



Workforce Development

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This department is committed to advocating for Washington’s working families. From initial entry, to career transition, and when facing job loss, our Workforce Development Department seeks to ensure universal access to:

- Portable skills and a voice in career development
- Continuity for those navigating the workforce system
- An economy that works for both workers and businesses

We provide direct services to working families, as well as engage with your unions on workforce related policy matters. Please contact us for any of the following:

Direct Worker Support

When workers face layoff through no fault of their own, there are state and federal programs available to assist with finding unemployment and pursuing training opportunities. We contract with Employment Security Department to troubleshoot Unemployment Insurance benefits to laid-off workers and apprentices, file for Trade Adjustment Assistance and other grant funds, and arrange presentations during downsizing and closure.

Labor Liaisons to the Workforce System

We work to ensure labor has a seat at the table throughout the entire public workforce system. As the voice for working families, we depend on you to serve on committees and boards for working people to be heard. You ensure public policy and funding decisions are made with the best interest of the recipient at heart. Our team works directly with applicable agencies throughout the state consulting on labor issues and training providers on unions and apprenticeship.

Workforce System Liaison to Unions

Our team is available to assist your reps and members at any time navigating the public workforce system. We offer ongoing training and support to members serving on boards and committees, provide trainings on accessing services, distribute notifications on policy discussions and grant opportunities impactful to labor.

Layoff Aversion

You are often the first to hear about struggling business – if we know early enough, there are resources that can be brought to bear. Notify us at the first sign of trouble so we can work together to engage the appropriate partners.

Job Creation / Training Development

We want to be strategic partners in workforce development. Employers are crying out for the right talent,



and workforce training is the answer. Through apprenticeship development and joint labor-management training partnerships, we can ensure workers gain portable skills and wage gains while meeting employer needs.

It is difficult to speak about our services and what we provide without talking about possibly the worst natural disaster of our time, COVID-19. Not only has it changed the world's attitude toward infectious diseases it has changed the way we live our daily lives. This change has affected our department in ways that we will never forget. COVID-19 has affected the workers that we support like the airline, retail, food service, and hotel industry to an extent that they may never recover. It has meant that our type of advocacy has mostly become virtual at a time when some need a more available, in-person support. During this pandemic our group strives to continually provide the needed transitional services that the system has to offer. We work with ESD to help overcome the roadblocks that the pandemic has caused, while encouraging affected workers to access the retraining programs offered by the Worksource and Community College system. We tirelessly pursue Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) so that we can better provide for those who have lost their jobs due to foreign competition. TAA provides the best the system has to offer in the form of retraining benefits. Additionally, we make ourselves available as a safe place for frustrated job seekers who are having issues with the system and just need to talk.

Workforce policy is often developed at the local level. There are various labor representative seats available for you to engage in this work. Community Colleges continue to be in need of union members' expertise. There is a college within your local area that provides workforce certificates and degrees and as these programs are developed, they need workers that are doing the work to help guide the best course offerings. If you are interested in providing your expertise, please reach out to Kairie Pierce (kpierce@wslc.org). Further, the state is divided into twelve Workforce Development Regions, which are each governed by private sector lead boards. There are three or more labor seats in each region which we assist with placing. If this is of interest to you, please reach out to Emmanuel Flores (eflores@wslc.org), Rachel McAloon (rmcaloon@wslc.org) or Bill Messenger (bmessenger@wslc.org).

Since our last report we would like to introduce you to the members of our department. Kairie Pierce works with our apprenticeship programs, Community College system, K-12, and the inner workings of our Workforce Development Councils. Emmanuel Flores is part of our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant and helps to advocate for workers suffering job loss by securing retraining funding, unemployment Insurance, and participates in providing information from Workforce Board activities to President Larry Brown. Rachel McAloon is our newest member and she helps in all the above mentioned activities specializing in unemployment issues and she brings strong Labor and Industries knowledge having worked for the department for several years. Bill Messenger advocates for workers that are suffering job loss by pursuing retraining benefits and actively trying to prevent job loss by working with business and workers to provide them with layoff aversion opportunities. Finally, Karen White is the Workforce Development Coordinator and without her valuable support our work would be more difficult. Please join us in welcoming our new members.

Thank you for your continued collaboration. We are here to serve you – let us be your partner in Workforce Development, because a skilled workforce works for everyone.