
NORTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AND WAGNER-PEYSER
OPERATIONS PLAN MODIFICATION
2009-2010**

(DRAFT)

SUBMITTED AS AN 2007-2008 LOCAL PLAN ADDENDUM

**TO:
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT
WORKSOURCE STANDARDS AND INTEGRATION DIVISION
MAY, 28 2009**

**THIS PLAN MODIFICATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT BEGINNING
MAY 29, 2009**

PURPOSE:

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MODIFICATION IS TO EXTEND THE CURRENT LOCAL PLAN THROUGH JUNE 2010 AND DESCRIBE REVISED OPERATIONS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN AND THE PROPOSED USE OF THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS PROVIDED THROUGH THE RECOVERY ACT.

OPERATIONS PLAN MODIFICATION 2009

1. How will the local area ensure that both the Recovery Act and regular formula funds are expended timely and concurrently to substantially increase the number of individuals receiving services?

North Central's budget process integrates Formula and Recovery Act revenue to provide core, intensive and training services to dislocated workers, youth and adults. The budgeting process began with the local board prioritizing populations, desired services and outcomes. Recovery Act funding will be used to increase capacity in vocational education, employer based learning and summer youth employment opportunities. Funds from partners are integrated through the one stop delivery system and effective local partnerships. These funds include Wagner-Peyser, Worker Retraining, Trade Act, Vocational Rehabilitation, Training Benefits, and State and Federal financial aid such as Pell.

Utilizing increased resources from the Federal Economic Stimulus, the Employment Security Department (ESD) throughout Washington State will receive an additional 36 Work Source Specialist 3 positions. This increased funding will provide UI claimants', dislocated workers, youth, and low income adults with low skills increased access to labor exchange services, re-employment modules, skill development and job search services.

North Central ESD locations received an additional four full-time employees from ARRA funding. The job duties of these positions will include:

- Staff assigned specifically to the resource computer room to provide assistance with registration in SKIES, development of employment plans, administer work skill assessments, provide job search activities and facilitate work skill development.
- Staff to conduct work skills assessment that would be available in all sites to give customers the information needed to determine an employment pathway.
- Staff assistance in support of the new front-end service delivery model.

With the addition of Recovery Act funds, budgeted Workforce Investment 09-10 expenses are up 41% over the current year's \$3.9 million. Overall, \$5.0 million is budgeted to deliver workforce investment services for 1,200 participants. Another 1,000 will benefit from skill assessment, career planning and other informational services for a total served of 2,200. This is a net increase of 12% over the current year. PY09 formula allocations are down 10% for Adult, 15% Youth and 29% Dislocated Worker (without PY09 mitigation). At the same time, the average cost of an ITA increases 20% as tuition goes up and as the cold economy stops luring students away before graduating.

ESD anticipates the number of Dislocated Workers and Unemployment Insurance claimants will increase by 10% over current numbers. In addition, the following performance measures are to be met:

- Increased number of UI claimants fully registered in SKIES
- Improvement in the number and quality of referrals to job orders
- Improvement in the access of services available in the Resource Room for UI claimants
- Increased number of referrals to Training Benefits, Workforce Investment and other Dislocated Worker Programs

2. How will the local area increase access to education and training opportunities for adults and dislocated workers needing new skills?

The strategy starts with information. One stop Centers have increased the number of information workshops to help workers understand their skills and interests, make career decisions, plan future goals and know how to access the financial aid, support services and training benefits available.

During times of high unemployment and low growth, the number of people interested in vocational education increases. In addition, completion rates increase as they are less likely to leave school to take a job offer. Expenditures increase as completion rates increase causing the cost per completion to rise. Increasing ITA limits will enable participants meet higher education costs and graduate.

Using Recovery funds, the local area will increase capacity for training in high demand occupations by contracting with local community colleges to provide additional vocational education classes. Individual Training Accounts will be issued at higher levels to help individuals cover the higher cost of education. Financial Aid and Training Benefit workshops will be increased to help adults and dislocated workers access a variety of funding sources. This will increase opportunities for everyone including recipients of public assistance, low-income adults and veterans.

Other leveraged resources include but are not limited to: Training Benefits, State Need Grants, private scholarships, and other partner resources from DVR and L&I.

3. Has the local area reviewed existing eligible training providers' and their capacity to meet the current and near-term projected needs for additional training enrollments in demand courses?

The WDC has inventoried community college medical, technical and industrial program capacity. Most programs (where they exist) have openings for Fall quarter starts at this time. Most medical programs require a year of preparation meaning that a worker laid off today would most likely not qualify for admission this Fall. But most programs without such rigorous prerequisites have seats available. There are exceptions like Truck Driving.

The WDC has approved a budget to create new classes or programs that do not exist or are full. This will be accomplished by contracting with Community Colleges to pay the full cost of classes such as:

- the first year nursing class for up to 18 students at Wenatchee Valley College – Omak
- Truck Driver course and a new Refrigeration program at Big Bend Community College

The cost for contracted education is expected to average \$10,000 per student. Training related and support brings the total to \$15,000 per participant. At these rates, ARRA funds will go fast.

4. Describe the local plan for increasing access to reemployment services for UI claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their benefits?

Additional staff will provide enhanced labor exchange activities, re-employment modules, work skill development, and job search activities. Specifically:

- Identify those most likely to exhaust benefits and call them in sooner to emphasize training and re-employment services.
- Increase frequency of Orientation and Re-employment modules
- Call 100% of the Mass Call In List for Orientation
- Increase number and frequency of Job Hunter Workshops

5. Describe local strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers, including UI claimants have universal access to the minimum required universal core services?

The Area’s delivery of core services reflects the principles of the Workforce Investment Act including universal access, customer choice, continuous improvement, performance outcomes and integrated service. Making customers informed about the full array of core services is the cornerstone of its WorkSource Integration Framework (WIF) application.

Services address the employment and training needs of individuals through an integrated, seamless service delivery system that provides universal access to all services by job seekers and employers. Services are available to all job seekers including dislocated workers, displaced homemakers: adults, including public assistance recipients; veterans and eligible spouses; individuals in non-traditional training; and persons with multiple barriers.

Upon entering a Center, customers encounter a friendly and informative reception staff equipped to handle a diverse population. Applicants receive an orientation to the full array of services available in the Center. The orientation may be provided in a group setting or through other means such as computer video presentation. Individuals may then self-access available resources, including labor market information, Internet access to career and training information, use of phones and fax machines, newspapers, and employment information. Staff will generally be available for those customers requiring assistance in utilizing resources.

Proposed changes to increasing the utilization of universal core and front-end services include:

- Additional staff at front end
- Replacement of Employment Security computers
- Increased frequency and mode of orientation
- Quick registrations at the front end

- Triage to gauge needs of customers
- Additional staff in resource room
- Ensure easy access to all programs regardless of their point of entry in the system

6. Describe how ARRA funds will enhance local integrated service delivery strategies in the following functional areas: front-end, skills/employment, and business-services.

The front-end ensures customers have a good understanding of their abilities and interests, the local labor market, employer expectations and other core information. ARRA and Formula grants pay for all or part of the front-end function in most Centers and also fund skill improvement and business services. Assessment and data-driven career counseling will be integrated in to service strategies to support customers in successful training and job search activities that align with areas of anticipated economic and job growth. ARRA will fund vocational education, on-the-job training and basic skills education through instruction at the Area’s learning centers, one stop centers and community colleges. Business services are coordinated with WorkSource partners, in particular Employment Security.

Wagner-Peyser ARRA funding enhancement in the front-end, skills/employment, and business services areas include:

- Additional staffing in support of the front-end service delivery model
- Increase in full registrations and initial assessments to better gauge the needs of the customer
- Increase the number of job and training referrals to workforce investment and other One Stop partners
- Hire a Business Services Manager (WorkSource Specialist 6) to enhance ESD business services. Duties could include:
 - Work with local ESD/One Stop business services staff
 - Oversee local implementation of Wagner Peyser ARRA policies and procedures
 - Lead contact with ARRA employers
 - Coordinate ARRA jobs at the local level and act as a liaison with ESD Central Office
 - Build collaborative professional relationships with businesses
 - Attend and present as appropriate at business group functions
 - Monitor the effectiveness of the State’s Business Outreach Campaign and make recommendations to the ESD Central Office
 - Monitor performance and tracking data for business services
 - Work closely with regional LMEA economist

7. Describe local efforts to target training to regional economies, including high growth and emerging industry sectors and awarding ITAs for careers in energy efficiency, renewable energy, “green” collar jobs, and health care as discussed in the Recovery Act?

According to a report issued by the Employment Security Department in 2009 entitled, *Washington State Green Economy Jobs*, the North Central Workforce Development Area has the second highest total number of green jobs of any area in Washington state at 5,394. More than 82

percent of green jobs in the region are associated with preventing or reducing pollution such as organic farming together with the processing and packaging of grocery products grown organically. This represents the highest concentration of green jobs by a WDA in any of the designated “green core” areas, which include energy efficiency, preventing or reducing pollution, mitigation and cleanup of pollution, and renewable energy. Agriculture-related industries and occupations represent over half of all employment in this green area, followed by construction, and waste management and remediation services. At 4.4 percent of total employment, green jobs in the area are proportionately higher than in any other WDA.

Some green jobs are manual. For example, the construction of steel blades used in wind turbines would be considered a green job. Others are managerial or scientific. Individuals who make their living designing energy-efficient buildings or planning out green space for a city can also consider themselves green-collar workers. In the North Central region, green jobs are found in traditional industries. Crop production; crop harvesting services; management; farm labor contractors; soil preparation and planting; residential, commercial, and industrial building construction; hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste collection, treatment, and disposal; landfill and materials recovery facilities; and recycling services can all be considered green jobs when done in an environmentally friendly way.

Hydroelectric power generation and distribution is the state’s biggest clean energy industry. The construction of Columbia River dams and development of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project changed forever not only the landscape of the region, but the economic possibilities for North Central Washington. However, there is increasing concern from the hydroelectric industry that, as baby boomers retire, there will not be enough trained power plant operators or linemen to fill those vacancies. A 50 percent decrease in the energy generation workforce is expected in the next decade. To address this problem, Wenatchee Valley College has developed an energy technology certificate program to educate individuals planning a career in the power generation industry. The first class earned certificates in the spring of 2007.

Concerns about environmental contamination from fossil fuel usage have increased interest in developing alternative energy sources. Reduction of the unit cost of solar cell production, coupled with foreign government subsidies, is supporting the development of the solar grade silicon market. Renewable Energy Corporation (REC) of Norway, a world leader in polysilicon production, finished construction of a new plant in Moses Lake and announced plans for two expansions worth more than \$1 billion in 2008. Polysilicon is used in the manufacture of solar panels. REC’s plant in Moses Lake employs 350 people, and will need an additional 170 workers to operate the new expansions, a fluidized-bed reactor and gas plant, once they are built. Most workers hired will be provided with short-term technical training.

Katana Industries is another renewable energy-related company, new to the area since 2005. Katana builds giant steel towers for wind turbine generators. Demand for wind turbines has been strong and the company has worked with the Port of Ephrata and Grant County Economic Development Council to expand into an 85,000 square foot building. The organization operates a plant in Ephrata that employs about 80 welders and fabricators, jobs that require skills in heavy steel fabrication. In 2006, Big Bend Community College added an ESL track to its Welding Technology Program so that individuals with limited English proficiency could learn welding.

In these examples, skills are improved in college or on-the-job with Workforce Investment funds. This effort will continue with ARRA funds in addition to continued targeting of health care occupations such as nursing, radiology technician, CNA, medical assistant, etc.

8. States are to ensure that supportive services and needs-related payments described in WIA section 134(e)(2) and (3) are available to support the employment and training needs of priority populations. Will the local area offer supportive services and needs-related payments (NRPs) to eligible adults and dislocated workers?

The fiscal agent ensures maximum access to support for individuals showing financial need. Caps for support such as gas, groceries, and utilities will be raised. The availability will be well communicated at orientation and counseling meetings. The area does not have the capacity to disseminate and track needs related payments.

9. How the local area will deliver summer youth components including employment opportunities that include work experience? Describe the anticipated program design for the summer youth program including the time period involved.

North Central will place all summer youth participants into work-based training which includes work experience, internship and on-the-job training. Summer youth participants may begin May 1, 2009 and end no later than September 30, 2009. The Area also will offer pre-employment training, as well as opportunities for youth to attend basic skills, Business Week and Challenge Course activities.

Staff strives to develop work experience sites that match participants' career interests and aptitudes. Job interest and aptitude assessments are administered to summer youth participants. The staff also endeavors to develop worksites that provide excellent supervision and safety. Furthermore, staff attempt to develop worksites that offer green jobs. For example, staff coordinates with local Community Action Councils for work experiences in weatherization and projects with WSU cooperative extension for "eco-jobs."

North Central will implement projects that combine classroom and work-based learning. For example, Habitat for Humanity youth attend the Tech Center carpentry class before helping build the next low cost house. This exposes participants to apprenticeship and construction. Another project combines the Tech Center digital media class with work experience to produce a youth program information video. Completers will earn a quarter credit toward graduation.

10. To what extent does the local area plan to complement youth work experience with classroom-based learning? As noted in TEGL 14-08, local areas have the flexibility to determine for each youth participant whether academic learning must be directly linked to a summer employment opportunity.

Academic learning will be available for any youth participating in summer employment. Basic skills instruction is offered at four learning centers throughout the area and open to any youth desiring to study and improve their skills during the summer months. Certified instructors staff the learning centers and facilitate individualized, self paced instruction.

Project based learning concepts such as planning, budgeting, implementation and presentation of the project is utilized when groups of participants work together. Academic skills are essential to these phases and are both utilized and improved throughout the project duration.

11. Describe how the local area will oversee youth activities and summer employment, and train staff in implementing the various aspects of summer employment, including appropriate wage and hour provisions, child labor laws, and work site supervision and safety?

North Central assigned specific staff to oversee and implement the summer youth program. In addition to regular employees, the local area hired temporary employees in early April 2009 to oversee youth activities and summer employment.

Throughout March, April and May 2009 staff received training to implement the various aspects of the summer youth program. In March 2009 managers and the Managing Director attended a summer youth clinic which provided a summer youth program overview. In April 2009 staff attended Washington State's Training Providers conference which included summer youth program related sessions. Also, the local area conducted a training session in April 2009 covering training topics such as work based training, employment competency system, wage and hour provisions, child labor laws, work site development, supervision and safety. In early May 2009 staff attended SKIES/MIS training.

12. Does the local area plan to ensure that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training including the youth most in need of assistance?

Recruitment involves high schools, alternative schools, juvenile detention, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Opportunities Industrialization Center (for MSFW youth), DSHS and other partners referring youth to information meetings. School Counselors are instrumental in referring potentially eligible youth directly to orientation meetings. All youth participating in summer employment activities will learn the basics of career decision making and planning as well as explore jobs in their interest areas. Summer training plans will be customized for each youth depending on their goals, interests, skill levels and any barriers to employment they may have.