

High Skills, High Wages: 2008-2018

Washington's Strategic Workforce Development Plan

Our plan to meet the needs of a highly skilled, diverse workforce

As Washington's workforce ages and grows increasingly diverse, tapping the full potential of our workers has never been more important—or more challenging. Our supply of young workers is shrinking relative to the general population, while our older workers are working longer and will need education and training to stay on top of new skills and changing technology. At the same time, workers from minority groups account for a greater slice of Washington's labor force, with projections for that percentage to rise even faster and farther in the years to come. Education levels, wages and employment rates among minority workers continue to lag behind whites—troubling problems that have far-reaching implications for our economy as a whole.

At the Workforce Board, we view these demographic shifts both as an opportunity, and an economic imperative. For Washington business and industry to remain competitive in a global economy, where technology is constantly in flux and skill needs are quickly upgraded, we must provide our workers with the tools they need to thrive. To do that we need to start with our public schools, helping students create meaningful educational pathways that keep them from dropping out and instead lead to a high school diploma and beyond. We need to reach out to unemployed adult workers and those stuck in low-skilled, low-wage jobs, connecting them with education and training that leads to a living wage. We need to reach out to Washington's businesses to see what job skills they require, and how we can help workers obtain them, giving our workforce, and our state, a competitive edge.

Our imperative is clear: we need to work even harder to reach all segments of our population so that everyone has the skills and education needed to reach their career goals. For Washington's economy to prosper, we cannot afford to leave anyone behind. *High Skills, High Wages* our state's 10-year strategic plan for workforce development provides our blueprint.

Leaders from across the state created this plan. Contributors included employers, labor, education, nonprofit and community-based organizations, state, local and tribal government, rural and urban areas, communities of color, and individuals with disabilities. We will achieve our three goals for youth, adults and industry by implementing selected strategies, sticking to our vision for 2018, and tracking our progress.

Persistent skill gaps impact Washington workers and businesses

After several years of growth, Washington's economy, like the nation's, shows signs of slowing, with unemployment rates beginning to climb in January 2008. Since then, the downturn has become more severe. But it would be a mistake to pin all of our problems on a flagging economy. Even in periods of economic decline our employers report difficulty recruiting skilled workers, particularly those with mid-level education and training. The 2008 Workforce Board Employer Survey estimated that we are only meeting 77 percent of the demand for skilled workers. Put another way, nearly one out of four skilled jobs in Washington is either going unfilled or to a less qualified worker. These vital and well-paying positions include everything from dental hygienists to electricians to bookkeepers. This has serious consequences, and not just to Washington workers who could benefit from higher-paying, family-wage jobs. Employers report that a lack of skilled workers directly impacts their ability to expand, their profitability,

and influences whether they decide to stay in the state. In particular, we need to focus on industry clusters—strong, economic drivers that influence a range of interrelated businesses concentrated in regions across Washington. Whether it’s aerospace in King County or wine in Walla Walla, we need to help ensure a steady supply of skilled workers to keep those industries profitable, productive, and on the cutting edge.

As Washington’s workforce ages and begins to retire in greater numbers, our workforce is growing more slowly than in the past. In-migration from other states and abroad will contribute more than half of our future growth in the coming years. It’s against this backdrop that we need to create a culture of lifelong learning for all of our citizens, to implement strategies that enhance the job skills of adults who move to Washington with a variety of educational backgrounds, ensure more youth graduate from high school and are on track to complete at least one year of postsecondary education, and reduce unemployment and under-employment. Removing barriers in our workforce development system will help ensure expanded access and success.

Past planning moves Washington’s workers forward

Previous plans have helped Washington’s workforce make great strides, including:

- Improving access to career and technical education in high schools.
- Developing the Building Bridges initiative to reduce middle and high school dropouts.
- Providing High Demand Funds to programs that prepare students for sought-after jobs.
- Increasing access to postsecondary education with programs like Opportunity Grants that pay for tuition and supplies for low-income students studying in-demand careers.
- Expanding apprenticeships in fields like construction that provide family-wage jobs.

Industry Skill Panels have also helped forge closer ties between the business community, education providers, and public and nonprofit entities around the state, bringing them together to pinpoint worker skill gaps and create education and training programs to fill them. Some local initiatives have become prominent best practice examples, for both our state and nation. However, while we are making progress, skill gaps persist. The Workforce Board’s 2008 Employer Survey reported six out of 10 employers had difficulty hiring qualified employees the previous year, and one out of three employers said overall productivity suffered as a result.

Also troubling is the potential development of an “hourglass economy,” where there is a widening gulf between high-paying, high-skill jobs and low-wage, low-skill ones. Without additional education and training, many Washington workers risk being left behind, instead of progressing up the career ladder and into family-wage jobs.

Building a blueprint for workforce development through 2018

In developing our *High Skills, High Wages* plan, we asked our stakeholders to first identify issues for three key groups: youth, adults and industry. All play a vital role in our economy. Each merits greater attention, especially during an economic downturn. By addressing each group individually, we were able to create a plan that takes us all the way through 2018—an expanded time frame that not only lets us design and implement programs but, ultimately, measure results.

What's in this plan?

In each section of this plan, we provide an overarching goal, several specific objectives and multiple strategies to get us there. Below are three broad goals we hope to achieve for youth, adults and industry over the next 10 years.

OUR GOALS

1. **YOUTH:** Ensure all youth receive the education, training, and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.
2. **ADULTS:** Provide Washington adults (including those with barriers to education and employment) with access to lifelong education, training, and employment services.
3. **INDUSTRY:** Meet the workforce needs of industry by preparing students, current workers, and dislocated workers with the skills employers need.

Investing in a stronger Washington

At the heart of *High Skills, High Wages* are strategies to help Washington's workers become better educated, better skilled and better paid. The benefit of achieving these goals goes beyond the workers themselves: it makes for a more competitive business climate and a stronger Washington economy for all of us. To implement every strategy to its full extent calls for a significant investment, but one that can and should be shared as our stakeholders work together to optimize public and private partnerships.

In fact, those partnerships are a fundamental part of our plan. A lead agency is designated as responsible for carrying out each strategy, along with supporting partners. Each year the Workforce Board delivers a progress report to the Legislature.¹ We also evaluate every major workforce program, measure specific performance targets, and determine whether we are keeping pace with employers' demands for skilled workers through our biennial employer survey and gap analysis.² We recognize, however, that state budgets must be lean, and with this in mind we offer some strategic opportunities to focus on over the next two to four years.

Strategic opportunities for 2008 to 2012

While all the objectives and strategies in this plan need to be carried out over a 10-year time span, the Workforce Board has identified key strategic opportunities that should be addressed within the next two to four years.

¹ See our progress reports to the Governor and Legislature on our publications pages: www.wtb.wa.gov

² See our evaluations of workforce programs (Workforce Training Results), our reports on federal targets, and our gap analyses on our web site: www.wtb.wa.gov

- Increase high school graduation rates and ensure youth are prepared for further education and/or work by:
 - Expanding the community partnership model, Building Bridges, that implements effective dropout and retrieval programs.
 - Holding schools accountable for engaging and retaining students through graduation.
 - Demonstrating the relevance of education through strong programs of career and technical education.
 - Ensuring all youth, their parents and caregivers, their teachers and counselors, and the broader community are aware of the full range of career options.
 - Expanding the best practice career and guidance counseling model *Navigation 101* to all middle schools and high schools.
 - Reaching out to business and labor to provide career information, mentors, and work-based learning opportunities and experiences.

- Expand the availability of career pathways that move students from middle and high school through education and training at the postsecondary level. Career pathways offer students career and technical education in a career cluster, incorporate rigorous academic as well as technical content, span secondary and postsecondary education and training, and lead to an industry-recognized credential. These pathways lead students from high school to postsecondary education and training into family-wage careers.

- Increase capacity at community and technical colleges, private career schools, and other postsecondary institutions, to help shrink the gap between the number of skilled workers Washington businesses need, and the number of workers who have those skills. Apprenticeships and high-employer demand programs of study also need to be expanded.

- Increase financial aid and other services for workforce education students, so they're able to afford additional education and have coordinated support in completing their education and training. Research shows one year of education beyond high school, paired with a credential, is the "tipping point" that provides the greatest chance to achieve family-wage employment. Financial barriers are the number one reason Washington residents do not obtain education and training beyond high school. Support services, such as child care, should be provided to help more Washingtonians achieve higher education levels. These services also help ensure students who start such programs are able to finish them.

- Increase programs that pair adult basic skills and English language instruction with occupational skills training. Such programs help a broad cross section of people, including those with low literacy, immigrants, low-income workers, and the unemployed, gain job skills at the same time they learn basic skills, such as reading and writing. Integrated instruction is more likely to lead to wage gains for participants than basic skill programs that do not include an occupational component.

- Improve coordination between workforce and economic development in strategic industry clusters through initiatives such as Industry Skill Panels, and Centers of Excellence. An economic cluster is a sector of the economy in which a region has demonstrated it has a competitive advantage by a high geographic concentration of firms and employment. Clusters provide an organizing principle around which the state and

local areas can successfully coordinate workforce and economic development efforts to the advantage of Washington employers and workers.

- Meet employee education and training needs by:
 - a) Expanding and improving customized training.
 - b) Developing more workplace based learning and flexible methods of education delivery, such as online courses.
 - c) Developing new ways of funding employee training, such as Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs), which gives Washington employers the chance to provide their employees with a financial match and continue developing their skills.
- Identify system barriers for improving and expanding employment, education and training services and remove those barriers.

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Youth Goal and Summary of Objectives

Youth Goal: Ensure all youth receive the education, training, and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.

Objective 1

A *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

- No later than 2018 all middle and high schools in the state have in place all five elements of the *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* that includes community, business and labor collaboration.

Objective 2

All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

- No later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.

Objective 3

All students graduate from high school.

- No later than 2018 every local community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out.

Objective 4

Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

- No later than 2018 there is a comprehensive state strategy to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and/or further education opportunities.

Youth Goal: Ensure all youth receive the education, training, and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.

Youth Objective 1: A *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

- No later than 2018 all middle and high schools in the state have implemented all five elements of the *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* that includes community, business and labor collaboration.

Rationale for Youth Objective 1 and Steps to Get Us There

The need to guide youth

All K-12 students need information and guidance to help them make decisions about their learning and understand how these decisions have a direct impact on their ability to move forward with their education after high school or enter a particular career. If students do not understand the relevance of what they learn, they may be at risk of dropping out.³ But even for students who earn a high school diploma, a lack of direction can push them into low-wage, low-skill jobs. Their risk for dropping out of college, unemployment, and, in worst cases, criminal activity goes up. At the same time, what experts refer to as a “10-year drift,” means these young people too often take an unnecessarily long and hard road to postsecondary education and in many cases must take remedial college classes to get back on track.

What are our options for guiding youth?

The State Board of Education has been exploring how to change high school graduation requirements to provide a stronger connection to career guidance. The board took a significant step in that direction when it implemented the 13th Year Plan, requiring all high school students to create an academic plan that starts in high school and reaches beyond. In the Federal Way School District, for example, students begin planning in eighth grade, exploring different careers, current interests and building the foundation for a college and job portfolio. The district also asks students and parents to discuss and choose one of three general graduation plans to help guide their class choices. The 13th Year Plan requirement could be strengthened statewide by connecting it to other career and guidance activities, including work-based learning, conferences with parents, and mentorships.

Best practice guidance model

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been advocating that school districts institute a comprehensive *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System*. The best practice model, *Navigation 101*, launched in the Franklin-Pierce School District in the Tacoma area, combines five major elements of personalizing, planning, demonstrating, empowering and evaluating that lead to better student outcomes and success in further education and/or work. *Navigation 101*:

³ John M. Bridgeland, John J. DiIulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006.

- Teaches students the skills they need to chart their own courses through middle school, high school, postsecondary education and adulthood.
- Provides students with an ongoing personal relationship with an adult that lasts throughout their middle and high school experiences.
- Provides a meaningful way to keep parents involved in the decisions their teens are making.
- Requires commitment from the school and faculty to make changes such as adjusting schedules and classes to meet students' goals.

In 2006-2007, OSPI allocated \$6,440,000 appropriated by the Legislature to increase the use of *Navigation 101* in school districts across the state. The *Navigation 101* curriculum is being implemented at 221 schools across 103 school districts, including:

- 100 high schools
- 15 seventh-through-12th grade programs
- 18 Alternative Learning Experiences, which can include certain online learning and parent partnership programs
- 77 middle schools
- 11 elementary schools

Schools that implement *Navigation 101* have improved their students' on-time graduation rates by about two percentage points, according to a preliminary evaluation. Other indicators of success show more students taking challenging math and science courses and more parents participating in student-led conferences.⁴

Steps To Get Us There

- Expand implementation of the best practice guidance system, *Navigation 101* across the K-12 system including establishing goals for expansion each year. This would ultimately result in full funding of *Navigation 101* as a basic program of education.

Lead(s): OSPI with partners. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

- Integrate the Individual Education Plan with the 13th Year Plan required for graduation.

Lead(s): OSPI with partners.

- Work with the State Board of Education to create policy links to comprehensive career guidance.

Lead(s): OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners.

- Support the College Bound Scholarship Program that provides an incentive for low-income students to complete high school.

Lead(s): OSPI, with other partners. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

⁴ Conversation with Kyra Kester, Social and Economic Science Research Center, Washington State University, March 2008.

Youth Objective 2: All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

- No later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.

Rationale for Youth Objective 2 and Steps to Get Us There

Relevant learning through Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) connects students in a hands-on way to what they are learning, whether it's witnessing the complex chemistry behind the internal combustion engine in an auto repair class or writing a detailed quarterly report in a business class. At its best, CTE is both rigorous and relevant, blending academics with job skills that reflect the work world, and a student's place in it. For many students, CTE is a solid stepping stone for additional education after high school. Dual credit programs, such as Tech Prep, allow students to gain both high school and college-level credits at the same time. For other students, CTE provides specific skills, knowledge and training that make a high school diploma a more valuable credential that can lead to better paying jobs.

Which students benefit most from Career and Technical Education? Every student benefits. CTE provides opportunities for students to apply their learning in relevant, real world situations and helps them see the connections to their own futures. Through internships and other cooperative work experiences, they get a head start on a career. Student career organizations for every subject area also help students acquire the employment and leadership skills that will enable them to succeed in the workplace. And Tech Prep programs link high school and community college curricula to help students make a smooth transition to postsecondary education and careers.

CTE enrollments decline despite lasting educational and financial benefits

Although some worry that career and technical education could take students off the college track, this hasn't proved true. In fact, not only have students become more engaged in careers through CTE, they've become engaged in education overall. Washington State University's graduate follow-up study shows that students who complete CTE sequences continue on to postsecondary education at about the same rate as do other students.⁵ The Workforce Board's evaluations of CTE programs find that students who complete a CTE sequence have better employment and higher earnings than students with similar demographic characteristics who do not complete a CTE sequence.⁶ Despite these successes, student enrollment in CTE has been flat since 2000--the first time there has not been an increase since the data has been tracked.⁷ Moreover, 57 school districts in Washington offer no career and technical education courses. Rural and remote districts offer limited choices, if any.

⁵ See the Graduate Follow Up Study at http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/gfs/GFS_Reports/gfs_reports_page.asp

⁶ Workforce Board, *Workforce Training Results*, 2008.

⁷ Office of Financial Management, Washington State, 2007 Data Book, "Enrollment Trends in Workforce Education Programs" <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/education/et26.asp>

Strengthening CTE

Since many more students could benefit from CTE, we should develop policies that strengthen it. We need to enhance capacity for students to take CTE through developing and expanding programs at middle schools, high schools, and Skills Centers.

We need to strengthen transitions to postsecondary learning for CTE students by ensuring more students receive academic credit through CTE coursework and by developing stronger articulation and transfer of credits. OSPI and the Workforce Board have developed a toolkit for school districts that serves as a guide for granting academic credit for CTE coursework. OSPI is offering workshops to assist school districts in this process.

In 2007, the Workforce Board convened a stakeholder work group to develop a five-year plan to implement the reauthorized Carl Perkins Act, a federal program that helps pay for and promote career and technical education in high schools and community colleges. The five-year plan focuses on strengthening career and technical education at the secondary and postsecondary levels with a key emphasis on developing stronger articulation and transfer, so that students have a more seamless transition between high school and college.

In 2008, the Legislature passed comprehensive legislation to strengthen CTE (SB 6337). The bill established state accountability for local CTE programs, including the requirement to meet specific targets for program improvement. The bill also provided funds for the expansion of CTE programs in high demand fields and the development of model CTE programs of study that will provide a clear pathway to postsecondary educational opportunities. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1

2008 state legislation (2SSB6377, consistent with the federal Carl Perkins Act) defines programs of study as those that:

- (a) Incorporate secondary and postsecondary education elements.
- (b) Include coherent and rigorous academic content aligned with state learning standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that are aligned with postsecondary education in a related field.
- (c) Include opportunities for students to earn dual high school and college credit.
- (d) Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Serving immigrant students

As Washington state's population becomes more diverse, and more immigrants are projected to settle here, we need to develop better ways of assisting students who have a wide range of academic skill levels and varying degrees of English language proficiency. Integrating English language learning with career and technical education programs is one way of accelerating English acquisition, job skills and academic skills all at once.

Steps To Get Us There

- Increase the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a four-year college or university or enrollment in college-level classes at a community or technical college by:

- Identifying targets for increases. *Lead(s): OSPI working with Workforce Board, with other partners.*
- Conducting an ongoing campaign to increase awareness of teachers, counselors, students, parents, and the general public of the opportunities of rigorous CTE programs, using multiple strategies. *Lead(s): Workforce Board working with OSPI, with other partners.*
- Establishing criteria for setting academic course equivalencies. *Lead(s): OSPI working with the Workforce Board, with other partners.*
- Increasing the number of CTE courses that provide credit for math or science. *Lead(s): OSPI working with school districts, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*
- Providing new opportunities for students in rural areas to complete a CTE sequence. *Lead(s): OSPI working with Skills Centers, school districts, with other partners.*
- Expanding CTE offerings offered via distance learning options. *Lead(s): OSPI working with school districts, with other partners.*
- Identifying high employer demand programs and expand these offerings in secondary CTE sequences. *Lead(s): OSPI working with Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*
- Expanding Grades 7-12 CTE sequences for students. *Lead(s): OSPI working with school districts, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*
- Developing model statewide CTE articulation agreements that provide a program of sequenced courses and ensure all students have access to dual enrollment options. *Lead(s): OSPI working with school districts, SBCTC, Workforce Board, with other partners.*
- Working with the State Board of Education to ensure high school graduation requirements contain a viable option for students to pursue a CTE sequence. *Lead(s): OSPI working with Workforce Board, with other partners.*
- Expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for youth. *Lead(s): OSPI working with Department of Labor and Industries – Apprenticeship and Training Council, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*
- Provide opportunities for all youth to connect to the workplace, including mentorships, job shadows, internships and a variety of other strategies including:
 - Building upon the mentorship component of the In-Demand Scholars program. *Lead(s): OSPI, Association of Washington Business, labor organizations, Workforce Development Councils, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*
- Develop and implement best practice models to help basic skills deficient immigrant youth succeed in high school, including:

- Developing I-BEST programs for use in middle schools and high schools (basic skills and English language programs that are integrated with occupational skills training).

Lead(s): OSPI working with Skills Centers, SBCTC, with other partners.

- Help all students achieve the rigorous, high standards required for further education and/or work.

Lead(s): OSPI with other partners.

Teaching the Teachers: A Governor's Best Practice

In 2007, Greater Spokane Incorporated gathered 75 teachers and counselors from all Spokane County school districts for breakfast to discuss the role of business in education. Educators identified a lack of knowledge about careers and training programs in the region, noting this as a critical barrier for advising students on career and postsecondary paths. This prompted the creation of the Teach the Teachers program. Teach the Teacher workshops provide an opportunity for educators to learn more thoroughly about the careers available in targeted, high-demand industries and how their curriculum directly correlates to these jobs. These workshops provide practical experience that can be applied to the 7th through 12th grade curriculum. In addition, workshop participants receive a variety of resources to share with their students. Another significant benefit is greater participation by businesses in the public school system.

Youth Objective 3: All students graduate from high school.

- No later than 2018 every community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out.

Rationale for Youth Objective 3 and Steps to Get Us There

High dropout rates

A high school diploma or its equivalent is a vital step to successfully entering postsecondary education and training, and, often a prerequisite for many types of entry-level work. Even so, only 70 percent of Washington students graduated on time (within four years of starting grade 9) in 2005-2006.⁸ Even when considering students that graduate after the expected year of graduation, the graduation rate for all students rose to only 75 percent. Graduation rates for students with disabilities and from most racial and ethnic minorities are lower than for the general population. (See Figure 2).

⁸ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us (2005-2006)

Figure 2.

On-Time Graduation Rates for Class of 2005-2006⁹	
All Students	70.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic)	48.0%
Asian Pacific Islander	76.5%
Black / African-American	53.6%
White	74.1%
Hispanic (may be of any race)	57.5%
Special education	54.3%
Limited English	55.5%
Low income	58.0%
Female	73.9%
Male	67.1%

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx (2001-2002 through 2004-2005) and reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us (2005-2006)

Damaging effects of dropping out

Dropping out of high school has been shown to seriously diminish a person's earning and employment potential. According to a seminal national report on dropping out, *The Silent Epidemic*,¹⁰ high school dropouts:

- Earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates on average.
- Are often unable to support themselves.
- Are three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed.
- Are twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into poverty from one year to the next.

⁹ Class of 2006 are the most recent on-time graduation rates available from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time of printing of this report.

¹⁰ John M. Bridgeland, John J. DiIulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006.

Initiatives focus on partnerships, prevention, and reengagement

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction implemented the Building Bridges Prevention and Retrieval Program supported by a \$5 million Legislative appropriation in 2007. In 2007, the Workforce Board recommended and the Governor directed an additional \$550,000 of state's discretionary dollars received from the federal Workforce Investment Act (10 Percent Fund) to support dropout prevention and retrieval.

The strength of this initiative lies in the partnerships between the various entities that serve young people including schools, community-based organizations, Workforce Development Councils, and social service organizations. These efforts need to be expanded to serve more youth: those at risk as well as those who have already dropped out.

We would like to see more students graduate even if it takes additional time. For those students who are not likely to graduate with a high school diploma, we must re-engage them in education and training so they have the skills they need to be “college and work ready.” Through the Building Bridges program we can build a system in communities throughout the state that provides support for students at risk of dropping out and those that have dropped out.

Steps To Get Us There

- Expand the Building Bridges Grant Program to build more school / community partnerships that support youth at risk of dropping out and re-engage youth who have dropped out of school.

Lead(s): OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – State appropriations.

- Collaborate with education and social service partners to develop state-level performance measures and targets for reducing the dropout rate, increasing the on-time graduation rate and increasing successful re-entry and achievement for students who have dropped out.

Lead(s): OSPI with other partners.

- Establish a process for identification, development and replication of best practices statewide.

Lead(s): OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners.

- Explore changes in educational policy and school funding that will provide incentives to serve at-risk youth. *Lead(s): OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature.*

- Identify and make recommendations to reduce the fiscal, legal and regulatory barriers that prevent coordination of program resources across agencies and community-based organizations to support the development of sustainable dropout prevention, intervention and retrieval partnerships. *Lead(s): OSPI, Workforce Board, WDCs, SBCTC, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature.*

- Create stronger program links between Job Corps, and Skills Centers to ensure more Job Corps students receive a high school diploma. *Lead(s): OSPI, with other partners.*

- Identify support services for at-risk youth and their parents, and implement action steps. *Lead(s): OSPI, ESD, WDCs, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*

Building Bridges Spurs a Whole Community to Support High School Graduation

Mayra Rivera thought about dropping out of high school. The 17-year-old has faced “a lot of obstacles” in getting her education, including having a baby four months ago. But she stuck with school and now wants to help other teens make the same choice. That’s why Rivera and some classmates at New Horizons High School in Pasco have created posters, TV and radio spots and T-shirts aimed at curbing dropout rates and reaching students with the message their destination should be graduation. The students became involved after the Pasco School District received a \$270,000 state grant earlier this year to improve on-time graduation rates and work on dropout prevention with Columbia Basin College, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Benton and Franklin Counties and other community partners. The goals of the grant include lowering dropout rates among students who are particularly at-risk – such as freshmen and those in special education, juvenile justice and foster care – and bringing dropouts back to school.

Tri-City Herald, May 28, 2008

Youth Objective 4: Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

No later than 2018 there is a comprehensive state system to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and/or further education opportunities.

Rationale for Youth Objective 4 and Steps to Get Us There

Washington youth experience high unemployment rates

Youth in Washington have significantly higher unemployment rates than the general population.¹¹ Youth from low-income families and from racial and ethnic minorities are the most likely to be unemployed. This is a cause of great concern because of the long-term impacts on an individual’s life:

- Experiencing unemployment early in life is more likely to lead to long-term withdrawal from the labor force.¹²
- Getting a job is harder without an established employment history.
- Unemployed youth have fewer opportunities for on-the-job training.
- Evidence shows that not working during secondary school is associated with lower high school graduation rates and with lower employment rates and earning levels after secondary school.¹³

¹¹ There is no standard definition of “youth” in research on youth unemployment. Generally the term is used to refer to young people approximately 18 to 24 years of age.

¹² Organization for Economic, Co-operation and Development, *OECD.Labour Statistics*, August 2008. See www.oecd.org

In Washington state, the unemployment rate for 20-24 year olds was 10.6 percent in 2006—significantly higher than the 6.4 percent unemployment rate of the general population.¹⁴ In this regard, Washington is like most other states and other developed nations.¹⁵

One might think that due to economic need, youth from lower income families would be more likely to work than youth from middle or upper income families. But the opposite is true, and is compounded by racial disparities. For example, nationwide “only 19 percent of low income black teens worked during 2007 versus nearly one half of their more affluent white counterparts living in families with incomes above \$60,000.”¹⁶

Why are so many youth unemployed?

The high rates of job turnover naturally associated with new market entrants could be one factor contributing to high unemployment rates. But the majority of youth job “separations” are involuntary, and natural turnover does not explain why youth unemployment tends to be concentrated among certain groups.¹⁷ Another factor could be the lack of desirable job opportunities for youth.¹⁸ The lack of a well-developed system for transitioning youth from school to work contributes to the high unemployment rate for youth.

How we can reduce youth unemployment

Public education and labor policies can reduce unemployment rates among youth. The 1990 report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, *America’s Choice: high skills or low wages!*, helped create public awareness of the youth unemployment issue and spurred the development of a number of school-to-work initiatives. Since then, policy initiatives have included:

- **Youth apprenticeship** pilots have begun in Washington through the creation of pre-apprenticeship programs in secondary schools. In Washington, the average age of an apprentice is approximately 30. To change this we should look to Germany and other nations with strong apprenticeship systems and relatively low youth unemployment.
- **Career academies** are secondary schools programs that link academic and vocational education to an occupational cluster, such as Aviation High School in Des Moines. Career academies have been found to be associated with higher employment and earnings after secondary school.¹⁹

¹³ Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Tobar, “The Educational Attainment of the Nation’s Young Black Men and their Recent Labor Market Experiences,” February 2007.

¹⁴ *American Community Survey, 2006*, [//factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov) The unemployment rate may understate the problem since it includes only those actively seeking work, please refer to Clark and Summers, “The Dynamics of Youth Unemployment,” National Bureau of Economic Research, 1982 and the work of Andrew Sum, Director of the Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University.

¹⁵ From the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development that includes developed nations.

¹⁶ Sum, Khatiwada, and McLaughlin, “The Collapse of the National Teen Job Market and the Case for An Immediate Summer and Year Round Youth Jobs Creation Program,” March 2008.

¹⁷ Federal Reserve Board of San Francisco Economic Letter, 2005-15; July 15, 2005, *Age and Education Effects on the Unemployment Rate* and OECD Employment Outlook, 1983, Chapter 6.

¹⁸ Clark and Summers, “The Dynamics of Youth Unemployment,” National Bureau of Economic Research, 1982

¹⁹ Kemple, “Career Academies: Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes and Educational Attainment” Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 2004.

- **Summer employment programs** of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) used to provide 600,000 to 700,000 jobs for primarily economically disadvantaged teens during the summer months. JTPA, which preceded the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and earlier federal employment and training acts included a program that provided summer job opportunities to low-income youth. The program was discontinued under WIA in 1998.
- **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program** is based on a holistic youth development theory that emphasizes treating all aspects of the barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged youth. The Workforce Board’s net impact evaluation of the state program, conducted by the Upjohn Institute, found that WIA youth participants had 10 percentage point higher employment and \$1,200 more in annual earnings three years after participating in the program than youth from similar backgrounds who did not participate in WIA.²⁰ National funding for the WIA youth program, however, has decreased from \$1 billion in 2000 to \$940 million in 2007 in nominal dollars.
- **Career and Technical Education** is the oldest and largest youth program dating back to the early part of the 20th Century and was formerly known as vocational education. The Workforce Board’s net impact evaluation, conducted by the Upjohn Institute, found that completers of career and technical education have a 5 percentage point higher employment rate and \$1,600 more in annual earnings three years after graduation than students from similar backgrounds who did not complete career and technical education. Before 2000, the number of students in secondary CTE in Washington rose steadily, in keeping with student population growth. However, after 2000, student enrollment in CTE has remained flat, and in 2006 student enrollment declined. Therefore, since 2000 the number of students enrolling in CTE has been declining on a per capita basis.²¹

Steps To Get Us There

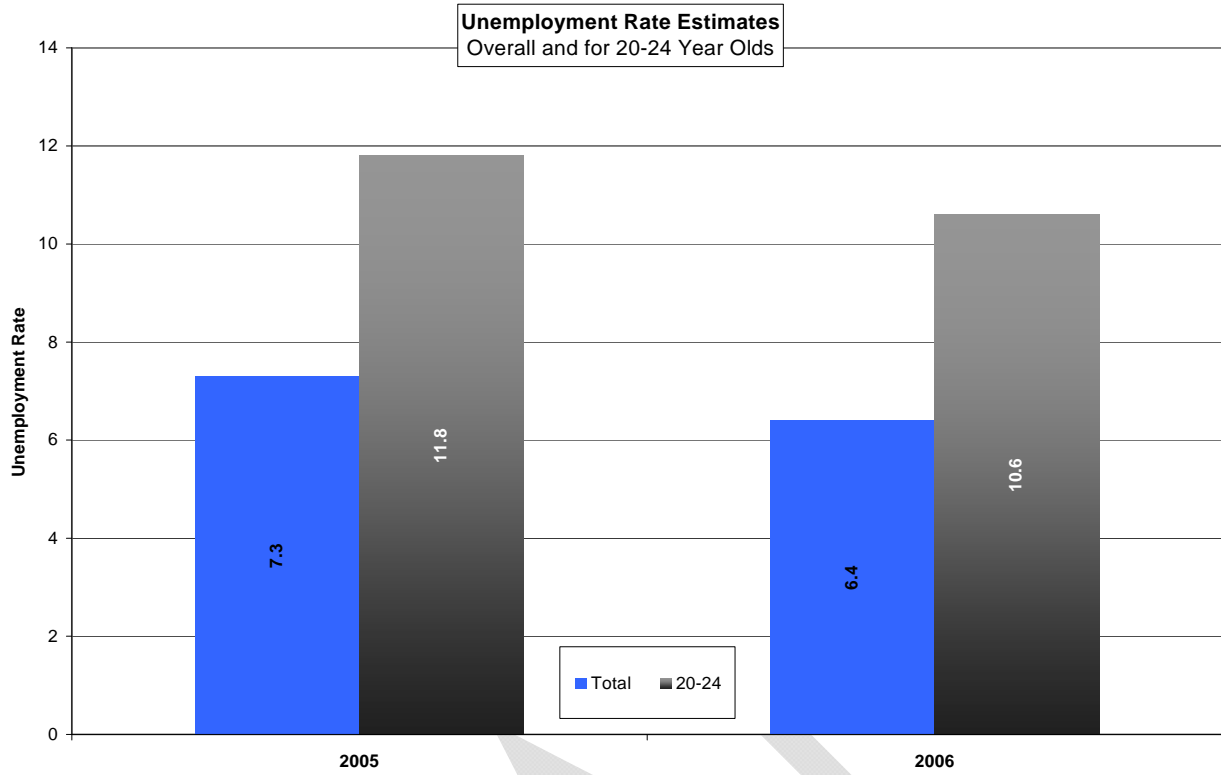
- Create summer youth employment programs. *Lead(s): WDCs, Workforce Board, OSPI, with other partners.*
- Connect unemployed youth to expert “navigators” who can guide them to postsecondary resources and work experience opportunities. *Lead(s): WDCs, OSPI, SBCTC, with other partners.*
- Seek a WIA I-B Youth waiver or WIA Adult 18-24 waiver for the maximum age eligibility and supplement these resources with state funds. *Lead(s): ESD, Workforce Board, WDCs, with other partners.*
- Develop I-BEST opportunities specifically for older youth. *Lead(s): OSPI working with Skills Centers, SBCTC, Workforce Board and other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*

²⁰ “Workforce Training Results: 2006.”

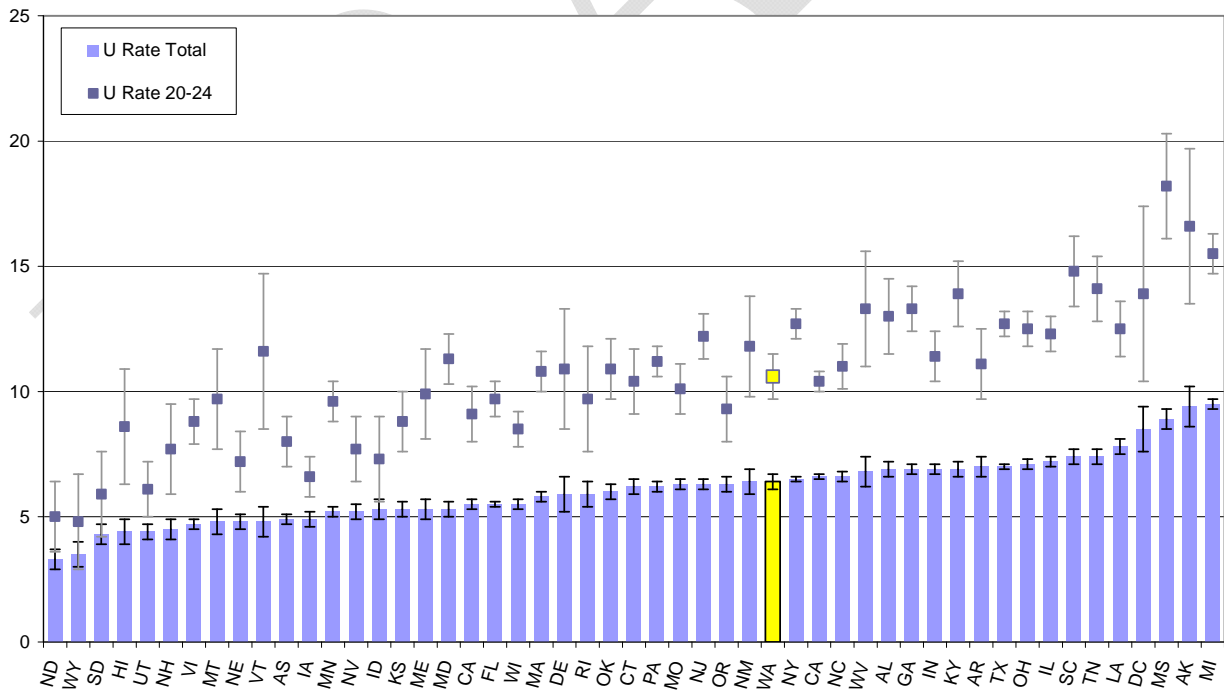
²¹ Washington State Office of Financial Management, *2007 Data Book*, “Enrollment Trends in Workforce Education Programs” <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/education/et26.asp>

- Ensure the Building Bridges Grant programs includes a strong component for re-engaging youth 21 years of age and under to reconnect with education to obtain a high school diploma. *Lead(s): OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.*
- Connect disadvantaged youth to AmeriCorps and Service Corps opportunities. *Lead(s): ESD, OSPI, WDCs, with other partners.*

DRAFT



2006 ACS Unemployment Rate Estimates



Adult Goal and Summary of Objectives

Adult Goal: Provide Washington adults (including those with barriers to education and employment) with access to lifelong education, training, and employment services.

Objective 1 (see discussion on page 19)

Increase the number of adults who have at least one year of postsecondary training.

No later than 2018:

- More adults attain at least one year of postsecondary training and a credential.
- Washington state covers the tuition costs for the 13th year for workforce education students.
- More individuals receive the support services they need to enter and complete postsecondary training.
- More students achieve critical milestones at community and technical college programs as evidenced by the Student Achievement Initiative.

Objective 2 (see discussion on page 23)

Postsecondary education and training provides effective opportunities for going in and out of training over the course of life-long learning.

No later than 2018:

- The majority of working adults engage in training each year, including workplace-based learning.

Objective 3 (see discussion on page 27)

Adults with barriers to employment and training enter education and career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.

No later than 2018:

- (Target to be determined) More adults with barriers to employment and training become employed in middle and higher wage jobs.
- The majority of Adult Basic Education programs at community and technical colleges are integrated with occupational skills training.

Objective 4 (see discussion on page 33)

The WorkSource system provides integrated and effective customer service without barriers associated with separate, individual programs.

No later than 2018:

- WorkSource is a functionally integrated service delivery system that measurably improves the employability of its customers.

Adult Objective 1: Increase the number of adults who have at least one year of postsecondary training.

No later than 2018:

- More adults attain at least one year of postsecondary training and a credential.
- Washington state covers the tuition costs for the 13th year for workforce education students.
- More individuals receive the support services they need to enter and complete postsecondary training.
- More students achieve critical milestones at community and technical college programs as evidenced by the Student Achievement Initiative.

Rationale for Adult Objective 1 and Steps to Get Us There

More adults need postsecondary education and training

“For more than 40 years, the conventional wisdom has been that the best antipoverty strategy is to help the unemployed get jobs. And while work is a precondition to escaping poverty, getting a job is not the problem that it once was for most segments of the population, as the unemployment rate has remained historically low for a decade—between 4 percent and 6 percent. Rather, the key problems facing most poor people today are that they are working in jobs that don’t pay enough and that they are not advancing up the career ladder.”²²

The 2005 “Tipping Point” study found that people who complete at least one year of postsecondary education and obtain a certificate or credential have a much better chance of supporting themselves and their families compared to those that do not have this level of education.²³ And yet, about 1.6 million adults in Washington have a high school diploma or less as their highest level of educational attainment, and many of these adults have low literacy levels. These individuals have limited career opportunities. At the same time, our statewide employer surveys show that employers have difficulty recruiting enough qualified applicants, particularly those with mid-level education and training credentials.

²² Betsy L. Tessler and David Seith, “From Getting By to Getting Ahead: Navigating Career Advancement for Low-Wage Workers,” October 2007, page xi.

²³ David Prince, “Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Longitudinal Student Tracking Study (*The “Tipping Point” Research*)” Research Report No. 06-2 Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, April 2005.

Increasing education attainment has multiple benefits

Increased levels of educational attainment lead to increased earnings over a lifetime and increased tax revenues.²⁴ Workforce Board evaluations of workforce education programs consistently show that students participating in these programs earn more during their lifetimes than individuals from similar backgrounds who do not participate in these programs. Our evaluations also show that the higher taxes generated by those who receive further education and job training outweigh the cost of these programs. Thus, taxpayers receive a significant return on investment.

At the same time, individuals with the lowest educational levels have trouble getting jobs and keeping them, let alone moving up the career ladder. There are other serious consequences related to health, inequality and crime. Adult literacy surveys show that adults with the lowest levels of literacy “work fewer hours, earn lower wages, and are more likely to live in poverty than adults having higher literacy levels.”²⁵ Education and health are also linked. Studies show that educational background and opportunity is a “social determinant of health.”²⁶ Since students who do not fare well in our education system are over-represented among racial and ethnic minorities, these racial and ethnic minorities are also at greater risk of poor health outcomes.

The fact is that **one out of four working families with children**—a total of 42 million people—are low-income. These families pay a higher percentage of their income for housing than those earning more, are far less likely to have health insurance, and often lack the education and skills required to succeed in today’s skills-driven economy.²⁷

Those in our state’s prison system tend to have much lower levels of education than the general population. Some 83 percent of women and 71 percent of men that enter Department of Corrections’ prisons have less than a ninth grade level education.²⁸ We need to ensure more low-skilled adults attain higher levels of education for their benefit and the well-being and safety of our society.

Serving older, career-focused students

Many Washington adults realize they need to return to school to increase their earning capacity and better support themselves and their families. The image of college campuses filled with students fresh out of high school does not compare with reality at most of our state’s campuses. In 2005, 32 percent of students enrolled in Washington’s four-year public universities and

²⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, “Education Pays,” April 15, 2008
<http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab7.htm>

²⁵ Debra B. Bragg, Christine Bremer, Marisa Castellano, Catherine Kirby, Ann Mavis, Donna Schaad, Judith Sunderman, “A Cross-Case Analysis of Career pathway Programs that Link Low-skilled Adults to Family-Sustaining Wage Careers,” National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, May 9, 2007.

²⁶ Dr. Maxine Hayes, M.P.H, PowerPoint presentation “Every Student Successful Summit: Exploring Policies to Examine Health Disparities and the Academic Achievement Gap,” May 18, 2007, found at:
<http://www.sboh.wa.gov/ESS/index.htm>

²⁷ Brandon Roberts and Deborah Povich, *Still Working Hard, Still Falling Short: New Findings on the Challenges Confronting American’s Working Families*, The Working Poor Families Project funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and John Stuart Moss Foundation, see report at www.workingpoorfamilies.org

²⁸ Department of Corrections, GMAP Presentation, November 1, 2006.

colleges were 25 or older, with older students comprising 42 percent of the student body at independent four-year institutions, and 52 percent at community and technical colleges.²⁹

In 2006–2007 there were more than 450,000 students enrolled at community and technical colleges. Of that number, over 45 percent were enrolled in workforce education to gain skills to land a job or upgrade skills to keep their current one.³⁰

The term "nontraditional student" is not a precise one, although age and part-time status (which often go together) are common defining characteristics. Students may be considered non-traditional for a variety of reasons, and may possess one of the following characteristics:

- *Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she finished high school).*
- *Attends part-time for at least part of the academic year.*
- *Works full-time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled.*
- *Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid.*
- *Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but sometimes others).*
- *Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and has dependents).*
- *Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school).*

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) almost 75 percent of U.S. undergraduates are in some way "nontraditional."³¹

Even though our education system serves many older and returning students, our colleges and universities have not fully adjusted to meet their needs. Many older students hold down full-time jobs, for example, and need to take all of their classes in the evening or on the weekends. Others have children or other dependents such as aged parents, or family members with a disability and need assistance with child care, or dependent care. Older students often can only afford to go to school part-time as they continue to work to support themselves and their families. However, federal financial aid programs can be limited to full-time students. Of those adults who do find a way to advance their education, their successful transition to employment might be hindered by insufficient information about job openings for graduates.³²

If we are to increase the number of people who reach the “Tipping Point” and transition successfully to work and better-paying careers, we must concentrate efforts in these key areas:

- Communicate the long-term benefits of postsecondary education and training.
- Provide financial aid and support services that overcome barriers to access and retention.
- Develop a variety of educational delivery modes, such as expanding distance (or e-learning) and workplace learning options.
- Expand apprenticeship programs so more students can “earn while they learn.”
- Expand program capacity to meet increased demand.
- Work with targeted populations to overcome specific barriers to accessing and completing education and training.

²⁹ HECB. *Key Facts About Higher Education in Washington*, February 2007.

³⁰ SBCTC, *Annual Report on Enrollment and Student Demographics for 2006-2007*.

³¹ National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, “Special Analysis 2002: Nontraditional Undergraduates.”

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/analyses/nontraditional/sa01.asp>

³² Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, *Workforce Training Results*, 2006.

- Develop mechanisms to ensure the success of adults in completing their education and transitioning to work, or to better work.

Student Achievement Initiative

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has begun a major effort to measure and reward community and technical colleges for student success, the Student Achievement Initiative. The Student Achievement Initiative will measure incremental gains and progress that focus on student achievement. The measures will quantify each college's annual improvement and help each college to develop and share with other colleges the practices and strategies that are most effective in advancing student achievement.

The Student Achievement Initiative examines six “momentum” points that represent critical steps in student success. Two of the points directly measure first year college-level progress. They are gained for earning the first 15 and the first 30 college-level credits. Another point is earned for the first five college-level credits in a math class that meets the requirement for computation (applied degree) or quantitative reasoning (transfer degree). These points presume levels of college readiness. Since not all students are college-ready, two momentum points are measured for advancing through Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language and completing pre-college English and math to become college-ready.

Start-up funds will be allocated to the colleges in the first year and incentive funding will be awarded after 2008-2009. SBCTC will conduct an evaluation of the whole program to test its success.

Financial issues pose the greatest barriers to access and completion

A 2006 Workforce Board study found the greatest barrier to access and completion for students in workforce education programs is financial—whether it's paying for tuition, fees and books, or other necessary services such as childcare and transportation. The study also found that when we total the various federal and state financial aid programs, there is still a significant amount of unmet student need. In 2006 unmet need for students in workforce education programs totaled \$97 million. Even when we account for the \$23 million in financial aid provided through the new Opportunity Grant program (below), we still fall far short of meeting students' financial needs.

Washington has a unique Opportunity Grant program that provides low-income students the chance to enter high employer demand programs of study and prepare for high-wage jobs. The program provides financial aid for tuition and support services in emergency circumstances. This program serves a large number of racial and ethnic minorities and students with disabilities. This is not surprising as these populations are over-represented among low-income students. Early results are favorable, showing increased student retention.

Following favorable results of a pilot program, the Legislature provided funds to expand eligibility of the State Need Grant to students who attend less than half time. Many working adults and those with dependents can often only participate in postsecondary education on a part-time basis. The expansion of aid is crucial to these students. The 2007 Legislature capped funding at \$1 million.

“I wanted to go back to school for my daughter who is four years old, to be a good example for her and to get a better job to better support my family. For the last nine years

I have worked two jobs in restaurants to support my family and my parents' family. Without the Opportunity Grant I could not afford to send my daughter to childcare and go back to school. This has given me the opportunity to educate myself so I can get a better job.”

Jesus Jasso, Automotive Student at Shoreline Community College³³

Financial costs include everything from tuition to living expenses, childcare, transportation and books. For example, the high price of college text books can be a roadblock. A 2005 study by the Government Accountability Office found that textbook prices over the past two decades grew about twice the rate of inflation, a rate similar to tuition increases. According to the report, in the 2003-2004 academic year, students at public colleges and universities spent an average of \$898—about a quarter of their tuition and fees—on books and supplies. At two-year public colleges, students spent \$886, about 72 percent of their tuition and fees.

Workforce Board evaluations of Adult Basic Education show that employment and earnings outcomes on average do not improve unless basic education is combined with occupational skills training. All community and technical colleges have started delivering I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training). I-BEST combines basic skills with occupational skills and has already shown promising results. However, there are still many Adult Basic Education courses that provide few links and no integration with occupations skills training.

Integrated English as a Second Language and Apprenticeship Program

Roofers Local 153, Clover Park Technical College and Pierce College worked together to address the needs of non-English speaking workers who were unable to complete apprenticeship instruction. By putting both the technical and ESL instructor in the classroom and on the roof together during 14-week instruction periods, the project offered apprentices the opportunity to gain specific work and language skills simultaneously. Workers who began in this integrated adult basic skills and occupational skills program increased their earnings from \$15 per hour to \$25 per hour as journey roofers. This program won a Governor's Workforce Best Practice Award in 2008 and the roofing model is being expanded to other locations across Washington.

Washington's Career Bridge

The Workforce Board has created *Washington Career Bridge* (www.CareerBridge.wa.gov), an online information source that allows Internet users to view careers and employment demand by region of the state, learn how much they'll earn, and find education programs needed for a new career. Plus, they're able to discover performance results for each program—from graduation rates to job placement to pay.

Career Bridge provides information on most workforce training programs in Washington, including programs at community and technical colleges, private career colleges, apprenticeship programs, and many four-year colleges and university programs as well. Information includes cost, length of program, student characteristics, and employment and earnings results. Career Bridge also provides occupational information, and links to a variety of other information sources related to education and employment such as financial aid and employment projections.

³³ Testimony provided in support for SB5410 (Opportunity Grants) Senate Higher Education Committee, February 21, 2008.

Washington Career Bridge is one part of a communication strategy to inform adults in Washington of the benefits of further education and to help them be better consumers when choosing their next career step.

Steps To Get Us There

- Provide more financial aid and support services to enable students to enroll in and complete at least one year of postsecondary training and receive a credential, including:
 - Expand the Opportunity Grant program and include support services.
 - Provide the first five credits of postsecondary training free for workforce students who earn less than the median family income.

Lead(s): SBCTC working with Workforce Board with other partners. Requires support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – State appropriations.

- Establish more industry-based credentials in occupational and general workplace skills demanded by employers for students that complete one year of training and develop more one-year certificated programs.

Lead(s): SBCTC working with Workforce Board, business and labor organizations, and other partners.

- Provide more workforce education students with access to work-based learning and career and labor market information.

Lead(s): SBCTC, Workforce Board, business and labor organizations, joint labor-management training partnerships, with other partners. Requires support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – State appropriations.

- Create easy to navigate postsecondary education and training and career websites, including financial aid and support services.

Lead(s): Workforce Board (Career Bridge Website), SBCTC, HECB (Academic GPS) with other partners.

- Conduct an ongoing marketing campaign to inform the general public about the employment and earnings benefits of postsecondary training, especially in high employer demand programs of study.

Lead(s): Workforce Board, OSPI, SBCTC, ESD, Department of Labor and Industries – Apprenticeship Training Council, HECB, private career schools, business and labor organizations, WDCs, with other partners.

Adult Objective 2: Postsecondary education and training provides effective opportunities for going in and out of training over the course of life-long learning.

No later than 2018:

- The majority of working adults engage in training each year, including in workplace-based learning.

Rationale for Adult Objective 2 and Steps to Get Us There

Expanding options for lifelong learning

We need to make it easier to participate in postsecondary education and training programs. Options include distance learning and workplace-based learning. We also need incentives for adults to enter an educational program and for employers to support their employees along their lifelong learning path.

The Workforce Board's statewide employer survey indicates that 60 percent of employers in Washington provide at least four hours of education and training to one or more employees. While many employers provide training to some employees, they often concentrate on employees in higher positions, and training does not usually lead to a formal credential. A FutureWorks report outlines three facts related to adult education:³⁴

- The number of working adults pursuing any type of training or education already outnumbers traditional students 6 to 1. (U.S.)
- Much adult education and training is focused on non-degree continuing education or occupational training that does not result in formal credentials.
- Recognized employment credentials are key.

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) specializes in promoting and developing strategies that enhance education and training options for adult learners. CAEL notes that adult learners have unique requirements, including a need for "institutional flexibility in curricular and support services, academic and motivational advising supportive of their life and career goals, and recognition of experience and work-based learning already obtained."³⁵

Lifelong Learning Accounts

CAEL selected Washington state to pilot a new system for funding education and training for working adults. Washington State Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs) provide a unique opportunity for employers and employees to work together to finance career-related education and training. LiLAs are employee-owned, employer-matched savings accounts. This type of co-investment makes education more affordable for both parties. The concept is similar to 401(k) retirement accounts in that the employer matches the employee's contributions. However, LiLA funds are used for education and training.

³⁴ Brian Bosworth and Sylvia Choitz, "Held Back: How Student Aid Programs Fail Working Adults," FutureWorks, Belmont Massachusetts, April 2002.

³⁵ "Serving Adult Learners in Higher Education: Principles of Effectiveness," Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, 2000.

The Workforce Board is leading the pilot with state and local partners. This is a positive recruitment tool for employers, with potential to support the development of a skilled workforce. The program could be strengthened if proposals in Congress to provide a tax credit to participating employers are successful.

Creating links between basic education and job preparation

Washington state's 34 community and technical colleges have been part of a national initiative sponsored by the Ford Foundation, *Bridges to Opportunity*. The initiative tests the theory that although community colleges are well situated to serve low-income students, they could serve them even better with improved links between remedial courses and college-level or job preparatory programs.³⁶

Community and technical colleges offer both remediation and job preparation, and these two types of programs are what many low-income adults need. However, often there is a disconnect between the two areas. Washington's innovative I-BEST program is one way that these two worlds within community and technical colleges have forged connections. At public forums around the state, college educators reported there was a need to create better links for adults to move from Adult Basic Education to college-level classes and job preparation. In addition to financial aid links, education policymakers and providers should seek ways to create coherent pathways that link basic education, through career preparation, and beyond to baccalaureate degrees.

"The I-BEST revolution has initiated enormous transitions across our district and very successfully put low-skilled adults on paths to high demand jobs like never before. I-BEST is truly taking students from where they are to where they want to be."

John Kerr, Director for Integrated Basic Skills, Pierce College

Two-year paths to baccalaureate degrees

Washington's transfer and articulation system compares favorably to most other states. More than 40 percent of students earning bachelor's degrees from four-year public baccalaureate institutions in Washington transferred from a community or technical college.³⁷ However, there is room to improve efficiency by increasing statewide transfer agreements and the number of transferrable credits. Students also need assistance in charting an academic path that ensures they earn credits that tie directly to four-year colleges and universities.

Applied baccalaureate degrees

Many students and their employers say they need access to further specialization or management skills provided through a four-year degree. Although students who earn an academic associate's degree can transfer their credits relatively easily toward bachelor's degrees, those who earn technical degrees face more limited options in advancing their educations to the next level. Most state universities and colleges won't accept technical credits and apply them toward a four-year degree. Fortunately, this is changing. Central Washington University, Eastern Washington

³⁶ Gary Bouldard, "Bridges Initiative Fuses Adult Education, Training," Community College research Center Article, March 28, 2008, see <http://www.communitycollegetimes.com/article.cfm?TopicId=6&ArticleId=864>

³⁷ State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Role of Transfer in the Bachelor's Degree at Washington Public Baccalaureate Institutions, June 2003.

University, and The Evergreen State College, along with some independent four-year schools, accept technical credits in some programs and provide limited baccalaureate options.

This lack of access to a four-year degree needs to be addressed at other public universities. In response, the state Legislature has funded seven pilots—all of them at community and technical colleges—to create baccalaureate degree options for students with technical degrees. Those under pilot are:

- Bellevue Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Radiation and Imaging Sciences
- Columbia Basin College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management
- Lake Washington Technical College – Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design
- Peninsula College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management
- Olympic College – Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Seattle Central Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Behavioral Science
- South Seattle Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Hospitality Management

These pilots provide a good start in the short-term. In the future, Washington will need to expand these options even further.

Granting credit for prior learning

In addition to developing applied baccalaureate degrees, Washington’s four-year institutions should consider expanding the type and quantity of credits they grant for prior learning. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges proposes expanding prior learning credits to include general education courses and major courses of study up to 22 credits within a 90-credit degree.

Web-based advising for potential transfer students

The Higher Education Coordinating Board is developing a web-based advising system to help transfer students avoid taking unnecessary classes and stay on track toward a two-year associate’s degree that leads them to their next educational step. The *Academic Guidance Planning System* helps students plan their degrees and coursework, and incorporates placement scores, degree audit results, course scheduling information and more.

Other transfer and efficiency issues

There are a variety of ways to enhance a student’s postsecondary education experience. Issues that need further exploration include:

- Developing curriculum that is “modularized” with multiple entry and exit points, and includes a career preparation component.
- Developing core curriculum and foundation courses that serve more than one career preparation program at more than one school. Already, Direct Transfer Agreements help students transfer to four-year schools and earn baccalaureate degrees. This concept could be expanded for shorter courses.
- Transferring credits between two-year public and two-year private schools.
- Applying credits from apprenticeship programs toward associate and baccalaureate degrees.

- Applying credits earned by high school students in career and technical education course toward postsecondary degrees.
- Granting more credits for prior learning.

Steps To Get Us There

- Identify and implement best practice models for working adults to gain further education and training at the workplace, including online learning.
Lead(s): Governor and Legislature, Workforce Board working with SBCTC, business and labor organizations, joint labor-management training partnerships with other partners.
- Develop public/private financial aid support to assist working adults in gaining further education and training credentials including:
 - Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs). *Lead(s): Workforce Board, Association of Washington Business, business and labor organizations, HECB, and other partners.*
 - Increasing the number of part-time, working students who can receive the state-need grant. *Lead(s): HECB, business and labor organizations and other partners.*
- Develop better links between Adult Basic Education, English-as-a-Second Language, job preparation and college-level courses.
Lead: SBCTC with other partners.
- Develop more four-year degree options for students who complete technical associate degrees.
Lead(s): SBCTC, HECB, Joint Access Oversight Group, Workforce Board, business and labor organizations, with other partners.
- Develop more statewide direct transfer agreements and articulation agreements between two-year and four-year schools, and between private schools and public schools.
Lead(s): SBCTC, HECB, Joint Access Oversight Group, Workforce Board, business and labor organizations, with other partners.
- Grant more credits at postsecondary institutions for prior learning, including credits for major programs of study.
Lead(s): Governor and Legislature, SBCTC, HECB, Joint Access Oversight Group, Workforce Board, with other partners.

Adult Objective 3: Adults with barriers to employment and training enter education and career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.

No later than 2018:

- More adults with barriers to employment and training become employed in middle and higher wage jobs.
- The majority of Adult Basic Education programs at community and technical colleges are integrated with occupational skills training.

Rationale for Adult Objective 3 and Steps to Get Us There

Overcoming barriers to education and employment for target populations

Our workforce development system needs to serve all adults, including adults with barriers to further education and employment. Communities of color, people with disabilities, veterans, older workers, women, and former inmates are over-represented among low-income populations and those with low educational attainment. By customizing our programs and providing the best possible service to every person, we can help tap the talents of our entire workforce.

Recognizing and developing skills for refugees and immigrants

A study by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County on career advancement for refugees and immigrants found that both language proficiency and an employee's drive and attitude are essential for job retention and promotion.³⁸ Employers also reported other factors for success, such as an employee's sense of security, job skills, and family support system. Within the education and training system, integrating English as a Second Language (ESL) with occupational skills training, is a key strategy to overcome language deficiencies of many refugees and recent immigrants. Workforce programs need to improve soft skill development and forge stronger ties with community-based organizations that can help provide or develop access to support services.

Highline Community College, in partnership with BuRSST for Prosperity, is developing the Gateway Center. This program helps immigrants with prior medical training become recertified for high-demand nursing and healthcare jobs in our state. The center will provide short-term professional and ESL classes, career coaching, and assistance with recertification process. These efforts need to be expanded to help refugees and immigrants create living-wage careers.

Retaining older workers

The state's percentage of adults age 55 and over is expected to increase from 16 percent in 2005 to 22 percent of the labor force in 2030. While many older workers may retire, others will stay in the labor force a few more years. While some of these workers will need minor upgrading of skills, others will require substantial retraining to meet changing job requirements. Either way, employers, and state and local agencies, will need to work together to entice older workers to stay in the workforce and to upgrade their skills.

Here are some examples of Washington companies with programs to retain older workers:³⁹

- Weyerhaeuser: Delayed retirement program where employees may work part-time while still accumulating a pension and enjoying company-paid health insurance.
- Group Health: Nurses who are five years from retirement have opportunities to mentor and teach, as well as do part-time work after retirement.
- Boeing: Offers job-sharing, telecommuting and contract work.

³⁸ Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County by contract with the Athena Institute and the Refugee Resettlement Office, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County Research Project: Employer Strategies for Retaining and Promoting Refugees and Immigrants," January 2004.

³⁹ Seattle Times article by Marsha King, "Companies Find Ways of Retaining Expertise of Older Workers," April 9, 2008.

The 2008 report of the Taskforce on the Aging of the American Workforce at the U.S. Department of Labor outlines strategies in seven key areas that could form the basis for state and local initiatives to retain older workers.⁴⁰

- Legal and regulatory issues (such as pension plans, Social Security benefits, tax policy with respect to retirement savings, and unemployment programs).
- Expanding knowledge of older workers.
- Outreach and education efforts.
- Facilitating self-employment for older workers.
- Flexible work arrangements and customized employment for older workers.
- Tools and technical assistance to support older worker employment.
- Retirement and financial literacy education.

Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, and Oregon are tapping their increasingly mature workforce. *The Arizona Mature Workforce Initiative*,⁴¹ with the motto, “Experience is Our Business!” has connected over 500 older workers to employers, and has laid the groundwork for much greater impact, with job fairs, a job bank, a workforce transition center at a local community college and a program that certifies “mature worker friendly” employers.

Three of Washington’s community and technical colleges offer a launching point for a state initiative to serve older adults. Clark College, Clover Park Technical College, and the Institute for Extended Learning at the Community Colleges of Spokane Community College were among 15 colleges nationally that received a “Plus 50 Initiative” grant from the American Association of Community Colleges and the Atlantic Philanthropies. These grants create or expand programs to serve individuals who are 50 and over. They aim to engage this population in learning, training/re-training programs, and/or volunteer, civic, service activities.

While our workforce development system does not have a specific state program that targets workers who are 50 and over, many of the workforce development programs serve this population. System partners at the state and local levels need to work together to create connections with mature workers, and develop strategies to serve them.

Smoothing transitions for veterans

As U.S. soldiers and sailors return from Iraq and Afghanistan and other military operations, we will need to improve workforce development services aimed at veterans. Washington state citizens have always answered the call to serve our state and nation as soldiers, sailors, airmen, marine, and coast guardsmen in times of peace and war. With 672,000 veterans in the state, Washington is home to one of the largest populations of veterans in the country. Our veterans offer the civilian workplace a high level of skill, training, and experience. The majority of veterans establish career pathways and successfully transition into civilian employment, but many face challenges in advancing their career due to underemployment and low education. In addition, some exit the military facing physical and mental health disabilities that often go undiagnosed or are disclosed later in life.

⁴⁰ U. S. Department of Labor, “Report of the Taskforce on Aging of the American Workforce,” February 2008 found at: http://www.doleta.gov/reports/FINAL_Taskforce_Report_2-11-08.pdf

⁴¹ See the Mature Workers Initiative web site: <http://www.azmatureworkers.com/>

Federal and state programs assist in transferring military skills to the civilian workplace. Initiatives in our state include a two-day Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshop held at Washington's military installations. TAP allows service members transitioning to civilian life the opportunity to learn about benefits and services that include unemployment insurance, WorkSource services and other workforce development programs with education and training assistance. In addition, redeploying National Guard members attend transition briefings to obtain information on employment and training opportunities. For example, programs such as Helmets-to-Hardhats move veterans into approved apprenticeship programs.

Recently, both Congress and the state Legislature passed legislation supporting exiting service members. In 2008, Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act which increased the Montgomery GI Bill benefits for post-9/11 veterans. In 2006, Washington state passed legislation that created the Veterans Innovation Program. This program provides emergency funds for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Funds may be used to meet financial needs ranging from utility bills to assisting with college tuition.

Although these programs can help struggling veterans towards their goal of a high-wage job, they can be difficult to participate in while also trying to be a financial provider for their family. As a result, many will choose underemployment rather than further develop their skills. They find themselves five, 10, or 20 years later challenged as a job seeker who is under-educated and under-skilled in today's workforce. For the pre-9/11 GI Bill veteran, many find their benefits offer less financial support and time usage requirements that are often expired.

To improve veterans services we must:

- Develop programs that provide skill development opportunities designed to generate long-term, high wage employment and provide opportunities for those veterans whose GI Bill support has expired.
- Align general education and training with military experience.
- Centralize and streamline pathways to apprenticeships.
- Include training and education opportunities for spouses and dependents.

Our vision for the future must include helping veterans obtain the education and training for successful civilian careers. This includes making sure that Montgomery GI Bill benefits are used before expiration and providing opportunities for education and training for those whose benefits have expired.

Reducing barriers to employment for people with disabilities

People with disabilities account for 16 percent of the state's working-age population—or nearly one in five Washington workers. Many would like to work, but labor force participation for this population has declined over time. The Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) made great strides in 2007 by eliminating the waiting list of customers. DVR's five-year plan details strategies for serving customers with disabilities. Some strategies are:

- Reaching out to more people with disabilities, not just the hardest to serve.
- Reassessing when, where, and how they serve customers.
- Creating more consistency in services.
- Enhancing partnerships with other state, local and private organizations that deliver services to individuals with disabilities.⁴²

In the coming years, Washington will face an increasing shortage of skilled workers. People with a disability have been an underutilized human resource, and, in the past, have been underrepresented in the workforce at large. Part of the solution to this coming shortage should come from preparing people with disabilities for success in the workplace.
Workforce Board, Focus Papers (www.wtb.wa.gov)

Improving education and employment for communities of color

Between 2000 and 2030, all non-white groups are expected to grow faster than whites.⁴³ Those from non-white racial backgrounds and Hispanics tend to have lower educational levels than non-Hispanic whites. In 2006, while 92 percent of the non-Hispanic whites 25 years or older had completed high school or its equivalency, only 56 percent of Hispanics and 78 percent of persons from non-white racial backgrounds had done so.⁴⁴

Lower levels of education and skills combined with racial and ethnic discrimination have negatively affected the labor market experiences of large percentages of individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. They tend to earn less and are underrepresented in high level positions. These education and employment trends are likely to continue unless we instigate new policies that address issues of access, discrimination, and success in workforce programs.

Another key issue for Asian Americans is the disaggregation of data for the “Asian and Pacific Islander” classification. This is necessary to interpret data accurately and develop policy solutions. As with all categories of race and ethnicity, there is great diversity in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities. While the “Asian” group does well in education outcomes according to national and state data, anecdotal information from immigrants of specific Asian countries often tell a different story. National and state policymakers should explore different types of data collection to better serve the needs of the Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

Issues for ex-offenders

According to the Department of Corrections, about 8,500 offenders return to the community from Washington prisons each year after completing their sentences. A study of the Washington State Institute of Public Policy estimates that more than half of these offenders will commit a

⁴² Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, “A Strategic Plan for 2009-2013” see

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/hrsa/dvr/DVR%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-13.pdf>

⁴³ OFM reported on five major race groups: White only, Black only, American Indian/Alaskan Native only, Asian/Pacific Islander only, and Two or More (i.e., multi-racial). Unless otherwise indicated people from the different racial groups can be either from Hispanic or non-Hispanic origin. Further, people of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

⁴⁴ American Community Survey for 2006, Table S0201 Selected Population Profile.

new felony within 13 years, imposing huge financial costs. In fiscal year 2007, the average annual cost of incarcerating a Washington inmate stood at over \$31,000, according to the Department of Corrections. More than 18,600 prisoners are housed in Washington state prisons, work release facilities and out-of-state prison beds. Many more are behind bars in county and city jails.

Studies show that ex-offenders who are employed are much less likely to re-offend and return to prison or jail. Yet they often cannot find a job. An MDRC report highlights some of the major issues:⁴⁵

- Employers are reluctant to hire someone with a prison record.
- Former prisoners often have low levels of educational attainment.
- Former prisoners often have a limited work history.
- Former prisoners often have competing demands from drug treatment programs and curfews or other restrictions on mobility.

Ex-offenders are also limited in the jobs that are open to them. For example, those with prison records are prohibited from working in much of the health care industry where there are ample jobs and career opportunities.

Recognizing the need to increase efforts to help former prisoners successfully re-enter the community, the 2007 Legislature passed ESSB 6157. In addition to requesting the Department of Corrections to create a long-term plan, the bill provided for four pilot programs to be administered by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, and issued funds to counties with the purpose of identifying offenders' needs and connecting them with needed resources and services that support successful transition to the community.

The grant programs are to include programs with proven success. Education and training plays a large role. Career and technical education, basic education and correctional industries programs lead to reduced recidivism rates of 9 percent, 7.5 percent and 5.9 percent respectively, and have proven cost benefits to both the individual and the community.⁴⁶

The Employment Security Department (ESD) supports the offender reentry initiative through partnership with the Department of Corrections and community service providers across the state. ESD's Offender Employment Services (OES) delivers reentry and preemployment skills training in 14 correctional institutions and five Community Justice Centers. A model reentry program is being piloted at Stafford Creek Correction Center that provides a community resource database, teaches computerized job search skill, and encourages offenders to participate in their own release planning. OES also provides training to WorkSource and WorkSource partners to help staff work more effectively with those who have prior convictions.

This cross agency work should continue to best meet the workforce needs of ex-offenders and their communities.

⁴⁵ Dan Bloom , Cindy Redcross , Janine Zweig (Urban Institute), Gilda Azurdia, "Transitional Jobs for Ex-Prisoners: Early Impacts from a Random Assignment Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Prisoner Reentry Program, MDRC, November 2007.

⁴⁶ Steve Aos, "Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates, October 2006, page 9.

Online cost-of-living calculator promotes self-sufficiency

A new online resource provides a way for low-income customers in the WorkSource system to help themselves. The Washington State Self-Sufficiency calculator links Washingtonians with valuable information regarding work support services, including child care assistance, housing subsidies, and food stamps. Launched in October 2007, the Washington State Self Sufficiency Calculator builds on a previous calculator developed by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. A \$100,000 grant from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, and contributions from a partnership of Workforce Development Councils statewide and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges provided funds to develop the site. We need to promote wider use of the calculator among job-seekers and case managers to test different strategies for achieving financial, career, and education goals. See: <http://www.thecalculator.org/>.

Working together to serve target populations

Many of the programs in the workforce development system serve customers and students from target populations. For example, workforce education students at the community and technical colleges are more diverse than the general population.⁴⁷ Because targeted groups are overrepresented in our low-income population, we will likely improve outcomes for targeted populations when we improve outcomes for low-income populations. When we serve low-income populations, policy and frontline staff need to be mindful of the services they are providing, and how they are provided. As we work to serve all adults and adults with barriers to further education and employment we need strategies that are both broad and also target specific need.

Steps To Get Us There

- Expand the use of the self-sufficiency calculator to all Workforce Development Councils, and provide training for frontline staff.
Lead(s): WDCs, ESD, with other partners.
- Expand the number of Adult Basic Education programs that integrate occupational skills training through the I-BEST model.
Lead(s): SBCTC with other partners.
- Expand use of the Food Stamps Education and Training program for customers with the greatest barriers to employment.
Lead(s): SBCTC with other partners.
- Enhance professional development and provide credentials for career coaching, mentoring, and instruction in life skills and employability skills for WorkSource staff, training institutions, community-based organizations, employers, and others.
Lead(s): ESD, WDCs, working with SBCTC, business and labor organizations, with other partners.

⁴⁷ Workforce Training Results 2008, May Board Meeting, PowerPoint presentation, Slide 5.

- Enhance employment and training options for targeted populations (people of color, people with disabilities and women), ex-offenders, and veterans.

Lead(s): ESD, WDC working with SBCTC, business and labor organizations, with other partners.

- Improve workforce development services for individuals with disabilities by:
 - Reaching out to more people with disabilities, and utilize community-based organizations to assist with this.
 - Reassessing the business needs of employers and services to customers with disabilities.
 - Building stronger linkages between workforce development services and programs that provide the essential support services needed by many individuals with disabilities to participate in the workforce.
 - Enhancing partnerships with other state, local, and private organizations that deliver services to individuals with disabilities.

Lead(s): ESD, WDCs, DSHS – DVR, with other partners.

- Develop a system to provide post-employment services to adults to improve work retention and career advancement.

Lead(s): ESD, WDCs, business and labor organizations, with other partners.

- Develop a state strategy to serve the “50 Plus” workforce including flexible work schedules, customized training to upgrade skills, and strategies to enable industry to take advantage of the skills and knowledge of retired workers.

Lead(s): Workforce Board working with Governor’s Council on Aging, SBCTC and community and technical college pilot sites, with other partners.

Adult Objective 4: The WorkSource system provides integrated and effective customer service without barriers associated with separate, individual programs.

No later than 2018:

- WorkSource is a functionally integrated service delivery system that measurably improves the employability of customers.

Rationale for Adult Objective 4 and Steps to Get Us There

Working together to serve students and job seekers

In 2007, the Workforce Board adopted the Washington Workforce Compact. The *Compact* is candid about the challenges of working together to remove barriers:

Sometimes, the barriers that stand in the way of our customers achieving their goals are of our own making. Not that they are intentional. But sometimes, individual program objectives bump up against the policies or practices of another program in a way that is less than optimal for our customers. For example, the administrative rules of one program may make sense in the context of that program, but when put together with the administrative rules of another program, customers may be faced with conflicting sets of procedures.

The partners to this *Compact* commit to a collective effort to identify and remove government or other barriers that stand in the way of serving our customers. Such barriers may include, but are not limited to policies, practices, regulations, or performance measures. What appear as barriers may exist for a good reason. This must be considered. But we commit to identifying and removing those barriers that don't make sense from the perspective of the goals we are trying to achieve for our customers.

Through interviews and surveys, the Workforce Board has begun collecting information from state and local agencies, and their customers, to identify barriers and develop solutions to eliminate them. The initial barriers to be addressed are:

- The Need for Streamlined “Co-Enrollment” Processes
- The Need for Staff Cross-Training
- The Value of Co-locating Staff Among Workforce Partners
- The Need for Consistency in Performance Measures

Steps To Get Us There

- Identify barriers to integrated customer service and implement solutions.
Lead(s): All organizations represented on the Workforce Board with other partners.
- Increase integration of WorkSource partner programs through methods such as co-enrollments and co-locations among WorkSource partner programs.

Lead(s): ESD, WDCs, with other partners.

- Increase the use of consistent performance measures among WorkSource partner programs.

Lead(s): ESD, Workforce Board, with other partners.

- Improve the integration of assessments, counseling, employment services, and training in the WorkSource system.

Lead(s): ESD, WDCs working with SBCTC, private career schools with other partners.

- Improve linkages with community-based organizations, especially those that serve target populations, ex-offenders, and veterans.

Lead(s): ESD, WDCs, Workforce Board with other partners.

- Identify opportunities for partnership that will provide resources to serve more customers in the workforce development system.

Lead(s): All organizations represented on the Workforce Board.

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Industry Goal and Summary of Objectives

Industry Goal: Meet the workforce needs of industry by preparing students, current workers, and dislocated workers with the skills employers need.

Objective 1

The workforce development system supplies the number of newly prepared workers needed to meet current and emerging employer needs.

No later than 2018:

- Raise mid-level degrees and certificates to 36,200 annually, an increase of 9,400 degrees and certificates annually.

Objective 2

The workforce development system strengthens Washington's economy, focusing on strategic industry clusters as a central organizing principle.

No later than 2018:

- Washington's workforce and economic development programs have established track records of effective service to the strategic industry clusters in Washington.
- Washington's workforce development system prepares the number of workers needed to fill job openings in strategic industry clusters.

Objective 3

Current and dislocated workers, and job seekers receive education and training that builds competitive skills and businesses.

No later than 2018:

- A majority of mid- and lower-wage employees receive training from either their employers or the workforce development system.
- Dislocated worker programs are easy to navigate and enable good wage replacement results.

Rationale for Industry Objective 1 and Steps to Get Us There

Objective 1

The workforce development system supplies the number of newly prepared workers to meet current and emerging employer needs.

- No later than 2018, raise mid-level degrees and certificates to 36,200 annually, an increase of 9,400 degrees and certificates annually.

Increasing capacity in middle skill training is a must

“We must be second to no other nation in educational attainment and in discovery and innovation, or economic security and the quality of life in our communities will deteriorate.”⁴⁸

Meeting the workforce needs of industry requires expanding the number of people who receive education and training of at least one year and up to, but less than, four years of postsecondary training. Consistent with previous surveys, the Workforce Board 2007 statewide survey of employers in Washington reports more employers having difficulty recruiting people with middle skill training--specifically those with vocational certificates and degrees--than any other type of education. (See Figure 3.) Our gap analysis estimates we are meeting only 77 percent of employer demand for workers with middle skill training. To meet our workforce need we must increase capacity in middle skill programs, inform potential students, youth and adults of benefits of such training, and encourage more employers to offer education and training to advance their employees.

Figure 3
**Number and Percent of Employers with Difficulty Hiring Qualified Workers,
 Results by Education Level**

Education Levels	Estimated Number of Employers With Difficulty Hiring	Percent of Employers With Difficulty Hiring
		2007
Neither a high school diploma or GED	15,000	8%
High school diploma or GED	25,600	13%
Some college course work	43,400	22%
Vocational certificate	36,000	18%
Vocational associate degree	27,700	14%
Academic associate degree	19,900	10%
Baccalaureate degree	24,900	13%
Masters degree	15,000	8%
Doctoral or professional degree	10,700	6%

The Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council and its administrative arm at the Department of Labor and Industries support registered apprenticeship training around the state. Although most of the current apprenticeship programs in the state are in the construction trades, the apprenticeship training model has been successfully used in several other industry sectors and it could be a useful model of training for a wide variety of occupations.

The Governor and Legislature have recognized the need to expand apprenticeship training in recent years. They provided \$2.835 million for 2007–2009 to expand apprenticeship programs by 300 full-time equivalent students, and \$350,000 for incentive grants to school districts to develop pre-apprenticeship programs. The 2008 Legislature provided \$3 million to expand aerospace apprenticeship training programs. This is critical for meeting employers’ needs for skilled workers. Apprenticeships also suit many adult workers who would not enter a traditional education environment because of reasons such as the need to keep working to support their family, and negative experiences with traditional education systems.

⁴⁸ *White Paper for Presidential Candidates*, State Higher Education Executive Officers 2008

Steps To Get Us There

- Increase annual capacity in middle-skill education and training programs (greater than one year but less than four years) by 9,400 degrees and certificates. *Lead(s): SBCTC, and private career schools. Requires support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – State appropriations.*
- Expand apprenticeship training opportunities and recruitment of employers who hire apprentices for traditional and non-traditional programs.⁴⁹ *Lead(s): Department of Labor and Industries – Apprenticeship Training Council, Governor and Legislature. Requires General Fund – State appropriations.*

Industry Objective 2: The workforce development system strengthens Washington’s economy, focusing on strategic industry clusters as a central organizing principle.

No later than 2018:

- Washington’s workforce and economic development programs have established track records of effective service to the state’s strategic industry clusters.
- Washington’s workforce development system prepares the number of workers needed to fill job openings in strategic industry clusters.

Rationale for Industry Objective 2 and Steps to Get Us There

Coordinating workforce and economic development

In addition to expanding middle skill training capacity, Governor Gregoire’s action plan to grow Washington’s jobs and economy, outlined in the *The Next Washington*, called for improved partnerships in workforce and economic development at the state and regional levels. Working to strengthen industry clusters throughout Washington is one strategy that holds vast promise for strengthening our economy and offering our residents excellent job opportunities.

What is an industry cluster?

An industry cluster is the term for “a geographic concentration of interdependent competitive firms that do business with each other, including firms that sell inside and outside of the geographic region as well as support firms that supply new materials, components, and business services, and other institutions including government and education.” It includes upstream suppliers of inputs—such as firms that supply materials and equipment, and downstream customers, including other firms. It also includes related entities that shape the environment within which the industry operates—such as government regulatory bodies. The key characteristic is inter-relatedness.”⁵⁰

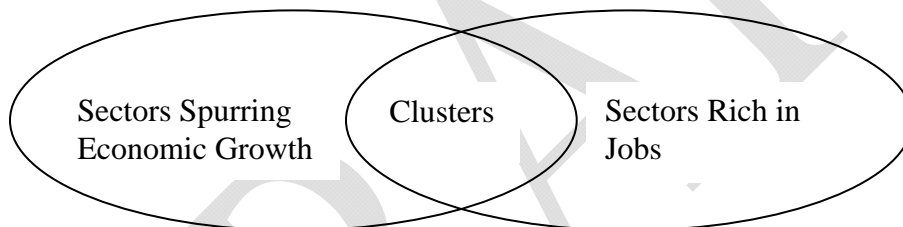
⁴⁹ Apprenticeships in construction are one example of “traditional” apprenticeships, while apprenticeships in health care fields would be considered “non-traditional.”

⁵⁰ In 2007, the Governor’s Policy Office convened a work group that developed definitions for the terms “cluster,” “sector,” and related terms. This definition and discussion relies on the work of Michael E. Porter. E.g.; see, *Clusters and Competition: New Agendas for Companies, Governments, and Institutions*, Chapter 7 of *On Competition*, Michael E. Porter, Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, MA, 1998.

Local, state, and national economies are characterized by prominent pockets of unusual economic success—entertainment in Los Angeles, shoes in Northern Italy, pharmaceuticals in Philadelphia. We have many such examples in Washington—wine in Walla Walla, software east of Lake Washington, aerospace in Snohomish and King counties. Much of the world’s economic success is situated in such localized concentrations of economic star power.

Although we live in an increasingly global economy, location still matters. Different locations have different advantages and disadvantages for particular industries. Locations vary in factor inputs such as natural resources, human capital, and physical infrastructure, supporting institutions such as education and research institutions, and access to suppliers and to markets. Over time, economic concentrations emerge where these factors are particularly favorable for a given industry. Sometimes too, chance plays a role, such as the birthplace of a single visionary entrepreneur.⁵¹

We should focus on clusters because that is where economic growth is most likely to occur and where innovation is most likely to begin. Focusing on clusters also makes special sense for coordinating workforce and economic development, since clusters are sectors of the economy where workforce and economic development overlap.



Government can assist clusters by helping to provide factors of production and alleviating bottlenecks, such as skill shortages, that impede cluster growth. Government can provide public goods, such as education, roads, and water and sewer systems, that are of value to many firms because their benefits are not limited to the particular firms or individuals that directly pay for the good or service. By focusing on providing public goods for clusters, rather than on resources for individual firms, government can avoid entering into unfair competition. Government can instead assist all firms that face similar needs.

In targeting clusters, government does not have to guess at which industry sector will emerge to be the next big thing. Cluster strategy directs government to target industry sectors that the private market has already identified as competitive for that geographic location. This is not to say that a focus on emerging industries or innovation has no place in cluster strategy—far from it. It suggests that a place to focus is on emerging industries and innovations that are interconnected with a cluster’s core industry. An example is building university research capacity in automotive technology in a geographic area with an existing automobile manufacturing cluster. Governments and others would be wise, however, to exercise caution before expending resources

⁵¹ For further discussion see paper by Bryan Wilson, “Skills for the Next Washington” White Paper, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, 2008.

to build a cluster where one does not exist, potentially competing with other geographic areas where the market has already demonstrated a competitive advantage.

Coordinating workforce and economic development around regional clusters

While some of the ways that government can assist industry clusters exist in Washington, others are missing. Also missing is an agreed upon framework that puts the pieces into place in a coherent manner. For state and local government to effectively coordinate workforce and economic development around clusters in Washington, certain steps should take place:

- Clusters should be identified.
- Cluster partners should be brought together.
- Programs and resources should be available to assist clusters.
- State and regional workforce and economic plans should lay out how government will support clusters.
- State and local government should implement programs and direct resource to assist cluster in a coordinated and strategic manner.

Other cluster initiatives

The community and technical colleges have established Centers of Excellence in 11 Washington clusters. These centers are sources of expertise on how colleges can assist in closing skill gaps in their regional clusters and in the core industry sectors throughout the state. The designated colleges develop expertise, curriculum, faculty, and partnerships related to a particular industry cluster. The critical feature is that the center really knows and understands its industry cluster and is a lasting resource for the cluster. Working closely with its related Skill Panel, the center provides technical assistance to colleges around the state so that their services are fashioned to meet industry needs.

The community and technical colleges and the four-year institutions receive “high demand funds” from the Legislature to increase student enrollments in fields where employer demand exceeds the number of students coming out of in-state colleges and universities. The institutions can use these funds to address the skill gaps in clusters. High employer demand programs of study are not always the same as clusters, though they often support clusters.

The community and technical colleges also receive Workforce Development Funds. These are fairly flexible funds used to start up, expand, or update workforce education programs. These funds can also be directed toward programs in industry clusters.

Spokane teachers get first-hand look at manufacturing jobs

Through the Greater Spokane Inc Manufacturing Roundtable (an Industry Skill Panel program), Wagstaff, a Spokane manufacturer of sophisticated molds, casting machines, and automated systems, hosted Teaching the Teacher Workshops to acquaint teachers with manufacturing job opportunities. With these workshops and follow-up student tours arranged by the workshop attendees, over 100 teachers and students have visited Wagstaff to learn about educational requirements for technical and skilled jobs in manufacturing.

Steps To Get Us There

- Establish Industry Skill Panels that provide information on skill needs in strategic industry clusters in all workforce development areas.

Lead(s): Workforce Board, CTED, WDCs, and other partners.

- Establish Centers of Excellence that provide best practice support to education providers for all strategic industry clusters in the state.

Lead(s): SBCTC, with other partners.

- Expand High Employer Demand programs of study at all levels of postsecondary education and target under-represented labor pools to facilitate their entry to high demand occupations.

Lead(s): SBCTC, private career schools, HECB, public baccalaureate and independent colleges. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – State appropriations.

- Prepare more individuals to work in industry clusters that provide middle-wage and high-wage job opportunities.

Lead(s): SBCTC, private career schools, Department of Labor and Industries – Apprenticeship Training Council, Workforce Board, WDCs, with other partners.

- Coordinate workforce development and economic development planning efforts at the state and local levels, including an emphasis on industry clusters.

Lead(s): Workforce Board, EDC, CTED, WDCs, ADOs, with other partners.

- Provide the best possible services to support strategic industry clusters by:
 - Identifying and removing barriers to serving industry clusters.
 - Identifying and implementing best practices in industry cluster development.
 - Identifying and implementing best practices in unified business services at WorkSource Centers.
 - Providing incentives to regions and local areas to convene and support industry clusters through programs and resources.

Lead(s): Workforce Board, ESD, EDC, CTED, with other partners.

- Establish a state initiative modeled after the WIRED grant program.

Lead(s): Workforce Board, CTED, WDCs and ADOs, with other partners.

- Convene an annual conference for workforce and economic development.

Lead(s): Workforce Board and CTED, with other partners.

A Strategic Industry Skill Panel Example

The Northwest Workforce Development Council's Industry Skill Panel in **Marine Manufacturing & Technology** has had an immense positive impact for this industry cluster chiefly through increasing recruitment, developing relevant and up to date curricula, and expanded training capacity. The Industry Skill Panel provided a conduit between education providers to implement a variety of programs including the following:

- Marine Carpentry and Marine Electrician Curricula.
- New classes in Marine Carpentry, Marine Electrical and expanded capacity in Yacht Finish, and ABYC National Certification.
- Marine Aluminum Welding Curricula, and Marine Aluminum Welding skill

- In-house marine aluminum welding training for new and incumbent workers at All American Marine, Inc. and other work places.
- Developed on-site DVD-based training model to train large crews on production processes.
- Convened stakeholders at meetings, summits, and presented at conferences
- Created high school curriculum for Summer Marine Career Camps (“Float Your Boat” and Marine Manufacturing Summer Career Camps).
- Conducted Marine Manufacturing & Technology Maritime Breakfasts for high school and junior counselors in the area.
- Military Skills Crosswalk matching Pacific Marine industry skill requirements to military occupations.

“I would like to recognize the continuing effort that the 11-county Marine Manufacturing and Technology Regional Skill Panel partnership has contributed to the shipyard’s workforce needs. The emerging talent pool created over the last three years, through multiple training academies and industry outreach throughout our region, is a direct result of our partnership efforts in building a sustainable pipeline. Incumbent worker training has not only benefited our industry, but produced training models for regional manufacturers seeking on-site specific process training. Outreach to veterans through the development of the Military Crossover has offered solutions and strategies to our staff as we seek to maintain our status in the yacht building industry.”

We are not only aware, but very appreciative that this partnership has opened new avenues of education in many areas of our industry, as well as a direct pipeline for our young people that are preparing to enter the workforce. We look forward to the future as this partnership continues to be a valuable learning experience with tangible results. This is the kind of “out-of-the-box” thinking that will aid our industry and many industries in the coming years.”

*Bob Brown, Manager
Westport Shipyard, WA*

Industry Objective 3: Current and dislocated workers, and job seekers receive education and training that builds competitive skills and businesses.

No later than 2018:

- A majority of mid- and lower-wage employees receive training from either their employers or the workforce development system.
- Dislocated worker programs are easy to navigate and provide good wage replacement.

Rationale for Industry Objective 3 and Steps to Get Us There

Customized Training

In 2007, 60 percent of employers in Washington reported providing or paying for four or more hours of classroom training for their employees. Research indicates that this type of training is usually concentrated on higher level workers and in certain industries. This type of training usually does not lead to a credential. We need to communicate a message to employers and employees across Washington: It pays to engage in further education and training, and where

possible we want to see employees raise their level of education at least to one year of postsecondary education and a credential.

While employers report that state supported customized training is very attractive to them when considering to set up in the state and support expansion, Washington ranks near the bottom when we compare the amount of public support that states provide for customized job training for current employees. However, we have increased support for customized training in recent years, though not enough to meet demand. The state programs include the Customized Training Program and the Job Skills Program. Customized training can also be funded through the federal Workforce Investment Act.

The Governor and Legislature supported customized training for Washington's high demand health care occupations by allocating \$1.5 million in the 2008 supplemental budget to fund the Health, Employee, Education and Training (HEET) initiative. This provides competitive grants to labor, management, and college partnerships to develop, or expand and evaluate, innovative training programs for hospital workers that lead to careers in nursing and other high-demand health care fields.

By reviewing our suite of customized programs, and assessing the needs and incentives, we can expand and improve our services to employers and workers through customized job training.

Since the start of the Job Skills Program at Intalco, we've been able to not only meet our skilled craft headcount needs, but we've also had a high retention rate (over 93%) of participants in the program. In addition, the JSP candidates have progressed significantly in their training, which has both increased their wage rate and allowed us to backfill their former production positions with new employees.

Jan Furnas, Alcoa Intalco Workers / Bellingham Technical College

Joint labor-management training partnerships

Joint labor-management training partnerships aim to meet the skill gap needs of both employers and the workforce. They are primarily funded through collectively-bargained contributions so their funding is dependable. The most common type of labor management training partnerships in Washington are Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATCs) that primarily provide apprenticeship programs.⁵² Another example of joint labor-management training partnerships is the SEIU Healthcare NW Training Alliance which is an alliance of the SEIU Healthcare NW training Partnership, (training for long-term care workers) and SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-employer Training Trust, (training and upgrading programs for incumbent hospital workers) which includes apprenticeships and a variety of other programs and supports.

Steps To Get Us There

- Increase the level of public and private support for customized training for current workers including joint labor-management training partnerships, recruit more workers

⁵² See Washington Administrative Code for apprenticeship programs approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council. WAC 296-05-309.

and employers to participate, and improve program design to best suit their needs. (Also see strategies in the Adult section of this plan.)

Lead(s): SBCTC, Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

- Increase the number of working adults gaining further education and training at the workplace through distance learning and other methods including the integration of Adult Basic English / English language and occupational skills. (Also see strategies in the Adult section of this plan.)

Lead(s): Governor and Legislature. Workforce Board working with SBCTC, business and labor organizations, joint labor-management training partnerships with other partners.

- Expand the availability of Lifelong Learning Accounts to fund worker training.

Lead(s): Workforce Board, HECB, Association of Washington Business, business and labor organizations, with other partners.

- Align eligibility criteria for dislocated worker programs. (Also see strategies in the Adult section of this plan.)

Lead(s): Workforce Board, ESD, SBCTC, WDCs, with other partners.

- Establish a toolbox of work-ready assessments and promote their use in a variety of settings.

Lead(s): Association of Washington Business, Workforce Board, ESD, WDCs, WorkSource Center partner agencies.