

2024-2028 North Central Regional Workforce Plan

Overview

This plan is intended for use by businesses, organized labor and workforce development agencies in their efforts to increase productivity and economic prosperity in the North Central region. This plan aligns with the strategic priorities in Washington State's Workforce Plan: Talent and Prosperity for All. It will be available for public comment starting March 1, 2024.

Strategic Vision:

By 2030, the region will have an informed, productive workforce sustained by a collaborative workforce development system leading to a middle-class standard of living.

North Central Workforce Development Area

Workforce Development Area 8, also known as the North Central Workforce Development Area, is made up of five counties in central Washington. From the Cascade crest, east to the Columbia Basin, its 14,612 square miles make it one of the State's largest workforce areas. As of 2021 it is home to over 281,000 residents, over 131,000 of whom are in the active labor force. Over 13,000 employers are based in North Central Washington as well.

The five counties within North Central comprise three labor market areas, each with its own distinct prevalent industry sectors and labor market characteristics. These areas are Chelan and Douglas counties (the Wenatchee-East Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area), Grant and Adams counties (the Moses Lake-Othello Combined Statistical Area), and Okanogan County. Workforce development in North Central similarly is divided into these three labor market areas, which makes it easier to provide oversight for systems development in such an expansive region.



The 2024-2028 Regional Workforce Plan

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 requires that each local board develop a regional plan describing activity aligned with the State Plan. It also emphasizes collaboration with the Core Four partners: Title I (Workforce Investment Activities), Title II (Adult Education), Title III (Labor Exchange), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). This plan describes the collaborative relationships and resulting service and resource alignment between them, as well as ongoing efforts to enhance One Stop services, improving connectivity and collaboration between partners.

The regional plan also includes an analysis of multiple factors impacting the development of workforce capacity - existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors; shifting industry and employment trends in NCW; earnings and wage trends; and pertinent demographics trends, including age distribution, race and ethnicity, educational attainment, and socioeconomic indicators. The analysis contrasts the federal poverty level with the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold measurement and the rising cost of living in North Central. It also examines skills and knowledge required to meet employment needs, including maximum educational attainment levels and English proficiency of North Central residents, as well as workforce skill gaps identified in multiple surveys.

The plan also includes a summary of the Area's approach to service alignment, access and coordination, career pathways and credentials, employer engagement, performance accountability, as well as plans for sector partnership development.

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal ONE: INDUSTRY

North Central workforce system proactively engages companies, economic development to develop strategic partnerships for increased growth, competitiveness and workforce success.

Objective 1: Identify emerging trends to build and expand career pathways for critical industries.

Objective 2: Coordinate and align business services and outreach.

Objective 3: Upskill and reskill working learners.

Objective 4: Develop apprenticeship and targeted training pathways.

Objective 5: Promote skilled trades development.

Goal TWO: YOUTH

North Central workforce system helps older teens and young adults understand the qualifications necessary to succeed in the workplace and how to make informed career pathway choices.

Objective 1: High school graduates make informed career pathway choices.

Objective 2: Improve access to activities leading to accelerated credential attainment for individually meaningful careers.

Objective 3: Young people explore careers & workplace experiences through career connected learning and work-based learning.

Objective 4: Increase youth awareness of workforce services and programs.

Objective 5: Improve retention & graduation.

Goal THREE: SKILLS & CREDENTIALS

North Central workforce system equips and supports all career seekers throughout the region to obtain in-demand, industry-recognized skills and credentials for competitive occupations.

Objective 1: Create accessible, in-demand pathways and credentials.

Objective 2: Prepare career seekers for meaningful career employment.

Objective 3: Advance the acknowledgment and acceptance of skills and lived experience for hiring, education, training & career development.

Goal FOUR: SYSTEM & DATA

North Central workforce system uses data for continuous improvement and increased customer knowledge & access of One-Stop programs.

Objective 1: Enhance collaboration and customer experience through shared operational data, partner services and outcomes.

Objective 2: Streamline one-stop service access and service delivery through enhanced technology and processes.

Objective 3: Improve community awareness of the One-Stop system through outreach campaigns and coordinated partner outreach plans.

Objective 4: Create a Regional Quality Jobs Framework and promote awareness to partners, businesses and career seekers.