprises that make up or support the marine trades and other advanced manufacturing of composites and wood products. The Intracoastal Region is growing a diverse manufacturing base, with a number of similarities among the manufacturing industries.

Overall Strategies: Leading industries and firms in marine and advanced manufacturing in the Intracoastal Region have made their voices heard on the critical workforce issues they face. Talent development is the most pressing issue. In response, results-oriented strategies proposed by the Alliance are organized around three major change efforts and will provide a focus for project and partner performance under the HSHW Strategic Fund initiative:

1) **Talent Development** to increase the size and quality of the workforce in marine and advanced manufacturing industries, which creates both cluster growth and competitiveness, expanding high-skill, high-wage, middle skill jobs. The Intracoastal Partnership will develop and deliver just-in-time applied knowledge and skills to incumbent workers and new workforce entrants, utilizing training sponsored by industry and education at industry sites, secondary schools, adult education centers, community

colleges, one-stops and universities. Pathway into employment will be provided for ESL, low skill adults and at-risk youth, while career pipeline activities will target youth.

2) **System Alignment** of education, workforce and economic development systems with a regional perspective and to meet the needs of industry and its workers.

3) **Catalyze innovation** and foster an entrepreneurial climate for business creation and expansion.

Regional Partnership: The **Washington Intracoastal Marine and Manufacturing Industries Alliance** is a business-driven collaboration of three local industry tables. These industry tables are convened by the three local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) for their respective areas. Together, they have a proven track record in supporting a regional economic approach to key industry development. Pressing workforce challenges have motivated the private sector to come together in an unprecedented way. The **Washington Intracoastal Marine and Manufacturing Industries Alliance**, composed of leaders of the twelve counties of the Intracoastal Region, has generated a series of successes in addressing difficult workforce issues since 2004. It has leveraged additional resources to support the growth of the marine industry, including two Industry Cluster Project grants and two Innovation Partnership Zone designations and a grant award from Washington's Community Trade & Economic Development.

The Alliance's continuation and ability to implement its work plan under the Workforce Training Board's High Skill High Wage Strategic Fund initiative predicts outstanding performance outcomes. A nine member Executive Team comprised of the WDC director, an industry executive, and the lead ADO director from each of the region's three (3) workforce development areas will be responsible for overseeing the grant activities. Additionally, an Intracoastal Leadership Committee will aid in establishing strategic vision, defining regional outcomes, influencing public policy and resources, and confronting systemic barriers to a sustainable, globally-competitive, regional economy. Members of the Leadership Committee consist of executive representatives from private industry forming a majority, and also includes leaders from workforce and economic development, post secondary education, K-12, vocational skills centers, Tech-Prep consortia, and organized labor.

Our stakeholder communities are poised and anxious to respond in new and innovative ways. The partnerships share the regional economic vision, the commitment, and have the necessary capacity to drive transformational strategies within the region. Working together across political boundaries and jurisdictions has changed the way we do business and our alliance strategies provide the necessary ingredients to evolve into sustainable partnerships and practices that will continue beyond the grant period.

With the current challenging economic and business climate, strategic leaders from all sectors in the Intracoastal Region are prepared to be agents of change, employing a model that will result in a new paradigm for advancing economic competitiveness through replicable strategies.

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