



NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

2024-2028

SkillSource Regional Workforce Board

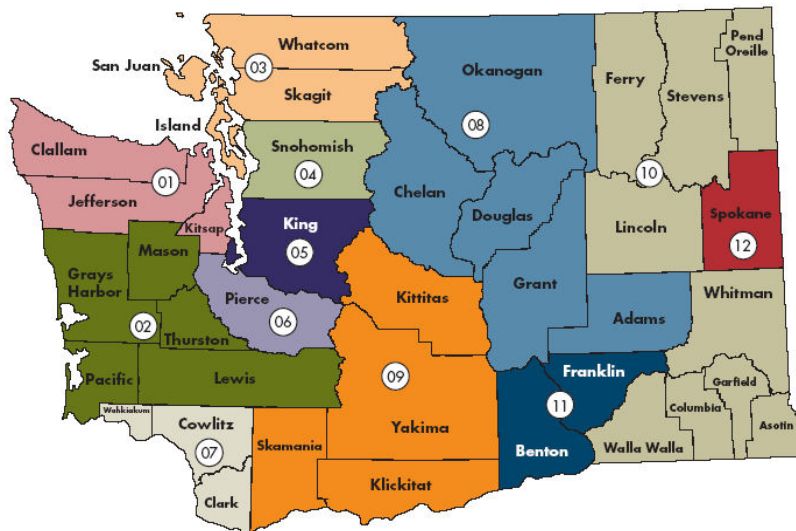
Serving Region 8:
Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams & Okanogan Counties

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Public Comment Period
March 1 – April 1, 2024

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NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN 2024-2028

Workforce Development Region 8
Serving: Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams & Okanogan Counties



Submitted to:
Washington State Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board
and
Employment Security Department

April 10, 2024

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SECTION I: REGIONAL DESIGNATION

- Workforce Region Name: North Central Workforce Development Area (WDA 08)
- Counties: Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams, Okanogan
- Local Board: SkillSource Regional Workforce Board
- Fiscal Agent: SkillSource

SECTION II: REGIONAL COMPONENT

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

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.

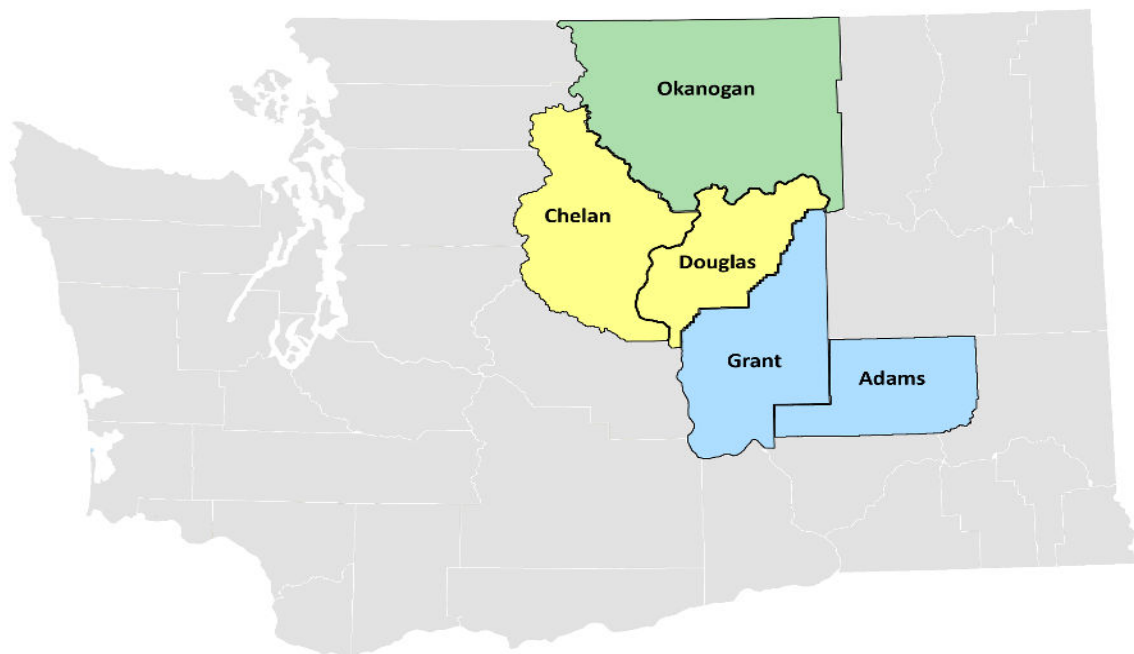


Figure 1A-1. WDA 8 with the five counties grouped in their labor market areas.

In-Demand Sectors and Occupations

The NCW region's historic economic drivers have been agriculture, forest management, fisheries, tourism, and local government. More recently, the region's hydropower and concentrated availability of high-speed fiber broadband Internet hubs have resulted in significant growth in manufacturing, information technology, and renewable energy technology. A myriad of factors has led to a rising cost of living, a growing workforce demand, and an acute affordable housing shortage; meanwhile, the effects of several years of devastating summer wildfires and especially the COVID-19 pandemic are still playing out across the five counties.

Overall, North Central Washington grew its workforce by 9,359 jobs (seven percent) from 2018 to 2022. Almost all sectors saw an increase in total employment regionwide, with the notable exception of agriculture, which shed 4,090 jobs. Many of the employment increases in the infrastructure, personal services, and professional services industries reflect recent regional trends: growing regional populations who are working in increasingly technical, technology-driven occupations.

Table 1A-1: Regional Employment by Sector, 2022							
Major Employment Sectors	Chelan	Douglas	Grant	Adams	Okanogan	Total NCW	
						Employed	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8,028	2,478	9,643	3,151	4,337	27,637	21%
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	10	--	42	5	40	97	>1%
Utilities	341	272	1,439	186	162	2,400	2%
Construction	2,902	1,056	2,418	158	739	7,273	5%
Manufacturing	2,220	662	4,559	1275	544	9,261	7%
Wholesale Trade	2,007	594	2,010	407	197	5,216	4%
Retail Trade	4,693	1,994	3,702	772	2,195	13,355	10%
Transportation and Warehousing	975	263	1,480	571	438	3,727	3%
Information	512	212	779	64	172	1,738	1%
Finance and Insurance	730	196	526	83	168	1,702	1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,126	195	436	84	197	2,038	2%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1,343	409	1,746	157	386	4,041	3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	61	14	31	--	0	106	>1%
Administrative/Support/Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	1,881	417	1,648	92	455	4,493	3%
Educational Services	2,537	1,175	3,999	447	1,816	9,975	7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,080	1,033	4,563	1386	2,651	17,714	13%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,699	422	372	49	568	3,111	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	4,832	1,063	2,822	478	1,175	10,370	8%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,651	332	921	186	439	3,528	3%
Public Administration	1,936	539	1,618	389	1,652	6,135	5%
Total - All Industries	47,561	13,328	44,753	9,940	18,332	133,914	100%
Change from 2018	2,420	377	4,389	1,303	870	9,359	7%

Source: JobsEQ, retrieved 2/2024

Chelan and Douglas Counties

Chelan and Douglas counties form the Wenatchee-East Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the most populous of the region's three labor market areas (121,130 residents as of 2021). The two counties are uniquely connected economically, administratively, and culturally. With the largest population centers of each county positioned on either side of the Columbia River, many functions such as the Chamber of Commerce, Regional Port Authority, Health District, and even fire and law enforcement agencies are shared or closely interoperational. Wenatchee, Chelan, Cashmere and Leavenworth are popular tourism destinations.

Over 5,900 employers are based in Chelan and Douglas Counties, employing 60,889 workers. Tree fruit and wheat are the primary products that make up the agriculture industry in Chelan and Douglas counties. The soil and weather, coupled with the irrigation system supported by the region's hydroelectric dams, makes the area ideal for growing apples, cherries, and pears. Grape production and supporting wineries have also shown significant growth, benefiting both agriculture and tourism employment. For instance, the Lake Chelan Valley supports 40 wineries and more than 15 vineyards with 16 percent annual revenue growth and 5.6 percent annual job growth.¹

Agriculture remains the top industry sector employer in Chelan and Douglas counties, although 4,208 jobs have been shed since 2018, an annual contraction of 6.5 percent. Over the same period, healthcare employment increased over 27 percent. Chelan and Douglas counties employ nearly half of all accommodation and food service workers in North Central and 43 percent of all professional, scientific and technical service occupations. Other leading industry sectors in the Wenatchee-East Wenatchee MSA include retail trade, construction, and educational services.

The top five growth sectors for employment in Chelan and Douglas counties over the past five years include real estate (+6.5%); management (+5.5%); construction (+5.4%); administrative, support, and waste management service (+4.0%); and arts, entertainment, and recreation (+3.4%). Employment related to data centers is expected to grow in the next four years as a result of investment from key businesses such as Microsoft and Sabey Data Centers.

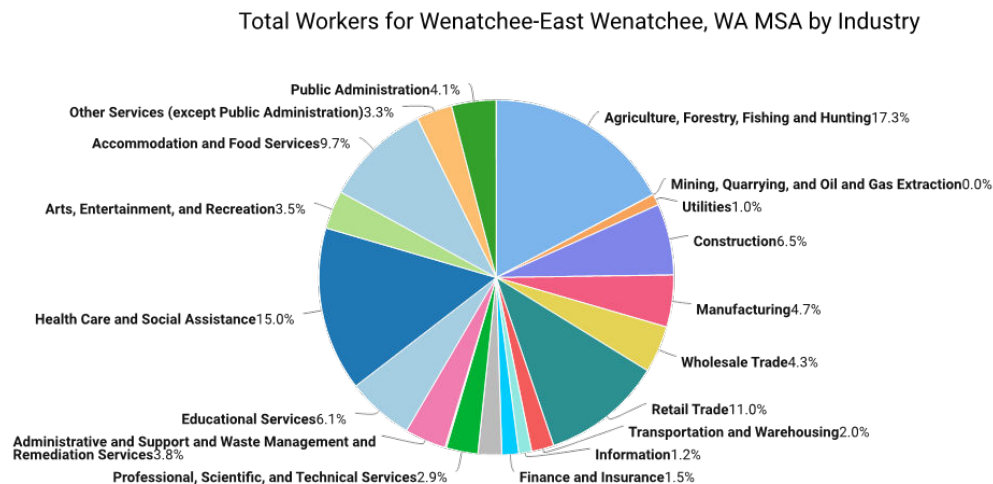


Figure 1A-2. Employment by industry for Wenatchee-East Wenatchee MSA (Chelan and Douglas Counties).

¹ Mitchell Roland (April, 4, 2022), "Chelan wineries see dramatic growth," *Wenatchee World*, accessed February 13, 2024 at: https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/business/chelan-wineries-see-dramatic-growth/article_aff29108-a576-11ec-b013-17060021cf0b.html.

Grant and Adams Counties

Grant and Adams counties are part of the Columbia Basin and form the Moses Lake-Othello Combined Statistical Area (CSA). 118,227 residents live in this two-county area, and it is home to over 4,900 employers with 54,693 employees. Fertile soil, abundant water and plenty of sunshine make this the state's premier agricultural area. Key crops in the area are potatoes, corn, onions, beans, mint, hay, and various tree fruits.

Moses Lake is the largest city in the area, serving as the retail center of the two-county region as well as a hub for advanced manufacturing based at the Port of Moses Lake. Businesses located in the port area near the regional airport produce everything from maintenance lifts to manhole covers, carbon fiber for car bodies to aircraft components. A rapidly emerging subsector of this manufacturing focus is clean energy components such as battery materials, with two major companies investing millions of dollars in Moses Lake-based manufacturing facilities. Quincy has earned notoriety for the number of high-tech companies that have recently built data centers in the area. Adams County's chief economic driver is agriculture and food processing, especially wheat and potatoes.

As with Chelan and Douglas counties, agriculture remains the leading industry sector employer in Grant and Adams counties, despite also seeing a decline in employees over the last five years. This decline, however, was much less pronounced than in the neighboring labor market area - only a 1.7 percent annual decrease due, in part, to earlier automation integration. Adams County has been unique among North Central counties in adding agricultural workers since 2018. These two counties collectively account for over 46 percent of the region's total agricultural employment. Healthcare employment has similarly risen in Grant and Adams counties, more than doubling since 2018. Manufacturing businesses in Grant and Adams counties account for six of every ten employees in that sector in North Central. Other well-represented sectors in the Moses Lake-Othello CSA include retail trade, educational services, accommodation and food services, and construction.

The top five growth sectors for employment in Grant and Adams counties over the last five years include professional, technical and scientific services (+21.3%); information (+7.4%); construction (+6.7%); wholesale trade (+4.6%); and accommodation and food services (+3.9%).

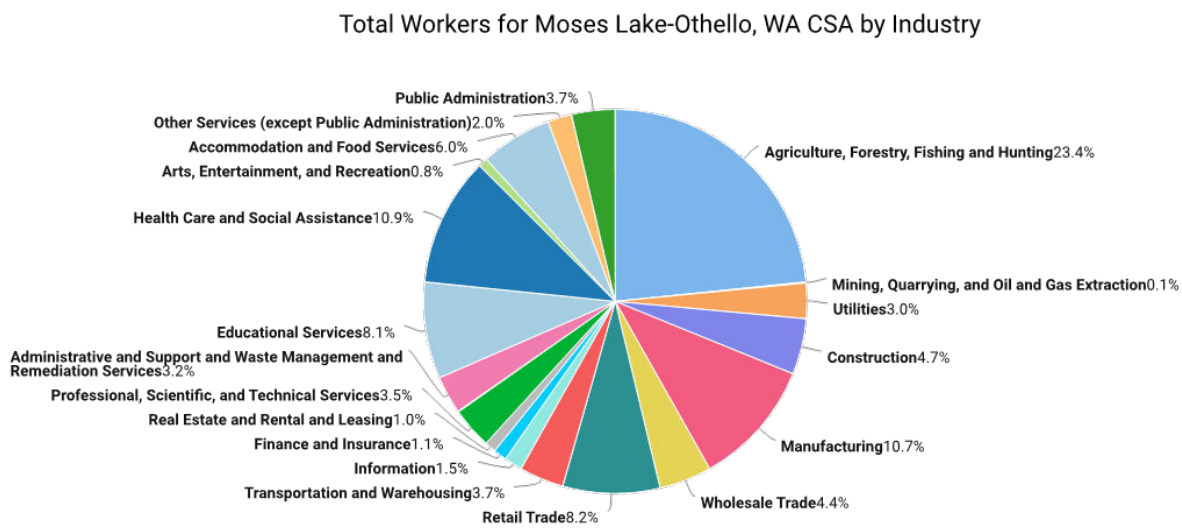


Figure 1A-3. Employment by industry for Moses Lake-Othello CSA (Grant and Adams Counties).

Okanogan County

Okanogan County is the largest county in the state by land area, covering 5,268 square miles. However, since the county is trisected by two north-south mountain ranges and is far from major roadways, the county is rural in character with fewer than 42,000 residents. Currently 18,332 workers are employed by over 2,000 employers, and the labor participation rate is the lowest in North Central at 53.6 percent. There are five distinct micro labor market areas in the county, identified as the Central Valley, North Valley, Methow Valley, South County, and East County. The Colville Reservation, the largest of Washington State's Native American reservations, is located in Okanogan County.

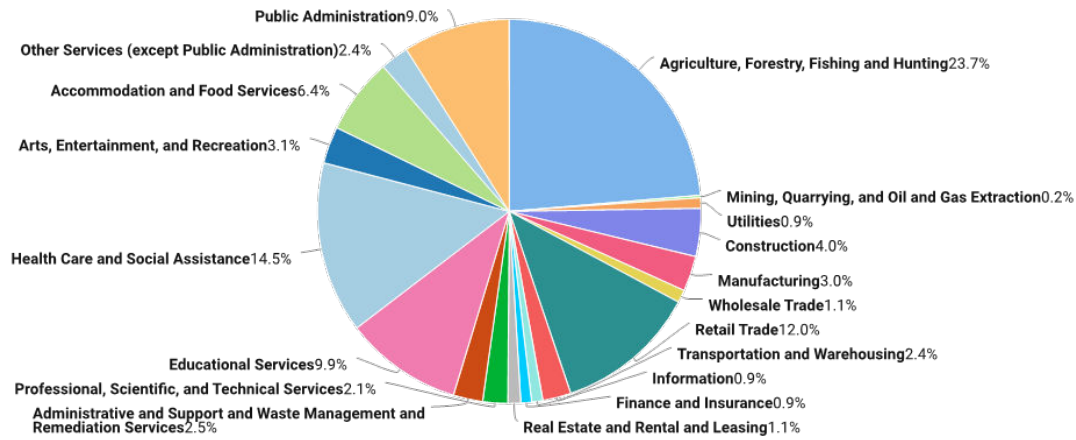
Table 1A-2: Okanogan Micro Labor Markets and Economic Drivers	
Okanogan Micro Labor Market Area	Economic Drivers*
Central Valley - Omak, Okanogan	Apples, plywood, ranching, retail, forestry, healthcare, recreation
North Valley - Tonasket, Oroville	Apples, pears, vineyards, Forest Service, timber, health care
Methow Valley - Twisp, Winthrop	Apples, tourism, ranching, limited timber, forestry
South County - Bridgeport, Brewster, Pateros	Hydropower, apples, recreation
East County - Nespelem, Coulee Dam	Hydropower, timber, ranching
Source: Okanogan Economic Alliance, 2020	

The public sector employs approximately one-sixth of the Okanogan County workforce. The single largest employer in the county, with nearly 1,700 employees, is the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Colville Federal Enterprise Corporation (CFEC) headquartered in Nespelem and Grand Coulee. For the purpose of compiling labor market statistics, Colville employees are considered governmental or public sector workers. The CFEC owns Mill Bay Casino, the 12 Tribes Casino, and Coulee Dam Casino. Outside of the gaming commission, the Tribes also have fish and wildlife operations, law enforcement, and parks and recreation, among other entities.

As with elsewhere in North Central, agriculture is the key industry sector employer in Okanogan County, accounting for nearly one in four employees. Also, as with the other labor market areas, agricultural employment has seen a decline in the past five years. Healthcare has similarly grown in the county, and other significant employment sectors include retail trade, educational services, public administration, and accommodation and food services.

The top five growth sectors for employment in Okanogan County for the past five years include administrative, support, and waste management services (+9.6%); manufacturing (+8.3%); professional, technical and scientific services (+4.0%); construction (+2.8%); and retail trade (+2.1%).

Total Workers for Okanogan County, Washington by Industry



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2022Q3

Figure 1A-3. Employment by industry for Okanogan County.

Local Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Washington State was the first state in the US to confirm a case of COVID-19 and also among the first states to implement public health shutdowns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic starting in mid-March 2020. Cases began to be reported in North Central about the same time as the shutdown. Throughout 2020 and 2021, restrictions on public gatherings and businesses had wide-ranging impacts on North Central’s residents and businesses.

The most immediate impact was manifested in service industries that relied on in-person interactions such as restaurants, bars, and movie theaters. The accommodations and food service industry in North Central shed 2,800 employees, almost 28 percent of its workforce, between the first quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021. Establishments had to deal with workforce absences due to illness or family care issues, sharply decreased patronage, and sudden implementation of new business models. A number of NCW businesses in this industry were closed or moved to limited hours of business for up to a year.

Educational services declined by 12 percent from 2020Q1 to 2021Q1, as school districts and community colleges shifted to online learning models. The lessened need for onsite support staff and pressures to deliver instruction via distance learning resulted in significant departures, both from dismissals and from willful separation from the workforce, such as early retirement.

Many of the region’s other key industries, particularly agriculture and manufacturing, were less affected by the pandemic-related shutdowns. Most of these businesses were allowed to stay open with modified safety protocols because they were deemed essential under executive orders. As a result, the overall impact on North Central’s overall economy was lessened.

A nationally recognized trend during the pandemic was a shift in certain industries and occupations towards remote work. While the “work-from-home revolution” did not directly affect many businesses and workers in NCW, it had lasting effects in other ways. With no effective geographic restrictions on where they lived, remote workers moved away from population centers. Some of this

diaspora made its way to North Central Washington, where a lower cost of living and plentiful broadband access provided an attractive remote work destination. The pandemic also brought into sharp focus the issue of broadband access and use across the rural regions of North Central Washington. Small communities and rural school districts struggled to adapt to the new reality of a digitally connected economy and online learning. The effects of school closures on academics and learning will likely be felt for many years to come.

As with national and state economies, North Central’s workforce proved resilient. Despite a loss of over 8,000 jobs between 2020 and 2021 (about 6 percent of total employment), as of the third quarter of 2023 the labor market not only recovered all those lost jobs, but actually gained ground to reach its highest employment numbers on record.

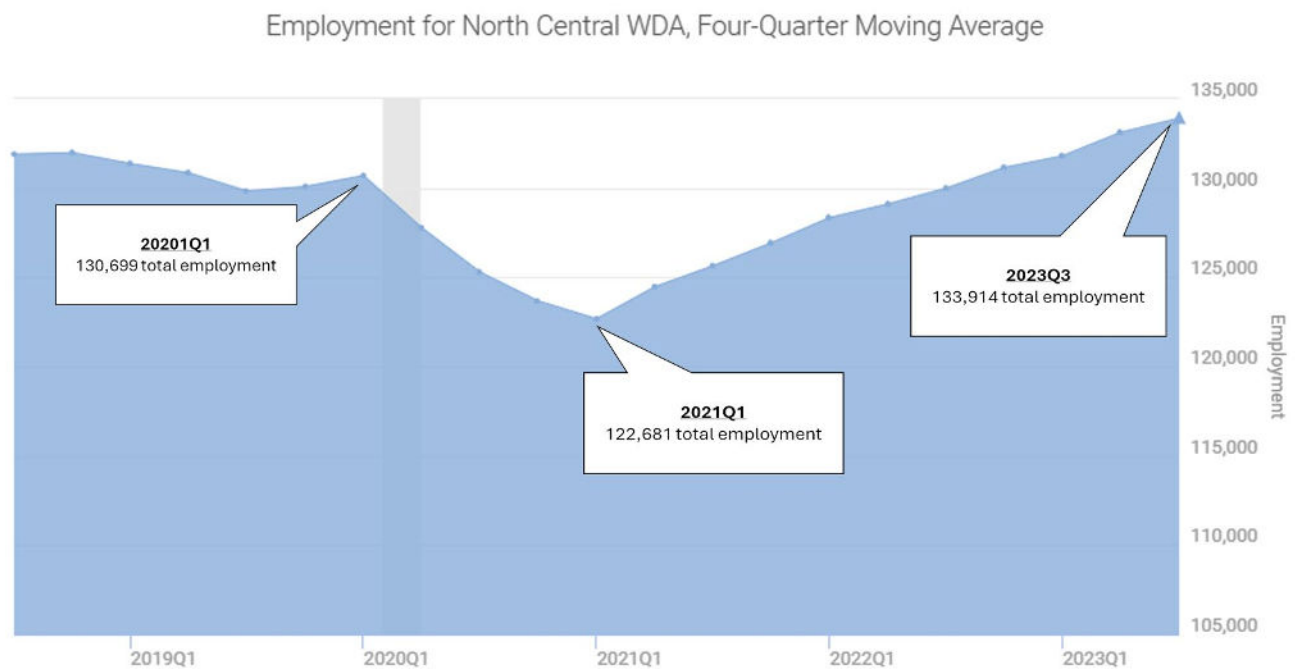


Figure 1A-4. Total Employment in North Central Washington, 2019-2023.

The Shifting Importance of Agriculture in NCW

Agriculture has long been the foundation of the North Central Washington economy; however, its share of the overall workforce picture has decreased in the past four years. The agricultural industry still employs the greatest number of workers of any industry in North Central Washington and the Columbia Basin; however, NCW’s agricultural employment numbers have declined over the past several years, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018 agriculture represented over 27 percent of total regional employment; in 2023, it represented under 21 percent. Adams County had the only employment gains in agriculture during this time period, but agriculture’s share of the county job market still decreased, as it did everywhere else in North Central. Contributing factors include a shortage of younger farmers able to break into the rapidly aging industry², increasingly expensive

² David Buys, John Green and Mary Nelson Robertson (October 10, 2023). “America’s farmers are getting older, and young people aren’t rushing to join them,” *The Conversation*, accessed February 20, 2024 at:

capital machinery costs, consolidation of smaller agricultural employers, and COVID-related policy changes, i.e., reduced stimulus funding for farmers of color.³ As automation increases in agricultural businesses, it can destabilize employment; this effect has mostly passed in Grant and Adams counties' ground crop-centric agricultural markets, but is still playing out to varying extent in Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties' tree fruit industries. In recognition of these challenges, Wenatchee Valley College's Agriculture Department received a federal US Department of Agriculture grant to enhance career prospects for underrepresented groups, enabling WVC to support Hispanic agricultural education attainment, including experience-based learning in classrooms, laboratories, and fieldwork.⁴

Table 1A-3: North Central Agricultural Employment, 2018-2023

County	Agricultural Employment 2023	Agricultural Employment 2018	Employment Change Since 2018	Employment Change % Since 2018	Percent of Total Employment 2023
Adams	3,151	2,767	+384	+13.8%	31.7%
Chelan/Douglas	10,506	13,887	-3,381	-24.3%	17.9%
Grant	9,643	10,008	-405	-4.0%	21.5%
Okanogan	4,337	4,932	-600	-12.2%	23.6%
Total	27,637	31,594	-3,957	-12.5%	20.6%

Source: LMEA/ESD US Department of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2018 Annual Average); JobsEQ

Increased Employment in Highly Skilled Occupations

The changes in North Central's population diversity over the past five years have begun to chip away at the previous dominance of "blue collar" trades' representation as a share of total regional employment. Meanwhile, several occupational clusters which typically require advanced schooling and/or highly developed, specialized skills have seen the greatest proportional increases in the same period. This points up a need for expanded training pathways in these occupations.

<https://theconversation.com/americas-farmers-are-getting-older-and-young-people-arent-rushing-to-join-them-211330>.

³ Allison Saldanha (October 22, 2023). "These farmers of color caught a pandemic boom. Now, many fear a bust", *Seattle Times*, accessed February 14, 2024 at: <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/was-farmers-of-color-caught-a-pandemic-boom-now-many-fear-a-bust/>.

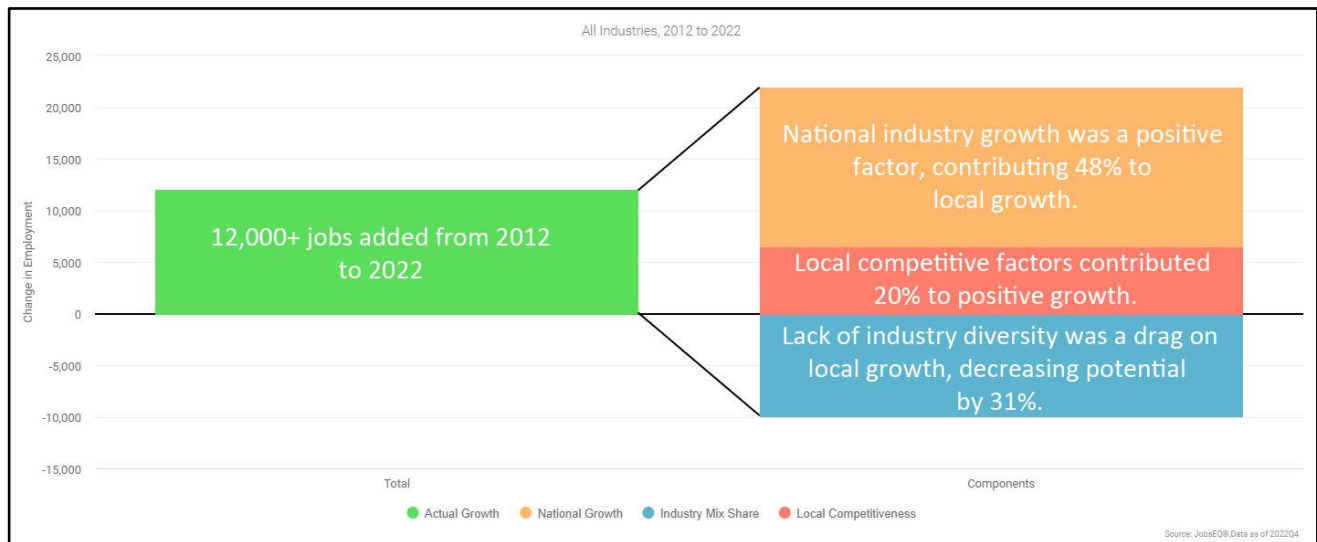
⁴ Source One News (January 8, 2024). "Wenatchee Valley College gets major USDA grant to advance agriculture education, *Source One News*, accessed February 23, 2024 at: https://www.yoursourceone.com/columbia_basin/wenatchee-valley-college-gets-major-usda-grant-to-advance-agriculture-education/article_842fe510-ae76-11ee-9172-7b853b25f26a.html.

Table 1A-4: North Central Highly Skilled Occupational Cluster Employment, 2018 & 2023

Occupational Cluster	Employment 2018Q3	Employment 2023Q3	Change	Change %	% of total empl 2018	% of total empl 2023
Architecture and Engineering	1,272	1,817	545	42.85%	1.02%	1.36%
Computer and Mathematical	1,889	2,364	475	25.15%	1.52%	1.77%
Construction and Extraction	4,813	5,864	1,051	21.84%	3.86%	4.38%
Business & Financial Operations	4,910	5,744	834	16.99%	3.94%	4.29%
Healthcare Support	4,753	5,474	721	15.17%	3.82%	4.09%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technicians	6,309	6,969	660	10.46%	5.07%	5.20%
Life, Physical, & Social Science Occupations	1,070	1,178	108	10.09%	0.86%	0.88%
Source: JobsEQ						

Factors Contributing to Employment Growth

The growth in employment change in NCW over the past ten years has three possible contributing factors: overall national growth which is reflected locally, the mix of industry represented, and the competitiveness of the region based on its unique attributes. As shown in **Figure 1A-5**, national growth of industries and local competitive advantages were the key factors contributing to the more than 12,000 jobs added since 2012. Further employment growth was limited by the narrow industry diversity present in North Central - in other words, if more types of employers were present in greater numbers in NCW, there would have been a greater overall growth effect.

**Figure 1A-5. Factors Contributing to Employment Growth in NCW**

Employment and Earnings

Table 1A-5 depicts industry sectors by the number of individuals in covered employment along with their average annual wages. Overall annual average wages for covered employees rose more than 36

percent in the past five years in North Central. The statewide implementation of one of the highest minimum wages in the country, as well as an incredibly competitive labor market following the COVID-19 pandemic, has resulted in historically high worker compensation. The highest increases in average annual wages are in professional, scientific and technical services (+87.62%), administrative, support and waste management services (+79.23%), information (+48.97%) and retail trade (+46.26%).

Due to seasonality, lower average yearly pay industries include accommodation and food services; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and agriculture. These industries, while still maintaining employment through the winter months, provide the majority of their employment within the summer months.

Table 1A-5: Covered Employment and Wages by Industry in North Central WDA, 2018 -2023					
Industry	Covered Employment 2018Q3	Covered Avg Annual Wages 2018Q3	Covered Employment 2023Q3	Covered Avg Annual Wages 2023Q3	Avg Annual Wage Change %
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	32,387	\$27,111	25,752	\$35,052	29.29%
Health Care and Social Assistance	15,867	\$52,326	17,267	\$66,372	26.84%
Retail Trade	12,197	\$25,996	12,890	\$38,023	46.26%
Accommodation and Food Services	9,627	\$19,811	10,197	\$26,945	36.01%
Educational Services	9,613	\$44,645	9,863	\$58,107	30.15%
Manufacturing	8,559	\$51,295	9,047	\$61,887	20.65%
Construction	4,769	\$48,930	6,441	\$67,678	38.32%
Public Administration	5,916	\$55,130	6,135	\$70,670	28.19%
Wholesale Trade	4,865	\$52,480	5,160	\$72,076	37.34%
Administrative/Support/Waste Mgmt Services	3,577	\$28,142	4,151	\$50,439	79.23%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,227	\$47,718	3,457	\$60,697	27.20%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	2,138	\$57,427	3,440	\$107,746	87.62%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,612	\$29,990	2,921	\$37,765	25.93%
Utilities	2,255	\$88,973	2,397	\$107,342	20.65%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,809	\$27,306	2,127	\$37,366	36.84%
Information	1,450	\$58,593	1,696	\$87,287	48.97%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,406	\$31,283	1,676	\$43,309	38.44%
Finance and Insurance	1,583	\$52,367	1,621	\$72,698	38.82%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	116	\$82,428	106	\$88,935	7.89%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	128	\$83,325	95	\$73,530	-11.76%
Total - All Industries	124,340	\$39,328	126,438	\$53,678	36.49%
Source: JobsEQ, retrieved 2/2024					

Table 1A-6 depicts covered employment and wages by industry as a percentage of total employment and wages earned in North Central. The industry sector with the highest percentage of covered wages

earned in North Central is healthcare and social assistance, accounting for just under 17 percent of wages while only representing 13.66 percent of covered employment in 2023.

While agriculture is the largest employer in NCW, employing 20.37 percent of the workforce, due to its seasonality and the large amount of manual unskilled labor it only accounts for 15.14 percent of wages. This is a 2.69 percent smaller share of income than in 2018. Manufacturing has overtaken retail trade to become the third largest share of covered wages in North Central, comprising 8.07 percent of wages with 7.16 percent of total covered employment.

Table 1A-6: Proportion of Covered Employment and Wages by Industry in North Central WDA, 2023				
Industry	Covered Employment 2023Q3	% of Total Covered Empl	Covered Wages 2023Q3	% of Total Covered Wages
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	25,752	20.37%	\$283,525,810	15.12%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	95	0.08%	\$1,621,346	0.09%
Utilities	2,397	1.90%	\$65,211,544	3.48%
Construction	6,441	5.09%	\$125,416,567	6.69%
Manufacturing	9,047	7.16%	\$156,411,279	8.34%
Wholesale Trade	5,160	4.08%	\$100,897,072	5.38%
Retail Trade	12,890	10.19%	\$132,125,423	7.04%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,457	2.73%	\$57,043,730	3.04%
Information	1,696	1.34%	\$37,583,241	2.00%
Finance and Insurance	1,621	1.28%	\$29,028,973	1.55%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,676	1.33%	\$21,156,964	1.13%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,440	2.72%	\$96,136,045	5.13%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	106	0.08%	\$2,587,134	0.14%
Administrative/Support/Waste Mgmt Services	4,151	3.28%	\$58,277,818	3.11%
Educational Services	9,863	7.80%	\$138,988,248	7.41%
Health Care and Social Assistance	17,267	13.66%	\$313,328,140	16.71%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,921	2.31%	\$31,966,945	1.70%
Accommodation and Food Services	10,197	8.06%	\$80,321,954	4.28%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,127	1.68%	\$22,208,694	1.18%
Public Administration	6,135	4.85%	\$122,334,235	6.52%
Total - All Industries	126,438	100.00%	\$1,875,471,415	100.00%
Source: JobsEQ, retrieved 2/2024				

Current and Future Employment Needs

North Central Washington is standing at a crossroads between the longstanding traditional industries that have high location quotients (agriculture, timber, food production) and new industries with high national growth potential (technology, energy, advanced manufacturing). North Central is an

attractive destination for business investment for these new industries, just as it was for the main industries of the past. The specific factors drawing those businesses, however, are very different.

Technology: Affordable, reliable hydropower and a robust build-out of high-quality broadband internet access have attracted several different types of business investments. Data centers perform a key role in today's cloud-based internet, storing vast amounts of data at key locations across the country. North Central not only can provide high-speed connections to the internet and inexpensive hydropower and alternative energy to run these centers, but also boasts vast tracts of developable commercial property. Workforce system partners have taken an active interest in supporting local efforts to identify training pathways to support the employment needs of these businesses. Additionally, computer and IT jobs are on a growth track across the region as more companies embrace online business models or further technology integration. Over 200 systems administrator or support technician job openings were reported in North Central over 2023.

Advanced Manufacturing: Many of the same qualities that attract technology employers to the region are also highly desirable to advanced manufacturing. The regions around the two major regional airports (Pangborn in East Wenatchee and Grant County in Moses Lake) are well suited for manufacturing operations.

Energy: Again, low-cost hydropower, renewable energy, and large amounts of land and infrastructure make North Central an attractive site for clean and renewable energy production. As a result, significant federal investment in energy supply chains has found its way into the local area. Two excellent examples of new initiatives based in North Central are hydrogen production at Douglas County Public Utility District facilities and the planned arrival of two new commercial EV battery manufacturers in Moses Lake, with accompanying new local technical instruction pathways. New skills for associated occupations will be in high demand in the region.

Care Economy: Anywhere people congregate, they require healthcare, social assistance, and other supportive services to keep them healthy and working. Healthcare has grown over the past several years to rival agriculture in terms of total employment and already provides the most wages in the five-county area. Demand for healthcare workers, already incredibly high, spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic as long hours and difficult working conditions took their toll on the existing workforce.

Infrastructure, Professional and Personal Services: Again, as a result of local business investment and economic development, employment in construction, utilities, and real estate continue to climb to support living conditions for new and existing residents. Services such as finance, insurance, retail trade, and even arts, entertainment and recreation provide local choices for residents to invest in themselves, their families, and their lifestyles.

All of these industries were identified by respondents to the North Central Workforce Area Community Survey as "most crucial in the next four years".

Workforce Demographics

Historically, North Central Washington's demographic profile has differed from the state's and the nation's in several key respects. These differences have clear implications for the region's workforce.

- **Age:** North Central has smaller proportions of prime working age adults (18 to 54 years old) than either Washington state or the country as a whole: as of 2021, only 43.8 percent of NCW residents fell into this age bracket, compared to 49.8 percent for Washington and 48.5 percent for the US. The region has a higher proportion of individuals under 18 (26.8%) than the state (22.1%) or the country (22.5%), and the region's lower median age reflects this. As this population matures into prime worker age and the experience base of older workers fades away, career training and employment services must be ready to respond with strategic workforce and career development initiatives.
- **Race and Ethnicity:** North Central has diverse and unique population characteristics. As of 2021, NCW had more than twice the proportion of residents identifying as American Indian than Washington State (2.5% to 1.2%) and three times the national proportion (0.8%). 21.4% of North Central residents identified as two or more races, more than four times the state or national rate. 35.5% of residents identified as Hispanic/Latino residents of any race, nearly twice the national rate (18.4%) and three times the statewide rate (13.2%). African American and Asian representation, on the other hand, is significantly less represented demographically in NCW than statewide or nationally.
- **Population Density:** North Central Washington is far less densely populated than the state or country average. NCW had a population density of 19.8 people per square mile compared to 117.2 for Washington and 94.3 for the US in 2021. This statistic reveals the very large geographic distances between population centers in NCW, which affect everything from commutes to commerce.
- **Educational Attainment:** NCW's percentage of residents without a secondary education credential (19.6%) is nearly double the national average (10.3%) and almost triple the state non-graduate rate (8.0%). However, NCW boasts proportionally more high school graduates (27%) than either the state (21.3%) or nation (25.3%), a recent change. The rate of residents with some college or an associate's degree is roughly comparable to statewide and nationwide trends; however, fewer North Central residents have bachelors' degrees or postgraduate credentials than the state or country as a whole. While this would have indicated a "right-sized" credential profile as recently as five years ago, the previously noted growth of highly skilled occupations in NCW means that pathways need to continue on past the two-year mark, paired with relevant industry-recognized credentials. Occupational demand for higher skilled workers throughout the region will drive workforce strategic planning initiatives.
- **Socioeconomic Indicators:** North Central has a slightly higher poverty rate (13.5%) than the state (10.0%) or the US (12.6%) and also a higher rate of households receiving food stamps (14.5% compared to just over 11% for both Washington and the US). North Central also has higher incidences of individuals without health insurance (11.5% vs. 6.4% statewide and 8.8% nationwide), individuals self-identifying as having a disability (13.9% vs. 10.5% statewide and 10.3% nationwide), and self-identifying as limited English proficiency (12.7% vs. 7.6%

statewide and 8.2% nationwide). This points to continued need for programs such as Economic Security for All (EcSA), disability services, and English Language Acquisition instruction as delivered by the WorkSource partnership.

Federal Poverty Levels and ALICE

The federal poverty level (FPL) has been used as a metric to determine the number and proportion of US residents living in poverty. However, it is not based on current costs of living and assumes no cost of living differences between the 47 contiguous states. The United Way devised the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Household Survival Budget to ascertain the bare minimum cost of household basics necessary to live and work in local economies. The ALICE Threshold measurement represents a more accurate measure of actual income required for household survival based on latest Census and economic data.

While the rate of households below the FPL has steadily fallen over the past several years in North Central Washington, examining the ALICE Threshold metric (shown in **Table 1B-1** below) shows that a growing proportion of households in NCW are not self-sufficient. Simply put, despite federal statistics indicating otherwise, the working poor in North Central Washington are not finding relief.

Year	Number of Households	Households below FPL	Poverty Rate	Households below ALICE Threshold	ALICE Rate
2010	91,552	14,200	15.51%	22,694	24.79%
2012	94,345	15,176	16.09%	24,657	26.13%
2014	93,213	14,362	15.41%	26,564	28.50%
2016	93,589	14,182	15.15%	29,146	31.14%
2018	97,316	13,569	13.94%	27,120	27.87%
2019	98,161	12,554	12.79%	29,454	30.01%

Source: United Way ALICE Project, unitedforalice.org.

Hand in hand with this widening of the opportunity gap for North Central residents, the cost of living in the region has gone up as well. Compared to the nationwide average annual salary, a Wenatchee-East Wenatchee MSA has only 87% of the relative purchasing power. Grant and Adams Counties currently experience the best cost of living index score among the three labor market areas in North Central. None of the three labor market areas, or the five individual counties of North Central, exceed the statewide cost of living index compared to the US base. This higher cost of living is reflected in prices for everything from groceries to home sales.

Table 1B-2: Cost of Living Index (Base US) and Relative Purchasing Power of Average Annual Salary as of 2023Q3			
Location	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
Wenatchee-East Wenatchee, WA MSA	\$52,280	114.9	\$45,501
Moses Lake-Othello, WA CSA	\$60,116	101.7	\$59,123
Okanogan County, Washington	\$44,103	107.3	\$41,089
North Central WDA	\$54,362	108.5	\$50,099
Washington	\$85,127	119.7	\$81,685
USA	\$70,183	100.0	\$70,183
Source: JobsEQ			

Population and Forecasted Growth

The total estimated population for the five-county area is 281,323 (2021), with projected annual growth of 0.9 percent. This is above the national annual growth estimate of 0.6 percent although behind the statewide estimate of 1.2 percent.

The Chelan-Douglas population is 121,130 (2021), and is expected to increase 1 percent annually. Grant and Adams County's combined population is 122,272. Their annual growth rate is also projected at one percent annually. Okanogan County's population was 43,127 as of 2021, and population growth is expected to be lower than the other two labor market areas, with a 0.5 percent annual growth rate forecasted.

Workforce Participation

North Central's 61.5 percent workforce participation rate lags behind the state average of 64.3 percent and the nationwide average of 63.4 percent in 2021. The workforce participation rate measures the number of people over age 16 who were employed or actively seeking work (excludes incarcerated and military). However, the prime age workforce participation rate, measuring only those between ages 25-54, exceeds the state and nationwide rates - 82.8 percent compared to 82.7 percent and 82.5 percent respectively. This indicates that shortfalls in labor market participation are mostly contained in the under-25 and 55-and-over populations in North Central.

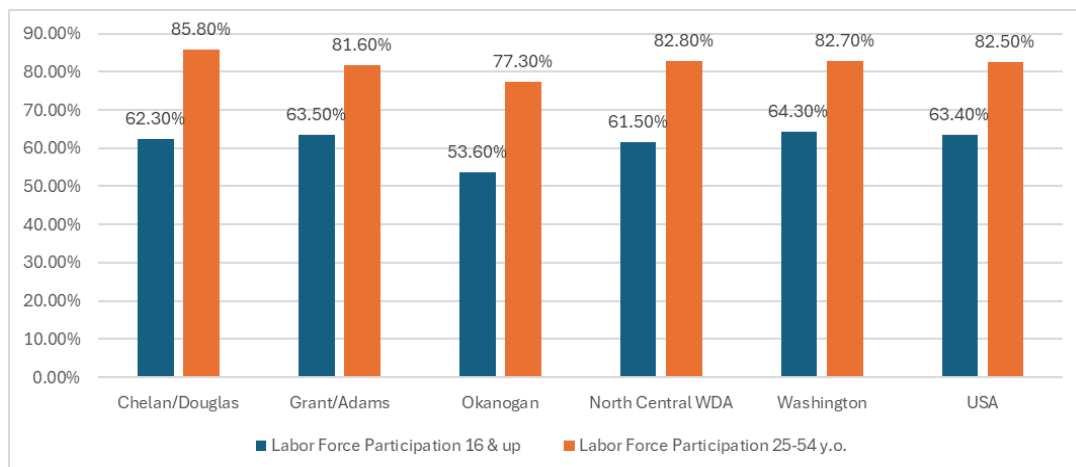


Figure 1B-1. Labor force Participation Rates compared (Labor Market Areas, NCW, State, National)

According to Employment Security Department estimates from December 2023, the North Central workforce consisted of 138,072 people, 9,128 of whom are unemployed. The overall unemployment rate (age 16-74) for the area is 6.61 percent, not seasonally adjusted.

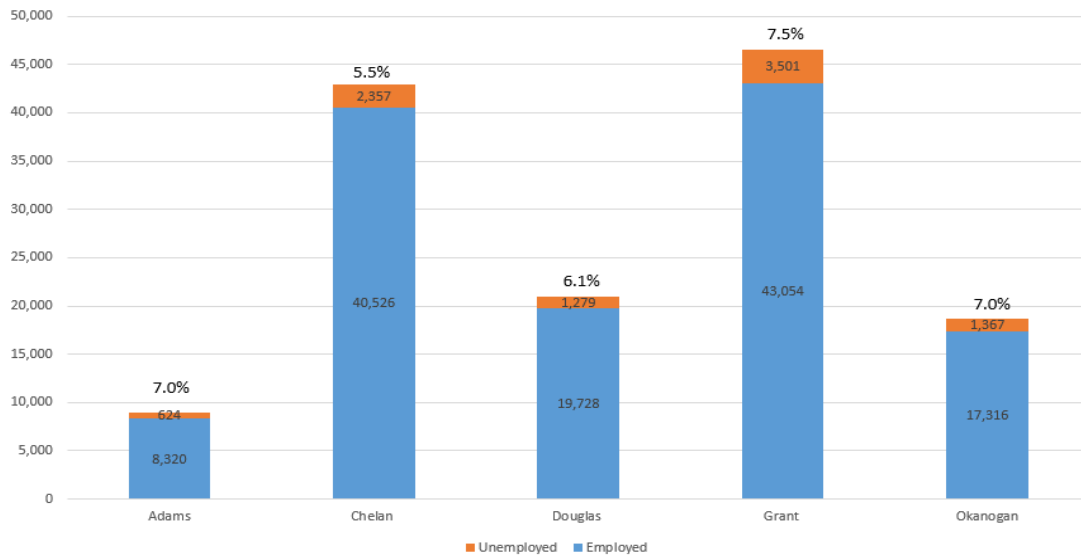


Figure 1B-2. Employment/unemployment rates per county as of December 2023, not seasonally adjusted.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

As shown in **Table 1B-3**, individuals who identify as White represent 66.6 percent of the region's population. Those identifying as Hispanic or Latino comprise 35.5 percent of the population, making this the area's largest minority group. Other minority populations are significantly smaller in the North Central WDA. American Indians/Alaska Natives, the second largest minority population in the area, comprise 2.5 percent of the populace. Interestingly, increasing numbers of North Central residents identify as "two or more races" or "some other race", comprising 29.1 percent of the population. This increase has been attributed not only to the increase of persons with mixed racial heritage, but also to account for the lack of a Middle Eastern/North African race identification in the US Census, as well as the tendency of many Hispanic/Latino individuals to primarily identify racially as Latino.

Table 1B-3: Racial and Ethnic Composition of North Central WDA Population		
Race or Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White	187,400	66.6%
Hispanic or Latino, Any Race	99,475	35.5%
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	1,783	0.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic	7,144	2.5%
Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	319	0.1%
Two or More Races	22,281	7.9%
Some Other Race	60,111	21.4%
Total Population (not sum of categories above)	289,517	100%
Source: 2017-21 American Community Survey 5-year estimates		

Age Distribution

According to the American Community Survey, as stated earlier, North Central has a larger percentage of residents under 18 than the state or national rate, most notably in Grant and Adams counties. Recently the proportion of individuals 55 or older in the region has lowered to more closely match state and nationwide trends. These two shifts have collectively served to lower the region's median age below that of Washington State and the US as a whole.

Table 1B-4: Age Distribution, Overall Population								
	Chelan	Douglas	Grant	Adams	Okanogan	North Central	Washington	USA
Median Age ²	39.9	37.5	33.2	28.3	42.9	36.8	37.9	38.4
Under 18 Years	23.5%	25.8%	29.6%	35.6%	23.2%	26.8%	22.1%	22.5%
18 to 24 Years	8.1%	8.1%	9.2%	10.0%	6.3%	8.4%	8.6%	9.2%
25 to 34 Years	12.3%	12.4%	13.6%	12.7%	11.3%	12.6%	15.1%	13.8%
35 to 44 Years	11.9%	12.2%	11.9%	11.2%	11.5%	11.8%	13.7%	12.9%
45 to 54 Years	11.2%	11.3%	10.9%	9.9%	11.2%	11.0%	12.3%	12.6%
55 to 64 Years	14.0%	12.8%	11.0%	9.5%	14.8%	12.6%	12.7%	13.0%
65 to 74 Years	11.3%	10.3%	8.5%	6.9%	13.9%	10.2%	9.6%	9.6%
75 Years and Over	7.7%	7.2%	5.3%	4.3%	7.9%	6.6%	5.8%	6.5%
Source: 2017-21 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates								

Meanwhile, an examination of beginning-of-quarter employment annual averages over the last eight years reveals an incredibly stable age distribution in the North Central workforce, even notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1B-5: Age Distribution Across Annual Beginning-Of-Quarter Employment Averages								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
14 to 18 Years	2,938	2,813	2,936	2,827	2,645	3,090	3,204	2,826
19 to 21 Years	4,836	4,797	4,834	4,784	4,568	4,896	5,109	4,742
22 to 24 Years	5,589	5,449	5,449	5,266	4,918	5,205	5,466	5,354
25 to 34 Years	19,698	19,552	19,962	19,783	18,692	19,054	19,767	19,072
35 to 44 Years	18,544	18,488	19,042	19,072	18,400	18,676	19,644	19,039
45 to 54 Years	17,836	17,298	17,352	17,000	16,400	16,738	17,381	16,765
55 to 64 Years	14,724	14,690	15,063	15,040	14,618	14,708	14,813	14,002
65 and Over	7,769	7,916	8,342	8,738	8,757	9,210	9,737	9,269
Source: 2017-21 US Census Bureau QWI Explorer dataset								

Individuals with Disabilities

According to the American Community Survey, just under fourteen percent of the population aged 18 to 64 in North Central Washington (21,963 individuals) have a disability. The highest rate of disabled individuals resided in Douglas County as of 2021. Many of these individuals are working age adults and represent a segment of the population that may be able to participate in the workforce,

given the accommodations or rehabilitation to do so. As of 2021, about 48.4 percent of disabled individuals are in the North Central workforce, a number which is about 13 percent lower than the non-disabled population in the region. Although individuals with disabilities often require specialized training, businesses have been increasingly willing to hire them and provide the instruction necessary to succeed on the job. Adaptive technologies are also making it easier for people with physical disabilities to enter the mainstream labor market. Additionally, there are many resources in the region that offer workforce accommodation services to disabled individuals, often at no cost to the business.

Table 1B-6: Individuals with Disabilities, age 18-64 in the North Central WDA						
	Chelan	Douglas	Grant	Adams	Okanogan	Total
Individuals with Disabilities	6,531	4,211	6,474	1,260	3,487	21,963
Percent of age group	14.47%	17.41%	11.68%	11.63%	15.10%	13.9%
Individuals with Disabilities Labor Force Participation Rate	56.7%	59.8%	38.8%	42.6%	39.1%	48.4%
Source: 2017-21 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates						

Skills and Knowledge Needed to Meet Employment Needs

Basic Adult Literacy and Numeracy

Adult literacy and numeracy rates for the North Central Region lag significantly behind state and national averages. Data analyses by the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) for the years 2012-2017 show a much higher incidence of adults at or below Level 1 literacy through the five counties; this indicates that they can “read short texts and understand the meaning enough to perform simple tasks... [they] may only be able to understand very basic vocabulary or find very specific information on a familiar topic. Some may struggle with this and may be functionally illiterate.” Similarly, adult rates of numeracy at or below Level 1 were markedly higher in North Central than the state or the US. Level 1 numeracy is described by PIAAC as the ability to “add, subtract, multiply, and divide... perform basic one-step mathematical operations with given values or common spatial representations. Adults who are below Level 1 may only be able to count, sort, and do basic arithmetic operations with simple whole numbers and may be functionally innumerate.” These high rates of low literacy and numeracy among NCW adults reveal a huge gap in basic skills proficiency in the five-county workforce.

Table 1C-1: Adult Literacy and Numeracy below Level 1, North Central WDA		
County	Literacy at or below Level 1	Numeracy at or below Level 1
Chelan	26%	34%
Douglas	27%	36%
Grant	34%	43%
Adams	47%	57%
Okanogan	26%	38%
NCW Average	32%	42%
Washington	16%	23%
USA	22%	32%
Source: Institute of Education Sciences, using data from 2012-2017		

2021 American Community Survey results show that three of North Central’s counties have a higher rate of Limited English Proficiency individuals (5 years and older) than Washington State or the US as a whole. Only Grant and Okanogan counties had individually lower LEP rates.

Table 1C-2: Limited English Proficiency, North Central WDA	
Labor Market Area	LEP Rate
Chelan	10.90%
Douglas	16.70%
Grant	6.70%
Adams	12.70%
Okanogan	7.60%
NCW Average	8.20%
Washington	10.90%
USA	16.70%
Source: American Community Survey, 2017-2021	

Skill Demand

In the 2020 Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board’s survey of *Washington State Employers’ Training Needs and Practices*, a sample of 1,765 employers across the state showed that difficulty in recruiting is thought to be rooted in the availability of skilled and experienced talent.

Table 1C-3: Underlying Reasons for Recruitment Difficulty (by % of employers)	
Reason	Percentage of Employers
Not enough applicants	76%
Lack work experience	49%
Lack employability	43%
Lack education or training	33%
Declined job offer	33%
Lack soft skills	32%
Background check issues	27%
Geographic issues	27%
Source: Workforce Board, WA State Employers' Training Needs and Practices 2020	

The SkillSource Regional Workforce Board conducted a voluntary online survey beginning in November 2023. Seventeen employers were among the 109 respondents; when asked about their greatest challenge they faced when trying to recruit new employees, they rated a lack of workplace and/or professional skills as the top challenge, followed by lack of needed education and/or certifications, and lack of technical skills.

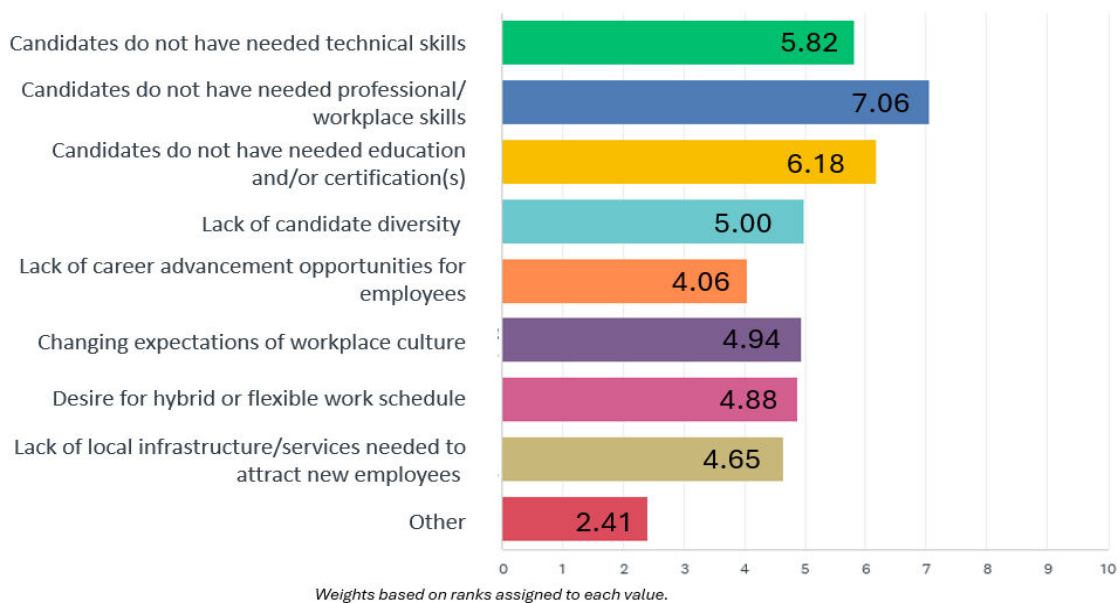


Figure 1C-1. Ranked Factors Cited As Recruitment Challenges by NCW Businesses

Educational Attainment

The attainment of a high school diploma is seen as an indicator of the acquisition of basic educational skills. According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, which reports educational attainment levels by county, as of 2021 the rate of North Central adults between 25 and 64 years of age without a secondary credential is nearly 20 percent, about twice the national rate and well over twice the statewide rate. There is some variance among the five counties on this statistic; Adams County has one of the highest rates of working-age adults without a secondary credential in the state. All five counties have higher secondary “top-out” rates higher than the statewide rate (i.e. educational attainment does not proceed further than a high school diploma or equivalent). North Central adults are roughly as likely as their statewide and nationwide peers to attend some college or obtain an associate-level credential as their highest educational level, but less likely to continue on to a bachelors’ degree or higher credential. Adams County, again, lags behind the field in all post-secondary attainment metrics.

Table 1C-4: Maximum Educational Attainment in North Central WDA, 2021 Estimates (Ages 25-64)

County/Area	Less than high school diploma	H.S. diploma/ GED	Some college	AA degree	Bachelor’s Degree or higher
Chelan	16.80%	23.70%	20.60%	10.10%	28.70%
Douglas	19.90%	29.20%	21.80%	8.00%	21.10%
Grant	20.50%	27.40%	22.90%	10.80%	18.40%
Okanogan	16.90%	28.00%	24.00%	11.70%	19.50%
Adams	32.90%	31.20%	16.10%	7.40%	12.30%
NCW	19.60%	27.00%	21.80%	10.10%	21.50%
Washington State	8.00%	21.30%	22.10%	10.60%	38.10%
USA	10.30%	25.30%	20.10%	9.30%	35.10%

U.S. Census, 2017-21 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

When these data are contrasted with the PIAAC literacy and numeracy estimates (Table 1C-1), some correlation can be ascertained with the two lowest levels of educational attainment, although the data are from different year cohorts.

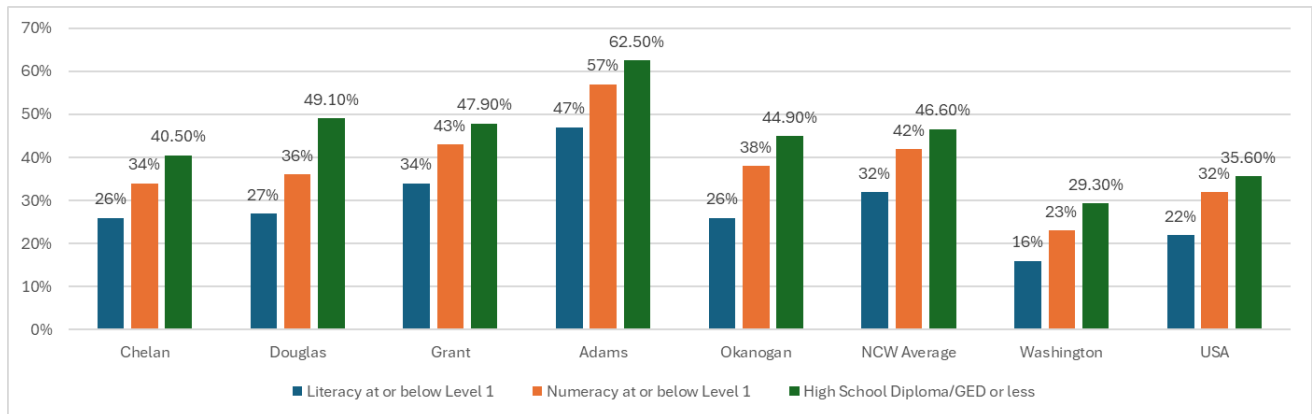


Figure 1C-2. Rates of NCW Adults at or below Literacy/Numeracy level 1 and possessing educational attainment at High School Diploma or below

Analysis of the Workforce in the Region – Workforce Metrix

Education and Employment

Table 1D-1 depicts the correlation between maximum educational attainment level achieved and labor force participation (working or actively seeking work) in North Central as of 2022. Typically, workforce development professionals draw clear parallels between educational achievement and employment; however, the abundance of employment opportunities that occurred post-pandemic has lessened this correlation. While labor force participation is strongest among those with bachelors' degrees or higher credentials, in many cases in North Central it is less prevalent among those with secondary credentials (high school diplomas or equivalents) than among those with no secondary credentials.

	Adams		Chelan		Douglas		Grant		Okanogan		NCW Total	
<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total:	11,258	100.00%	54,434	100.00%	28,706	100.00%	60,723	100.00%	29,871	100.00%	184,992	100.00%
Less than high school graduate	3,269	29.04%	7,946	14.60%	5,228	18.21%	11,884	19.57%	4,178	13.99%	32,505	17.57%
In labor force	2,049	62.68%	5,109	64.30%	3,497	66.89%	7,457	62.75%	2,342	56.06%	20,454	62.93%
Not in labor force	1,220	37.32%	2,837	35.70%	1,731	33.11%	4,427	37.25%	1,836	43.94%	12,051	37.07%
High school graduate / equivalency	3,527	31.33%	13,438	24.69%	7,933	27.64%	17,326	28.53%	8,854	29.64%	51,078	27.61%
In labor force	2,310	65.49%	7,484	55.69%	4,770	60.13%	10,026	57.87%	4,619	52.17%	29,209	57.19%
Not in labor force	1,217	34.51%	5,954	44.31%	3,163	39.87%	7,300	42.13%	4,235	47.83%	21,869	42.81%
Some college or associate's degree	2,805	24.92%	16,974	31.18%	9,308	32.43%	20,784	34.23%	10,075	33.73%	59,946	32.40%
In labor force	1,726	61.53%	10,126	59.66%	6,080	65.32%	12,904	62.09%	5,897	58.53%	36,733	61.28%
Not in labor force	1,079	38.47%	6,848	40.34%	3,228	34.68%	7,880	37.91%	4,178	41.47%	23,213	38.72%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,657	14.72%	16,076	29.53%	6,237	21.73%	10,729	17.67%	6,764	22.64%	41,463	22.41%
In labor force	1,212	73.14%	10,588	65.86%	4,279	68.61%	7,738	72.12%	3,742	55.32%	27,559	66.47%
Not in labor force	445	26.86%	5,488	34.14%	1,958	31.39%	2,991	27.88%	3,022	44.68%	13,904	33.53%

Source: US Census Bureau datasets, through 2022

Table 1D-2 shows the correlation between educational attainment, labor market participation, and limited English proficiency in North Central. There is a clear correlation between lower levels of educational attainment and limited English proficiency; nearly half of individuals with limited English in this dataset reported less than high school completion, and 72% had no college education. There is less correlation between labor force participation and educational attainment; between 33 and 42 percent of individuals at each level of educational attainment were not active labor force participants.

Among those with no high school diploma or equivalent, individuals with limited English had much higher labor force participation than English-only speakers, and non-participation between language groups was roughly equal. This was not true of any other educational attainment level; English-only individuals formed a much larger proportion of all other levels of educational attainment and therefore were better represented both in and out of the labor force.

Table 1D-2: Correlation of Educational Attainment, Labor Force Participation and Limited English Proficiency, North Central		
Group	Number	Percent (percent of cohort)
Less than high school graduate:	32,505	17.57%
In Labor Force, Speaks Only English	3,880	11.94%
In Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	16,574	50.99%
Not in Labor Force, Speaks Only English	5,897	18.14%
Not in Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	6,154	18.93%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	51,078	27.61%
In Labor Force, Speaks Only English	19,946	39.05%
In Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	9,263	18.14%
Not in Labor Force, Speaks Only English	19,145	37.48%
Not in Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	2,724	5.33%
Some college or associate's degree:	59,946	32.40%
In Labor Force, Speaks Only English	29,593	49.37%
In Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	7,140	11.91%
Not in Labor Force, Speaks Only English	21,864	36.47%
Not in Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	1,349	2.25%
Bachelor's degree or higher:	41,463	22.41%
In Labor Force, Speaks Only English	23,811	57.43%
In Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	3,748	9.04%
Not in Labor Force, Speaks Only English	12,662	30.54%
Not in Labor Force, Non-English Speakers	1,242	3.00%
Source: US Census Bureau datasets, through 2022		

Occupation by Education Level

Occupations by proximate level of education required to meet standard job qualifications show that education and training are integrally linked to the amount a person can expect to earn. **Table 1D-3** shows local occupations and the mean annual wages an employee can anticipate earning. The highest paying occupations require a four-year college education or more, plus in many instances certification

or licensure. Individuals with less than a high school diploma or GED earn the lowest wages. Some of the occupations that do not require a high school diploma frequently pay just above minimum wage. Significant wage growth over all levels and occupational clusters is evident over the last five years, due to increases in the statewide minimum wage and a highly competitive labor market.

Table 1D-3: North Central WDA Wage Rates by Occupation and Proximate Minimum Education Levels, 2014 and 2018 compared

Occupation	Median Annual Wage 2018	Median Annual Wage 2023	Change %	Median Hourly Wage 2018	Median Hourly Wage 2023	Change %
Less than HS diploma to HS/GED and short training						
Agriculture Workers	\$29,156	\$37,300	27.93%	14.02	17.94	27.96%
Construction Laborers	\$43,216	\$50,900	17.78%	20.77	27.16	30.77%
Retail Cashiers	\$27,926	\$33,900	21.39%	13.24	16.31	23.19%
Production Workers	\$34,306	\$39,600	15.43%	16.49	19.06	15.59%
Food Prep	\$29,902	\$38,100	27.42%	14.04	18.32	30.48%
Building Cleaning Workers	\$33,800	\$37,900	12.13%	16.25	18.21	12.06%
HS diploma/GED plus up to 2-year college/apprenticeship						
General Office Clerks	\$38,765	\$44,700	15.31%	\$18.64	\$21.49	15.29%
Bank Tellers	\$31,962	\$39,700	24.21%	\$15.36	\$19.11	24.41%
Medical Assistants	\$37,336	\$44,500	19.19%	\$17.95	\$21.38	19.11%
Machinists	\$44,170	\$50,000	13.20%	\$21.23	\$24.02	13.14%
Truck Drivers	\$45,878	\$58,300	27.08%	\$22.06	\$28.03	27.06%
2-year degree minimum /apprenticeship						
Registered Nurses	\$86,361	\$93,500	8.27%	\$41.52	\$44.94	8.24%
Computer User Support Specialists	\$51,669	\$65,300	26.38%	\$24.85	\$31.41	26.40%
Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	\$49,871	\$75,100	50.59%	\$23.98	\$36.09	50.50%
Electricians	\$70,731	\$83,300	17.77%	\$34.00	\$40.04	17.76%
4-year degree or higher						
Accountants and Auditors	\$68,935	\$80,800	17.21%	\$30.04	\$38.85	29.33%
Lawyers	\$108,297	\$116,100	7.21%	\$54.93	\$55.80	1.58%
Child, Family and School Social Workers	\$54,355	\$69,800	28.42%	\$22.31	\$33.58	50.52%
Civil Engineers	\$90,136	\$98,400	9.17%	\$37.92	\$47.31	24.76%
Computer Programmers	\$106,302	\$112,100	5.45%	\$42.35	\$53.90	27.27%
Teachers, Secondary	\$63,807	\$88,100	38.07%	\$28.68	\$42.33	47.59%

Source: JobsEQ

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

Program Strengths

Schools, colleges, local training providers and community-based organizations provide valuable educational opportunities and training resources for persons facing a variety of barriers to education or employment. SkillSource previously sent a survey to One-Stop partners asking them to self-assess

their services' strengths, challenges and capacity. Service providers most often reported their greatest strengths are their experienced and knowledgeable staff, the partnerships connecting the organizations with both service providers and employers in the community, and actual resources available to participants.

Having dedicated, competent professionals implementing these programs is a critical element in service provision. Staff were repeatedly described as experienced and knowledgeable, able to work with diverse populations, tailoring individualized training programs and connecting job seekers with the services they need for employment. Staff members were also described as individuals who are knowledgeable about their industries and competent to direct workers to the programs best suited for their specific needs. OIC of Washington staff members are bilingual/bicultural, with farm work backgrounds and able to understand the challenges faced by their customers. Employment Security employees were reported as cross-trained and knowledgeable of partner services, leveraging resources to achieve optimum outcomes for programs.

Agency partnerships were also cited as an essential strength of the regional service providers. They jointly communicate and collaborate with one another as well as with community employers. Some of these contacts are structured, scheduled and advisory while others have developed as mutually advantageous relationships between service providers and local employers. Community Colleges rely heavily on the input and guidance provided by program advisory committees who help design and refine curriculum to include specific, industry-related information and desired workplace skills. They have cultivated relationships with employers who support certificates and programs by offering clinical lab sites, guest lecturers and opportunities to engage in internships, work and clinical experiences. The established One-Stop partnerships in each local area reinforce the close collaboration between workforce system agencies.

Finally, the substantive resources available through the various organizations were also cited as an important strength. Whole-person solutions, valuable information and training, and coordinated strategies through programs leading to college and career readiness are available through these service providers. Specific classes and workshops were referenced including English Language Acquisition, GED or high school diploma preparation and completion, time management, organization, digital literacy, and career track training in professional technical fields. SkillSource provides an array of assessments such as Interest and Aptitude, Basic Skills, Job Skills and a Job Training assessment (SkillDex) that produces a job match and skill gap report identifying training and skill development needs. These real-world tools are invaluable in the appropriate placement and matching for both employers and prospective employees.

Individuals with barriers have a wide array of agency partnerships and resources available to them through experienced and knowledgeable staff that are flexible and competent guides through state-assisted programs.

The SkillSource Regional Workforce Board sent out a survey to community members in November 2023 in which several questions were asked regarding the regional workforce system's collaboration and benefit to customers. 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regional workforce system partners collaborate with each other; 77% agreed or strongly agreed that the regional

workforce system contributes to success for job/career seekers; and 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the regional workforce system contributes to success for businesses.

Program Challenges

The reported challenges that face agencies are more nuanced with program and customer specific difficulties. The need for in depth knowledge of the services provided through partner programs creates a challenge in navigating the appropriate use of resources. Increased knowledge of the services that partners provide through the WorkSource system will be important to streamline resources. The Workforce Collaboration initiatives deployed throughout the five counties are showing positive movement toward a more knowledgeable and streamlined workforce system.

Populations with multiple barriers present difficulties at the outset. These individuals come to service providers often lacking foundational skills necessary for education or employment. Some are lifestyle issues involving drug use or criminal records. Other skill deficits mentioned were more technical, for example computer literacy to utilize resources, time allocated in class schedules, and even awareness that the services are available. While a strength of partner programs is that they are welcoming to all, this creates the potential challenge for employers to view job seekers using these resources as “less desirable” and not their first choice for employee recruitment. Two partner agencies in particular have dedicated a Business Specialist to better facilitate employer relationships.

Resource challenges also face customers, especially in North Central’s rural setting. Adults without means to travel to service locations generally cannot participate in classes and many customers find distance learning technology difficult to access or use. Rigorous and complex documentation was mentioned by agencies as creating a challenge for Spanish speaking, agricultural workers as well as dislocated workers. New Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program requirements for one-on-one services with claimants have increased staff responsibilities. A local community college noted that they do not have many large employers in their district in which to obtain a broader array of business advisory input. This lack of employers was also reported as a challenge for transitioning workers looking for higher wage jobs. Good work-based learning experiences, such as internships and apprenticeships are similarly limited.

Partner agencies who use the WorkSource Information Technology case management system, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), have reported significant difficulty over the past several years related to system limitations, technical malfunctions, outages, and a poor user experience design, resulting in lost time and higher inefficiency. This system is also not compliant with federal reporting requirements to the US Department of Labor. As a systemwide priority, Employment Security Department has begun a Replacement Project involving hundreds of workforce professionals from across the state, including heavy involvement from the local workforce boards, to field a new case management system in late 2025.

Most importantly, reduced budgets were repeated as a primary challenge by a number of the service partners. That topic will be addressed as a capacity issue.

Employer Capacity

When employers invest in training, they are paying the wages of an employee who is not in full production. Add to that cost, the loss of productivity when their best employees are taken off production and paired into a training situation. Depending on the complexity of the job, some

employers don't expect to make a profit from their new employees for several months. The monetary implications for training are considerable and are limited by financial and time resources, especially in smaller companies. There are also capacity issues that are encountered when employee backfill is unavailable and seasonal demands are high. The reverse is also true; regional and seasonal down times reduce opportunities and resources for training, especially in the agricultural, manufacturing and tourism industries.

In spite of the cost training new hires, employers are not just investing in entry level training. Upskilling opportunities are plentiful throughout the workforce. Several of the larger businesses interviewed provide company specific "universities" and third-party training materials that can be accessed by employees wishing to increase their skillset. Most often, these additional training materials can be utilized while on paid time. Upskilling also happens through cross-training on the job, allowing employees to find arenas that maximize their strengths and interests. Employers consistently expressed their preference to hire into managerial roles employees who have a known work ethic and skillset, and are already familiar with the company and industry standards. Several of the employers interviewed were proud to have started at entry level positions and eager to offer that same opportunity to employees who demonstrate aptitude, initiative and desire to advance in the workforce.

REGIONAL SECTOR STRATEGIES

The Region has identified tech occupations (SOC 15-1200) and healthcare support occupations (SOC 31-0000) for additional strategies to meet workforce demands.

TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS (ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS/INDUSTRIES)

The Region selected technology (tech) occupations (SOC 15-1200) due to unique regional factors and broader industry and employment trends. Specifically, North Central Washington is attracting major investments from technology-oriented firms such as Microsoft and other companies in their pursuit to launch new data centers regionally. Other companies seeking to locate or expand their operations with a strong technology focus include alternative energy, aerospace and advanced manufacturing. For instance, agricultural food processing firms like Stemilt and Lamb Weston are actively seeking tech workers.

Additionally, the adoption of new technologies across industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare and professional services is another powerful driver for tech occupations. New technologies include the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in operations, increased reliance on online and remote operations requiring technical staff to address operational needs, and growing demand for skilled occupations in software development, data-driven operations, and support. Other emerging and growing technologies in demand include cybersecurity, rural broadband digital equity, and increased reliance on Internet-based services.

Increased automation is also driven by staffing challenges post-pandemic, demographics, supply chain constraints, and talent constraints. In response, colleges and high school districts are developing academic programs responsive to increased technology needs, for instance, Wenatchee School District's computer tech apprenticeship program and new programs to accommodate data center staffing needs. Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College are also expanding tech program offerings.

On a broader scale, state, regional and national trends forecast increased occupational focus on tech positions across industries. Federal drivers for expanding tech occupations include:

- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
- CHIPS and Science Act (CHIPS),
- Inflation Reduction Act
- Digital Equity Act
- Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program (BEAD)
- Good Jobs Challenge.

Occupational Outlook⁵

Current employment for tech occupations in the North Central WDA is approximately 2,200 positions (2,234), the majority of which are software developers (772), computer user support specialists (349) and computer systems analysts (**Table 2A-1**). The average annual wage is \$105,300. Forecasted annual growth is 1.4 percent.

Location quotient, a measure of occupational concentration in comparison to national averages, shows that healthcare support occupations are lower than the national average (.56)⁶; however projected demand in light of new industry development and increased reliance on tech positions across companies is likely to be strong.

Most tech occupations are found in computer systems design and related services (11.7 percent) and software publishers (8.5 percent), followed by computing infrastructure providers, data processing, web hosting, and related services (7.4 percent)

Similar to regional demographics, the majority of tech workers are white (78.7 percent), followed by those reporting two or more races (12.7 percent). Latino workers comprise 17.1 percent of tech workers. The majority of workers are male (73.8 percent).

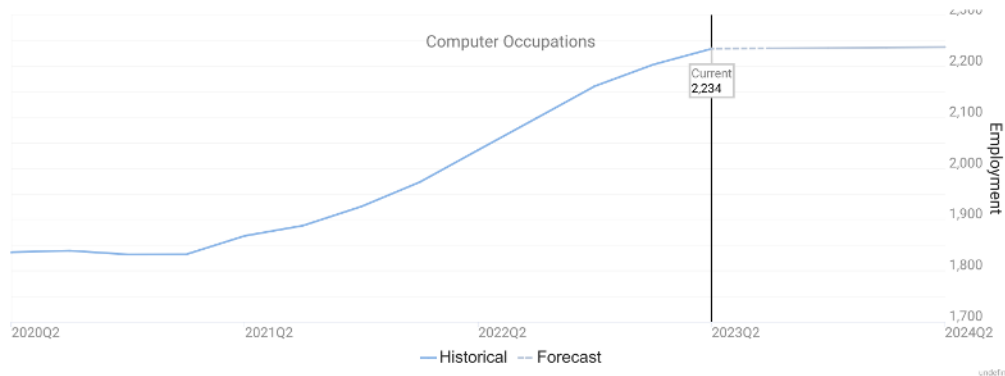
The majority of positions require postsecondary experience or awards (83.6 percent), while the remaining positions require on the job experience (approximately 16 percent). Big Bend Community College and Wenatchee Valley College are the primary college level tech program educational institutions in the North Central WDA.

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, data are provided by Chmura / Jobs EQ.

⁶ Location quotient is a measurement of concentration in comparison to the nation. An LQ of 1.00 indicates a region has the same concentration of an industry (or occupation) as the nation. An LQ of 2.00 would mean the region has twice the expected employment compared to the nation and an LQ of 0.50 would mean the region has half the expected employment in comparison to the nation.

Table 2A-1 Tech Occupational Snapshot (NC WDA)

6-Digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Mean Wages	LQ	3-Year Empl Change	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
Software Developers	772	\$128,700	0.58	205	75	2.5%
Computer User Support Specialists	349	\$66,000	0.59	47	29	0.4%
Computer Systems Analysts	235	\$104,500	0.55	24	19	0.8%
Computer Occupations, All Other	211	\$90,000	0.59	24	18	1.0%
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	136	\$94,100	0.50	12	9	0.2%
Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	87	\$93,100	0.53	25	8	2.0%
Computer Network Support Specialists	82	\$81,200	0.57	8	7	0.6%
Web and Digital Interface Designers	77	\$98,200	0.80	16	8	1.6%
Computer Network Architects	58	\$133,400	0.39	10	4	0.3%
Information Security Analysts	56	\$115,000	0.41	12	6	2.6%
Remaining Component Occupations	169	\$116,800	0.53	16	14	0.9%
Computer Occupations	2,234	\$105,300	0.56	398	197	1.4%



“Annual Demand” is the projected need for new entrants into an occupation. New entrants are needed due to expected growth and to replace workers who left the occupation due to factors such as retirement or switching careers.



“Forecast Ann Growth” is the expected change in jobs due to national, long-term trend projections (per the BLS) as well as local factors such as industry mix and population growth (as computed and modeled by Chmura).

Tech Demand Growing

Credit bearing workforce and academic programs are essential for higher skilled tech workers seeking long term career placement and advancement. Entry level tech workers, however, are seeking relatively quick, inexpensive noncredit industry credentialed training programs leading to tech skill certifications in demand. Educators and employers are converging on skill-based training and employment for working learners who have gained skills through [alternative routes rather than through two- and four-year degrees](#), including community college, workforce training bootcamps, certificate programs, military service, and on the job learning. Short-term noncredit tech credentials can serve as a [launchpad to gain employment](#) and provide the working learner with pathways to seek training in traditional associate and bachelor degree programs in demand.

Increasingly, companies are finding that [traditional hiring methods emphasizing degree attainment](#), among other requirements, are not attracting the talent needed to operate successfully. Employers

are in the midst of a radical redesign of hiring skilled talent in the face of increased demand due to the [Great Resignation](#) and the sheer number of job openings and lower unemployment rate.

Increasingly there is also a mismatch between those who earn college degrees and the jobs they attain. Burning Glass and the Strada Institute for the Future of Work report, among other findings, that half of college graduates are underemployed; in other words, they are working in fields for which their college degree was not required. Conversely, college-level employment rates for fields requiring high degrees of quantitative reasoning skills like computer science, engineering, mathematics as well as education and nursing had the lowest underemployment rates.⁷

To address immediate employer demand for skilled workers, employers and working learners are turning to [skills-based hiring opportunities](#), i.e., proven experience and credentials rather than focusing on degree attainment. In spite of millions of unemployed and underemployed looking for work, businesses are struggling to hire and fill critical skill gaps. These so-called [“hidden workers”](#) are working part-time or are unemployed, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Hiring managers are focusing on proven skills and community and technical colleges are positioned to offer programming that aligns with that approach. Colleges can play a pivotal role in helping their local workforce find this untapped talent by providing appropriate tech training programs emphasizing non-degree, short term training options that lead directly to well-paying tech jobs. The Region can support these efforts through grant partnerships and related support services.

Although recent layoffs in the tech sector (Google, Amazon, Meta, Salesforce, etc.) have witnessed [significant layoffs in 2024](#), North Central Area companies will benefit from efforts to attract and retain tech positions across industries due to, as noted above, increased reliance on technology solutions across business operations.

The North Central WDA has also led efforts to support computer tech apprenticeship program development in partnership with Wenatchee School District, with increased interest from other school districts, Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College. With demonstrated success in tech apprenticeship development and support from technology certification providers – CompTIA in particular – North Central staff have a strong foundation to participate in tech occupation workforce initiatives regionally.

Technology Occupation Sector Partnership Components

Phase I: Prepare Team

Goal: build buy-in & support

North Central partnership will continue to engage employers, training providers and nonprofit entities to build buy-in and support. Activities will include:

- Convening a work group consisting of the following organizations:
 - SkillSource, Computing for All, NCW Technology Alliance, Center of Excellence for Information and Computing Technologies, Local and regional employers.

⁷ Burning Glass Institute and Strada Institute for the Future of Work. (February, 2024). *Talent Disrupted: Underemployment, College Graduates, and the Way Forward*, accessed online February 23, 2024 at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6197797102be715f55c0e0a1/t/65d62ebce0cf8f07e3d6e006/1708535486302/Talent+Disrupted+02212024.pdf>.

Phase II: Investigate

Goal: determine target industries

North Central partnership will identify target industries for tech jobs in demand, including tech companies, agriculture, manufacturing, aerospace and professional services.

Phase III: Inventory & Analyze

Goal: build baseline knowledge of industry

North Central partnership will continue analyzing tech job growth across targeted industries, identifying specific tech jobs and associated required qualifications. This will include periodic analyses of labor market information, discussions with local employers, and assessment of training and education opportunities. Local board staff will develop and publish periodic reports highlighting tech jobs and careers in selected industries and companies, as well as personal stories and vignettes that highlight career success.

Phase IV: Convene

Goal: build industry partnership, prioritize activities

North Central partnership will continue to build industry partnerships and develop a priority matrix of training and related service activities to fill tech positions in demand.

Phase V: Act

Goal: implement ideas

North Central partnership will launch supporting initiatives in partnership with training and education providers, and related support services, including school districts, Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College. The Region will also partner with regional tech nonprofits, including NCW Technology Alliance, Computing for All, and Apprenti to promote and foster training and education opportunities with a focus on rapid certification programs for working learners interested in tech careers. This will also include symposia or seminars to attract job candidates and employers regarding tech job opportunities and supporting education, training, and services.

Phase VI: Sustain & Evolve

Goal: grow the partnership

North Central partnership will periodically evaluate progress and success in supporting working learners gain and advance tech positions across industries. In so doing, The Region will grow partnerships to leverage grants and other funding resources to attract and retain tech workers throughout the service area. Performance measures include:

- Registration and exit data for adult dislocated workers and youth with specified annual goals and actual results:
 - Registrations, Placement rates, Credential rates.
- Workforce investment fiscal measures:
 - Career services, Employer based training, Occupational education, Basic education.
- Program outreach outcomes:
 - Job fairs, Conferences, Planning and coordination meetings.

HEALTHCARE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COMPONENTS

North Central selected healthcare support occupations (SOC 31-0000) due to unique regional factors and broader industry and employment trends. Specifically, north central Washington demographics indicate a growing elderly population requiring long term care and advanced nursing and related healthcare needs, coupled with a growing population supporting new regional healthcare providers serving the broader population.

The Workforce Training Board initiatives support a strong focus on healthcare occupations including the long-term care initiative and the Licensed Practical Nurse registered apprenticeship program.

Behavioral health is a growing societal concern with consequent policy focus on meeting employment demand in this growing healthcare field. Current initiatives in north central Washington include program development at the high school level with direction and support from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Occupational Outlook

Current employment in the North Central WDA is approximately 5,500 positions (5,458), the majority of which are personal care aides (2,160) and nursing assistants (1,025) (**Table 2A-2**). The average annual wage is \$42,400. Forecasted annual growth is 1.9 percent.

Location quotient, a measure of occupational concentration in comparison to national averages, shows that healthcare support occupations are close to the national average (.93). Dental assistants and healthcare support workers, all others, show the highest concentration of workers exceeding the national averages.

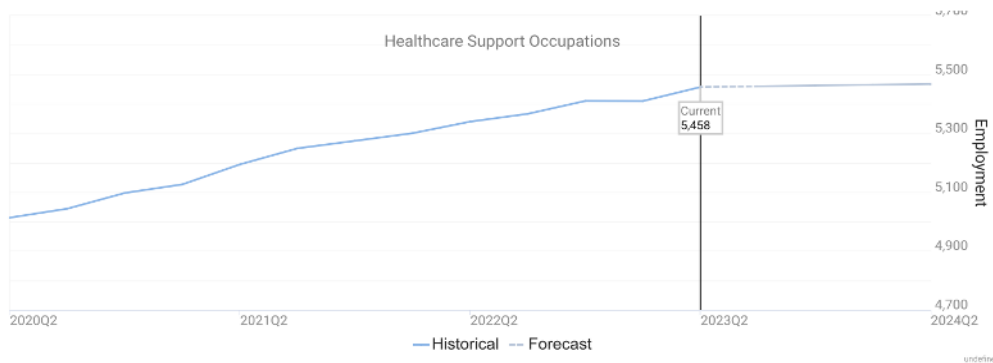
Most healthcare support occupations are found in individual and family services (43.3 percent) and general medical and surgical hospitals (17.0 percent), followed by retirement communities and assisted living facilities (7.0 percent).

Similar to regional demographics, the majority of healthcare support workers are white (78.3 percent), followed by those reporting two or more races (13.5 percent). Latino workers comprise one third (33.4 percent) of healthcare support workers. The majority of workers are female (84.3 percent).

The majority of positions require no experience or awards (approximately 60 percent), while the remaining positions require a two-year degree or certificate, or higher (approximately 40 percent). Approximately 44 percent of healthcare support workers (43.9 percent) have no college-level training; the remaining 56 percent have some college or higher education award. Big Bend Community College and Wenatchee Valley College are the primary college level healthcare educational institutions in the north central WDA.

Table 2A-2. Healthcare Support Occupational Snapshot

6-Digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Mean Wages	LQ	3-Year Empl Change	Annual Demand	Forecast Ann Growth
Personal Care Aides	2,160	\$39,600	0.95	423	385	2.6%
Nursing Assistants	1,025	\$40,300	0.92	-58	164	0.7%
Home Health Aides	763	\$39,600	0.95	-60	114	2.6%
Medical Assistants	554	\$46,200	0.87	63	90	1.7%
Dental Assistants	329	\$49,000	1.08	44	52	0.9%
Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	104	\$54,700	1.17	0	16	0.8%
Massage Therapists	91	\$73,500	0.82	3	15	1.9%
Medical Equipment Preparers	83	\$49,600	1.51	8	13	0.7%
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	82	\$36,800	0.88	16	19	2.1%
Phlebotomists	72	\$45,800	0.62	8	11	0.7%
Remaining Component Occupations	193	\$50,800	0.67	-4	34	0.9%
Healthcare Support Occupations	5,458	\$42,400	0.93	444	912	1.9%



💡 “Annual Demand” is the projected need for new entrants into an occupation. New entrants are needed due to expected growth and to replace workers who left the occupation due to factors such as retirement or switching careers.

💡 “Forecast Ann Growth” is the expected change in jobs due to national, long-term trend projections (per the BLS) as well as local factors such as industry mix and population growth (as computed and modeled by Chmura).

Policy level initiatives at the state and federal level support efforts to increase the supply of healthcare support workers in the north central WDA. The Washington long-term care workforce initiative expects that half of Washingtonians over the age of 65 are going to need paid long-term care. As the state population ages, the number of residents is projected to grow 30 percent by 2030. As noted in the 2023 legislative report, “The available pool of workers is unable to keep pace with the growing demand for LTC services and supports. This is further complicated by factors related to ongoing staffing challenges that have persisted for years.”⁸ Statewide employment growth from December 2022 – December 2023 showed that education and health services had the second largest employment gains year over year (not seasonally adjusted).⁹

⁸ Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board (2023). Washington Long-Term Care Workforce Initiative Legislative Report, accessed online January 21, 2023 at: <https://wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/LTC-Workforce-Annual-Report-FINAL4-2023.pdf>, page 5.

⁹ Washington State Employment Security Department (2024), “December 2023 Monthly Employment Report (1/17/2024), accessed online January 21, 2023 at: <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/december-2023-monthly-employment-report>.

North Central has been actively supporting healthcare support initiatives, including apprenticeship program development support, and long-term care partnerships with Cascade Medical Center and Mountain Meadows Senior Living Campus in Leavenworth. The region has also been actively participating in the state LTC initiative and LPN apprenticeship program development, with a particular focus on rural and underserved communities.

Healthcare Support Occupation Sector Partnership Components

Phase I: Prepare Team

Goal: build buy-in & support

North Central partnership will continue engaging employers, training providers and non-profit entities to build buy-in and support. Activities will include:

- Convening a work group consisting of the following organizations:
 - SkillSource, Local and regional healthcare employers, Educational providers- Wenatchee Valley College, Big Bend Community College, regional high schools, Healthcare community-based organizations and nonprofits.

Phase II: Investigate

Goal: determine target industries

North Central partnership will identify target industries for healthcare jobs in demand, including hospitals, long term care facilities, assisted living and retirement communities, and other healthcare providers in behavioral and mental health, dentistry and other healthcare support occupations.

Phase III: Inventory & Analyze

Goal: build baseline knowledge of industry

North Central partnership will continue analyzing healthcare support occupational growth across targeted industries, identifying specific healthcare support occupations and associated required qualifications. This will include periodic analyses of labor market information, discussions with local employers, and assessment of training and education opportunities. The Region will develop and publish periodic reports highlighting healthcare support jobs and careers in selected industries and companies, as well as personal stories and vignettes that highlight career success.

Phase IV: Convene

Goal: build industry partnership, prioritize activities

North Central partnership will continue building and expanding industry partnerships and develop a priority matrix of training and related service activities to fill healthcare positions in demand.

Phase V: Act

Goal: implement ideas

North Central will launch supporting initiatives in partnership with training and education providers, and related support services, including school districts, Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College. The Region will also partner with regional healthcare providers and non-profits, including Confluence Health, Columbia Valley Community Health, and the Workforce Board Long Term Care Initiative staff to promote and foster training and education opportunities with a focus on certification programs for working learners interested in healthcare careers. This

will also include symposia or seminars to attract job candidates and employers regarding healthcare job opportunities and supporting education, training, and services.

Phase VI: Sustain & Evolve

Goal: grow the partnership

North Central partnership will periodically evaluate progress and success in supporting working learners gain and advance in healthcare careers. In so doing, North Central will grow partnerships to leverage grants and other funding resources to attract and retain healthcare support workers throughout the service area. Performance measures include:

- Registration and exit data for adult dislocated workers and youth with specified annual goals and actual results:
 - Registrations, Placement rates, Credential rates.
- Workforce investment fiscal measures:
 - Career services, Employer based training, Occupational education, Basic education.
- Program outreach outcomes:
 - Job fairs, Conferences, Planning and coordination meetings.

Timeline: September 2024 – June 2028, with ongoing updates throughout the planning period.

REGIONAL SERVICE STRATEGIES

Strategic Interventions

Based on the comprehensive regional analysis, the following summary describes services and strategies that will be developed on a regional basis to address specific challenges, opportunities, or targeted populations. Additional strategies and service models are described throughout the plan.

- Address rural challenges by increasing program offerings and strengthening partnership footprint in rural areas.
- With diversified funding, increase services with a focus on minority owned business and people in poverty and those at risk of falling into the same (based on economic indices such as United Way's Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) metrics). This will include examining local criteria eligibility factors.
- Increase supports such as financial incentives to bolster training completion, skills attainment and wage progression.
- Focus on business services and serving employer workforce needs.
- Implement Area Workforce Collaboration initiatives, including staff cross-training & professional development. Increase the number and frequency of workforce/education/support partners who engage in collaborative efforts.

The Goals, Strategies and Objectives are described in further detail in section III-1.

Cooperative Agreements

Attachment A describes activities expected to improve One Stop service delivery and Workforce collaboration across all five counties. These activities are intended to inform MOU content and

provisions, but more importantly improve and expand collaborative efforts among all workforce, education, economic development and support organizations throughout the region. They are also intended to strengthen the team of one stop partners, enhance service alignment and increase access to the full array of partner services.

Section 8 of this plan: One Stop System goes into more detail about cooperation and collaboration around integrated and accessible services, staff cross-training, technical assistance, data sharing, employer engagement, etc.

Multi-Regional Focus:

The South Central & North Central are contiguous regions and share similar industry and populations as well as service delivery similarities. Leadership and staff will meet on a periodic basis to examine ways to improve service strategies and to maximize local resources. The Regions will work jointly to:

- Streamline and standardize administrative and managerial functions across the regions that will serve to leverage or reduce cost burdens. This includes sharing staff expertise for technical assistance, troubleshooting and development of the common financial management software MIP; joint development of process procedures for equal opportunity and compliance monitoring of service providers; identifying other areas where joint development of local policy would reduce time and effort when completed as a joint task.
- Plan and implement joint professional development opportunities such as the 2023 Central Regions Joint Business Services Summit. These joint trainings foster the sharing of innovative practices and development of new service delivery approaches.
- Coordinate Rapid Response efforts where closures impact both regions.

COORDINATION WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Several economic development agencies are active throughout the five counties including EDCs, port districts, cities and counties. Three of these agencies' Directors serve on the SkillSource Regional Board; board staff serve on several of these agency task forces. The region's economic development strategies are quite diverse. An overview of their purpose, goals and principal activities is provided below.

The Economic Alliance of Okanogan County's purpose is to create an effective partnership in Okanogan County between private enterprise, county, tribal, and local governments to implement strategies for growth. The Economic Alliance of Okanogan County also supports rural broadband expansion focused on bringing reliable internet access and equity to all county residents.¹⁰

Current economic development initiatives include Room One in partnership with Blue Sky Minds. The consortium supports growing the food ecosystem in the Okanogan region, with farmers, ranchers, food producers, restaurants, food sellers and the nonprofit community boosting demand for local and regional foods, including schools and local food banks. TwispWorks in Okanogan County supports innovative businesses and new industries regionally, with a focus on addressing the effects and causes

¹⁰ Mike Maltais (July 11, 2023). "Broadband Action Team expands countywide internet," *Quad City Herald*, accessed .February 14, 2024 at: <https://www.qcherald.com/stories/broadband-action-team-expands-countywide-internet,35843>.

of climate change on a local scale. Washington State Department of Commerce supports these innovation cluster initiatives through capacity building grants.¹¹

North Central Washington Economic Development District (NCWEDD), which covers Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas counties and the Colville Confederated Tribes, supports regional economic development. The group fosters contacts within the area for entrepreneurship growth and small business growth. Although larger businesses are interested in coming into the area, the NCWEDD has concentrated on small business through business expansion, regional small business development, and technical assistance. The NCWEDD has served as the lead for tourism development in Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan counties under the State of Washington Tourism Support Program.

Port of Chelan County and the Port of Douglas County have mainly concentrated on larger projects. The Pangborn Memorial Airport is an ongoing project for both of the counties along with agricultural tourism, including winemaking, and information technology. The ports have focused on various sectors and manufacturing has been the latest project for both groups. Together in 2020 the ports formed a first of its kind organization in Washington, the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority, whose mission is to “Work Together to Enhance the Economic Vitality of North Central Washington”. Recent initiatives include preparation for two large data center complexes in the Wenatchee area, a regional sports complex feasibility study and examining options to upgrade the Pangborn Airport runway.

Grant County Economic Development Council has historically and currently concentrated on the manufacturing and agriculture sector. They seek to bring together various development groups to bring in larger manufacturing facilities and grow high tech agricultural opportunities. New and emerging growth in aerospace and energy sectors has created increased employment opportunities and new labor skill set needs. Current economic development initiatives include aerospace, agriculture and food processing, data center expansion, manufacturing expansion, and retail growth.

Adams County Development Council works closely with local employers, schools, and municipal leadership to expand opportunities for area residents. The Council has also played a key role in developing local employer career showcases for high school youth throughout the county. Agriculture is a primary consideration: potato processing has led to Othello being dubbed the “world capital of French fry production” due to its geography and access to abundant renewable energy resources.¹² In addition, development of a large waste disposal facility in rural Adams County near Washtucna is expected to bring both revenue and jobs into the county.

Strategies for ongoing coordination with Economic Development entities:

Strategy 1: Identify current economic development agencies and organizations regionally and provide them with an in-person update on the 2024-2028 strategic planning goals and supporting activities.

¹¹ Washington State Department of Commerce (July 11, 2023). “Commerce partners with four rural communities to pilot unique twist on industry-led economic development strategy,” Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Commerce

¹² Eli Tan (August 21, 2023). “A french fry boomtown emerges as a climate winner - as long as it has water”, *Washington Post*, accessed February 14, 2024 at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/08/21/potatoes-farming-climate-water/>.

Strategy 2: identify common economic development goals and supporting activities that align with the 2024-2028 strategic plan.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement an ongoing communications strategy with economic development agencies and nonprofit organizations to sustain coordinated business outreach and economic development and minimize duplication of effort.

Coordination of Transportation and Other Support Services

Title I service providers coordinate with local transportation providers to provide students bus passes to get to and from class, training and work when a financial need exists. Other support services are provided on an individual basis through case management and according to the Local Board support service policy. Areas of support may range from transportation to clothing to childcare to housing. Career Specialists assess participants' situation to ensure a barrier exists and that other options to overcome the barrier have been explored. Local staff have strong networks with social and community organizations to meet needs so that customers can attend training, develop their skills, and enter the workforce.

Regional Performance Negotiation and Evaluation

Regional performance negotiation occurs through a series of meetings with State Workforce Board staff and representatives from each WDA. Data is analyzed to look at current levels of performance and trends over time. Feedback is given to Workforce staff regarding starting base lines. Each measure is discussed with regards to economic or other factors that need to be considered in setting new targets. Eventually WDAs send proposed targets for each measure which are considered when setting State targets with DOL. North Central will propose PY 23-24 & 24-25 Title I targets for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth measures, which have not yet been negotiated. **See Attachment G.** North Central receives performance data from the state on a quarterly basis in order to review performance and report to the Local Board.

SECTION III: LOCAL COMPONENT

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.

Strategic Goals

GOAL ONE: North Central workforce system proactively engages with companies, economic development agencies, education and training providers, and nonprofit organizations to develop strategic and working partnerships for increased growth, competitiveness and workforce success.

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

Strategy 1: Identify current occupations in demand using comprehensive datasets and analyses and provide staff with user-friendly summary analyses of family wage jobs in demand regionally and within subareas.

Strategy 2: Engage with critical industries regionally and within subareas to identify emerging high-demand occupations and training needs for those occupations.

Strategy 3: Provide business services, career services and training.

Objective 2: Coordinate and align business services and outreach.

Strategy 1: Develop and conduct an in-house workshop with business services and business navigators to align business services and outreach strategy both regionally and within subareas. Support and equip business services teams and navigators to streamline outreach efforts, avoid outreach duplication, and offer a coordinated suite of business services to employers.

Strategy 2: Develop and launch a coordinated employer outreach tracking system for business services staff and outreach staff, identifying prospective and actively participating employers. The tracking system will also capture specific staff outreach efforts, including phone calls, meetings, events, and results.

Strategy 3: Develop performance annual qualitative and quantitative targets and metrics for one-stop business services, layoff and business closure assistance, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, internships, apprenticeships and work experiences.

Objective 3: Upskill and reskill working learners.

Strategy 1: Support career services with periodic updates on regional industry initiatives, changing occupational and industry requirements and specific opportunities.

Strategy 2: Support career services by identifying industry experts to participate in workshops, classroom education, and work-based training opportunities.

Strategy 3: Provide comprehensive training solutions for working learners, to include incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, customized training, and apprenticeships.

Objective 4: Develop apprenticeship and targeted training pathways

Strategy 1: Identify potential opportunities for existing apprenticeship program expansion and new apprenticeship program development.

Strategy 2: Identify pre-apprenticeship and targeted training opportunities in coordination with existing apprenticeship programs and educational institutions school districts.

Strategy 3: Support the successful development and launch of apprenticeship programs and targeted training pathways by obtaining or facilitating grant funding, and providing apprenticeship development technical assistance for pathway developers.

Objective 5: Promote skilled trades development.

Strategy 1: Engage with regional union and nonunion skilled trades organizations to support skilled trades development and provide information on North Central business and career services.

Strategy 2: Connect career seekers to skilled trades through hiring events, work-based learning and educational and training opportunities, including apprenticeships.

Strategy 3: Evaluate statewide and national initiatives promoting skilled trades development and identify specific regional opportunities, including grant and partnership opportunities.

GOAL TWO: 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

Strategy 1: Enhance and expand learning pathways leading to careers of interest, allowing older teens and youth meaningful progress towards entering the workforce.

Strategy 2: Expand career guidance, counseling and navigator resources to help students align their future goals with their current education pathways.

Strategy 3: Partner with employers to help students explore careers and workplaces. Engage businesses, unions and non-profit and public sector organizations to inform students about career opportunities, both in the classroom and in workplaces.

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

Strategy 1: Expand dual credit programs offering high school students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school and expand high school elective credit for paid work experiences.

Strategy 2: Enable students and workers to obtain industry-recognized credentials. Emphasize credentials that stack towards career progression from high school to post-secondary, work, and beyond. Emphasize transferable skills that are useful across many occupations.

Strategy 3: Strengthen and increase available youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

Objective 3: Explore careers and workplace experiences through career connected learning including work-based learning

Strategy 1: Expand and support career and technical education programs across all occupational sectors.

Strategy 2: Enhance Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services for young people with disabilities to explore careers.

Strategy 3: Promote collaboration with partners to increase experiential learning opportunities like job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and informational interviews. These experiences offer valuable hands-on exposure to the workplace, allowing youth to gain practical skills, understand industry expectations, and build professional networks leading to family-wage careers.

Strategy 4: Teach students work readiness skills enabling them to locate and land jobs. Show students how to identify their knowledge, skills, and abilities and promote themselves to meet the job requirements. Teach young people how to find job openings, write resumes, complete applications, interview and follow-up.

Objective 4: Increase youth awareness of workforce services and programs

Strategy 1: Support enrollment in youth opportunity programs like WIOA Youth, Open Doors, and DVR Pre-Employment Transition while continuing to remove barriers to enrollment in multiple programs.

Strategy 2: Improve opportunities for young people to transition to an economically successful adulthood by providing effective support services, empowering them to succeed in their educational pursuits and transition effectively into the workforce.

Strategy 3: Connect business and education through programs such as Career Connect Washington, career and technical education, and skill centers. Raise awareness of youth workforce programs to empower young individuals and allow businesses to tap into crucial underutilized labor sources

Objective 5: Improve retention and graduation.

Strategy 1: Prevent youth disproportionately affected by recent economic disruptions (including the COVID pandemic and the great recession of 2008-2010) from dropping out, and retrieve those who have dropped out through re-engagement programs.

Strategy 2: Increase counseling and support for populations with multiple barriers to increase secondary and post-secondary performance and completion.

Strategy 3: Advocate for K-12 early learning; extend opportunities for limited English students; accommodate varied learning styles; prevent substance abuse, reduce delinquent behavior; improve parenting skills.

Goal THREE: The 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.

Strategy 1: Promote expanded access to training options for all North Central residents.

Strategy 2: Convene business, education and labor jointly build to develop locally responsive career pathways.

Strategy 3: Expand registered pre- apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities in key local industries.

Strategy 4: Promote creation of readily obtainable short certificate/micro-credential pathways for critical occupations.

Strategy 5: Support expansion and development of Career Connected Learning activities for youth, to include Career Launch, throughout the region.

Objective 2: Prepare career seekers for meaningful career employment.

Strategy 1: Connect businesses to a wide range of workplace training options to upskill, reskill, and retain their employees while improving profitability.

Strategy 2: Provide work readiness skills to improve competitiveness and hire ability for career seekers.

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

Strategy 1: Promote skills-based hiring with area employers as a way to accelerate hiring of qualified candidates.

Strategy 2: Promote prior learning credit and articulation for individuals in career education and training, to include immigrant and refugee populations.

Goal FOUR: 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.

Strategy 1: Expand Workforce Collaboration Summit into all three sub-areas, including partner Van Tours and One-Stop professional development sessions.

Strategy 2: Strengthen the One-Stop Consortium partnership through new and existing data sharing agreements, updated customer feedback methods, and common intake systems.

Strategy 3: Collect and share programs' performance outcomes across the local workforce development system.

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

Strategy 1: Finish the area-wide build-out of the North Central WDA Resource guide website and train all One-stop partner staff.

Strategy 2: Explore & implement a customer referral system supported by an updated technology platform.

Strategy 3: Implement and ensure system staff are trained on the new statewide MIS system.

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

Strategy 1: Coordinate sub-area outreach campaigns through the NCW Consortium and local partnerships.

Strategy 2: Use system success stories to communicate real-life career transformations and local system impact.

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

Strategy 1: Review existing Quality Jobs frameworks and provide a summary analysis based on an assessment of regional employer and employee characteristics and specific needs.

Strategy 2: Convene subject matter experts, business and career services staff, and regional employers to develop a draft North Central WDA Quality Jobs Framework.

HIGH PERFORMING BOARD OBJECTIVES

Twenty-one business and community leaders comprise the SkillSource Regional Workforce Board that governs SkillSource. These volunteers represent private companies, labor organizations, state agencies, community colleges, secondary schools, and economic development and community-based organizations. Members are appointed by county commissioners and certified by the Governor. The Board meets quarterly in March, June, September and November and also holds a planning retreat in odd numbered years. Committees meet in each of the three labor market areas at least four times each year before quarterly Board meetings.

Since the Area's founding thirty-five years ago, the Local Board has adopted policies leading to high performance. Key among these is Carver Policy Governance and comprehensive, direct service delivery.

Carver requires board members have board skills, not management or technical skills except when acting in a consultative role to the administrator. Carver calls on board members to know its communities, forecast trends and discuss future alternatives. Under Carver, the board is proactive, clear about its values and long range in its views.

Collectively, the board is the CEO's boss and establishes end policies that specify the desired outcomes for desired customers at the desired cost. These desired outcomes serve as the compass for preparing plans and budgets. It is to check accomplishments vs expectations. The administrator is held accountable to achieve the desired outcome.

Carver requires boards empower and delegate accountability to the administrator for implementing procedures, practices and processes except when required by fund source conditions. Carver requires boards identify the prudence and ethics boundaries of acceptable staff conduct.

Second, the Local Board consolidates and integrates to maximize resources. A non-profit, block-grant recipient's bottom line is the quantity and quality of desired results attained. A commercial firm is driven to maximize profit, but the SkillSource Board is driven to maximize the number of career seekers and businesses benefited.

This drive produces decisions to consolidate delivery of all Workforce Investment Career Services through a single provider. Small, rural Areas have insufficient resources to engage three separate entities to deliver similar, but different services. Economies of scale are essential to provide robust, substantive career services yet conserve resources for vocational education and workplace learning.

Vertical integration further advances economies of scale. Administration and Management is kept to one layer at the local level. North Central's efficiencies are evident when the number of persons

educated and trained per dollar received is compared to statewide averages.

Vertical integration also enhances agility. SkillSource, fiscal agent, can implement a grant virtually the next day. No time is lost or customers delayed while the Local Board waits for proposals to be submitted and scored, etc.

Finally, vertical integration ensures compliance with state and federal rules. For example, the Performance and Programs Manager, who does not directly supervise service delivery staff, performs internal monitoring and follows up directly with front line management and staff to provide training and technical assistance.

In accordance with Federal and State policy and the Chief Local Elected Officials Interlocal Agreement, the Local Board shall:

- Govern SkillSource, fiscal agent for the North Central Workforce Development Area.
- Develop a 4-year Regional Plan.
- Conduct workforce research and regional labor market analysis.
- Convene local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of this plan.
- Lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and other entities in the region.
- With representatives of secondary and post-secondary education programs, lead efforts to develop and implement career pathways.
- Lead efforts in the local area to identify and promote proven and promising strategies and initiatives for meeting the needs of employers, workers and jobseekers.
- Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the system.
- Conduct oversight of Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker grants and the WorkSource one-stop system. Ensure appropriate use and management of funds.
- Negotiate local performance measures with the Governor.
- Negotiate with partners on methods for funding one-stop infrastructure costs.
- Select service providers and one-stop operators.
- Coordinate activities with education and training providers in the local area.
- Develop a budget for the activities of the Local Board with approval of the CLEO.
- Assess annually the physical and programmatic accessibility of one-stop centers.
- Certify one-stop centers.
- Provide Basic and Individual Career Services

Service Provider Performance

Service provider performance is reviewed monthly at the management level and quarterly at the board level. Performance targets are set annually for input and outcomes. Performance is managed by reviewing actual levels against target and, when necessary, modifying current practices and procedures to improve outcomes. Additionally, local employers are surveyed on a periodic basis about their employment needs and what skill gaps they are experiencing in the labor force. This information is used to target skill shortages and readjust service offerings where appropriate. Many employers report soft skills and work readiness are still at the top of the skill gap list. Service

providers receive this feedback regularly and adjust service offerings such as adding more internship opportunities for employers and job seekers to make sure the job is a good fit before committing to full-on training.

REGIONAL ALIGNMENT AND STRATEGY

See **Attachment B: Local Area Profile** for a summary description of the local area's workforce development system.

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS IN TRANSITION

Adult workers striving to improve their standard of living are considered adults in transition. They may be employed, underemployed or unemployed. They may also be temporarily out of the labor market undergoing a major skill overhaul or a minor skills tune-up. Adults in transition generally improve their standard of living by (1) acquiring new abilities within their existing workplace to increase their company value; (2) leveraging existing skills in a new workplace that holds higher value; (3) completely retool their skill set for a new and different workplace.

Schools and employers must find new methods to teach elusive behaviors like communicating effectively, completing assignments, presenting appropriate appearance, solving problems and working in teams.

Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange

This ESD program provides labor exchange services to all job seekers and helps employers to meet their hiring needs by referring qualified workers. Staff may also assess customers' skills and abilities, work experience and education to address their ability to match the labor market within their career interest, offer job search workshops and provide basic and computer skills online instruction, as well as refer the customers to other services provided by other social service, employment and training agencies and educational institutions.

Veterans Placement and Referral

Local Veterans' Employment Program (LVER), Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Consolidated Veterans Services Representatives (CVSR) staff provide individualized job search assistance and comprehensive information and referral for veterans and family members. DVOP staff provide case management to eligible Veterans with significant barriers to employment and conduct outreach to community partners. They facilitate access to Department of Veterans Affairs programs. Newly discharged veterans receive help in making the transition from military to the civilian workforce. The LVER supports Veterans and employers to conduct job development, matching job openings with Veteran applicants and conducting outreach in the community in collaboration with the local business services team to provide events that support employment such as resource and job fairs. CVSR staff are essentially a blend of the responsibilities carried out by LVER and DVOP staff. Two CVSRs support the North Central Workforce Development Area.

Workforce Investment Adult

Basic, Individualized Career, and Occupational training services are prioritized for Adults who receive public assistance and earn below the lower living standard income level or have low basic skills. Key services include career planning, work readiness skills, job search assistance and

workplace and occupational training services. Veterans also receive priority of service.

Workforce Investment Dislocated Worker

The full array of Career and Training Services. It is restricted to workers who have lost jobs because of plant closings and cutbacks, and receive unemployment. Occasionally Dislocated Worker funds relocate laid-off workers, but most often it funds education and training. Local workforce partners offer rapid response services to help businesses and workers deal with the effects of layoffs and plant closures.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

This program provides workers dislocated by foreign competition retraining, reemployment or relocation services. Secondary firms impacted by downstream effects may also be eligible. The US Department of Labor determines if dislocations were caused by foreign competition. Workers, their union or company, the One Stop operator, or the State Dislocated Worker Unit may apply to the Department of Labor for certification. This program is connecting those dislocated workers to TAA case management services with a full array of funding for training, support services and relocation dollars.

After regular unemployment benefits run out, certified workers may apply for Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRAs) to extend support payments. Once individually certified, displaced workers are eligible for services and benefits to help them prepare for and re-enter the job market. TAA staff collaborate with the local Dislocated Worker Program to co-enroll participants, aiming to optimize their benefits.

Commissioner Approved Training (CAT)

Commissioner Approved Training allows certain laid-off individuals to collect unemployment benefits while attending an approved, full-time education program. During this period, the claimants do not have to look for work.

Training Benefits (TB)

Training Benefits offers 26 additional weeks of unemployment benefits to eligible claimants attending full-time education programs in high-demand fields. During this period, students do not have to look for work as long as they are enrolled and making satisfactory progress.

Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP)

SEAP enables participants to enter into self-employment entrepreneurial training and receive business counseling while collecting unemployment benefits. Claimants create a job in an occupation that interests them and stimulates the local economy, providing employment opportunities for new hires. SEAP offers a valuable option to eligible people who wish to establish their own business. This program may offer the flexibility and income opportunity unavailable through traditional employment.

Worker Retraining

Worker retraining funds Community College workforce education books, fees & tuition. It also funds support services for laid-off or unemployed workers training for in-demand occupations. According to the WTB, Worker Retraining State Core Indicator Results show participants' attributable net

yearly earnings increase \$7,800 with program participation.

Postsecondary Workforce Education

Workforce Education programs are offered at three community college campuses. Programs also include short-term, on-demand classes, and certificate of accomplishment programs.

Wenatchee Valley and Big Bend Community Colleges structure vocational-technical programs to culminate in the attainment of industry-recognized certificates, Associate of Technical Science degrees, or for some programs, a transfer degree or bachelor's degree. Programs complement technical instruction with workplace skills education such as applied communication and human relations. Together, these institutions offer a variety of professional-technical programs in agriculture, business, industry, health and other fields.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and apprentices are paid to learn on the job, gain relevant skills through classroom instruction, and earn a portable, state credential. The on-the-job training includes instruction from a journey-level mentor to master a skilled occupation. Apprentices earn progressive wage increases as their skills and productivity increase. Classroom instruction may include college classes or distance learning.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps combines federal and local funds to employ individuals for a year of community service. Participants receive a monthly stipend and scholarship after completion. Workforce agencies have hosted several participants over the years to serve as assistant teachers, youth leaders, activity coordinators and other assignments.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker

Farm Worker Investment is administered by OIC of Washington. The program educates and trains agricultural workers. It offers English as a Second Language courses, basic education, and vocational training for seasonal farm workers.

Adult Education and Literacy, including English Language Programs

These programs serve Adults who have not finished high school or need to improve English language skills. Wenatchee Valley and Big Bend Community Colleges provide a variety of ABE and ELA classes at times and locations convenient for both employed and unemployed workers needing English language instruction and/or preparing for workforce education. Both colleges also provide the opportunity for adults to earn a High School Diploma or equivalency.

Senior Community Service Employment

SCSEP provides part-time employment for persons aged 55 and over. Low income individuals in this age bracket may receive part-time subsidized employment. AARP contracts to place eligible seniors at public and non-profit agencies. SkillSource prioritizes one-stop centers and partners.

WorkFirst

WorkFirst provides parents receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF: cash

assistance) job search training, work experience, basic education and short occupational training. WorkFirst Services are provided by the State Departments of Social and Health Services, Employment Security, Commerce, and Wenatchee Valley and Big Bend Community Colleges. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation administer TANF for tribal members. Localized services are guided by the collaboration of these and other partners in a Local Planning Area (LPA) committee.

Strategies for Success (SFS)

Strategies for Success (SFS) is a 6-week series of 20-hour life and soft skills workshops, designed to support primarily WorkFirst participants with opportunities to non-WorkFirst participants based on occupancy. Each workshop module can stand alone or be combined with other modules to provide a personalized experience. These modules are offered both virtual and in-person at the WorkSource centers, depending on the local agreement between ESD and DSHS.

Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET)

Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET) provides training and education with a goal of assisting Basic Food clients to attain a living wage career. BFET services are available from all WA State community and technical colleges as well as many non-college community-based organizations (CBO) and Employment Security Department as contractors through the Department of Social and Health Services.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

DVR is a division of DSHS which delivers employment services and counseling to eligible individuals with disabilities who want to work but have a physical, sensory, and/or mental disability. DVR counsels each person to develop a customized rehabilitation plan designed to increase independence through employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation for Adults with Disabilities

The DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), bring expertise and resources to serve adults with a wide variety of disabilities. These programs, when located at WorkSource Centers, provide accessible computer workstations that enable individuals with disabilities access to the internet and software programs including other assistive technology and reasonable accommodations.

DVR provides employment services and counseling to individuals with disabilities who want to work but have a physical, sensory, and/or mental disability. DVR counsels each person to develop a customized rehabilitation plan designed to increase independence through employment

PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

All youth need support as they move through adolescence to adulthood. Vulnerable youth face transitions made particularly challenging by poverty, disability, illness, homelessness, discrimination, emancipation, foster care, delinquency and other difficult circumstances. A growing body of knowledge indicates that these youth need community-wide webs of support to transition successfully to adulthood. Additionally, youth have been disproportionately affected by the COVID pandemic. There are a number of programs in Washington State that help young people make these

transitions.

Secondary Education

Workforce development begins with secondary education. According to Career Connect Washington, an initiative launched in 2017, the state is forecasting thousands of new job openings over the next decade. With the rising demand for post-high school credentials in high-paying career fields, it's more important than ever for young people to develop real-world skills that will open doors for them to succeed and access opportunity on their own terms. The initiative exposes kids as young as kindergarten to think about what they are going to be when they grow up. Starting in elementary school, students can learn how their interests can lead to different jobs in different fields.

At the secondary level, School Districts offer or partner with community agencies to provide a variety of options for teens to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent, and in many cases, get a jump on college. These choices range from traditional, comprehensive high schools, alternative schools, and re-engagement programs. Local school districts collaborate with Workforce Investment to create community-based Learning Centers. High Schools also offer a variety of Career and Technical Education in 16 “career clusters” ranging from Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, to Information Technology.

Wenatchee Valley Technical Center is a regional school where students study technical programs such as collision repair, carpentry and culinary arts. Students get a jump-start on a post-secondary education, apprenticeship, and technical and two/four-year colleges or universities. Graduates of the two-year programs are prepared for entry-level employment. The Center works closely with Wenatchee Valley College to provide advanced placement and credits for high school students. Currently many programs are connected to post-secondary training.

Columbia Basin Technical Skills Center is a STEM based regional school located in Moses Lake emphasizing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects and professions. STEM skills centers not only build scientific and engineering expertise, but also focus on creativity, innovation, collaboration, communication skills and critical thinking. The Center works closely with Big Bend Community College to provide college credits through Tech Prep and certification attainment.

Open Doors Youth Reengagement

Open Doors is an option for young people 16-21 who are not enrolled in high school, who are not on track to complete by 21, and/or who may not complete high school with their cohort without intensive support. Several districts have developed innovative partnerships for instruction, wraparound support, and career/community connections that include and go beyond K-12. Open Doors programs offer and promote multiple pathways to meaningful credentials and career skills and an on-ramp to postsecondary work and education. SkillSource operates three Open Doors programs in Wenatchee, Othello and Omak.

Special Education

Public schools throughout the five counties accommodate students with cognitive and physical disabilities. Special education classes are offered, as are mainstreaming opportunities in regular

classrooms. Additionally, the Wenatchee Valley Technical Skills Center has a Wenatchee Valley Community Transition program for disabled individuals that focuses on vocational training, self-advocacy, community mobility and connections, functional daily living skills, and functional academics. In Moses Lake, the Summit program helps students 18-21 years of age with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition from high school to the workforce. The Summit works with students who aren't sure what to do after high school by focusing on independent living skills and the transition to the workplace. Students are given opportunities to have work experience and build their resumes for gainful employment.

Workforce development programs for young people with disabilities are primarily provided by local school districts, with some programs coordinated with the Department of Vocational Rehab. (DVR)

Job Corps

Job Corps is a residential education and training program that prepares young adults for a trade, high school diploma or equivalent, and employment. The Columbia Basin Job Corps Center is located across the street from Big Bend Community College. Most who attend are from outside the area and learning skills that are in-demand within their own communities.

Workforce Investment Youth

This Youth development program serves out-of-school youth (dropouts and disadvantaged graduates) and impoverished students struggling to keep up. Dropouts are re-engaged with educational programs, counseled and supported, provided career planning, work experience, leadership and more. Graduates are assisted to enter the military, enroll in college, apprenticeship and other advance training, attend Job Corps or find jobs.

These programs retrieve about 500 teen dropouts annually to achieve literacy and numeracy gains, earn Workplace Skills Certificates, and High School Diplomas or equivalency.

Youth Apprenticeship

Youth Apprenticeship enables high school students 16 and older to benefit from robust training programs that combine industry driven curriculum with high school and college credits, and career and technical training with critical on-the-job training at local businesses. Students earn a progressive wage and journey level mentorship while earning a state recognized credential. In North Central, high school students participate in Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) Production Technician and Automation Technician, Wenatchee School District Computer Technician, and Cascade Veterinarian Veterinary Assistant registered apprenticeship programs. Youth apprenticeships can increase graduation rates, replace the aging workforce and prepare the next generation of skilled workers.

Career Connect Washington

Career connected learning is a series of skill-based programs that help young people connect directly to education, credentials, and career opportunities. Three levels of career connected learning programs for young people allow them to Explore, Prepare, and Launch themselves into college and careers. These programs include worksite tours, career fairs, career and technical education courses (CTE), recognized pre-apprenticeships, internships, and Registered Apprenticeships as reliable ways to learn about different careers through a combination of in-the-classroom and on-the-job

experiences. The stated goal of Career Connect Washington is to provide career connected learning to 100% of Washingtonians ages 16 through 29 by the year 2030, and to provide Career Launch programming (classroom instruction paired with paid worksite learning) to 60% of that same cohort.

SkillSource is a co-lead partner of the Career Connect Regional Network for North Central Washington, helping to connect and coordinate career pathway learning in partnership with the Apple STEM Network and the North Central Educational Services District. Local school districts, businesses, Wenatchee Valley College, and Big Bend Community College offer Career Launch programs including Computer Technology, Veterinary Assistant and Technician, Automotive Technology, Engineering/Machining, and Aviation Maintenance Technology. Career Connect Washington announces competitive Program Builder grants several times a year to provide development and coordination support to consortiums of partners developing career exploration, career preparation or career launch programs.

Washington State University (WSU) Extension 4-H Youth Development Program

The 4-H Youth Development Program offers a number of experiential learning opportunities for young people in North Central Washington. The 4-H Challenge Program provides youth with experiential-based learning experiences to develop social and emotional skills, including effective communication, leadership, cooperation, respect, trust, self-confidence, conflict resolution, decision-making, and problem-solving. Programs can range from recreational to therapy-driven activities.

WSU Extension partners with SkillSource to provide paid cooperative work experiences in various environmental and recreation management partners through the area including US Forest Service, Leavenworth and Entiat Fish Hatcheries, Chelan/Douglas Land Trust, and others. The opportunity includes industry recognized certifications and skills such as First Aid/CPR, Leave No Trace, proper tool use, and safe utilization of protective equipment.

COORDINATION WITH CORE PROGRAMS

Resource & Service Alignment:

Local resources are aligned across core programs (Titles I, II, III, IV) in order to broaden service delivery, maximize leverage and minimize duplication. Ongoing One Stop collaboration ensures partners understand each program's benefits. SkillSource conducted a process improvement project where surveys of staff and customers identified the need for ongoing One Stop system staff training and support to provide seamless, effective customer service. As a result, the local board leads and hosts annual Workforce Collaboration Summits, Agency van tours, and is building out an online training resource for all partner staff to learn and have access to information and resources throughout the workforce area.

Local services are aligned across core programs as well as other key workforce partner programs in order to broaden service delivery, increase access, capitalize on partner expertise and minimize duplication. North Central partners will collaborate to align services and leverage resources. Alignment efforts will include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Title I Youth enrolled in State secondary education aligns with Carl Perkins by enabling

students to earn postsecondary credit. College and Career Fairs for students are jointly organized by Title I, Secondary Ed and Adult Ed to provide a full array of career education and training information to youth and adults.

- 2) Many partners' staffs serve on Community College Professional-Technical Advisory Committees, Interagency Councils and Worker Retraining committees to provide and glean information critical to providing up-to-date career guidance information to customers.
- 3) Partners closely coordinate a variety of vocational education financial aid sources including Pell, Worker Retraining, Adult and Dislocated Worker individual training accounts (ITA), Youth, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Basic Food Employment and Training, Opportunity Grants, WA College Grant & Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Staff meet regularly to leverage funding options for customers.
- 4) Multiple partners co-facilitate workshops bringing a variety of information and expertise. From orientation to assessment, labor market and job search to financial aid and training options, partners team up to provide information customers need to make informed decisions.
- 5) Secondary Ed provides Special Education in Learning Centers so that retrieved dropout youth with disabilities receive additional services to succeed. DVR staff is often part of this collaboration.
- 6) Rapid Response services are aligned through partner planning sessions and the development of a service strategy that meets the specific needs of the affected workers. When necessary and feasible, partners expand service and program offerings on a large scale in a short span of time. Partners communicate, meet and adjust services daily.
- 7) Business Services teams meet on a regular basis to discuss the needs of local employers and plan services that maximize the expertise of staff and available services of each partner. These teams have a strong representation from One Stop partners and from partners outside the Centers.
- 8) Services are aligned through technology solutions such as WorkSourceWA.com and SchoolLinks that will match employers with workers and students in a new integrated fashion.
- 9) Title I providers work closely with two state-of-the-art Secondary Technical Skill Centers and a Job Corp Center to provide former dropouts with an opportunity to learn in-demand skills and prepare for advanced training.
- 10) Adult education services are offered at two Centers enabling students to attend class at a less intimidating location before working up to the notion of advanced education and training.
- 11) Economic Security for All (EcSA) is a poverty reduction model that coordinates existing

programs to increase their collective ability to support low-income clients in their pursuit of training for sustained self-sufficiency. EcSA prioritizes BIPOC communities, rural communities and people experiencing poverty through collaborative local, state, and federal levels to remove barriers to coordinated delivery of multiple benefits. Title I providers work closely with partners to coordinate Community Reinvestment Funds (CRF) which provide innovative incentive programs and investments in business services and subsidized training.

EXPANDING ACCESS

Partners will collaborate to expand access to employment, training and education through the following illustrative examples:

- 1) Increase services for youth with disabilities through collaboration and joint agreements with secondary special education and DVR Pre-Employment Training for Students.
- 2) Expand adult basic education and English language acquisition instruction availability, specifically in rural and isolated communities.
- 3) Expand access to career and technical education for students 19-21 through Running Start and Open Doors.
- 4) Improve the collaborative outreach and marketing efforts to provide employers with the information about workforce and training services offered through the One Stop.
- 5) Increase the level and frequency of staff cross training so that information is up to date and delivered to One Stop customers in a consistent manner.
- 6) Increase the number of partner staff participating on Community College Vocational Advisory Committees.
- 7) Engage career and technical education providers to increase options for short term, stackable training that results in a skill certificate.
- 8) Maximize collaboration with WorkFirst and clients receiving public assistance.
- 9) Analyze the assistive technology at Centers and bring up to date.
- 10) Collaborate with One Stop partners and businesses to expand Career Pathway options for in demand occupations.

Targeted Outreach

Veterans

Targeted outreach to veterans and eligible spouses is achieved through the implementation of written One Stop System procedures at each WorkSource Center, Affiliate and WIOA Title I provider. Written procedures outline Priority of Service for Veterans and eligible spouses. One Stop partners have been trained on these procedures which are located online for easy access. Veterans are first identified at the first point of contact which can be at the Center front desk or Center Orientation. Veterans are asked to identify themselves in order to receive priority of Service.

Services to veterans are coordinated between Title I and Wagner-Peyser Vet Representative, and Community Colleges through the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). Partners communicate with each other regarding available resources and often combine services when appropriate.

Consistent with the Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288), the North Central WorkSource Partnership is committed to providing services to veterans on a priority basis.

Older Workers

In addition to all services described previously, low income, older workers have access to training through the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Center and affiliate partners including Wagner-Peyser refer potential candidates for services. This program helps older workers brush up their basic, computer and workplace skills and connects them with local agencies and employers to further develop those skills. Workshops such as Career Planning, Job Search Toolbox, Strategies for Success and computer basics to help them identify their transferable skills improve job search and networking skills as well as increase, update and improve their computer skills. Part time work experience is designed with a training plan and performance evaluation system that helps older workers practice new skills and increase their ability to secure unsubsidized employment.

Individuals with Disabilities

The Workforce Development System is designed for all persons interested in work to access services. DVR is an integral partner located in both comprehensive Centers in Moses Lake and Omak and in the Chelan/Douglas partnership. DVR is also a member of the local business services teams and is represented on the Local Board of Directors.

Local strategies to enhance services to individuals with disabilities include a closer collaboration with DVR staff in the Centers to co-enroll customers where appropriate and maximize the level of services provided. WorkSource and DVR staff collaborate on a consistent basis, sharing information about common customers and joint service strategies. Accommodations for individuals with disabilities are provided for core and intensive services at SkillSource and WorkSource locations through assistive technology and other resources.

WorkSource staff receive training in assisting persons with disabilities. The training has come from Employment Security, EO Officer and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition to the education of staff, which is critical in the delivery of services, the One-Stop center actively sought out and received assistive technology and training using a large variety of equipment. The One-Stop center and affiliates have Spanish bilingual staff that are ready to assist in interpreting, as needed. The system also uses the Relay system for the hearing impaired. This list of options for persons with disabilities is not all inclusive, and staff will use any means available to assist persons with disabilities with respect and dignity.

SkillSource delivers Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to school district Youth with disabilities throughout the five counties under contract from DVR. These programs provide work readiness and self-advocacy workshops; career-connected learning experiences such as job shadows, informational interviews, and workplace tours; and paid work experiences between 40 and 120 hours in length. Many of the youth served under this program go on to engage other Youth workforce investment services and/or obtain meaningful employment as a result of their Pre-ETS experiences.

Long Term Unemployed

The longer an individual is out of work, the more difficult it is to re-enter the workforce, especially for the older individual. Two-thirds of long-term unemployed workers are over 45. Implementing a variety of national dislocated worker grants has taught SkillSource the primary obstacles these individuals face and to develop strategies for success such as internships. This one to two-month work-based learning assignment enables the worker to re-enter a workplace, restore confidence, recall positive work habits and learn how the business operates at no cost to the employer. It allows both parties to make sure this is a right fit.

At-risk Youth and Low-Income Adults

Targeted outreach to these individuals will be performed through efforts described in detail under Adults and Youth Workforce Investment activities.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Outreach:

In North Central Washington, all centers; WorkSource Okanogan County, WorkSource Central Basin and WorkSource Wenatchee Affiliate have a special designation to support the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker services as a Statewide Workforce Agency (SWA). These centers have designated Wagner Peyser funded MSFW outreach staff to provide focused core services for migrant and seasonal farm workers and agriculture employers. All MSFW Outreach staff are fluent in English and Spanish to effectively serve farmworker populations. Over 50% of ESD staff in North Central Washington are bilingual in English and Spanish.

The MSFW Outreach staff must develop an outreach plan that focuses a majority of their time conducting vigorous outreach to migrant and seasonal farm workers where they work, live and gather to provide them information on the services available to all job seekers.

As part of the services provided by the outreach staff, MSFWs are provided with a list of services from community organizations, public agencies and employers that are available to them in their own language, including the availability of referrals to agricultural and non-agricultural employment, training, supportive services, as well as the availability of testing, counseling and other job development services. ESD is also responsible for assuring a complaint system is in place, where the customers rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment, and information on other organizations and services for MSFWs.

Migrant Seasonal Outreach staff refer domestic workers to the H-2A program, which gives priority to qualified domestic workers for H-2A contracted jobs.

ESD outreach workers, WIOA training staff and OIC of Washington (OIC) staff meet on a regular basis to promote employment screening and OJT opportunities for agricultural employees. Additionally, representatives from OIC, the WIOA MSFW grantee, provide information on eligibility and training opportunities to farmworkers on a regular basis in some centers. OIC staff based out of WS Central Basin and WS Wenatchee provide intermittent services to farmworkers in the WorkSource Okanogan County service delivery area.

EDUCATION COORDINATION

Coordination with Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

The Local Board connects secondary education and workforce investment at three community-based learning centers. Over \$1 million of State dropout reengagement funding is combined with about \$750,000 in federal funds to educate teen dropouts. Most prepare for the GED but a significant share are in a high school diploma track. This collaboration between SkillSource and four School Districts has also resulted in multiple I grants from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, including Comprehensive Schools, LAP, and Open Doors Summer Pilot. Learning Center students often enhance skills by attending vocational classes at Wenatchee Valley and Central Basin Technical High Schools.

Adult education is provided at Wenatchee SkillSource and in Othello through cooperative agreements with Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College. This increases student capacity and also allows students who prefer studying at a community-based location to prepare for their high school diploma or the GED.

Title I and vocational education staff work diligently to coordinate paying tuition and related educational costs. Between Pell, Worker Retraining, Opportunity grants, Workforce Investment ITA, WA College grant, and others, students get the best package possible while maximizing the usage of these sources.

Staff of partner programs meet regularly to coordinate funding, align services and eliminate duplication. Title I staff serve on community college program advisory boards while community college staff serve on business services and outreach committees. Career Fairs and hiring events are coordinated with partner staff for both adult and youth populations.

New & Emerging Post-Secondary Workforce Education Initiatives

Data Center Apprenticeships/Career Launches

The Quincy School District and Computing For All, the Career Connect Washington sector lead for information technology, partnered to create a Career Launch program to create pathways for local youth to prepare for careers with data center employers in the area. The Wenatchee School District has been approved to expand this Career Launch program in support of the expansion of data centers in the Wenatchee Valley. SkillSource and Wenatchee Valley College are also working with Microsoft, Sabey Data Centers and other key employers to address training gaps for data center career pathways.

Healthcare/Care Economy Initiatives

Multiple efforts are underway with Cascade Medical (Leavenworth), Seattle Children's, Thriving Together NCW Behavioral Health. SkillSource also supports the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board Long Term Care Initiative. SkillSource is partnering with Wenatchee Valley College and SEIU to support LPN apprenticeship program development.

Registered Apprenticeships

In addition to supporting LPN apprenticeship program development, SkillSource Regional Workforce Board has been integrally involved in the successful development and launch of the Wenatchee School District Computer Technician 1 registered apprenticeship program. SkillSource also played an crucial role in the successful development and launch of the Cascade Veterinary Clinics Veterinary Assistant and Licensed Veterinary Technician registered apprenticeship programs. SkillSource is currently assisting NCW commercial electrician contractors research new commercial electrician (EL 01) apprenticeship requirements and solutions. SkillSource is partnering with Wenatchee School District and Wenatchee Valley College on apprenticeship program related supplemental instruction.

Battery Materials Manufacturing

In 2022 Sila, a leader in energy conversion technologies, purchased a 600,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Moses Lake. Sila is partnering with a Washington state-based company, Group14 Technologies, to produce advanced silicon-based batteries and other battery technologies. In 2023 Sila and Group14 were each awarded \$100 million by the US Department of Energy's Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains to build manufacturing facilities in Moses Lake. In February 2024, Sila announced its partnership with Big Bend Community College and Columbia Basin Technical Skills Center to create a local talent pipeline for future employees, and will donate \$1 million to each school for equipment and curriculum costs. The program will conclude with an industry-recognized credential for entry-level manufacturing skills. The manufacturing facility is planned to start production in 2025.¹³

Career Launches

Career Launch is a Career Connect Washington initiative that pairs classroom instruction with paid internships leading to industry-recognized credentials; it is similar to registered apprenticeship but has less intensive work-based learning requirements. Education and training providers create Career Launch programs in partnership with industry and community-based organizations. Active and developing Career Launches in North Central include data center programs in Quincy and Wenatchee school districts; environmental systems, electronics, automotive technology, drafting and machining programs at Wenatchee Valley College; and computer user support technicians at the North Central Educational Services District.

CAREER PATHWAYS AND CREDENTIALS

The career pathway approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress toward the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. This approach helps individuals earn marketable credentials; prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities; engages individuals in further education and employment; and helps individuals achieve sustained economic success. Career pathways deeply engage employers and help meet their workforce needs; they also help the state and its

¹³ Amanda Roley (February 22, 2024). "Two companies help Moses Lake become hub for advanced battery manufacturing", *Krem2 News*, accessed February 23, 2024 at: <https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-inland-northwest/two-companies-moses-lake-cutting-edge-battery-technology-sila-group14/293-ad92d25a-4e4b-4ca9-a6eb-8c041a59fb64>.

communities strengthen their workforces and economies.

Over the last decade, North Central Workforce Area has made marked strides in collaborating with partners to develop interconnected pathways, with multiple options for workers and continues to do so today. More partners are delivering services utilizing One Stop locations while expanding and improving the offerings to workers and students. Even with the shrinking budgets of almost all education and training providers in the local system, resourcefulness has increased. Partners work closer than ever and partner in co-enrollment to maximize the options for a worker's pathway to advancement.

These efforts are seldom made without multiple partner involvement. Below are examples of how coordinated efforts between Title I and other system partners will expand and support learning opportunities for workers at all stages of their education or career paths.

Partners offer greater career and education guidance for adults through career and education planning workshops. Workshops are designed to help customers explore local and state labor markets, emerging and demand occupations and result in a training plan.

- Through delivery of basic skills instruction at SkillSource locations. Adult Basic Education is offered by WVC at Wenatchee SkillSource, and by BBCC in Othello.
- Through coordinated preparation for post-secondary education, informing customers about financial aid and assisting w/ applications. SkillSource coordinates closely with both WVC and BBCC to provide up to date information on program offerings and financial aid options.

Partners increase the accessibility of training programs for adult workers by participating with Professional/Technical Education initiatives such as the Central Basin Manufacturing Pipeline project to help incumbent workers and students navigate through and complete occupational training specific to the Manufacturing industry. Enhanced accessibility to post-secondary programs will increase industry recognized credentials.

Partners improve training for adult workers with barriers to advancement by coordinating with DVR to assist them to increase the number of internships and community-based employment and OJT for individuals with disabilities. And, by contracting with SCSEP to educate and train older workers to secure employment suitable to their needs and abilities.

Partners leverage resources and efforts to expand work-based learning and career exploration activities through efforts/initiatives such as Career Connect Washington and DVR's Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

To facilitate employer engagement of a diverse range of employers, including small businesses and employers from in-demand industry sectors and occupations, local strategies include:

- a. Improve outreach to employers through updated coordinated Business Service Plans with Employment Security (ES) and other partners on the One Stop Business Services Team. The

plan outlines process standards for jointly reaching out to employers and providing services in an efficient coordinated manner. Educate and engage employers in utilizing WorkSourceWA.com resources.

- b. Engage employers in identifying skills needed to perform the job, assist them to design training plans and evaluation systems to meet their standards through On-the-Job Training (OJT). Partners (SkillSource, OIC, DVR, ESD (TAA)) coordinate the delivery of OJT depending on the needs of the employer and trainee.
- c. Continue industry involvement in work-integrated learning by participating in Industry groups similar to the Workforce Alliance in the Central Basin and SEIU and engaging industry and apprenticeship organizations such as the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) to develop new employer driven training opportunities.
- d. Increase employer investment in workforce training by promoting OJT and customized and incumbent worker training.

To align workforce development with local business needs and economic development goals to create a supportive business climate and livable-wage jobs, and to coordinate and integrate local workforce investment activities and economic development programs to optimize resource use, improve accountability, and foster a cohesive system, local strategies include:

- a. Provide and market business services through a Coordinated Business Services plan customized to each WorkSource Center and/or Affiliate in each subarea.
- b. Invest in strategic economic opportunities such as delivering incumbent worker training to expanding businesses in the in-demand industry.
- c. Communicate with Economic Development Organizations (i.e. Grant County EDC, Chelan County Port District, Economic Alliance, Adams County DC) to promote and market business and employment services to new and expanding businesses.
- d. Continue efforts with the Wenatchee Valley Initiative: "Our Valley, Our Future" and the Bridge Research and Innovation District to identify and strengthen community involvement in implementing a comprehensive plan for continued economic and job growth.
- e. Adopt a Quality Jobs Framework and begin efforts to educate local employers on the benefits of establishing and building a job quality focus.

To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, local strategies include:

- a. Partner with local community colleges to add self-employment/entrepreneurship courses to their program offerings and the Eligible Training Provider List.
- b. Fund entrepreneurial training as appropriate.

- c. Connect with small business incubators in the local area to support and provide training resources.

To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training, on- the-job training, customized training, industry and sector strategies, career pathways, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies to meet the needs of employers in the region, local strategies include:

Coordinated Business Services Plans

Local area employers receive business services through a coordinated approach. Title I and Title III program staff take the primary lead in outreach and delivery of these services. Other system partners provide services as available.

Each WorkSource Center and Affiliate has developed and implemented a coordinated Business Services plan which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner and the corresponding efforts that each partner will provide. Each plan outlines how referrals will be made between partners for training and to businesses for hire or for training. Coordinated Business Services Plans can be viewed on the One-Stop page link at www.skillsource.org.

Plans outline:

- Basic business services: Labor market information, Job listings, Applicant Referral, Business Assessment, Access to Training & Retraining, Business Assistance Information & Referral, Business Restructuring/Closure Information, Access to Facilities.
- Coordinated outreach to new and existing employers in each sub area.
- How demand occupations and industries important to the region will be targeted.

Business Service Teams work together to meet the diverse needs of local businesses. Team members visit business locations to encourage the use of Center services ranging from entering job openings, referring candidates, developing job descriptions, conducting skill gap analysis, preparing training plans, utilizing tax incentives to coordinating hiring events. Information ranging from hiring practices to retention and training opportunities, layoff aversion to Rapid Response is provided to employers as part of the coordinated plans.

Job Development is a facilitated introduction of a job seeker to an employer for the purpose of securing a job interview or creating the opportunity for the applicant to be considered for current or future job opportunities. This service is provided when there are few (if any) available job listings consistent with the unique skills, experiences or interests of a job applicant.

Incumbent Worker Training:

Learning never stops. Employed workers need training too; especially where there is room for skill development, advancement and promotion. Incumbent worker training (IWT) under Title I is allowed when it is designed to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers learning the skills necessary to keep their job. The

employers must share in the cost of the training. Successful IWT allows businesses to grow talent from within, stay competitive in new or emerging markets, and retain and/or promote employees through skills development.

On-the-Job & Customized Training:

Individuals may lack the occupational skills required by employers. The Local Board prioritizes skill development and training as a major service in the local area. Skill development may take place in a variety of ways whether in the classroom or on-the-job and depends largely on the employee's learning style and the type of occupation.

Most employers prefer to train on-the-job; others want experienced people on day one. The Local Board may utilize a variety of methods as Title I budget allows.

Employees learn occupational skills informally through demonstration and practice and other forms of Job Instruction Training. Training is conducted at the employer's business. OJT may be sequenced with or accompanied by other types of training such as classroom training or literacy training.

Title I may reimburse employers for the actual costs incurred providing classroom or outside training and training-related and supportive services to participants. Any additional payments shall be only for training and support over and above that provided to regular employees, and the employer must document costs.

Worksite supervisors and/or employers receive a formal orientation by a job trainer before the employee starts. The orientation includes an explanation of the program, a review of labor laws, time and attendance procedures, a review of good supervisory skills, techniques for dealing with poor performance, reinforcing good work habits, and evaluating competency. The supervisor is encouraged to contact the case manager/trainer whenever problems arise.

Job Skills Program

Job Skills Program (JSP) provides funding for customized, short-term and job-specific training for eligible businesses using dollar-for-dollar matching grants. Grants are awarded to educational institutions that partner with employers to undertake a JSP project. The participating employer must match the grant amount with cash or in-kind program support. The Job Skills Program supports training for new employees, retraining for current employees or upgrades training for employees who would be eligible for promotion.

ONE-STOP SYSTEM

WorkSource is Washington's brand for the one-stop delivery system, a partnership of entities which administer separate workforce, education and human resource programs that collaborate to enhance access to the programs' services and improve long-term employment outcomes.

Continuous Improvement through One Stop Coordination & Cross Training

Workforce Collaboration Summits: To foster continuous improvement and high quality of service, One Stop partner training summits are held annually where partner agency staff learn and share the full array of career development services and training/ employment resources. The goal of the summits is to allow staff of workforce, education and supporting agencies to present information about services they offer that could benefit partner agencies' mutual customers and streamline processes and referrals. Presenting teams are encouraged to use creative methods of presentation to engage all learning styles and keep the day interactive, engaging and memorable. The teams use a variety of learning tools such as dramatizations, participant testimonies, multiple interactive digital resources, game show-like activities, music, props, and prizes. In addition to the agency presentations, the events include dynamic keynote speakers, pull outs, a resource fair, a demonstration of the web-based resource directory and an introduction to inter agency van tours. The Summits provide partners with relevant, updated information on services available in the community. Additionally, former customers served by multiple agencies share their success stories during a panel discussion at lunch. Currently, annual collaboration summits have been held annually in one sub-area. The goal is to expand the WFC summits to be held annually in all three sub-areas.

Interagency Van Tours: Quarterly van tours provide the opportunity for partner staff to continue to foster strong partner relationships and keep staff updated on program policy changes throughout the partnership and learn firsthand more about each other's services, points of contact, processes, facilities, etc. Partners refer customers daily and find it valuable to see and learn for themselves more about the partners they are referring to.

Business Services Summit:

The labor market landscape has shifted considerably for regional businesses, with effects of the pandemic and the resulting economic turmoil still felt throughout Central Washington. The job market is hot, prices are high, and employers are struggling to recruit and retain talented workers.

The 2023 Central Region Business Services Summit was held in Moses Lake, WA. The summit was jointly presented by SkillSource Regional Workforce Board, South Central Workforce, and the Employment Security Department, and was attended by over a hundred representatives from local workforce boards, agencies, and service providers.

The North Central and South Central workforce areas share many of the same challenges and specific issues in serving their business customers. Many of the workforce agencies in both areas have experienced personnel shifts and turnover themselves. These two days of training and networking presented an opportunity for new and experienced staff to combine their efforts and knowledge to address common goals for business services.

The Summit included an overview of the Quality Jobs initiative, training on how to explore the conditions for cultivating customer relationships through improving adaptive skills, practicing non-defensive feedback and active listening so that others feel heard. The sessions also included a panel focused on business engagement insights from local

workforce development experts, local business members and representatives from economic development.

This was one of several initiatives to continuously improve insight and services to local area businesses. It is anticipated to be an annual event.

Accessibility & Technology

All Centers and Service Delivery locations are equipped with requisite assistive technology for individuals with disabilities and staff are trained to operate and provide support as needed.

The Local Board will make Title I services available in each county through the One Stop delivery system. The Local Board will also advocate partners provide services throughout the One Stop delivery system, including remote areas, as feasible. Advances in technology have made access to services more of a reality in more remote areas through the use of internet connections in local libraries and community centers where a One Stop center or affiliate are not present.

Broadband connectivity in more remote areas of the North Central region is not available and many people still prefer in-person services, so outreach teams schedule service hours at community centers to connect. The implementation of the WIT replacement will help increase customer and employer access.

Linkages between One Stop and UI Program

The Employment Security Department (ESD) provides Unemployment Insurance (UI) services to eligible customers who can receive up to 26 weeks of UI cash benefits. As part of receiving UI benefits the claimant must seek and be available and able to work. The ESD staff within the local WorkSource centers provide re-employment services to those claimants who are most likely to exhaust their benefits. The goal of this program is to assist UI claimants to return to work as quickly as possible.

The re-employment customer services include building linkages by providing referrals to other WorkSource partners to include employment and training, educational, vocational and community resources. These services support the claimant to assess their career prospects in their chosen field, in a demand occupation, encourage developing more skills, enhancing their job search strategies and connecting them whenever possible to a full array of services available at the WorkSource centers and the greater community of service and educational providers. Ultimately supporting that claimant to seek full time work that will support self-sufficiency. Claimants who visit the WorkSource Centers specifically for UI assistance are provided information about the comprehensive array of services provided by the One-Stop partners.

The local board CEO meets regularly with the area's One Stop Operator Consortium to review progress toward alignment and strengthening linkages such as this one. Data sharing agreements currently being pursued will assist with connecting UI claimants to all available services throughout the workforce system.

Equal Opportunity

The local board's Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with

Section 188. The EO Officer or his/her designee will train and monitor Title I sub recipients, Operators and contractors as applicable. MOU partners (including Titles II, III, IV agree to comply with Section 188.

Aligning Roles & Resources

The Area's One Stop procedures are designed to improve the consistency and quality of services delivered to common customers. These procedures include: Front End Services, Menu of Job Seeker Services, Veterans' Priority of Service, Initial Complaints and Coordinated Business Services.

Each procedure outlines how information will be consistently distributed. These procedures apply to Workforce Investment and Wagner-Peyser staff and other Center partners as applicable. Procedures are reviewed periodically to adjust as necessary. Area procedures can be found on the One-Stop link at www.skillsource.org.

A One Stop Memorandum of Understanding and Operator Agreement between the Local Board and applicable partners further detail services provided throughout the system and the Operators' responsibilities to coordinate partners.

Center staff meet regularly with local partners as well as the One Stop Operator to align and coordinate services. Their aim is to provide services as seamlessly as possible. Staff cross-training increases the delivery of consistent, accurate, up-to-date information.

Center strategies to maximize coordination and efficiency include, but are not limited to: integrate intake forms, inventory current workshop content to analyze any unnecessary duplication, review assessment tools and cross-train staff to interpret assessment results, continue regular business service meetings and coordinated outreach and increase referrals to partner services.

One Stop partners participate and make commitments via the Memorandum of Understanding including the Infrastructure Funding Agreement, as applicable. Partners to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

TITLE I WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

See **Attachment B: Local Area Profile** for a summary.

ADULT ACTIVITIES

Basic Career Services

The delivery of career services supports the principles of universal access, customer choice, continuous improvement, performance outcomes and integrated service.

Services will address the employment and skill gaps of individuals through 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, individuals in non-traditional training and persons with multiple barriers.

Outreach to potential eligible adults (including low income adults and individuals with disabilities) is accomplished primarily through word of mouth of previous customers and through staff membership on various community groups as well as outreach sessions at local libraries in more remote locations. Additional outreach is accomplished through joint partner orientation meetings as well as coordinated outreach materials presented to customers entering the Centers and via social media platforms and other media such as radio and digital advertising. A local One Stop video produced specifically to inform customers about One Stop services, including Adult services, is shown in group orientations, in the resource libraries, in kiosks and online. This information helps customers self-refer to additional services. Partners in the Center and larger system meet regularly to share information and update processes for referral of customers to each partner programs/services.

Upon entering a Center, Affiliate or Title I service provider, customers will 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 or remote meeting technologies. 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.

Emphasis will also be placed on the ongoing utilization of the Innovation Act and other resources as a method of promoting skill enhancement needed to ensure career development, and job retention beyond the initial employment. The career service delivery process will promote the opportunities available to help customers move into jobs that facilitate career growth and self-sufficiency.

Individualized Career Services

Some people require more personalized help to learn the skills employers want. To ensure the greatest degree of flexibility in providing the most appropriate services, an applicant may access individualized career services at any point following initial assessment and determination of eligibility.

Individualized Career services are designed to closely assess and analyze a worker's aptitude, attitude and abilities. These services also provide foundational skills generic to most occupations like Math, English or Computer basics. A variety of services are available including but not limited to: comprehensive assessment, Career Planning/Case Management, development of an Individual Employment/ Training Plan. Individualized services also include basic education skills, computer literacy and other short term pre-vocational services.

Comprehensive Assessment

This includes, but not limited to, interviews, portfolios, and data collection and standardized tests. Information gathered during an initial assessment and input from

providers of core services will be included in the assessment process and the development of an Individual Employment Plan.

Formal assessments such as Career Scope, CASAS, WorkKeys and Prove It are available to measure the applicant's basic and foundational skills as well as occupational skill knowledge. This information together with other assessments aimed at determining attitudes toward work, interests and values help to set goals as well as determine the fit between a candidate and a job.

When a training plan calls for on-the-job training, an analysis of current skills and comparison to the required skills is done using the skill gap analysis tool, SkillDex in conjunction with personal interview with the applicant and supervisors.

Individual Employment Plan

An integral part of the career planning process is the development and implementation of an employment plan that outlines short and long-term goals and the specific strategies for achieving goals. The plan identifies the specific services needed to assist the customer in obtaining employment including any supportive services needed to overcome issues impacting a customer's ability to secure and maintain employment. Plan development has benefited from the articulation of ESD and SkillSource planning workshops. For example, goals set in one workshop are carried over and recognized in a subsequent workshop.

Career Planning / Case Management

The Career Specialist serves as the point of coordination and consistency for a customer by providing guidance in mapping out the activities needed to achieve their goals. The Trainer ensures that each customer is aware of available options, not only those at SkillSource or the WorkSource Center, but services offered throughout the community, and will have extensive knowledge of the local labor market.

Ongoing case management provides an opportunity to identify issues which were not previously apparent, or which have recently arisen, and which may deter a customer from achieving their goals. In some instances, two or more agency's counsel and support (i.e. case manage) a mutual customer. In these instances, SkillSource, Colleges, DVR and Employment Security program staff meet regularly to case conference jointly enrolled customers. Also, progress or status notes are shared via a database that all appropriate partner staff may access.

Basic Education and Computer Skills

Math and English Certification (GED, WorkKeys), Google IT, and Microsoft certifications are offered. This skill development is most frequently coordinated with community colleges at One Stop Learning Centers. SkillSource provides basic education class space, which enables colleges to extend instruction to additional off-campus locations.

DISLOCATED WORKER ACTIVITIES

Dislocated Workers have access to the same services described under the Adult activities section. Career and Training services are delivered in the same manner. Dislocated

Workers are also included in each of the multiple pathways objectives and local Strategies described for Adults.

Coordination of Dislocated Worker Services

Dislocated Workers are connected with Workforce Investment services immediately when they apply for unemployment benefits and receive an orientation to the full array of WorkSource services available to them. However, in some cases, laid off workers choose not to utilize the full array of services until benefits are close to exhaustion or worse.

In addition to outreach activities described for Adults, outreach to potentially eligible Dislocated Workers is done through partner Rapid Response meetings, Center orientation meetings, postings on Center kiosks, mailing of outreach materials to long term unemployed workers and via radio programs and public service announcements.

Additional efforts to re-engage long term unemployed individuals focus on contacting individuals who have been receiving unemployment benefits for over 20 weeks to reconnect them to the labor force through Internship or On-the-Job Training. Staff counsels these individuals to address barriers to re-employment, assess their current skills, improve job search techniques and basic skills that may be rusty and explore careers in the local and neighboring labor markets with employers wanting to train on the job.

Workforce Investment staff coordinate closely with other partner programs such as Worker Retraining at the Community Colleges and Trade Assistance staffed by Employment Security to maximize the training and funding options for dislocated workers. SkillSource and ES staff assist dislocated workers who choose vocational education as their re-training option to apply for Training Benefits and Commissioner Approved Training.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is available to TAA-certified workers who have lost their jobs or experienced work hour reductions as a result of international trade. Workforce system partners can file petitions for trade certification, or assist companies or groups of workers (3 or more) to file TAA petitions. When there is a trade-certified general layoff or plant closure, WorkSource Centers start with Rapid Response services (see below). Rapid Response is a fully integrated activity, which includes the Unemployment Insurance Division; Workforce retraining representatives from the community colleges; WorkSource staff, including TAA; and WIOA staff. Union officials (where applicable) and company officials meet with the Rapid Response leads to coordinate orientations for all affected employees. These initial orientations introduce all workers to the general (dislocated worker) options available, including TAA benefits and services.

TAA certification may occur weeks or months after the business closure. If this is the case, TAA certified workers, who were introduced to training opportunities through Rapid Response sessions and WIOA dislocated worker opportunities, are now introduced to TAA benefits and services. WorkSource staff also initiates outreach efforts to workers who did not initially engage in dislocated worker opportunities. The WIOA and TAA job training staff work together to ensure that all workers transition appropriately.

Trade-affected employees who express interest in TAA services can attend additional orientations and group activities to learn more about TAA benefits and options. Workers are encouraged to test the local job market while exploring options for retraining. The Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA), or weekly training subsidy, is time-limited for eligible workers; therefore, WorkSource staff, primarily TAA counselors, must inform TRA-eligible workers of the TRA timeframe if participants are interest in training. All partnership staff assist in the exploration of local jobs, new careers, and/or jobs out of the area that may require relocation.

Assistance can take place in groups or one-on-one and may require comprehensive assessments to identify skills, interests, aptitudes, and needs. Along with the Comprehensive Assessment, career exploration assessments, basic skills assessments, computer literacy development, work search skills, and both formal and informal methods may be used. TAA requires trade-affected workers to enroll in the program if they want TAA services. Once enrolled as active TAA participants, TAA customers work with WorkSource staff to determine their options and make decisions about employment and training opportunities. When appropriate, TAA participants may be co-enrolled with another program to ensure success in their chosen paths. Staffs work closely together to provide accuracy, consistent information, and timely service delivery, with the TAA counselor as the primary point of contact.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Design Framework

Outreach, Intake & Objective Assessment

Outreach to at-risk and out of school youth, including youth with disabilities, will be accomplished through word of mouth, targeted recruitment, youth advocacy and education partnerships. Each applicant will submit information for eligibility to be determined. Eligible youth will receive an objective assessment examining skills, interests, aptitudes, and personal situation to guide the development of an education and training strategy (career pathway) and employment goal. Diagnostic basic skills assessment is done using CASAS as per State policy. Additional assessment considers the family situation, work history, education, occupational skills, interest, aptitudes, attitude towards work, motivation, behavior patterns affecting employment potential, financial resources and needs, supportive service needs, and personal employment information as it relates to the local labor market.

Individual Service Strategy

An Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is customized for each eligible youth. The ISS is an action plan mutually agreed to by the counselor and participant and is updated or revised as needed during the course of training. The ISS specifies the participant's career goal(s) and is completed during assessment. When the participant has no preference, training counselors and instructors assist the individual through education and career guidance. Then staff arranges education and training activities consistent with the participant's

educational needs and employment interests. Staff assigns competencies and summarizes pre and post assessment results to document training objectives mastered.

Additionally, training counselors assess supportive service needs. Supportive services enable participants to complete training, enter employment and retain employment. Support is provided on an individual need basis.

Case Management & Follow Up

According to the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC), case management is a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the options and services required to meet the youths' ISS. It is characterized by advocacy, communication, and resource management and promotes quality and cost-effective interventions and outcomes. Its underlying premise is that everyone benefits when youth reach their optimum level of wellness, self-management, and functional capability. Case management facilitates the achievement of the young person's wellness and autonomy through advocacy, assessment, planning, communication, education, resource management, and service facilitation.

Youth Trainers will provide case management and follow up to all workforce investment youth to provide consistent and comprehensive services and maximize goal attainment and success. They will facilitate connections to services/agencies such as: public housing, secondary and adult education, disability serving agencies, mental health, human service agencies, job corps, and employers.

Program Elements

The fourteen required program elements are delivered within the five-county area to meet the youth's ISS goals. The Area plans to deliver comprehensive year-round youth program services that provide training related to the following required program elements, as prioritized and budgeted by the Local Board:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies,
2. Alternative secondary school services,
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that are directly linked to academic and occupation learning, including Summer employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing and on-the-job training,
4. Occupational skill training,
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation for a specific occupation or cluster,
6. Leadership development,
7. Supportive services,
8. Adult mentoring,
9. Follow up services,
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling,
11. Financial Literacy education,
12. Entrepreneurial skills training,

13. Labor Market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors in the local area such as career awareness, career counseling and career exploration, and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education & training.

Youth activities and services will be coordinated with other organizations, programs and entities serving youth throughout the five-county area. The Area will facilitate the delivery of the fourteen required elements through the following activities or services:

- Individual Service Strategy & Case Management
- Basic Skills Education
- Employment and Life Skills Workshops & Curriculum
- Computer Literacy Training
- Career Planning
- Career Exploration
- Work Experience
- Internship
- Project and Community Based Learning
- Leadership Skills Training
- Vocational Skills Training
- On-the-Job Training
- Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling

Basic Skills Education

Our technology driven economy has placed a high premium on skills and literacy. Youth lacking basic education skills face tough obstacles entering the labor market. The Area offers basic education skills training primarily to youth who drop out of school and youth at-risk of dropping out of school.

Several area Learning Centers receive State Basic Education funds to deliver: basic skills instruction including tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion including dropout prevention strategies; Alternative secondary school offerings; Leadership development opportunities and adult mentoring.

Basic education is provided to reengage school dropouts and to retain at-risk youth in Learning Centers. Academic and vocational instruction is individualized, self-paced and competency based using the computer assisted learning systems in these facilities. To the maximum extent practicable, instruction is applied learning in reading, writing and math competencies relevant to the workplace.

Additionally, instructors and training counselors foster fun and excitement in and out of the classroom by providing diversity in the delivery of lessons, academic challenges and teamwork projects. Youth are involved in planning and executing community projects and other activities. Additionally, youth are introduced to career opportunities and post-secondary education through workshops, occupational software, guest speakers, worksite

tours, and field trips.

Staff coordinates with other youth agencies to identify youth who have dropped out of school and guide them to return and complete their education. Goals include the attainment of a High School Diploma, General Education Diploma (GED) or skill level advancement, and career skills.

The Area has established financial agreements with the following school districts in consideration of teaching basic and vocational skills to school district students at Learning Centers in Wenatchee, Othello and Omak.

Employment/Life Skills

The Area's basic skills education training includes pre-employment and work readiness instruction and life skills training. Pre-employment skills are taught in the *Career Development* classes. This class teaches participants how to understand the labor market, make career decisions, write resumes, complete a job application, prepare a cover letter and complete an interview. Participants also learn what employers want concerning appearance, problem-solving skills, interpersonal communications, positive attitudes, completing tasks, cooperating and punctuality. Youth also learn problem solving, team work, in addition to financial literacy and safe and healthy living.

Youth may participate in project-based learning / community projects in conjunction with local nonprofit or public entities. Crews of youth plan, design, budget, procure, identify specific material needs, develop task descriptions, utilize the media, build or complete the project and evaluate the project. Project learning will incorporate entrepreneurial skills training and explore the characteristics of entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, youth may attend the scheduled leadership classes, community service events or other similar activities to develop leadership skills. Youth attending the leadership training activities enhance their self-esteem, develop problem solving skills, and learn teamwork. Leadership curriculum provides a variety of topics: building positive character traits, public speaking, teamwork, developing healthy relationships, enhancement of citizenship skills, life skills training, family management skills and community involvement.

Basic and Life skills education is also typically combined with other class and/or work based learning (paid and unpaid) to develop positive work habits and/or job specific skills.

Financial Literacy

The ability to understand how money works: how it's earned, how it's managed, how it's invested (turned it into more) and how it's shared to help others, is useful knowledge. More specifically, this set of skills and knowledge allows an individual to make informed and effective decisions with all of their financial resources. Financial literacy may include teaching students to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts, how to effectively manage spending, credit and debt, how to understand credit reports and make informed financial decisions.

Computer Literacy Training

To navigate in our information-driven economy, youth need computer literacy skills. Computer literacy training teaches youth how to become fluent with information technology. Information technology fluency explores three kinds of knowledge — intellectual capabilities, foundational concepts, and contemporary skills — that are essential.

Career Planning

Many youth do not have career goals. They aren't sure what jobs are available and what skills they'll need to be employed in a specific field or occupation. Counseling services for at-risk youth is a key element of the Area's youth program. Area training counselors guide and counsel youth on making career and educational decisions. Through guidance and counseling, youth are provided information and tools that help them to prepare for post-secondary education opportunities. As well, linkages between academic and occupational learning and preparation for employment are facilitated through one-on-one and group guidance and counseling. Counselors serve as the point of coordination and consistency for youth by providing guidance in mapping out the activities needed to achieve their goals. Counselors coordinate education and career planning with Open Doors Case Managers in the Learning Center for robust wrap around support.

Ongoing counseling provides an opportunity to identify issues which were not previously apparent, or which have recently arisen, and which may deter a youth. Training counselors assist youth in solving issues that create training barriers. Staff may refer youth to community agencies and programs to help them overcome barriers including referrals to drug and alcohol abuse counseling as appropriate.

Career Exploration & Job Shadowing

Career exploration and Job Shadowing exposes youth to a variety of job situations. Employees in an actual operating business provide hands-on experiences in various occupations that stimulate youth to consider their options for future employment. The exploration is much like a new employee's first day on the job, with a lot of listening, yet some doing.

Work Experience

Some youth don't know how to show up on time, ready for work, eager to learn. Others start out with a defensive attitude or don't know how to behave in the work world. Work experience gives participants who lack work maturity skills the opportunity to develop and/or demonstrate positive work habits in temporary positions with public and non-profit agencies. Work experience is usually accompanied with other training designed to increase the participant's basic education and/or occupational skills. Youth are paid minimum wage with grant funds. Performance evaluations are completed by worksite supervisors.

Internship

Many youth have not developed the basic work habits required to find or keep a job.

Youth also lack occupational skills necessary to secure employment in today's labor market. The Area's internship activity enhances the long-term employability of youth participants and provides hands-on private sector exposure to work and the requirements for successful job retention. Internship may be combined with classroom training relating to a particular position, occupation, industry or the basic skills and abilities to successfully compete in the local labor market.

Preparation for and Links to Post-Secondary Education and Employment

All youth attending Area Learning Centers receive basic education instruction aimed at preparing them for advanced training and/or education. Opportunities to learn about the value of post-secondary education are infused into classroom activities and outings. Youth are presented labor market information, education and career opportunities, and linkages to a myriad of community resources. Connections between academic and occupational learning are available through project-based learning, job shadowing, volunteer projects, work experience and internships. Youth also learn about employment services available through the One Stop system so as they graduate and move into the labor force, they are well equipped with the employment resources they may need in the future.

Occupational Skills Training

Jobs of the 21st century require advanced skills. Youth who have career goals requiring post-secondary education, may receive occupational skills training. These are vocational education programs provided by post-secondary educational agencies designed to teach individuals the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform a specific job or group of jobs in occupations for which there is a demand. Training is encouraged in higher skill occupations and for non-traditional employment appropriate to the participant's needs and which contributes to their economic self-sufficiency.

Occupation Skills Training is provided by eligible training providers and are procured using off the shelf, published pricing. Community colleges are primary suppliers for this type of vocational education.

On-the-Job Training

Youth may lack the occupational skills required by employers. OJT participants learn occupational skills informally through demonstration and practice and other forms of Job Instruction Training. Training is usually conducted at the employer's business. OJT may be sequenced with or accompanied by other types of training such as classroom training or literacy training.

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling dealing with issues such as mental health, chemical dependency, domestic violence, etc. are provided by qualified professional agencies when needed. When other resources are not available, WIOA may fund this comprehensive counseling as a support service.

RAPID RESPONSE

Local partnerships participate in numerous rapid response activities each year. Because of enhanced communication and participation with one another, the local Rapid Response team

responds to any business requesting the service, not just those that have filed a WARN notice. This has proven to be a valuable community service throughout the five counties. Wagner-Peyser, Title I-B, Worker retraining staff are members of the local Rapid Response team and provide information regarding labor exchange services to impacted workers.

Rapid Response and career services are delivered to all TAA petitioners as required. Each sub area rapid response team is comprised of representatives from Workforce Investment, Wagner-Peyser, Worker Retraining and other programs. Partners in the One Stop system provide timely orientations; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities; provision of labor market information; and job search assistance. Co-enrollment of workers certified under TAA leverages the resources of WIOA for counseling, career guidance and support services.

Rapid Response Additional Assistance (RRAA) has afforded the area to help train affected workers through vocational education, on-the-job training and other basic and computer skills brush up. As area closures occur, additional requests are submitted to fully utilize formula and discretionary funds to help get workers re-trained and back to work.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Title I service providers coordinate with local transportation providers to provide students bus passes to get to and from class, training and work when a financial need exists. Other support services are provided on an individual basis through case management and according to the Local Board support service policy. Areas of support may range from transportation to clothing to childcare to housing. Trainers assess participants' situation to ensure a barrier exists and that other options to overcome the barrier have been explored. Local staff have strong networks with social and community organizations to meet needs so that customers can attend training, develop their skills and enter the workforce.

WAGNER-PEYSER COORDINATION

Service delivery alignment with Wagner-Peyser which provides labor exchange services to all job seekers and helps employers to meet their hiring needs by referring qualified workers is a priority. WorkSource Central Basin, OIC, and SkillSource coordinate a three-day career, assessment, and financial workshop to avoid duplication of services. Similarly, WorkSource Wenatchee and Wenatchee SkillSource plan and deliver a weekly resume and interviewing workshop. All three sub areas business services with staff from One Stop partners regularly meet to coordinate business outreach and hiring events. The One Stop Consortium operator meets monthly with the three subarea One Stop partnerships to maximize coordination and continuously improve service delivery.

TITLE II COORDINATION

Service delivery alignment between Title I and Title II continues to be important. Recently, through financial agreements, Adult Education classes started at the Othello Career Center and the SkillSource Learning Center in Wenatchee partnership continues. This coordination provides additional options for students and increases access and capacity. Participant referrals between Title I and Title II providers are common within North Central.

The community colleges' High School Plus programs allow adults to have previous high school credit and work or life experience evaluated. They then complete classwork to earn the remaining needed high school credits and receive a diploma as opposed to an equivalency certificate such as the GED. Since the program's start, hundreds of adults have taken advantage of this opportunity and earned their secondary credentials at both colleges. Some of the first graduates of these programs have continued on to advanced degrees. The program was expanded in 2019 to include Title II participants ages 18 to 20.

Both BBCC and WVC offer Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training, or I-BEST, cohorts in professional-technical certificate pathways. In these programs, two instructors share instructional duties - one teaches the professional-technical content, and the other supports the development of basic skills such as reading, writing, math or language. Together, the instructors build a classroom environment that provides maximum support for student success. BBCC offers I-BEST instruction in their Early Childhood Education and Medical Assistant programs, while WVC offers Early Childhood Education and Hispanic Orchard Employee Education I-BEST instruction.

Both colleges offer adult basic education classes off their main campuses. Wenatchee Valley College provides instruction at both campuses as well as in the Wenatchee School District and in Orondo, Bridgeport, and Nespelem. Big Bend Community College similarly has classes in Othello, Quincy, Soap Lake, Mattawa, Royal City, and Warden. Both colleges' programs also offer some online instruction.

Local board staff maintain close ties with the colleges and their Title II program staff, and participate in the state Adult Education Advisory Committee.

The Local Board Director will review local applications for ABE Master Grants submitted under Title II for consistency with the local plan. The Director will report his/her review to the Local Board.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

The Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) serves as the primary formal agreement between the Local Board and DVR. In addition to the MOU, DVR is co-located at both comprehensive centers and is also a member of the One Stop Operator Consortium at WorkSource Central Basin. DVR participates as a member on each Business Service Team and provides valuable insight and tools with regards to serving individuals with disabilities. Co-enrollment between Title I and Title IV occurs frequently and always enriches the customer experience and increases positive outcomes.

DVR provides essential services to clients at these locations, but also may provide cross training for staff. Training topics include how to identify individuals with hidden disabilities, communicating effectively with those individuals, understanding the types of accommodations that are available and improving skills of staff in the use of assistive technology.

DVR and WorkSource partners share customer information to compliment service delivery

and co-enrollment. DVR Business Specialists engage employers to identify job opportunities and initiate placements, follow-up and support services.

Since 2016, DVR has engaged the local board to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) for secondary students with disabilities throughout the five-county region. The service design includes pre-employment instruction, positive work habits, career and education exploration and work experience.

PROCUREMENT

Competitive procurement for workforce investment services in Okanogan county is performed on a regular basis every 4-5 years. The contract with ESD to deliver Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker services in Okanogan County will be extended to include PY 24-25. The contract will be amended to include new local directives/policies issued pursuant to Workforce Innovation. Procurement will be performed in the next cycle in accordance with Federal, State policies and local directive 16-141.

PY 23-24 Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services in Chelan/Douglas and Grant/Adams counties will be provided by SkillSource, Local Board fiscal agent staff. Beginning July 1, 2024, service delivery will be implemented in accordance with Federal, State and Local policies.

Youth services will be provided by SkillSource in Chelan/Douglas and Grant/Adams counties for PY 23-24. Beginning July 1, 2024 youth services will be provided in accordance with Federal, State and Local policies and procedures. Several youth elements are funded by State Basic Education. (See Youth Service Profile, Attachment B)

TRAINING SERVICES

The service flow design has been intentionally crafted so that when a person completes initial and comprehensive assessment and career planning, all the necessary information has been collected to determine if training is necessary and, equally important, what type of training would be most beneficial for the individual. This planning is done jointly between the WIOA career & training specialist and the participant using a plethora of information gathered, researched and analyzed to that point.

Training services are available to those meeting the following requirements:

1. meet eligibility requirements for career services and are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency through career services,
2. in need of training services to obtain or train employment leading to self-sufficiency,
3. have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services,
4. have selected a program or training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local workforce investment area or in another area in which they are willing to commute or relocate, and
5. are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of training such as Pell, TAA, State funds or require assistance beyond that available from other

sources to pay the costs of such training.

Training activities will include, but are not necessarily limited to, occupational skill training, training for non-traditional employment, on-the-job training, entrepreneurial training, job readiness training, incumbent training and customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

The primary emphasis of all activities is to match the employment needs of the customer with the needs of the local labor market. Services such as counseling, individual service strategy development and assessment of aptitude and interest combined with specific skill development through activities such as classroom training and on-the-job training contribute to occupational skill development. A wide range of services is to be available to each customer. As a result, customers may experience multiple components concurrently or consecutively.

Training Contracts

Adult and Dislocated worker training services are provided through contracts with educational institutions and employers.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are issued pursuant to the local directive which outlines all requirements such as in demand occupations listed on the Eligible Training Provider List. The ITA procedure ensures the trainee explores training provider options and states on their application why they have chosen the specific training provider.

On-the-Job and customized training may be provided by employers through contract with the Title I service provider according to the local OJT directive.

Individual Training Account (ITA)

Jobs of the 21st century require advanced skills. Individuals whose career goals require post-secondary education may receive an Individual Training Account (ITA). ITAs are issued for vocational-technical programs eligible training providers designed to teach the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform a specific job or group of jobs for which there is a demand. Education is encouraged in higher skill occupations and for non-traditional employment appropriate to the participant's needs and which contributes to their economic self-sufficiency. The training may be sequenced with, or accompanied by other types of training such as OJT. It ranges from two months to two years, depending on the occupation and training available.

Programs include but are not limited to, nursing, accounting, machinists, mechanics, industrial electronics, truck driving, automated office technology and computer programming. Time span in certain vocational training averages one to two years depending on the program. Community colleges are primary suppliers for this type of vocational education.

On-the-Job & Customized Training

Individuals may lack the occupational skills required by employers. The Local Board prioritizes skill development and training as a major service in the local area. Skill development may take place in a variety of ways whether in the classroom or on-the-job and depends largely on the employee's learning style and the type of occupation.

Most employers prefer to train on-the-job; others want experienced people on day one. The Local Board may utilize a variety of methods as Title I budget allows.

Employees learn occupational skills informally through demonstration and practice and other forms of Job Instruction Training. Training is conducted at the employer's business. OJT may be sequenced with or accompanied by other types of training such as classroom training or literacy training.

Title I may reimburse employers for the actual costs incurred providing classroom or outside training and training-related and supportive services to participants. Any additional payments shall be only for training and support over and above that provided to regular employees, and the employer must document costs.

Worksite supervisors and/or employers usually receive a formal orientation by a job trainer before the employee starts. The orientation includes an explanation of the program, a review of labor laws, time and attendance procedures, a review of good supervisory skills, techniques for dealing with poor performance, reinforcing good work habits, and evaluating competency. The supervisor is encouraged to contact the case manager/trainer whenever problems arise.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

One stop Centers and affiliates implemented the new statewide WorkSourceWA.com job match and Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) case management system in 2016. All Title I and Title III providers engage with this database.

The WorkSource system has begun work to replace ETO based on ongoing performance and compliance issues. SkillSource is well represented at all levels of the WIT Replacement Project, providing technical guidance and ensuring communication between stakeholders at all levels. The new MIS system is estimated to come online in late 2025.

EQUITY

Inclusive, equitable and diverse workforce development is at the heart of the strategic plan and drives the strategic goals and supporting initiatives throughout the North Central region. SkillSource Regional Workforce Board staff are inclusive, encouraging all voices to be heard in order to improve and sustain exceptional service delivery. North Central's goal is to bring a wide range of perspectives and experiences to the table, leading to increased collaboration and innovation. As just one example, the shared North Central and South Central business services summit in November 2023 exemplified shared commitment to better serving central Washington. By including clients in developing service strategies, North Central also affirms that clients are not just numbers but critical voices to be heard.

North Central is dedicated to creating a level playing field where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background or identity. Equity drives specific strategies and initiatives that support new career seekers and those seeking to advance their careers, ranging from job skill development to career fairs, incumbent worker training and apprenticeship programs.

The diversity of the region is reflected in substantial demographic, geographic and socioeconomic variation across the five county communities. North Central's commitment to diversity is reflected in the attention given to understanding critical regional characteristics necessary for strengthening each of the unique communities served by North Central.

Throughout the four-year plan period, SkillSource Regional Workforce Board will undertake initiatives in support of equity goals in close coordination with clients, staff, employers, community-based organizations, and partner agencies.

1. Needs Assessment:

- Conduct community forums and focus groups with diverse job seekers, employers, and community stakeholders to understand their needs and experiences.
- Continue evaluating the regional workforce landscape, including diversity demographics and employment outcomes.

2. Goal Setting:

- Continue setting and evaluating specific, measurable goals that address identified disparities in the region, such as increasing the participation of specific underrepresented groups in programs.
- Continue evaluating key performance indicators to track progress towards achieving these goals such as number of program applications, job placements, or wage changes among different demographic groups.

3. Strategy Development:

- Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach materials to reach diverse job seekers in their preferred languages and communication channels.
- Partner with community-based organizations and faith-based groups to connect with underserved populations and promote workforce development programs.
- Offer targeted workshops and training programs on topics like resume writing, interviewing skills, and career exploration for specific demographic groups.
- Create and advocate for inclusive workplace policies and practices with local employers such as unconscious bias training, flexible work arrangements, accessible benefits packages, and other Quality Job Framework characteristics.

BOARD COMPOSITION

See Attachment C: Local Workforce Development Board Membership and Certification

SECTION IV: PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

System performance data will be used to provide the local board and other stakeholders with information necessary to gain perspective on the system's operations and resulting outcomes for the benefit of business, job seeker, and youth customers. The data will help develop system-wide objectives and strategies that respond more effectively to gaps in services. Although the local board has limited authority over any program outside Workforce Innovation Title I, it shapes local strategies to address broad workforce development issues. Program performance data will provide important information for those strategies.

The WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) System Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), a joint product of Monster and Social Solutions currently serves as the backbone for data collection of Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Innovation Title I performance accountability information following state and Department of Labor proposals. Service providers continuously collect, monitor, and review program performance data in relation to customer outcomes. Performance data is made available to WorkSource partners and WIOA program operators through WIT and special reports generated no less than quarterly from the local board administrative office. The proposed new WIT system will provide more accurate and timely data and performance management.

Workforce Innovation Title I service providers meet monthly to review performance outcome data, budgets and to problem solve. One Stop Partner meetings and local board Committee Meetings are other venues for performance evaluation. In addition, One Stop Operator and WorkSource partner meetings are held to coordinate services across programs for job seekers and business customers.

The local board is accountable for the results of WIOA Title I programs through the system of performance-based interventions described above. It will also share accountability for career and technical education and adult education results.

Title I Common Measures Performance

Necessary program data are collected and maintained for performance accountability for WorkSource and Workforce Innovation Title I following state and Department of Labor protocols. Data sharing agreements are included in the protocols. North Central's most recent rolling 4 quarter performance sheet is provided in **Attachment G**. The published Workforce Investment Title I-B program performance chart measures the long-term results of enrolled participants in the most recent rolling 4 quarters for PY 2022-23.

The Workforce Board will issue PY 2024-25 performance targets once negotiations are complete and will be added to Attachment I of this plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- A: Regional Cooperative Service Delivery Agreement**
- B: Local Area Profile**
- C: Local Workforce Development Board Membership and Certification**
- D: Local Integrated Workforce Plan Assurances**
- E: Local Integrated Workforce Plan Certification**
- F: Public Comment**
- G: Performance Target**

Attachment A: Regional Cooperative Service Delivery Agreement (See [Section II.3.B](#))

Phase	Timeline for each phase	Activities anticipated for each phase to be implemented. Please indicate how each LWDB will participate for a multi-area region	Anticipated outcome(s) for each phase	Measure(s) of progress for each phase
Phase I: Prepare Team <i>Goal: build buy-in & support</i>	Completed: Workforce Collaboration & Local One Stop Teams	Build a team of workforce, education and economic development leaders for ongoing joint decision making. Inventory current One Stop service delivery strategies. Determine initial roles & responsibilities. Commit to analyzing regional data together.	Strengthened partnerships and buy in.	Partners identified. Meetings held. Agreements developed. Resources committed.
Phase II: Investigate <i>Goal: determine options for coordinated service delivery</i>	Ongoing via One Stop Operator & local teams	Identify customers who could be better served by improved One stop collaboration. Identify services that could be worth coordinating. Ensure relevance for the region and the partners participating.	Increased understanding of partner services and ideas for collaboration.	Data reviewed. Potential customers/services identified for coordinated approach
Phase III: Inventory & Analyze <i>Goal: build baseline knowledge</i>	Currently underway and ongoing	Conduct a review of current one stop services and strategies. Analyze trends, review outcome data and existing research. Develop a brief “report” or “snapshot” of the current state to engage current and potential partners. Identify champions, resources and resource gaps.	Increased awareness of current state and ideas that are data driven.	“Snapshot” or “report” ready for first meeting. Champions identified. Partners invited.
Phase IV: Convene <i>Goal: build partnership, prioritize activities</i>	Currently underway and ongoing	Hold events or meetings to discuss the analysis and develop options for addressing the challenges. Identify a goal and strategy to address it. Prioritize key issues. Determine whether additional resources are needed and how to bring these to the table.	Each Center or Affiliate develops a plan and is committed to implementation.	Each Center or Affiliate develops a plan and is committed to implementation.
Phase V: Act <i>Goal: implement initiatives</i>	Currently underway and ongoing	Develop a plan for implementation. Execute plans, monitor progress. Provide status reports to partnership, task forces, and stakeholders. Identify road blocks and address them	Area MOUs and RSAs are signed	Metrics specific to project identified and reported.
Phase VI: Sustain & Evolve <i>Goal: grow the partnership</i>	Currently underway and ongoing	Identify next opportunities. Start the process over again at the appropriate phase. Grow the partnership	Discover new/ongoing opportunities to address	New projects identified. New resources added.

Attachment B: Local Area Profile (See [Section III.3.A](#))

Please complete the following three sections for each Local Area in the Region and submit the information as part of the plan.

1. Local One-Stop System

List all comprehensive, affiliate, specialized, and connection one-stop sites in the local area, along with the site operator. If the operator is a partnership, list all entities comprising the partnership.

Site	Type of Site (Comprehensive, Affiliate, Specialized or Connection)	Site Operator(s)
WorkSource Central Basin	Comprehensive	NC Workforce Consortium: OIC, ESD, SkillSource
WorkSource Okanogan	Comprehensive	NC Workforce Consortium: OIC, ESD, SkillSource
WorkSource Wenatchee Affiliate	Affiliate	NC Workforce Consortium: OIC, ESD, SkillSource

2. Other Service Delivery Sites

List any other service delivery sites in the local area.

Site	Type of Site	Connected to One-Stop System?
SkillSource (Wenatchee)	Service Delivery	Yes, through both Comprehensive Centers & Affiliate sites via MOU & IFA

WIOA Title I-B Service Providers

Dislocated Worker Program List all current and potential service providers in the area	Indicate service(s) provided by each			WIOA funded?
	Basic	Individualized	Training	
Employment Security Dept. (Okanogan)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SkillSource (Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vocational Education Providers and Employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Dislocated Worker Services available:

Both providers of Dislocated Worker services have met and/or exceeded performance outcomes regularly for many years. The main challenge to providing services has been shrinking federal budgets. See Service delivery description throughout the Plan.

Adult Program List all current and potential service providers in the area	Indicate service(s) provided by each			WIOA funded?
	Basic	Individualized	Training	
Employment Security Dept. (Okanogan)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SkillSource (Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vocational Education Providers and Employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Adult Services available:

Both providers of Adult Services have met and/or exceeded performance outcomes regularly for many years. The main challenge to providing services has been shrinking federal budgets. See Service Delivery description throughout the Plan.

Youth Program List all current and potential service providers in the area	Indicate service(s) provided by each			WIOA funded?
	Youth Program Elements	Design Framework Services	Services for youth with disabilities?	
SkillSource (Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Employment Security Dept. (Okanogan)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
State Basic Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Employers (Element 3) Paid & Unpaid work experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vocational Education (Element 4) Occupational Skills Training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Support Providers (Element 7) Support Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments regarding the adequacy and quality of Youth Services available:

All providers of Youth Services have met performance outcomes regularly for many years. The main challenge to providing services has been shrinking federal budgets. State Education Contracts contribute close to \$1 million per year to provide a significant portion of required elements. See Service Delivery description throughout the Plan.

Attachment C

Local Workforce Development Board Membership and Certification

Official Name of Local Board: SkillSource Regional Workforce Board
Fiscal Agent: SkillSource
Contact Name and Title: Lisa Romine, CEO or Zach Williams, Chair

Required categories	Name/Title/Organization	Nominated by	Term Expires
Business (51% minimum)			Dec 31
1. Business	Crystal Gage/ Practice Manager/ Omak Clinic	OK Economic Alliance	2026
2. Business	Anthony Popelier / HR Dir/ Reman Reload	OK Economic Alliance	2027
3. Business	Roni Holder-Diefenbach/ Exec Dir/ Ok Econ All	Career Path Services	2024
4. Business	Annette Herup / HR Manager / Genie-Terex	Grant Co EDC	2026
5. Business	Tad Hildebrand /Consultant/ Nash Consulting	Adams Co Dev Council	2027
6. Business	Ken Johnson/ Owner/ Johnson's Glass & More	Adams Co Dev Council	2027
7. Business	Brant Mayo/Executive Dir/Grant Co EDC	Grant Co EDC	2024
8. Business	Ryan Beebout/ VP/ Sabey Data Centers	Wenatchee Chamber	2027
9. Business	Tom Legel / CFO/ Confluence Health	Wenatchee Chamber	2026
10. Business	Julie Helligso /Exec Director/ Cascade Vet	Wenatchee Chamber	2026
11. Business	Zach Williams /HR Manager/ Stemilt Growers	Wenatchee Chamber	2024
Workforce/Labor (20% minimum)			
1. Labor	Nathan Mack/ Field Representative/LiUNA 348	Central Labor Council	2027
2. Labor	Augustine Gallegos / Bus Agent / Teamsters	Central Labor Council	2024
3. Labor/Apprentice	Randy Curry / President /IBEW #191	Central Labor Council	2024
4. Other workforce	Irasema Ortiz-Elizalde/ Administrator/ DSHS	DSHS	2027
5. Other workforce	Michelle Price/ Superintendent /NC ESD	North Central ESD	2024
Education & Training			
1. Title II Adult Ed	Sara Thompson-Tweedy/ President / BBCC	Big Bend Comm College	2024
2. Workforce Ed	Faimous Harrison / President / WVC	Wenatchee Valley College	2026
Public/Government			
1. Wagner-Peyser	Todd Wurl/ Regional Director/ ESD	Employment Sec Dept	2027
2. Vocational Rehab	Pablo Villarreal/ Acting Regional Director/ DVR	Div Vocational Rehab	2026
3. Econ Dev	Kyle Niehenke/ Ex. Dir/ Adams County ED	Adams Co Dev. Council	2026

Attachment D
2020-2024 Local Integrated Workforce Plan Assurances

Planning Process and Public Comment		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. The local board has processes and timelines, consistent with WIOA Section 108(d), to seek input for the local plan's development. This includes providing representatives of businesses, labor organizations, education, other pivotal stakeholders, and the general public an opportunity to comment for a period not exceeding 30 days.	WIOA Sec. 108(d); 20 CFR 679.550(b)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. The final local plan, and modification, is available and accessible to the public on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings.	WIOA Sec. 107(e); 20 CFR 679.550(b)(5)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. The local board has established procedures ensuring public access, including people with disabilities, to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership, meeting minutes, the appointment of one-stop operators, awarding of grants or contracts to service providers, and the local board's by-laws.	WIOA Sec. 107(e); 20 CFR 679.390 and 679.310
Required Policies and Procedures		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4. A written policy is established by the LWDB outlining potential conflicts of interest and resolutions. Entities with multiple roles under the LWDB have documented agreements with the LWDB and chief elected official (CEO), ensuring compliance with WIOA, pertinent OMB guidelines, and the State's conflict of interest policies.	WIOA Sec. 107(h); 20 CFR 679.430; WIOA Title I Policy 5405; WorkSource System Policies 1012 and 1025
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5. The LWDB affirms that required one-stop partners actively provide access to their programs through the one-stop delivery system, contribute to its maintenance, and participate consistently with local memoranda of understanding (MOU).	WIOA Sec. 121(b); 20 CFR 678.400
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. The LWDB confirms the execution of MOUs with each one-stop partner detailing service provisions, costs and funding arrangements, referral methods, accessibility measures, especially for those with barriers, and periodic reviews at a minimum of every 3 years; and has provided the State with the latest version(s) of its MOU.	WIOA Sec. 121(c); 20 CFR 678.500; WorkSource System Policy 1013
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7. The LWDB, aligned with the CEO, affirms its selection of one-stop operators through a competitive process, ensuring their eligibility, transparency, and adherence to all WIOA regulations, including conflict of interest, service coordination, and stakeholder engagement, with full operational functionality achieved by July 1, 2017.	WIOA Sec. 121(d); 20 CFR 678.600; WorkSource System Policy 5404
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8. The LWDB has or will negotiate and reach agreement on local performance measures with the local chief elected official(s) and Governor before the start of the program year, using the required objective statistical model.	WIOA Sec. 107(d)(9) and 116(c); 20 CFR 679.370(j) and 677.210
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9. The LWDB has procurement policies and procedures for selecting one-stop operators and awarding contracts for youth, training, and career services under WIOA Title I-B, ensuring coordination with local educational entities, budgeting, accessibility compliance, and consumer choice in line with state, local, and WIOA mandates.	WIOA Sec. 107(d)(10); 121(d) and 123; 20 CFR 679.720(l-m); 679.410; 678.600-625 and 681.400; WIOA Title I 5404
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10. The LWDB has policies and procedures for identifying and determining the eligibility of training providers and their programs to receive WIOA Title I-B individual training accounts and to train dislocated workers receiving additional unemployment insurance benefits via the state's Training Benefits Program.	WIOA Sections 107(d)(10), 122(b)(3), and 123; 20 CFR 679.720(l-m) and 679.380; WIOA Title I Policy 5611

Required Policies and Procedures		References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. The LWDB has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I-B regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service, including, at a minimum, a requirement that all partners can identify appropriate staff contacts and refer customers to those contacts. All parties will be informed of these procedures, ensuring clarity and accessibility, especially for limited-English speaking individuals.	WIOA Sec. 181(c); 20 CFR 683.600; WorkSource System Policy 1012, Rev. 2 and 1025.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12. The LWDB has assurances from its one-stop operator that all one-stop centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites have front-end services consistent with the state's integrated front-end service policy and their local plan.	WorkSource System Policy 1010 Revision 1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13. The local area has established at least one physical, comprehensive, full-service one-stop center ensuring access to specified career, training, employment services, and programs, including those from mandated one-stop partners with at least one Title I-B staff member present, access during regular business days, accommodations for alternative hours where needed, and facilitates direct technological linkages where program staff isn't physically present.	WIOA Sec. 121(e)(2)(A); 20 CFR 678.305; WorkSource System Policy 1016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14. The LWDB ensures all one-stop centers, and Title I-B programs or activities are accessible both physically and programmatically to individuals with disabilities in accordance with 29 CFR part 38 and WIOA sec. 188 to include accessibility of facilities, services, technology and materials.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR Part 38; 20 CFR 652.8(j)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15. The one-stop centers undergo certification at least once every three years, based on objective criteria set by the State board in consultation with chief elected officials and local boards. This certification process assesses the centers' effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and commitment to continuous improvement, in alignment with WIOA Section 121(g) and the requisite standards related to service coordination.	WIOA Sec.121(g); 20 CFR 678.800; WorkSource System Policy 1016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16. The local board certifies that in all determinations, including facility locations, related to WIOA Title I-B financially assisted programs or activities, it neither employs standards nor procedures that lead to discrimination on prohibited grounds, nor does it take actions, directly or through other arrangements, that impair the objectives of the WIOA nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions. The board ensures all individuals have equitable access and benefits from one-stop services, without any form of discrimination.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR Part 38
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17. The LWDB provides to employers the business services outlined in WorkSource System Policy 1014.	WorkSource System Policy 1014
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18. The local board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188 and assures that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIOA Section 188; 29 CFR 38; WIOA Policy 5402, Rev. 3; WorkSource System Policy 1012, Rev. 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19. The local board collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.	WIOA Section 185; 29 CFR 38; WIOA Policy 5402, Rev. 3; WorkSource System Policy 1012, Rev. 2

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20. The LWDB complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities, the use of the one-stop environment for political activities, and the local board complies with the applicable certification and disclosure requirements	WorkSource System Policy 1018; 2 CFR Part 225 Appendix B; 2 CFR Part 230 Appendix B; 48 CFR 31.205-22; RCW ; 42.52.180; TEGL 2-12; 29 CFR Part 93.100
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21. The LWDB ensures that one-stop MSFW and business services staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are demand-driven and consistent with ESD's mission.	WIOA Sec. 167; MSFW Services Handbook
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	22. The LWDB follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIOA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIOA Sec. 116(i)(3) and 185(a)(4); 20 USC 1232g; 20 CFR 677.175 and 20 CFR part 603
	Administration of Funds	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIOA Title I-B activities (or an applicable federal waiver), including a process to be used to procure training services made as exceptions to the Individual Training Account process.	WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16); 20 CFR 679.560(a)(15); WIOA Title I Policy 5601; WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-310
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24. The LWDB has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to insure proper disbursement and accounting of WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth program and the Wagner-Peyser Act funds.	WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15), WIOA Title I Policy 5230; WIOA Title I Policy 5250
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25. The LWDB ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA through annual, on-site monitoring of each local sub-recipient.	WIOA Sec. 184(a)(3); 20 CFR 683.200, 683.300, and 683.400- 410; WIOA Policy 5230
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26. The LWDB has a local allowable cost and prior approval policy that includes a process for the approval of expenditures of \$5,000 or more for equipment requested by subcontractors.	2 CR Part 200; 20 CFR 683.200; WIOA Title I Policy 5260, Rev. 4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27. The LWDB has a written debt collection policy and procedures that conforms with state and federal requirements and a process for maintaining a permanent record of all debt collection cases that supports the decisions made and documents the actions taken with respect to debt collection, restoration, or other debt resolution activities.	WIOA Section 184(c); 20 CFR Part 652; 20 CFR 683.410(a), 683.420(a), 683.750; WIOA Title I Policy 5265
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures for ensuring management and inventory of all properties obtained using WIOA funds, including property purchased with JTPA or WIA funds and transferred to WIOA, and that comply with WIOA, Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and, in the cases of local government, Local Government Property Acquisition policies.	WIOA Sec.184(a)(2)(A); 20 CFR 683.200 and 683.220; OMB Uniform Admin. Guidance; (GAAP); WIOA Title I Policy 5407
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	29. The LWDB will not use funds received under WIOA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIOA Sec. 181(b)(7); 20 CFR 680.830- 840.

	Eligibility	References
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility for WIOA-funded basic career services and qualifications for enrollment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth in WIOA-funded individualized career and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service.	20 CFR Part 680 Subparts A and B; proposed 20 CFR Part 681 Subpart A; WorkSource System Policy 1019, Rev. 8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	31. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures for awarding Individual Training Accounts to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth receiving WIOA Title I-B training services, including dollar and/or duration limit(s), limits on the number of times an individual may modify an ITA, and how ITAs will be obligated and authorized.	WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G); 20 CFR 680.300-330; WIOA Title I Policy 5601, Rev. 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32. The LWDB has a written policy and procedures that establish internal controls, documentation requirements, and leveraging and coordination of other community resources when providing supportive services and, as applicable, needs-related payments to eligible adult, dislocated workers, and youth enrolled in WIOA Title I-B programs.	WIOA Sec. 129(c)(2)(G) and 134(d)(2); 20 CFR 680.900-970; 20 CFR 681.570; WorkSource System Policy 1019, Rev. 8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	33. The LWDB has a written policy for priority of service at its WorkSource centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites and for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services.	Jobs for Veterans Act; Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act; 20 CFR 1010; TEGL 10-09; Veterans Program Letter 07-09; WorkSource System Policy 1009, Rev. 3

Attachment E

Local Integrated Workforce Plan Certification

This section of the Local Integrated Workforce Plan serves as the LWDB's certification that it complies with all required components of Title I-B of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser Act and must be signed by authorized officials.

Please customize this signature page to accommodate your CLEO structure (i.e., local areas that require more than one local chief elected official signature).

The SkillSource Regional Workforce Board certifies that it complies with all required components of Title I-B of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser Act and plan development guidelines adopted by the State Workforce Development Board. The LWDB also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser Act, and their regulations, written U.S. Department of Labor guidance implementing these laws, Office of Management and Budget circulars, and all other applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Local Chief Elected Official(s)

Date

SkillSource Regional Workforce Board Chair

Date

Attachment F

Public Comment

(See WIOA Sec. 108(b)(20))

Describe the Local Board's public review and comment process, and how an opportunity is provided for various populations and groups such as representatives for business and labor organizations to participate. The description should specify the public comment duration and the various methods used to seek input into the plan prior to submission (e.g., web-posts, newspapers, e-mail, web-posting, events, forums, and plan development workgroups).

The local board took part in planning sessions during a two-day board retreat in October 2022 and during board committee meetings in September 2023. This created an opportunity for representatives of all stakeholder groups (to include business, labor, education, and workforce partners) to provide detailed input. Community participation (to include business, labor, career seekers and workforce system partners) was requested via a publicly available internet survey open from November 2023 to February 2024, which received 108 responses. Partner agencies were invited to provide pertinent information for the full array of WorkSource and community-based services described in the Plan.

The Plan was posted on the SkillSource website for public comment as of March 1, 2024 and announced via press release and social media. Public comment will close on April 1, 2024.

Attachment G

Performance Targets

This page is intentionally left blank pending the results of state board negotiations with chief local elected officials.

Appendix A: Most Recent Title I-B Performance (PY 22-23)

Common Measure	Target	Actual	% of Target
Employment Rate Q2			
• Adult	77.0%	84.7%	110.0%
• Dislocated Worker	81.5%	82.4%	101.1%
• Youth (Employed or PS Ed)	62.0%	60.8%	98.1%
Employment Rate Q4			
• Adult	71.4%	69.2%	96.9%
• Dislocated Worker	80.6%	84.7%	105.1%
• Youth (Employed or PS Ed)	62.6%	61.3%	97.9%
Median Earnings			
• Adult	\$6,442	\$9,065	140.7%
• Dislocated Worker	\$8,458	\$10,763	127.3%
• Youth	\$3,395	\$5,471	161.0%
Credential Q2			
• Adult	82.5%	80.5%	97.6%
• Dislocated Worker	85.0%	78.9%	92.8%
• Youth	49.7%	46.3%	93.2%