

2009-2011

Strategic Plan



North Central Workforce

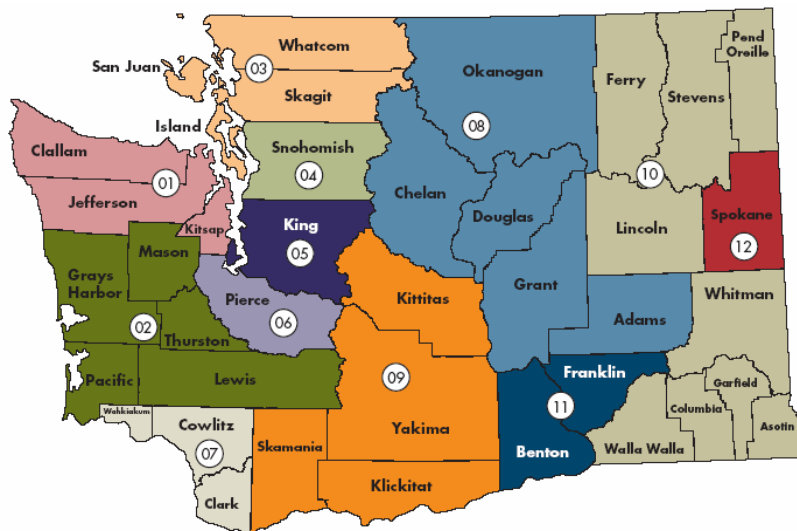
Development Council

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

May 2009

North Central Workforce Development Council 2009-2011 Strategic Plan

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



**Submitted to the Washington State Workforce Training & Education
Coordinating Board**

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Executive Summary

The updated strategic plan for 2009-2011 creates a system-wide blueprint for local action. This blueprint is intended for use by local development organizations in their efforts to improve the economic prosperity of the North Central region. The goals, objectives, and strategies endorsed in this plan by the Workforce Development Council were developed to further reduce gaps in services provided to area businesses and the local workforce.

Section A: Tomorrow's Economy

The regional economy, divided into three distinct labor market areas, is heavily reliant on agriculture. Approximately one in four local workers is employed in the industry, which accounts for 27.9 percent of wages in the area. However, direct crop production is seasonal, and earnings in that sector are traditionally low.

All industries in the region, both agricultural and non-farm, were affected by the economic collapse of 2008. A number of local companies have been forced to tighten operations and lay off workers, resulting in high unemployment across the region. However, certain sectors are still experiencing moderate growth and the emerging green economy could bring new opportunities to the North Central region.

According to *Washington State Green Economy Jobs*, a report issued by the Employment Security Department in 2009, the North Central WDA has the second highest total number of green jobs of any area in the state at 5,394. Green jobs are those rooted in the development and use of products and services that promote environmental protection and energy security. Many agricultural jobs are considered green, as are certain occupations in construction, manufacturing, and waste management and remediation. Renewable and inexpensive hydroelectric power and a focus by local economic development organizations on developing regional clusters around clean technology, position the region well for the emergence of a green economy.

Section B: The Local Workforce

The local workforce is aging, the number of immigrants in the region is increasing, and the high school dropout rate hovers around 21.5 percent for area residents aged 25 and older. Workforce development programs must be relevant to the needs of the community in this changing economy, and partnerships between local workforce and economic development organizations, schools, and employers are integral to that process. According to research conducted by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, obtaining at least one year of postsecondary education or training constitutes a tipping point for success. As baby boomers continue to retire, opportunities in high-skill, high-wage industries like healthcare and hydroelectric power generation and distribution will open up for younger workers. Effective

postsecondary training opportunities will ensure these individuals are able to compete for such jobs in an increasingly tight economy.

Section C: The Local Workforce Development System

The North Central Workforce Development Council is comprised of business leaders, educators, economic development specialists, and government representatives throughout Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams, and Okanogan counties. WorkSource is Washington state's brand for the coordinated menu of employment and training programs available to serve the various needs of regional businesses and job seekers.

Over the past years, there has been a concerted effort to develop One Stop Centers throughout the region, housing all workforce agencies and development organizations under one roof. The goal is to better serve customers and further integrate services provided by each individual organization. One Stop Centers are now open in Okanogan and Grant counties.

Workforce development organizations in the region work with secondary schools as well as community colleges (Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College) to provide training and education opportunities for adults and youth in transition. Additionally, Learning Centers and alternative high schools help youth who have difficulty succeeding in traditional school environments to earn high school diplomas or GEDs.

There is a wide variety of programs available to adults and youth in transition, ranging from apprenticeship programs, to worker retraining programs for dislocated workers, to adult education and literacy courses. Employers throughout the region also invest in training for employees, which has been shown to increase retention rates and help workers advance.

Section D: Performance Accountability

Workforce programs as a whole offer positive return on investment for public dollars. The state estimates an average benefit to cost ratio of about 6 to 1 for such programs. Service providers continuously collect, monitor, and review program performance data in relation to customer outcomes, and data is collected through the Services Knowledge and Information Exchange System (SKIES). In 2008, the North Central region exceeded expectations for 13 Department of Labor performance indicators.

Section E: Goals, Objectives & Strategies

The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in this plan call for the upgrade of business services, acceleration of the placement of qualified workers, rapid response to the needs of dislocated workers, expansion of modularized training options to help lower-skilled and incumbent workers advance, and investment in an effort to ensure all of our youth are on track to achieve their full potential.

Section A: Tomorrow's Economy

What a difference two years make. The rosy economic outlook of 2007 has given way to recessionary trends unseen in decades. In the United States, unemployment has risen to levels not reached since 1982, and trends indicate that this will be the worst recession since the post-war era. Washington state has not been immune to the effects of the financial collapse, as unemployment rates continued to rise through the end of 2008 and into 2009.

In the North Central Workforce Development Area (WDA), the economic outlook mirrors that of the state as a whole. Training for low-skilled workers will be more important than ever throughout the next few years as unemployment rates continue to rise and growing numbers of people find themselves looking for work in this tight and increasingly competitive job market.

The Importance of Agriculture

Agriculture has been and will continue to be the foundation of the North Central Washington economy. Apples, cherries, pears, wine grapes, wheat, hay, potatoes, corn, and mint, are just a few of the crops produced in the region. The agricultural industry employs the greatest number of workers of any industry in North Central Washington and the Columbia Basin. Approximately one of every four local workers (29,790) is employed in the orchards, in the fields, or in post-harvest processing activities such as warehousing, grading, sorting, and packing. In 2007, Washington state agriculture broke its record for value production for the third year in a row. Revenue hit a record \$8.51 billion, 23 percent above the 2006 figure. The market value of all crops in the North Central Workforce Development Area exceeds \$2 billion, and apple production alone accounts for 18.8 percent of all farm receipts in the state.

However, rising fuel and production costs, coupled with the effects of the current economic downturn, signal that revenue numbers for the next few years may be substantially lower. Additionally, dietary trends, consumer economics, and new foreign producers have made it difficult for orchardists and farmers to expand into new markets.

Though irrigation issues and increasingly stringent health and safety, environmental, and labor laws make conditions for farmers and orchardists more proscriptive than before, the number of individuals employed in agriculture has experienced a net increase since 2005. Between 2005 and 2007, the number employed within the industry rose by 557 individuals. This does, however, reflect a slowdown in agricultural employment. As seen in Table A-1, the total number employed in agriculture actually decreased in Adams and Okanogan counties over the two-year period, and the net gain is markedly lower than the 5,620 person increase experienced between 2003 and 2005.

Table A-1: North Central Agricultural Employment			
County	Agricultural Employment 2007	Agricultural Employment Change Since 2005	Percent of Total Employment in Each County 2009
Chelan/Douglas	12,970	238	21%
Grant	9,330	567	23%
Adams	1,890	-246	24%
Okanogan	5,600	-2	28%
Total	29,790	557	--
Source: LMEA/ESD US Department of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics			

The agricultural industry accounts for 27.9 percent of all wages in the region, which average to \$26,240 annually per worker. However, earnings for direct crop production workers are traditionally much lower, averaging only \$14,951 per year in 2004.¹ Value-added agricultural manufacturing workers averaged an annual salary of \$35,055 statewide, which is only 84.6 percent of the \$41,451 averaged for workers in all industries in 2005. Primary production agricultural workers earn less than one half of the wages of value-added workers in food processing. The low wages are largely due to the seasonal nature of primary production agriculture. Even with supplemental income, on average these workers report wages for only 1,293 hours of work per year. The standard number of hours is 2,080 annually.²

Table A-2: North Central Agricultural Production						
County	Number of Farms/Orchards	Cultivated Land in Acres	Change in Cultivation since 1997	Average Farm/Orchard Acreage	Market Value of Production	Production per Farm
Chelan	1,193	112,023	-15%	94	\$169,406,000	\$142,000
Douglas	947	878,867	-8%	928	\$124,348,000	\$131,308
Grant	1,801	1,074,074	-5%	596	\$881,756,000	\$489,592
Adams	717	1,067,079	-7%	1,488	\$202,854,000	\$282,920
Okanogan	1,486	1,241,316	5%	835	\$137,418,000	\$92,475

¹ LMEA, *2005 Agricultural Workforce in Washington State*, p. 51-53

² *Ibid.*, p.54

TOTALS	6,144	4,373,359	--	788	\$ 1.5 billion	\$227,659
Summarized from data developed by the National Agricultural Statistics Service Agricultural Survey 2002, and Agricultural Workforce in Washington State, LMEA 2005						

Overview of Labor Market Areas

The five counties comprising Workforce Development Area 8 are frequently divided into three labor market areas. These areas are Chelan-Douglas, Grant-Adams, and Okanogan. Breaking the counties into three labor market areas makes it easier to provide oversight for systems development in such an expansive region.

Major Employment Sectors	Chelan	Douglas	Grant	Adams	Okanogan	Regional Total by Sectors
Agriculture	8,657	2,881	7,770	1,684	5,035	26,027
Construction	1,692	687	926	97	542	3,944
Manufacturing	2,113	219	3,525	1,049	219	7,125
Wholesale Trade	1,392	334	978	430	315	3,449
Retail Trade	4,501	1,086	3,027	601	1,681	10,896
Transportation	724	349	816	244	158	2,291
Information	486	50	203	35	127	901
Finance & Insurance	708	160	411	79	212	1,570
Real Estate	464	88	240	30	115	937
Professional & Technical	651	192	350	42	191	1,426
Administrative Services	538	154	1,005	41	183	1,921
Healthcare	4,442	569	2,426	404	1,109	8,950
Accommodation & Food Service	3,216	718	1,739	386	1,175	7,234
Other services	1,020	262	1,084	239	563	3,168

Government	6,271	2,073	6,998	1,398	4,505	21,245
Average Total Employment in Major sectors and all other	37,469	10,183	31,915	6,897	17,205	103,669
Total # all firms	3,179	1,095	2,889	791	1,882	9,836
Source: LMEA Annual Avg. Wage and Employment (Q4 2005)						

Chelan and Douglas Counties

The Chelan-Douglas area reaches from the remote glaciers of the high Cascades to the Columbia River, encompassing expansive plateaus and rolling wheat fields. Tree fruit production is the primary industry that supports economic activity in this area. 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. A highly advanced grower-to-consumer agricultural industry is in place to deliver top produce or value-added products, such as frozen foods and juices, to markets worldwide.

Wenatchee and East Wenatchee are the economic centers for the two-county area. These cities are home to the region's retail complexes and major healthcare facilities. Central Washington Hospital in Wenatchee is one of only six level two trauma centers in the state.

Unemployment Trends - Chelan County's average annual unemployment rate rose to 5.9 percent in 2008, up from 4.9 percent the previous year. This is the highest unemployment level since 2005. Trends into 2009 show unemployment levels rising even higher, reaching 9.6 percent in February. The average annual unemployment rate increased from 4.7 percent in 2007 to 5.7 percent in 2008. Unemployment in Douglas County is slightly higher than in Chelan, reaching 10.1 percent in February 2009. Overall, the jobless rate for Chelan and Douglas counties combined is up 3.2 percent, rising from 6.6 percent in February 2008 to 9.8 percent in February 2009.

Industry Trends - In line with current economic trends statewide, the Chelan-Douglas job market is contracting. Between February 2008 and February 2009, the number of non-farm and salaried jobs in the area shrank by 1.3 percent, or 500 jobs lost.

The mining, logging, and construction industry led the decline, followed by manufacturing and retail trade. Alcoa was one of the manufacturers forced to tighten the company belt. The corporation laid off 29 workers at its Wenatchee Works in 2008 and 2009 due to soft demand and declining metal prices in the current economy. Additionally, the closure of the Longview Fibre and Tree Top plants in 2006 and 2007 respectively, displaced hundreds of local workers.

However, certain industries are still adding jobs. Government, leisure and hospitality, along with education and service sectors all gained jobs between February 2008 and 2009. The \$150 million expansion of Central Washington Hospital, which will nearly double the size of the facility, promises to bring a number of new jobs to the region. The expansion is scheduled to be completed by late 2010. Currently, Central Washington Hospital and Wenatchee Valley Medical Center employ more than 2,600 workers in the region. Town Toyota Center, the area's new events arena, has drawn a number of musical acts, hockey tournaments, and other performances to the region. The opening of this facility is likely a large factor in the expansion of the leisure and hospitality industry, as events have drawn large crowds from outside the Wenatchee Valley. Additionally, continued development of the Wenatchee Riverfront area, in various stages of completion, promises to provide an economic boon to the region. Once completed, a retail center will bring new shops to the Wenatchee Valley.

Grant and Adams Counties

Grant and Adams counties are part of the fertile Columbia Basin. Rich and fertile valleys characterize the topography with gentle rolling hills and grassy plains. Both counties enjoy a generally warm, semi-arid climate with long periods of clear and sunny weather. The area has evolved into one of the state's premier agricultural centers. Farms and orchards come to life each spring, fed by irrigation water provided through the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, which taps the Columbia River at Grand Coulee Dam. Key crops in the area are potatoes, corn, onions, beans, mint, and hay.

Moses Lake is the largest city in the area, serving as the retail center of the two-county region, and Quincy has earned notoriety for the number of high-tech companies that have recently built data centers in the area.

Unemployment Trends - Grant County's average annual unemployment rate for 2008 reached its highest level since 2005, increasing from 5.8 percent in 2007 to 6.9 percent. In January 2009, the rate reached 12.1 percent, increasing to 12.3 percent in February. Unemployment in Adams County is trending slightly lower than its neighbor to the north, but levels are still higher than they have been in three years. The average annual unemployment rate for Adams County in 2008 reached 6.6 percent, up from 5.9 percent a year earlier. Like Grant County, unemployment in Adams County surpassed 12 percent in January 2009. The rate decreased slightly to 11.6 percent in February.

Industry Trends - According to a summary of the latest labor market indicators for Grant County, non-farm employers added jobs at a higher rate than expected. Between February 2008 and February 2009, there was a net gain of 590 jobs. The public sector (also referred to as the government sector) experienced the largest gain, adding 200 jobs, followed by the information and financial sector, and trade, transportation, and utilities. Although the goods-producing industry, which includes natural resources, mining, construction, and goods manufacturers, expanded by 60 jobs in February 2009, annual hiring is still down. Genie Industries, a major manufacturer of construction equipment, has laid off more than 180 individuals at its Moses Lake operation since July 2008. This represents a 28 percent reduction

in the workforce at the Moses Lake plant. In October 2008, the plant was closed for a week due to the economic downturn and low demand for construction.

In Adams County, non-farm employment remained flat between February 2008 and February 2009, after a net loss of 20 jobs between January 2008 and 2009. Employers in the manufacturing industry eliminated 50 more workers than they had the previous year. The information and financial sector also lost jobs. However, the government sector and trade, transportation, and utilities industry both grew at a slow rate.

Metal fabrication, automotive air bag components, wind turbine towers, instruments, and navigational equipment are manufactured in the Grant-Adams area. Food processing is the Columbia Basin’s largest industry, and individuals with maintenance mechanic skills are sought by the industry to keep the high-speed machinery used in manufacturing in good working order.

Okanogan County

Okanogan County is the largest county in the state by land area, covering 5,268 square miles. However, because it is trisected by two north-south mountain ranges and is far from major roadways, the county is rural and has only 39,800 residents. 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 reservations, is located in Okanogan County.

Figure A-1: Okanogan Micro Labor Markets and Economic Drivers	
Okanogan Micro Labor Market Area	Economic Drivers*
Central Valley—Omak, Okanogan	apples, plywood mills, ranching, retail, Forest Service, Mid-Valley Hospital and Omak Clinic, Okanogan Casino, The Omak Stampede
North Valley—Tonasket, Okanogan	apples, pears, vineyards, Forest Service, timber, North Valley Hospital
Methow Valley—Twisp, Winthrop	apples, tourism via the North Cascades Highway, ranching, limited timber, Forest Service
South County—Bridgeport, Brewster, Pateros	Chief Joseph and Wells dams, apples
East County—Nespelem, Coulee Dam	Grand Coulee Dam, timber, ranching
Source: Okanogan County, 2006	

*School districts, municipal and social services are an economic driver throughout Okanogan County.

Unemployment Trends - Unemployment rates in Okanogan County are the highest within the North Central WDA. By February of 2009, unemployment had reached 12.8 percent. The average annual unemployment rate for 2008 was 7.1 percent, 1.2 percentage points higher than the previous year. The annual unemployment rate in Okanogan County has not been this high since 2005.

Industry Trends - In Okanogan County, the labor market grew slowly between February 2008 and 2009, by 50 jobs. The government sector expanded by 60 jobs, and jobs in wholesale trade grew at a rate of 8.7 percent, adding 20 workers. Employers in natural resources, mining, and construction also added workers, though hiring in this industry was down substantially across the state. Retail trade is another sector that grew over the period studied. However, manufacturers shed jobs, as did the information and financial sector. The closure of Colville Indian Plywood and Veneer (CIPV) at the beginning of 2009 hit the region hard. The company's 230 workers were laid off in January of that year for an indefinite period of time, as CIPV cannot afford to keep its doors open. The current economic downturn and housing crisis has dramatically lessened demand for building materials, making it extremely difficult for manufacturers of these products to sustain operations.

The service and public (government) sectors employ 60 percent of the Okanogan County workforce. The single largest employer in the county, with more than 2,000 employees, is the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Colville Tribal Enterprise Corporation (CTEC) headquartered in Nespelem and Grand Coulee. For the purpose of compiling labor market statistics, Colville employees are considered governmental or public sector workers. CTEC owns three casinos (Okanogan Bingo Casino, Coulee Dam Casino, and Mill Bay Casino), four lumber and plywood mills (Colville Tribal Logging, Colville Indian Plywood and Veneer, Colville Indian Precision Pine, and Colville Timber Resource Company), a large construction company (Colville Tribal Service Corporation), and some smaller retail and tourism businesses. Annual revenues for CTEC were over \$140 million in 2004, up from only \$5 million in 1984 when the corporation was created.

Emerging Industries

Data Centers

In 2005, economic developers in Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties started to receive inquiries from large companies interested in building data centers in the area, to house and power large numbers of internet servers. The North Central region is well-suited for these "server farms," due to the cool, dry climate, inexpensive electricity, and rural setting. Another key benefit of locating in the area is high capacity, redundant fiber optic connectivity available through the Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet).

Microsoft and Yahoo! finished construction on Quincy-based data centers in 2007, but have since put plans for expansion on hold. Both companies are now exploring the possibility of relocating operations to Oregon, which has no sales tax. The Microsoft construction project was supposed to keep engineers and construction workers employed through 2011. The hold on

construction has left many local workers in the lurch and halted a major sales surge for local businesses.

Sabey Corporation, a Seattle-based company that builds and leases data centers, bought nearly 40 acres of land in Quincy at the end of 2008, and will employ a number of local workers when construction begins on the company's latest building. Sabey started construction on two data centers near Pangborn Memorial Airport in East Wenatchee last year, and T-Mobile will be moving all of its servers to Intergate.Columbia, one of the complexes developed by Sabey. This data center could employ up to 20 people. Additionally, Ask.com and Intuit, maker of the TurboTax and Quicken software, have also decided to move data centers to North Central Washington. Intuit purchased land in Quincy, and Ask.com will move into a preexisting facility in Moses Lake.

Although the number of skilled and semi-skilled jobs created as high-tech companies move server farms to the area is minimal, there are other benefits to the community. By establishing relationships with data center industry leaders and technical experts, it will be possible to solicit their advice regarding current area technical programs and how they could be better aligned to meet the demands of high-tech employment.

Green Jobs

According to a report issued by the Employment Security Department in 2009 entitled, *Washington State Green Economy Jobs*, the North Central Workforce Development Area has the second highest total number of green jobs of any area in Washington state at 5,394. More than 82 percent of green jobs in the region are associated with preventing or reducing pollution. This represents the highest concentration of green jobs by a WDA in any of the designated "green core" areas, which include energy efficiency, preventing or reducing pollution, mitigation and cleanup of pollution, and renewable energy. Agriculture-related industries and occupations represent over half of all employment in this green area, including jobs related to organic farming and sustainable agricultural practices that involve the use of chemicals and fertilizers that are less harmful to the environment than those traditionally used. The remaining occupations in this green core area are found in construction and waste management and remediation services.

The report identifies the top five green occupations by total number in rural workforce development areas as farmworkers and laborers (crop, nursery, and greenhouse), agricultural workers (all other), graders and sorters of agricultural products, electricians, and packers and packagers. At 4.4 percent of total employment, green jobs in the area are proportionately higher than in any other WDA.³ However, the report only looks at green jobs in the private sector, leaving out the large number of public utility employees in the region who work on renewable energy projects, and other public workers who promote sustainability.

³ *Washington State Green Economy Jobs*, Employment Security Department, Jan. 2009, p. 17

But what exactly makes a job “green”? According to the report, the green economy “is rooted in the development and use of products and services that promote environmental protection and energy security.” Jobs that support this definition can be considered green. Some green jobs are manual; for example, the construction of steel blades used in wind turbines. Other green occupations are managerial or scientific. Individuals who design energy-efficient buildings or plan out green space for a city can be considered green-collar workers. In the North Central region, green jobs are found in traditional industries. Crop production; crop harvesting services; management; farm labor contractors; soil preparation and planting; residential, commercial, and industrial building construction; hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste collection, treatment, and disposal; landfill and materials recovery; and recycling services can all be considered green jobs when done in an environmentally friendly way.

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

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

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

Area Wages

Overall, earnings are up across the region, but the gap between average earnings in North Central Washington and state averages is widening. Chelan County has the highest wages

within the region, at \$31,125 in 2007, but this is \$13,596 less than statewide averages of \$44,721 per year. Adams County has the lowest average earnings, at \$21,802. While annualized wages in North Central Washington are significantly lower than wage averages across the state, this disparity is largely due to the seasonal nature of many of the area's employment opportunities.

Table A-4: Wages Per Worker by County 2007				
County	No. of Workers (Low Estimate)	Annualized Wages	Average Monthly Gross Income	Statewide Average
Chelan	40,030	\$31,125	\$2,471	\$44,721/yr., \$3,184/mo.
Douglas	20,840	\$25,578	\$2,004	
Grant	40,260	\$23,465	\$1,878	
Adams	7,830	\$21,802	\$1,965	
Okanogan	19,810	\$27,841	\$2,154	
Source: LMEA 2007				

Table A-5 shows economic sectors broken down by the number of people employed within that field, along with wage output. Agriculture provides the largest number of jobs in the region, with a total 36,527 during the third quarter of 2008. However, earnings per worker in the agricultural sector are much lower than they are in many industries throughout the region. The public sector (referred to as government in the table), is the field that employs the second highest number of people in the North Central region. This sector includes jobs in schools, public utilities, and through Tribal enterprises, as well as municipal, county, state, and federal employment. The public sector yielded the third highest average earnings per worker during the third quarter of 2008 at \$10,551. The only sectors to see higher average earnings are company and enterprise management (\$15,771), and mining (\$13,780), which provide a small number of jobs in the region.

Table A-5: Employment and Earnings by Industry in the North Central WDA					
Sector	Jobs	Earnings for 3rd Quarter 2008	Jobs %	Earnings %	Average Earnings/Worker, Quarterly
Agriculture	36,527	\$168,960,802	30.1%	19.8%	\$4,771
Government	22,719	\$247,346,626	19.5%	29.0%	\$10,551
Manufacturing	8,496	\$87,317,472	6.9%	9.1%	\$9,301

Healthcare & Social Assistance	8,880	\$89,257,494	6.6%	8.5%	\$8,632
Other Services	3,431	\$14,022,311	2.8%	1.6%	\$3,989
Accommodation & Food Services	9,010	\$32,110,987	6.9%	3.3%	\$3,315
Construction	5,457	\$55,834,913	4.1%	5.7%	\$9,735
Finance & Insurance	1,658	\$16,406,226	1.2%	1.6%	\$8,741
Transportation & Warehousing	2,608	\$21,229,125	2.4%	2.7%	\$8,234
Wholesale Trade	3,801	\$41,528,469	3.2%	4.9%	\$10,546
Professional & Technical Services	1,714	\$14,899,436	1.3%	1.6%	\$8,391
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1,569	\$5,937,095	1.7%	1.0%	\$3,687
Administrative & Waste Services	2,708	\$13,210,068	1.9%	1.3%	\$5,765
Information Transmission	874	\$7,104,792	0.7%	0.7%	\$7,691
Retail Trade	11,692	\$68,859,127	9.7%	8.0%	\$5,744
Company & Enterprise Management	100	\$1,563,420	0.1%	0.2%	\$15,770
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	1,059	\$5,778,059	0.8%	0.6%	\$4,935
Mining	128	\$1,763,834	0.6%	1.4%	\$13,780
Education Services	138	\$592,120	0.1%	0.1%	\$4,158
Total	122,569	\$893,722,376	98.0%	99.2%	\$8,061
Source: LMEA, Industry Distribution 3 rd Quarter 2008					

Table A-6 shows the top ten non-farm occupations in North Central Washington, provides the estimated average wage for these occupations in March 2008, and the level of education and training each position requires. The information it contains gives an indication of the skill level of workers in the region, and how that translates into earning power. The majority of these occupations, with the exception of elementary school teachers and welders, cutters, solderers, and braziers, require little training and offer low wages. The need for personal and home care aides is increasing at an annual rate of 4.9 percent, but earning potential for this occupation is fairly low.

Table: A-6: Top Ten Occupations for North Central Washington/Columbia Basin					
Occupational Titles	Preparation Level	Estimated Employment 2006	Average Annual Growth Rate	Average Annual Total Openings	Estimated Average Wage March 2008

Personal and Home Care Aides	Short-term on-the-job training	1,348	4.90%	111	\$22,380
Home Health Aides	Short-term on-the-job training	475	3.60%	26	\$20,466
Comb. Food Prep. and Serving Workers, incl. Fast Food	Short-term on-the-job training	2,085	1.80%	85	\$19,298
Retail Salespeople	Short-term on-the-job training	2,944	1.80%	155	\$25,372
Office Clerks, General	Short-term on-the-job training	2,236	1.80%	88	\$26,499
Counter Attends., Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	Short-term on-the-job training	805	1.80%	75	\$18,987
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	AA degree, postsecondary training, or long-term on-the job training	351	2.90%	16	\$22,342
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	Short-term on-the-job training	952	1.80%	33	\$26,589
Elementary School Teachers, Exc. Special Ed.	Bachelor's degree or higher	1,087	1.70%	46	\$50,417
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Braziers	AA degree, postsecondary training, or long-term on-the-job training	214	3.30%	14	\$36,126

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, Labor Market and Economic Analysis June 2008

Job Vacancies

The Labor Market Economic Analysis (LMEA) branch of the Employment Security Department conducts point-in-time surveys to determine job vacancies in the state. The following tables reveal job vacancies for which employers indicated they were hiring in 2008. The LMEA determines the industries and occupations with the most vacancies at a given time and provides information regarding the level of education needed to secure employment in a certain occupation, average wages associated with such positions, and the size of companies hiring. Throughout the state, the number of job vacancies has decreased steadily since 2006, and the bulk of current openings are for low-paying jobs. Over 40 percent of the positions

highlighted in this report offered wages of less than ten dollars per hour. In the fall of 2008, Washington companies attempted to fill approximately 50,593 jobs, a third fewer openings than projected. Only 4 percent of these vacancies were for jobs in the North Central WDA.

As seen in Table A-7, North Central Washington employers in the healthcare and social services industry had the largest number of job vacancies during October 2008. Agricultural vacancies were estimated at 296, substantially lower than 2006 vacancy estimates in that industry at more than 2,307. Agriculture is the industry with the largest percentage of seasonal or temporary vacancies in the region.

Table A-7: North Central Job Vacancies by Industry

Industry	Estimated Job Vacancies	Full-time Positions	Permanent Positions	Newly Created Positions	Reporting Education Beyond HS/GED	Requiring License or Certificate	Requiring Previous Experience
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	296	81%	6%	1%	0%	0%	71%
Utilities	<25	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Construction	95	50%	50%	19%	6%	40%	88%
Manufacturing	105	98%	86%	9%	34%	18%	64%
Wholesale trade	27	100%	100%	17%	33%	50%	100%
Retail trade	192	18%	31%	6%	3%	4%	14%
Transportation and warehousing	51	72%	72%	17%	39%	53%	76%
Information	<25	100%	100%	0%	0%	40%	40%
Finance and insurance	26	43%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Real estate and rental and leasing	<25	100%	100%	0%	60%	40%	100%
Professional and technical services	<25	83%	100%	0%	83%	83%	67%
Management of companies and enterprises	<25	71%	71%	29%	0%	29%	57%
Administrative and waste services	31	57%	93%	14%	43%	71%	86%
Educational services	117	10%	85%	0%	41%	90%	80%
Health care services	589	90%	100%	1%	51%	89%	81%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	36	39%	39%	0%	0%	33%	39%

Accommodation and food services	146	19%	80%	5%	0%	43%	14%
Other services, except public administration	121	71%	88%	12%	29%	35%	65%
Total	1,891	66%	70%	5%	27%	50%	66%
Source: LMEA, 2008							

Not surprisingly, the occupational group with the largest number of vacancies to fill during the fall of 2008 was healthcare and healthcare support, totaling 589 openings in North Central Washington. Agricultural jobs, including farming, fishing, and forestry, showed 275 vacancies during the final months of 2008. Construction and extraction job openings numbered 103 in October 2008, down 40 vacancies from 2006.

Major Occupation Group	October 2008 Vacancies	Full-time Openings	Permanent Openings	Newly Created Positions	Requiring Education Beyond HS/GED	Requiring License or Certificate	Requiring Previous Experience
Management	35	92%	100%	18%	71%	53%	60%
Business and Financial Operations	29	100%	100%	15%	36%	21%	78%
Computer and Mathematical	<25	49%	100%	22%	62%	30%	100%
Architecture and Engineering	<25	100%	100%	15%	70%	82%	100%
Life, Physical, and Social Science	<25	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
Community and Social Services	<25	77%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
Legal	<25	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	58%
Education, Training, and Library	65	15%	73%	4%	45%	76%	100%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	<25	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	84%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	269	87%	100%	2%	97%	94%	87%
Healthcare Support	320	91%	100%	0%	20%	99%	100%
Protective Service	<25	0%	100%	0%	65%	87%	35%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	117	29%	94%	6%	0%	70%	15%

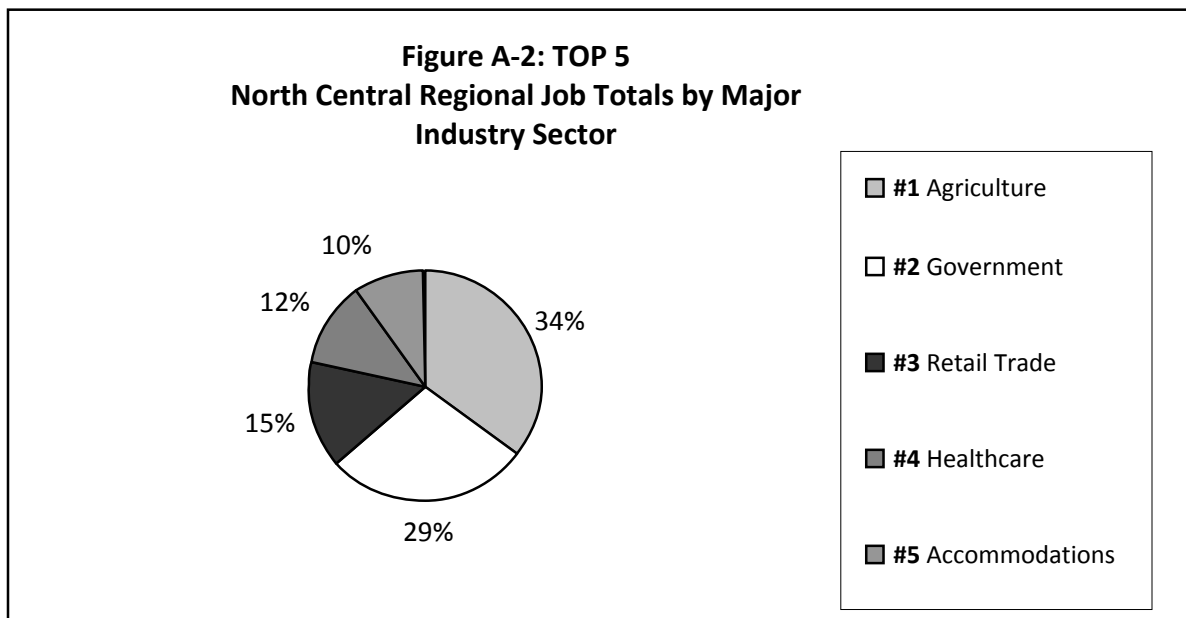
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	63	33%	64%	4%	0%	7%	17%
Personal Care and Service	55	67%	63%	0%	0%	11%	14%
Sales and Related	159	16%	32%	5%	1%	3%	61%
Office and Administrative Support	131	45%	71%	6%	18%	14%	71%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	275	79%	3%	0%	0%	0%	72%
Construction and Extraction	103	53%	39%	20%	0%	37%	68%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	74	84%	91%	3%	34%	40%	59%
Production	44	100%	100%	15%	13%	30%	88%
Transportation and Material Moving	74	88%	76%	12%	33%	54%	66%
Total	1,891	66%	70%	5%	27%	50%	0%
Source: LMEA, 2008							

The next table indicates the educational level that employers in North Central Washington expect prospective employees to have attained. In October 2008, nearly 51 percent of the vacant positions in the region had no educational requirements. Approximately 18.3 percent required at least a high school degree or equivalent, and 13.2 percent required a four-year college degree or more.

Required Education Level	Estimated Job Vacancies	Full-time Positions	Permanent Positions	Newly Created Positions	Requiring License or Certificate	Requiring Previous Experience
No Requirement	954	65%	54%	6%	41%	59%
High School/GED	346	46%	69%	3%	32%	49%
Some College	45	91%	100%	19%	80%	97%
AA/Voc. Degree	75	75%	100%	6%	77%	36%
Bachelor Degree	215	79%	95%	2%	86%	93%
Graduate Degree	35	92%	100%	12%	100%	88%
Other	101	93%	100%	0%	96%	87%

No Response	120	64%	91%	0%	22%	95%
Totals	1,891	66%	70%	5%	50%	66%
Source: Employment Security, LMEA, Oct. 2008 survey http://www.workforceexplorer.com						

Figure A-2 shows regional employment by the top five industry sectors. Approximately 34 percent of the total workforce is employed in the agricultural sector. The public or governmental sector employs 29 percent of workers, and retail trade accounts for 15 percent of employment. The fourth largest sector, and the one that is currently growing at the fastest rate, is healthcare, accounting for 12 percent of area employment. Rounding out the top five is accommodations and food service at 10 percent.



Economic Development Strategies

The region’s economic development strategies generally focus efforts on diversification and helping local businesses grow and thrive. The state Department of Community Trade and Economic Development estimates that 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs are created by existing businesses. The workforce development system therefore must focus energy to meet the needs of businesses and employers currently in the area, providing assistance to enable them to remain in the region. However, as new industries are recruited to the area, educational institutions and training programs must also be able to provide the skills necessary to meet the workforce needs of these new companies, small businesses, and entrepreneurs. Outreach to the Hispanic community is also important, as there are many untapped opportunities for minority entrepreneurs. In the North Central WDA, Skill Panels and industry cluster

development are just two methods used to identify and cultivate sectors that will help the economy grow.

Skill Panels

The North Central WDA has convened two Skill Panels in recent years in order to train current employees working in certain sectors. Food processors from the Columbia Basin met during 2002 and 2003 to train their current workforce. Job opportunities within this industry require workers with the skills necessary to maintain the increasingly sophisticated, high speed machinery used in processing frozen foods.

Employers representing the food processing industry started meeting again in 2007 to hold another round of maintenance mechanic skills trainings facilitated by SkillSource. The partner companies requested customized modular classes from Big Bend Community College's Maintenance Mechanic Technology (MMT) program. Participants reported to class on Fridays, Saturdays, and evenings through the spring of 2008. Most employees were able to use their expanded skills in their current positions, honing new abilities in anticipation of future, higher-wage openings and maintenance mechanic apprenticeships. During the 2002-03 training, the Food Processing Skill Panel reported that the hands-on classes in pneumatics, hydraulics, welding, and general maintenance improved their employees understanding and motivation.

Healthcare is the region's fourth largest industry. SkillSource facilitated the start of the North Central Healthcare Skill Panel in 2003, which continued meeting through 2006. The Healthcare Panel brought together healthcare leaders from across the region to develop strategies for building a thriving healthcare workforce in the region. The Panel had widespread reach across the region, ultimately improving the skills of about 200 incumbent healthcare workers. Classes ranged from short workshops teaching teamwork and workplace Spanish, to full courses in medical terminology, nursing assistant certification, and perioperative nursing.

The Colville Tribal Enterprise Corporation (CTEC) is also convening a Skill Panel in the recreation and tourism industry. The panel addresses the needs of employers by focusing on skill needs in specific occupations, addresses workers' needs by creating formal career paths to good jobs with family wages, and by reducing barriers to employment, and engages stakeholders within the recreation and tourism industry to develop economic development strategies. The Skill Panel acts as a forum, convening multiple employers within the same industry to identify solutions to common workforce challenges, offer non-traditional methods or approaches to train and educate the local workforce in relevant jobs, and identify barriers to industry competitiveness and facilitate joint solutions. As the industry convener, the CTEC conducts labor industry analysis, and coordinates joint and leveraged solutions across public and private sector partners so that industry needs for qualified workers are met.

Industry Cluster Development

In 2008, experts at the University of Washington and Seattle University conducted an analysis of industry clusters in each of Washington state's workforce development areas. In the North Central region, agriculture and food production was, not surprisingly, found to be the largest

area cluster with 32,700 employees. Local government electricity, which would include public utilities jobs and employment at area dams, was also a significant cluster, as was cut stone production. There is also a small forest products cluster and metals sector in the region, and two service clusters, gambling/other entertainment and ambulatory healthcare, employing more than 1,000 people each.⁴

Industry cluster analysis defines regional specialties and helps economic developers to prioritize various industries for development. The area's inexpensive electricity and local government electricity cluster is drawing interest around the country. The Port of Chelan County, along with various partners, hopes to use the area's hydroelectric advantage to launch a statewide hybrid car project, making Wenatchee a center for plug-in hybrid electric vehicle technology. Ultimately, the coalition hopes to encourage entrepreneurs to launch startup companies in the area that would convert cars and develop conversion kits and technologies. If the group succeeds, it could mean the creation of a new industry cluster in the state's growing clean-technology field.

In Grant and Adams counties, goods production and manufacturing clusters are particularly strong. In 2008, the Central Washington Jobs Consortium outlined a training program to prepare local workers for jobs in the goods producing cluster in the Moses Lake area. The plan was developed by a consortium of private businesses along with the economic development council and training agencies. Graduates of the training program receive a certificate and then move into entry level jobs.

For more than two years, companies in the goods producing cluster in Grant and Adams counties have had a difficult time finding job applicants qualified for employment. On their own, the companies have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to expand their recruitment efforts. They have also worked closely with WorkSource, SkillSource, and local temporary agencies, but are still faced with a deficit of qualified applicants.

In 2007, the Grant County Economic Development Council formed a task force to examine labor market needs and develop solutions for ensuring an adequate supply of local qualified job applicants. As a result, the Central Washington Job Oriented Business Strategies (J.O.B.S.) Project was created. J.O.B.S. Project partners hope to develop a replicable model for providing employer-developed training for individuals to enter the goods production cluster. The consortium is also developing a Pre-Employment Training (PET) Program to help them fill the 250 or more jobs they believe they will need to fill in the near future.

Okanogan County's main industry cluster is agriculture. Besides growers, this cluster includes fruit packers such as Starr Ranch, Gebber's Farm, Gold Digger, Smith and Nelson, and Chelan Fruit. It also includes processors like American Produce, Kettle Valley, and Bear Fruit. This cluster also includes machinery, chemical, and other farm and plant support firms such as

⁴ *Region 8 Cluster Analysis*, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board, p. 1

Hamilton Farm, Okanogan Truck and Tractor, Northwest Wholesale, Nolton Irrigation, and Cascade Feed and Supply.

Regional Economic Development Organizations

A number of organizations throughout the region work to promote the local economy and create economic opportunities for residents.

Grant County Economic Development Council

The Grant County Economic Development Council has partnered with ten port districts in order to attract new industries to the area. New employment opportunities could be generated as Renewable Energy Corporation finishes the expansion of its polysilicon plant in Moses Lake.

Port of Chelan County

The Port of Chelan County is spearheading an effort to transform North Central Washington into a center for plug-in hybrid research, education, and development. For the last few years, Wenatchee has hosted the "Power UP! Alternative Vehicle Innovations Summit," in May, which fills the Wenatchee Convention Center with people interested in electric and electric hybrid technology. Wenatchee also hosted a program through Washington State University's Rural Bridges Program. Experts shared their knowledge regarding the use of affinity marketing to attract qualified professionals to the area and stem the flow of young people leaving Chelan and Douglas counties for urban areas.

Port of Douglas County

The mission of The Port of Douglas County is to stimulate economic, environmental, and social prosperity for Douglas County and North Central Washington businesses and residents. Current Port projects include constructing new buildings for industrial tenants and enhancing infrastructure services such as power, water, roads, storm drainage, and fiber-optic telecommunication lines.⁵

Economic Alliance of Okanogan County

The Economic Alliance of Okanogan County was formed by the merging of Partnership 2005 and the Okanogan County Council for Economic Development. The organization works to develop a more stable, diversified economic base for the county. Businesses exploring the possibility of locating in Okanogan County receive assistance from the Economic Alliance. Small businesses are helped with loans from the North Central Washington Business Loan Fund, and the organization supports incubator projects as well. The Economic Alliance of Okanogan County also guides cities and towns in the area through the application process to solicit funds from the distressed counties tax for infrastructure repair and construction projects.

Big Bend Economic Development Council (BBEDC)

⁵ Port of Douglas County: <http://www.portofdouglas.org/default.asp>

The BBEDC is located in Moses Lake and serves Grant, Adams, and Lincoln counties. The organization filed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) with the federal Economic Development Administration, which qualified the counties for official designation as a re-development area. This designation can assist communities in the three counties to obtain community development funding for projects such as waste water treatment systems. Supporting the expansion of existing businesses, encouraging tourism, and developing a multi-modal transportation system with highway, rail, and transit improvements, are the organization's goals.

Adams County Economic Development Council

The Adams County Economic Development Council assists in acquiring funding for prioritized community infrastructure projects in the Columbia Basin. Council leaders promote Othello's Sandhill Crane Festival to build community identity and tourism.

North Central Washington Economic Development District (EDD)

EDD is a federally designated economic development district for Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties, including the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation. The EDD is responsible for economic development planning in the region and collaborates with various private and public agencies.

Section B: The Local Workforce

Population Growth

According to estimates issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Washington state grew 1.5 percent between 2007 and 2008. However, this marks a moderate but continuing slowdown in state population growth since 2006. According to the Office of Financial Management, the weak housing market and slow economy are limiting the mobility of the population.

The Chelan-Douglas area’s population is now estimated at 108,193, making it the state metropolitan area with the fifth fastest growth rate. An arid climate, good healthcare, and recreational opportunities without the bustle of the I-5 corridor are said to be contributing to net in-migration. Douglas County is growing at a faster rate, 1.7 percent, than Chelan County at 1.2 percent. Since 2000, the population of the Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has increased by 9 percent. According to projections issued by the Office of Financial Management, Chelan County should expect to see a 12.4 percent population increase by 2015. The population of Douglas County should increase by as much as 16.5 percent over the next six years.

The population of Okanogan County increased at about the same rate as the state as a whole, growing 1.4 percent between 2007 and 2008. Okanogan County lost approximately 3,500 workers and their families during the recession of 2002-03, which could occur again over the next few years as the effects of the current economic collapse continue to be felt. However, population growth in Okanogan County is projected to pick up, increasing by 12.9 percent by 2015.

Grant County grew at 2.8 percent, twice as fast as the state, and Adams County also experienced a higher than average growth rate at 2.3 percent. The population for the two-county region is now approximately 101,982. The Grant County population is projected to grow by 12.4 percent through 2015. Over the same time period, Adams County is expected to grow at a rate of approximately 11.2 percent.

County	Population 2007	Intermediate Estimate 2010	Intermediate Estimate 2015	Projected Increase 2007-2015	Population of five largest cities and towns (2006)	
Chelan	71,200	75,093	80,031	12.40%	Wenatchee	29,920
					Chelan	3,755
					Cashmere	2,980

					Leavenworth	2,195
					Entiat	1,105
Douglas	36,300	39,222	42,262	16.50%	East Wenatchee	11,420
					Bridgeport	2,075
					Waterville	1,175
					Rock Island	865
					Mansfield	325
Grant	82,500	88,389	92,719	12.40%	Moses Lake	16,830
					Ephrata	6,950
					Quincy	5,395
					Mattawa	3,330
					Warden	2,575
Adams	17,600	18,376	19,568	11.20%	Othello	6,205
					Ritzville	1,730
					Lind	565
					Washtucna	260
					Hatton	105
Okanogan	39,800	42,739	44,923	12.90%	Omak	4,705
					Okanogan	2,485
					Brewster	2,200
					Oroville	1,665
					Tonasket	1,000
Source: Growth Management Act Projections by OFM						

Racial and Ethnic Composition

According to 2006 numbers, individuals that identify as White non-Hispanic represent 68.5 percent of the population in the North Central Washington region. Those identifying as Hispanic (White and non-White) comprise 26.7 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 only 2.4 percent of the populace.

Table B-2: Race and Ethnicity in the North Central WDA					
Race or Ethnicity	2006	2010	Change	% Change	Percent of Population
White, Non-Hispanic	166,732	173,719	6,988	4%	68.58%
White Hispanic	62,201	68,731	6,530	10%	25.58%
Non-White Hispanic	2,704	3,230	526	19%	1.11%
Black or African American	1,168	1,272	104	9%	0.48%
American Indian or Alaska Native	5,881	5,990	109	2%	2.42%
Asian	1,910	2,189	279	15%	0.79%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	245	292	47	19%	0.10%
Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. http://www.economicmodeling.com/					

The large Hispanic population in North Central Washington has implications for employment, education, healthcare, and civic life in the region. Spanish is spoken as the primary language in 14 percent or more of regional households, and estimates project that the Hispanic population could increase by 29 percent in the next few years. Many native Spanish speakers in the region are not proficient in English, which is a major barrier to educational attainment and employment. Additionally, many Hispanic adults living in Central Washington lack even elementary and secondary education, which restricts training access at the college level.

The Aging Population

Washington state’s population of adults aged 65 and older is increasing, as members of the baby boom generation continue to reach retirement age. According to the Office of Financial Management, current gains of 25,000 individuals in this age bracket per year will likely jump to over 40,000 annually in 2012 and remain high through 2028. By 2030, the “elderly” population should reach 1,685,600 and represent one-fifth of the state’s total population.

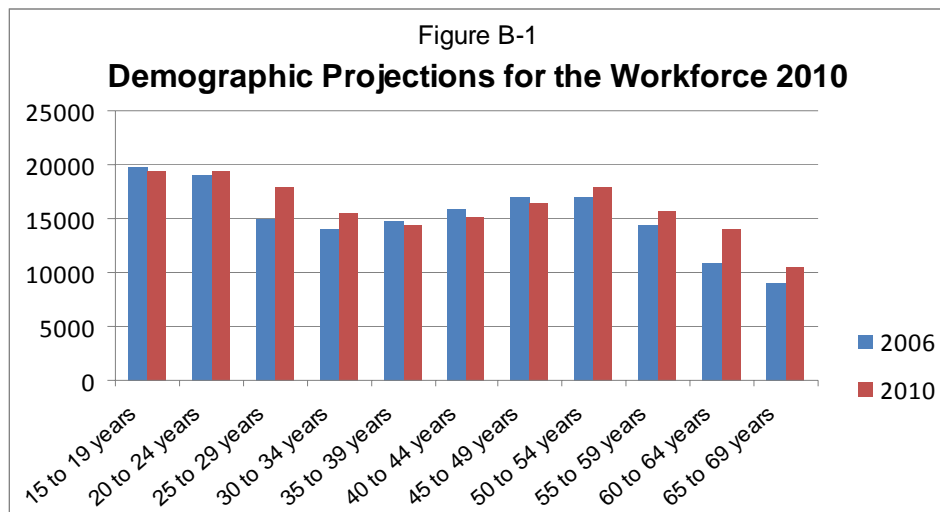
Implications for the workforce are far reaching. Comparing the level of educational attainment between older working adults and the younger adult population, Washington mirrors the nation. Our older population is better educated than our younger population, a trend that is moving the state in the wrong direction.⁶ In the coming years, as baby boomers continue to

⁶ *Washington Learns*, Nov. 2006, p. 11

exit the labor market in large numbers, there will be a shortage of skilled workers able to fill these vacated positions.

The baby boom echo, who are the children of baby boomers, and the largest generation since, are now moving through the education system and entering the workforce. The sheer number of individuals in this age group, born between 1982 and 1995, will cause demand for skills training and postsecondary education to increase. Figure B-1 shows demographic projections by age group for the workforce through 2010. According to the chart, individuals aged 15 to 24 years will make up the largest proportion of the labor market.

Overall, individuals aged 65 and over represent 11.8 percent of the population statewide. In the Chelan-Douglas area, rates are similar to those of the state as a whole (11.3 percent and 12.5 percent respectively). The Grant-Adams area also has rates similar to the state average (11.2 percent). However, the number of individuals aged 65 or older residing in Okanogan County is substantially higher than the state as a whole at 17.1 percent. Census figures indicate that many residents in their prime working years have left Okanogan County while the number of retirees moving into the region has grown. The resident labor force in the county dropped nearly 20 percent between 1999 and 2002 during the last recession.



Education and Literacy

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, 18.5 percent of Chelan County residents older than 24 have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent. In Douglas County, that number is 21.7 percent. Grant County has the highest proportion of individuals over age 24 without a high school degree in the North Central WDA at 27.9 percent. Conversely, Okanogan County has the lowest number at 18 percent. Information for Adams County was unavailable. All counties in

the North Central Workforce Development Area trend significantly higher than the state average of 11.1 percent.

Table B-3: Educational Attainment in North Central WDA, 2007 Estimates							
County	Less than high school	Some high school, no diploma	High school diploma or GED	Some college	AA degree	Bachelor's degree	Post-graduate degree
Chelan	10.10%	8.40%	28.60%	21.60%	9.20%	14.90%	7.20%
Douglas	12.70%	9.00%	27.70%	24.00%	8.80%	12.70%	5.10%
Grant	14.20%	13.70%	29.10%	20.60%	8.80%	9.60%	4.00%
Okanogan	8.00%	10.00%	34.50%	21.50%	8.50%	9.70%	7.70%
State Totals	4.00%	7.10%	25.60%	24.00%	9.30%	19.40%	10.60%
U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2007							

Adult literacy rates for the North Central Workforce Development Area are some of the lowest in the state. According to a 2003 evaluation of literacy levels conducted by the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 15 percent of adults in Chelan County lack basic prose literacy skills. Both Douglas and Okanogan counties had estimated rates of 16 percent, and 22 percent of the adult population in Grant County lack basic reading and writing skills. Adams County adult literacy rates were the second lowest of all 39 counties in Washington, with approximately 32 percent of the population lacking basic abilities. The Washington state average is much lower at only 10 percent.

These numbers illustrate the significance of the skills gap in North Central Washington. In the 2007 Workforce Board survey of *Washington State Employers' Training Needs and Practices*⁷ analysts found an increase in the percentage of employers in the area that said they found it difficult to fill positions due to an insufficient number of applicants with the required educational proficiencies. Table B-3 shows the percentage of hiring employers who found certain skills lacking in the pool of applicants for various positions.

⁷ Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, *Washington State Employers' Training Needs and Practices*, 2006. http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Pubs_Publications.asp

Table B-4: Percentage of Employers in the North Central WDA saying Job Applicants Lack Certain Skills, 2007		
Skill	Percentage of Employers Noting Skills Lacking	Number of Employers
Reading	28%	2,400
Writing	38%	3,200
Math	47%	4,000
Occupation specific	50%	4,300
Computer	39%	3,300
Team work	40%	3,400
Problem solving or critical thinking	45%	3,800
Communication	49%	4,100
Positive work habits and attitudes	54%	4,600
Ability to accept supervision	43%	3,600
Ability to adapt to changes in duties and responsibilities	49%	3,600
English as a Second Language	24%	2,100
Source: Workforce Board, WA State Employers' Training Needs and Practices 2008		

Occupation specific skills were seen as lacking in half of all applicants, and 54 percent were perceived to lack positive work habits. Also of note, 39 percent lack necessary computer skills. However, it is important to note that only 21 percent of the employers that received this survey actually responded. This could mean that the sample is not representative of the entire population of hiring employers during 2007 and percentages might actually be substantially lower or higher than represented in this report.

However, it is still alarming that nearly one-fourth of businesses surveyed in North Central Washington perceive many job seekers to lack the basic skills necessary to obtain employment. Programs that help young people bridge the skills gap are integral to the training of an effective workforce.

The difficulty in finding qualified job applicants was seen as **most severe in**

- construction
- agriculture/food processing industries

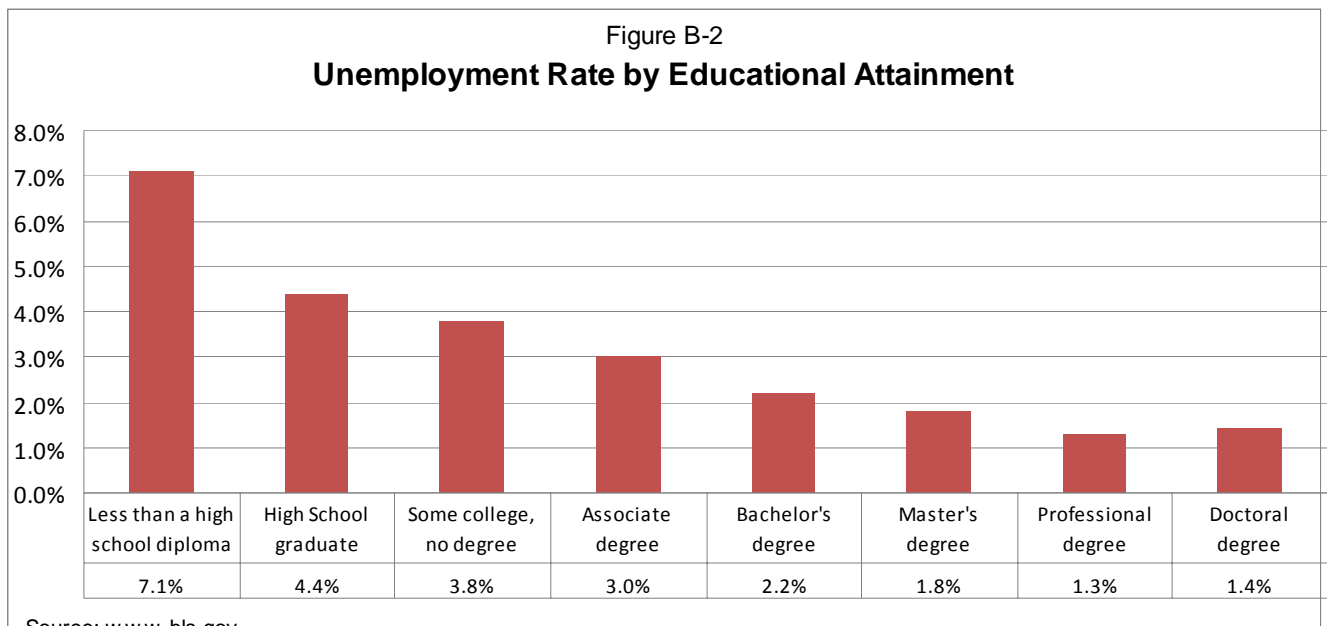
least severe in

- retail
- wholesale trade.

Dropouts

High school dropouts, on average, earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates.⁸ Young people who do not have a high school education are more likely to be involved in criminal activities, participate in public assistance programs, experience unemployment, and receive low wages than those who earn a high school diploma.⁹ Studies show that the lifetime cost to society for each youth who drops out of school and ends up in the criminal justice system is \$1.7 to \$2.3 million.¹⁰

As noted above, high school dropout rates in North Central Washington and the Columbia Basin are significantly higher than the state average. Figure B-2 shows the strong correlation between low educational attainment and unemployment. More than 7 percent of individuals with less than a high school diploma are unemployed. The number of unemployed drops off precipitously with the attainment of a high school degree, and continues to decrease at each level of postsecondary education. In order to stay competitive in the current economy, marked by high unemployment and low levels of hiring, it will be more important than ever for young people to stay in school and learn the basic skills necessary for success in the job market.



⁸ Civic Enterprises & Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspective of High School Dropouts*, March 2006, p. 2

⁹ Russell Rumberger, *Why Students Drop Out of School and What Can Be Done*, (revised 2001).

¹⁰ Howard Snyder and Melissa Sickmun, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*, Pittsburgh, PA Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, U.S. Dept. of Justice
www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/nationalreport99/toc.html

By grouping occupations by the level of education required to perform a job, or the amount of training necessary, it becomes clear that education and training are integrally linked to the amount a person can expect to earn. Table B-5 shows local industries and the mean annual wage a job seeker can anticipate making within that industry. With the exception of nursing, a high-demand, high-wage occupation that requires only a two-year postsecondary degree, the highest wage occupations require a four-year college education. Individuals with less than a high school diploma or GED earn the lowest wages. Many of the occupations that do not require a high school diploma offer pay barely above minimum wage.

Table B-5: North Central WDA Wage Rates by Industry and Proximate Minimum Education Levels		
Industry or Occupation	Mean Annual Wage	Hourly Wage
Less than HS diploma to HS or GED and short training/apprenticeship		
Agriculture (all)	\$23,427	\$11.27
Construction	\$37,015	\$17.80
Retail Trade	\$26,365	\$12.68
Warehousing	\$36,620	\$17.60
Food Prep	\$19,338	\$9.30
Maintenance	\$23,325	\$11.22
Accommodation & Food Services	\$20,279	\$9.75
Farming	\$22,074	\$10.61
Transportation. and Material Moving	\$26,151	\$12.57
HS diploma/GED plus up to 2 year college/apprenticeship		
Office Occupations	\$28,252	\$13.58
Financial Services	\$30,828	\$14.82
Healthcare Support	\$22,073	\$10.91
Manufacturing	\$32,873	\$15.80
Production (Assemblers, CNC operators, Food Batchmakers, Butchers, Steel Fabricators)	\$30,288	\$14.56

2 year degree minimum /apprenticeship		
RN	\$51,522	\$24.77
Information Tech	\$35,920	\$17.27
Wholesale Trade	\$32,494	\$15.62
Sales	\$28,014	\$13.47
Installation & Maintenance	\$38,584	\$18.55
Media	\$32,575	\$15.66
4 year degree or higher		
Community & Social Services	\$36,668	\$17.63
Training & Development Specialists	\$41,881	\$20.13
Human Resources	\$58,775	\$28.26
Management	\$80,402	\$38.66
Computer Programmers	\$48,499	\$23.32
Network Systems and Data Communication Analysts	\$61,863	\$29.74
Source: LMEA, 2008		

Prevention and Retrieval

Two priorities for the North Central Workforce Development Council are dropout prevention and helping those that do to get back on track to earn a diploma or GED. We estimate that as many as 419 to 1,259 students annually do not graduate in the region even after reaching their senior year.

Workforce Investment Act funding is invested, along with Basic Education Allocation funding, to serve at-risk youth. Four Learning Centers in Wenatchee, Moses Lake, Othello, and Omak partner with school districts and provide certified teachers and specialized counselors in alternative learning environments to serve nearly 1,000 students per year. Instructors in these Learning Centers focus on individual students rather than whole classrooms. For over a decade, Learning Centers have helped students with behavior and learning challenges to progress academically, explore career pathways, and learn pre-employment skills. Learning Centers have been effective over the years at reaching at-risk youth in need of educational alternatives.

Alternative high schools are also integral to the retention of students who struggle in traditional high school environments. These programs offer individualized learning in a small school

setting. At WestSide High School in Wenatchee, students can enroll in the Day Program, Night Program, or English as a Second Language Program. Such flexibility is important for students who may have families, hold full-time jobs, or are non-native English speakers. Alternative schools also contract with students so they can earn credits beyond the traditional classroom experience. There are a number of alternative schools in the North Central region, including Omak Alternative High School, the Alternative Educational Experience School, Columbia Basin Alternative High School, and WestSide High School.

Dislocated Workers

A dislocated worker is defined by state law as an individual who has been terminated by an employer, is eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, and is unlikely to return to work in his/her field due to diminished demand for that particular skill set. In the current economic downturn, the number of dislocated workers nation- and state-wide has increased.

In Adams County, 71.1 percent of unemployment insurance claimants were dislocated workers in 2006. Chelan and Douglas counties combined had a dislocation rate of just over 66 percent. Of nearly 3,000 unemployment insurance claimants in Grant County in 2006, 69.5 percent were dislocated. Finally, Okanogan County had the lowest percentage of dislocated workers at 64.1 percent.

Table B-6: Actual Number of Dislocated Workers in the North Central WDA, 2006				
County	UI Claimants	Dislocated Workers	Non-Dislocated Workers	Dislocation Rate (%)
Adams	640	455	185	71.09
Chelan	2,788	1,842	946	66.07
Douglas	1,195	803	392	67.2
Grant	2,928	2,036	892	69.54
Okanogan	1,603	1,027	576	64.07
Total	9,154	6,163	2,991	67.33
Source: LMEA, March 9, 2009				

As discussed in Section A, unemployment is on the rise in North Central Washington. Closure of a number of plants, including Tree Top and Longview Fibre in Chelan County, and Colville Indian Plywood and Veneer in Okanogan County, combined with layoffs throughout the region, have increased the number of dislocated workers drawing benefits and looking for work. Blue collar

laborers are at highest risk of becoming dislocated. They are the group most frequently impacted by mass layoffs in tough economic times, and when technological advances render their jobs obsolete. Compounding the problem is the fact that many do not have transferable skills and must be retrained.

It is often beneficial for dislocated workers in North Central Washington, a number of whom are non-native English speakers, to spend time improving their skills in order to reenter the workforce more quickly. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language classes provided through Wenatchee Valley and Big Bend Community Colleges, have helped a number of dislocated workers gain the knowledge they needed to improve their options within the workforce. After the Longview Fibre plant was closed in 2006, 23 of the 100 workers that lost their jobs went back to school or entered training programs. Computer literacy is becoming increasingly important to employers, and dislocated workers seeking reemployment, as well as individuals looking to transition to higher-wage jobs, should access short workshops and modules that teach those skills.

Incumbent Workers

Rapidly changing technologies and an increasingly competitive economy make it necessary for all workers, even those with jobs, to upgrade skill sets. For those who want to get ahead, education and training are essential. The skills gap continues to persist and many workers are stuck in low-wage jobs because they do not have the education and training necessary to progress to the next level.

Though training for currently employed workers is important, it is often difficult for individuals with full-time jobs to find the time necessary to devote to education. Additionally, resources to support incumbent worker training are limited. A small amount of funding is provided through the state for customized resources, but not enough to meet the needs of incumbent workers. Into the future, it will be increasingly important to develop flexible education and training options for these individuals, including short modular workshops, continuing education classes, and vocational courses online. Partnerships between businesses, academic and technical institutions, and workforce development practitioners are integral to the success of such programs.

Individuals with Disabilities

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's *American Community Survey*, there were a total of 37,552 individuals with a disability in North Central Washington in 2007. Of that number, Grant County has the highest population with 11,834. Many of these individuals are working age adults and represent a segment of the population largely untapped as a labor market resource. Although individuals with disabilities often require specialized training, businesses have been increasingly willing to hire them and provide the instruction necessary to help them be

successful. Adaptive technologies are also making it easier for people with physical disabilities to enter the mainstream labor market.

Table B-7: Number of People with Disabilities, age 5 and over in the North Central WDA					
Chelan	Douglas	Grant	Adams	Okanogan	Total
9,101	6,008	11,834	3,009	7,600	37,552
Source: 2007 Census American Community Survey					

Disadvantaged Adults

North Central Washington continues to experience high levels of poverty. According to U.S. Census data for 2007, 23 percent of Okanogan County residents live below the poverty line. That is more than twice the state average of 11.4 percent. Okanogan ranks seventh in the state for food assistance, third for general assistance, and fourth for medical assistance received. In Adams County, 18.3 percent of the population lives in poverty, and rates for Grant County are only slightly lower at 17.1 percent. Poverty rates for Chelan and Douglas counties are substantially lower and much closer to the state average at 12.6 and 12.8 percent respectively.

Table B-8: County Poverty Levels and Unemployment Rates		
County	Percent Poverty (individuals)	Unemployment Rates (January 2009)
Chelan	12.60%	9.10%
Douglas	12.80%	9.70%
Grant	17.10%	12.30%
Adams	18.30%	12.20%
Okanogan	23.00%	12.20%
Sources: US Census, LMEA, 2008-09		

Families that live in impoverished conditions are eligible to receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). In 2007, 1.6 percent of the Chelan County population received TANF assistance, and 1.2 percent drew benefits in Douglas County. In Okanogan County, 2.1 percent of families were served by the program. Just over 3.3 percent of Grant County families received TANF assistance in 2007, which represents the sixth highest percentage of all counties in

Washington state. However, an even higher proportion of families in Adams County, 3.5 percent, drew benefits, making it the county with the third highest number of TANF recipients for that year.

These numbers indicate that North Central Washington residents experience higher levels of poverty and rely more heavily on public assistance than Washingtonians on average. Many of the working poor find it difficult to earn a livable wage that will support a family and provide means to become self-sufficient. Without training and educational programs to improve skills, most will remain in poverty.

Training Strategies

Bridge training programs¹¹ are designed to prepare individuals without the requisite basic skills for postsecondary education that will lead to career path employment and further learning in a specific industry or occupational sector. Bridge programs are distinguished from traditional job training programs in that they seek to provide a broad foundation for career-long learning both on-the-job and through formal postsecondary education.

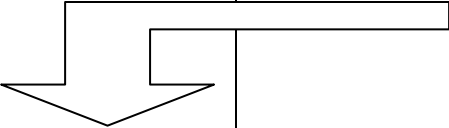
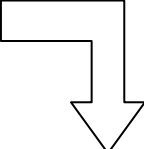
According to research conducted by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, obtaining at least one year of postsecondary education or training plus a credential, constitutes a “tipping point” to success. The report offers recommendations to help people pay for training or the first year of college so they can eventually secure a family-wage job.

In order to depict its key strategies for bridging the path from K-12 to postsecondary education, the WDC has developed a chart that contains a number of retention ideas and linking approaches to set people along career pathways. Please see Figure B-3 below.

Education, workforce, and economic development partners must work together with employers to find ways to help students better prepare for their futures. The challenges of accessing continuing education and training while simultaneously working to support families, makes it difficult for adults to make the investment in skill building to find higher-wage jobs. If they are shown the career opportunities and increased earning potential that an additional year of education makes possible, it becomes more likely that they will take the time to complete at least one year of postsecondary training.

¹¹ Dave Jenkins, Workforce Strategy Center, *Bridge Program Planning Guide*, May 2004

Figure B-3

<p><i>Secondary Education: continually assessing appropriate bridge strategy with the end in mind</i></p>	<p><i>Navigation 101 or similar Models providing Career Information, Exploration, and Individual Pathway Plan</i></p>	 <p>Bridge Strategies</p> <p>Career Pathways</p>	<p>Education and Training</p> <p><i>Skills leading to self-sufficiency and staying power in the labor market</i></p>	<p><i>Destination: Careers, In Demand and skilled workforce</i></p> 	<p>Bridging Strategies for adults:</p> <p><i>Workforce Preparation; Continuing Education; Incumbent Worker Training options</i></p>
<p>High School diploma</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>-AP coursework -Running Start</p>	<p>University/4 year College</p>	<p>Workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>High School diploma</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>-Students select more rigorous high school classes</p>	<p>Community College Transfer Degree goal</p>	<p>Workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>High School diploma</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>-Career and Technical Education -Skill Centers -Tech Prep</p>	<p>Community College Vocational Certificate or Degree</p>	<p>Workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>High School diploma</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>-Career and Technical Education -Skill Centers -Tech Prep</p>	<p>-Workforce -Apprenticeship</p>	<p>Workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>High School diploma</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>-Job Shadowing -Mentoring -Work experience</p>	<p>-Workforce -Job Corps -Apprenticeship -Community College</p>	<p>Workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>High School <u>Incomplete</u></p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>-Learning Centers in partnership with school districts -Community College HS completion for Diploma or GED</p>	<p>-Workforce -On-the-Job Training -Job Corps -Apprenticeship -Community College</p>	<p>Workforce</p>	<p>✓</p>

Implications for North Central Washington

The changing needs of the regional workforce have implications for educational institutions, training organizations, and workforce development program operators in North Central Washington. Increasingly, jobs that pay more than subsistence wages and offer opportunities for career advancement require at least some training beyond high school, even at the entry level. The continued transition to a knowledge-based economy necessitates that workers not only master basic skills, but adapt to new technologies, and possess positive work habits. Current economic conditions will make education and skills training in the region more important than ever.

Section C: The Local Workforce Development System

North Central Workforce Development Council

Most of the members comprising the North Central Workforce Development Council are private business leaders from Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams, and Okanogan counties. The remaining 25 members represent labor organizations, state agencies, community colleges, secondary schools, and economic development and community-based organizations. Members are appointed by county commissioners and approved to the post by the Governor. The Council meets quarterly in February, May, August, and November and also holds a planning retreat in odd numbered years. Advisory Committees meet in each of the three labor market areas at least four times each year before quarterly WDC board meetings.

According to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and continuing state Executive Order 99-02, the Workforce Development Council must:

- Provide input to the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) regarding development of the state unified plan.
- Develop and maintain a local unified plan for the workforce development system, including but not limited to the local WIA Title 1-B and Wagner-Peyser Plans required by law. The Council must also submit the local plan to the Workforce Board and Governor for approval.
- Conduct oversight of the local one-stop system, including selection, certification, and de-certification of one-stop operators and providers. The Council must also provide for a coordinated and responsive system of outreach to employers.
- Identify eligible service providers using performance standards established by the Workforce Board.
- Develop a local budget with the fiscal agent (SkillSource) for approval by the Local Elected Officials (LEOs) and the Workforce Board.
- Identify business, adult worker, and youth needs and conduct oversight of local programs serving these customers.
- Negotiate with LEOs and the Workforce Board to develop performance measures for local programs.
- Assist the state in developing employment statistics.
- Promote coordination of workforce development activities at the local level and ensure that they are linked with employers and local economic development strategies.
- Promote the participation of private sector employers in the statewide workforce system by connecting, brokering, and coaching activities and connecting them through intermediaries such as the one-stop operator.
- Establish youth councils responsible for developing portions of the local plan relating to eligible youth, as well as implement and administer youth programs.
- Implement memorandums of understanding (MOUs) among partner agencies.
- Assess the planning process to identify quality improvements.
- Collaborate in the development of WorkFirst Local Area Plans.

In addition to the assigned federal and state duties, the North Central WDC also serves as the board of SkillSource, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and the fiscal agent for WIA funds allotted to the region.

The North Central Workforce Development Council is located at 234 N. Mission Street, Wenatchee, WA 98807. The organization can be reached at (509) 663-3091, or by fax at (509) 667-1562. The Executive Director of the North Central WDA is Dave Petersen, who can be reached via email at dave@skillsource.org.

WorkSource

WorkSource is Washington state's brand for the coordinated menu of employment and training programs available to serve the various needs of regional businesses and job seekers. Local One Stop Centers, WorkSource Affiliate offices, and all partners to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) provide at minimum a no-wrong-door approach to services not limited to the following:

Business Services:

- Computer job-matching
- Electronic job postings and resume banks
- Help with recruitment and layoffs
- Assistance arranging customized training
- Information on business, industry, and economic trends
- Workplace consultations

Job Seeker Services:

- Free use of computers, copiers, phones, and faxes for job searches
- Internet access
- Job referral and placement
- Classes on how to get and keep a job
- Information on the fastest growing jobs and wages
- Referral to training and other community services
- Access to Unemployment Insurance
- Translation services

The official website for WorkSource is www.go2WorkSource.com, and the official Employment Security site for state and regional labor market statistics is www.workforceexplorer.com.

One Stop Comprehensive Centers: WorkSource Okanogan & WorkSource Central Basin

WorkSource Okanogan and WorkSource Central Basin are the certified full-service one stop career centers for Region 8. WorkSource Central Basin opened in the spring of 2007 to serve the needs of Grant, Adams, and Lincoln counties. The facility houses SkillSource, the

WorkSource Moses Lake Affiliate, and the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).

One Stop Centers:

- provide all core services (i.e., universal services not requiring eligibility);
- provide all required services;
- serve as a “broker” for services not available on site such as certain training or support services;
- provide referrals for services outside the WorkSource one stop system;
- coordinate services for customers; and
- provide electronic linkages including the internet.

Core Services provided on site or via electronic linkages include:

- Initial assessment to evaluate job readiness based on indications of work readiness, job skills, experience, aptitudes, interests, and abilities;
- Information to help customers determine what services are available;
- Posting resumes, job referral, and placement including access to available jobs for which the job seeker meets the minimum qualifications;
- Labor market information including occupations *in demand* and those *in decline*, as well as wage information;
- Employer services including labor market information, job posting, recruitment, testing, limited screening, and referral of applicants;
- Information and referral to community services such as housing, food, and medical assistance;
- Information about intensive and training services including counseling, services for persons with disabilities, basic skills, literacy, occupational skills training, apprenticeships, and program performance;
- Rapid Response services for business closures or mass layoffs;
- Access to TTY or language translation services for job search purposes (and subject to local policies), access to a copy machine, fax machine, telephone (for unemployment insurance needs), personal computers, printers, and the internet.

Programs accessible through One Stop Centers requiring eligibility are:

- WIA Title 1-B (adult, dislocated worker, youth)
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Title V of the Older American Act
- Veterans Employment Programs
- Claimant Placement Program
- Worker Retraining
- Training Benefits
- Adult Basic Education
- ESL Programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Services
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

- WorkFirst

One Stop Affiliate Centers:

- Provide all required core services either through staff, via referral, or through electronic linkage;
- Provide at least one required program;
- Provide all self-service and some group activities at the One Stop;
- Provide information and access to WorkSource services offered elsewhere in the system;
- Provide referrals for services not provided through the WorkSource system.

The following are partner organizations within the North Central Washington region:

Chelan-Douglas

- SkillSource Wenatchee
- WorkSource Wenatchee
- Wenatchee Valley College
- Department of Social and Health Services Wenatchee CSO
- Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington
- Chelan Douglas Community Action Council
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Grant-Adams

- WorkSource Central Basin Career Development Center
- Big Bend Community College
- Department of Social and Health Services Moses Lake CSO
- Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington
- Columbia Basin Job Corps Center
- North Columbia Community Action Council
- Grant Mental Healthcare
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Okanogan

- WorkSource Okanogan Career Development Center
- Employment Security Department (operator)
- Wenatchee Valley College
- Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Social and Health Services Okanogan CSO
- Okanogan County Community Action Council

The core services provided by these organizations and agreed to in MOUs are:

- Eligibility determination, WIA Title 1-B
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the one stop system

- Initial assessment
- Job search/job placement
- Labor market information
- Training provider performance information
- One Stop information
- Information on support services and referrals
- Information on filing for unemployment insurance
- WorkFirst eligibility information
- Financial Aid information
- Follow up services and referral

Program Coordination

Partners to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agree to:

1. Promote further integration of programs through joint planning;
2. Coordinate resources and programs and to promote a more streamlined and efficient workforce development system;
3. Promote information sharing and the coordination of activities to improve the performance of local partners;
4. Common release of information processes subject to confidentiality provisions and to preserve records for the period required by law;
5. Identify and address barriers to coordination;
6. Promote the development and implementation of a system of measuring and reporting partner workforce activity performance;
7. Promote the consistent use of SKIES and other common data systems to track progress and measure performance.
8. Comply with the federal Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-228) if services must be rationed.

The WDC and Youth Council will continue to provide direct program oversight for the youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs under The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title 1-B. The Council will provide non-managerial oversight of the one stop system in the local area.

Program Coordination Special Focuses

There are four subject areas, employer linkages and innovation, veteran priority, non-discrimination, and customers with disabilities, that are important for us to bear in mind as we review overall service delivery and move ahead into individual WorkSource programs.

Employer Linkages - The WDC and One Stop partner programs will continue to pursue opportunities to collaborate with other organizations to serve businesses, job seekers, and at-risk youth. In addition, the WDC will direct utilization of workforce development funding to broaden economic development strategies whenever possible while ensuring that priority of services to disadvantaged populations is maintained. SkillSource participates with the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce to deliver quarterly lunch seminars on general workforce

topics such as employee training. Annual career fairs bring participants and employers together with the help of area chambers, colleges, Job Corps, SkillSource, and many other organizations. Activities like these build employer awareness, program camaraderie, and public interest.

Incumbent worker training grants are directed by the WDC to critical industry sectors. In 2006, the WDC responded to a training request from the Healthcare Skills Panel. The local Healthcare Panel identified a critical need for the training of perioperative nurses to address shortages in staffing Wenatchee's 19 surgical suites at Wenatchee Valley Medical Center and Central Washington Hospital. The WDC contracted with Wenatchee Valley College to administer perioperative skills standards training programs and successfully improved the skills of seven hospital RNs to fill surgical assistant positions.

Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-228 and State WIA 1-B Policy 3641) - The Jobs for Veterans Act enacted in 2002 made priority of service to veterans within Department of Labor funded employment and training programs delivered through the one stop system. The law does not override eligibility requirements within various programs, however, veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service if they otherwise meet program eligibility requirements.

SkillSource complies with the Jobs for Veterans Act and has a local policy describing how priority of service to veterans is applied. Since SkillSource does not ration core or intensive services, the rights of veterans to receive priority of service for training programs¹² is guided by the priority of service clause under WIA Title 1-B programs. Veterans who are on public assistance receive the highest priority among public assistance recipients for the adult program. Additionally, veterans who are low-income receive priority within that group for consideration as eligible participants. Veterans who are neither on public assistance nor low-income, receive priority over all other adults. In the dislocated worker program, veterans receive priority of service over all other dislocated workers, and those applying through the WIA 10 percent special training projects for incumbent workers receive priority over all other incumbent workers. Completed existing training contracts are unaffected by veterans priority,¹³ but new training contracts for veterans are advanced to the top of wait lists for immediate processing.

WIA Section 188 Non-discrimination - All contracts for WDC services contain assurances against illegal discrimination. Official flyers, brochures, requests for proposals (RFPs), or other publications intended for customers, must carry the disclaimer: *[WIA provider organization] is an equal opportunity employer and provider of employment and training services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.*

People with Disabilities - The three WorkSource offices have each had a disability access review with the Washington Disability Network. Both physical and programmatic changes were studied

¹² WIA formula funded training services are Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), on-the-job training (OJT), and customized employer training (CET).

¹³ In the event that training funds are entirely obligated, existing contracts will not be canceled in an effort to free up funding for veterans.

and implemented by the Disabled Customers Accessibility Partnership (DCAP). DCAP was a partnership of stakeholders for persons with disabilities, including the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), charged with responding to the local disability access review, connecting with IDEA, the school transition program for students with disabilities, studying the results of a survey, and conducting a focus group of disabled WorkSource customers and potential customers.

Improvements, which included the addition of resource room computer workstations designed to help individuals with low vision or limited movement, were made to make education and training more accessible for people with disabilities. Staff resource guides were written, staff training was conducted, and processes were put in place to improve service for people with various disabilities. We now hope to increase the number of people with disabilities who access One Stop services. SkillSource received funding to contract for a system-wide disability navigator through June 30, 2006. The disability navigator facilitated 17 staff trainings across the region and focused on increasing staff understanding of disabilities to improve core and intensive services.

A navigator sustainability strategy was developed in order to transition to a system of Disability Action Teams (DATs). DATs are groups designated in each labor market, with a supervisor from each One Stop partner that share information on disability services in order to stay current with best practices and new technologies to improve service delivery. DAT members return to their own organizations to serve as resources within their offices on ways to improve access for people with disabilities. The teams are charged by the One Stop Steering Committee to meet monthly and report to the Committee on progress as requested.

Programs for Adults in Transition

Adults who are unemployed or under-employed are considered adults in transition. Transitioning adults have opportunities to receive job referral assistance and help in developing job attainment skills through basic skills training or vocational programs provided through community colleges, other eligible training providers, or Learning Centers. Various programs address educational and training needs, moving customers toward self-sufficiency and helping those currently employed to identify opportunities to advance. Courses are developed in response to particular customer and labor market demands. Programs also support vocational training in order to develop workers with the skills needed in the current economy. The five-county region has a number of programs that address the needs of the transitional workforce.

WorkFirst

WorkFirst helps impoverished families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) find jobs, keep jobs, and get better jobs. Services include comprehensive assessment, job search skills (applications, resume writing, interviewing, etc.), job retention strategies, and wage progression assistance. Participants are served by a variety of agencies, both governmental and community-based organizations and colleges.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Employment Security Department work together with their Local Planning Areas (LPAs) to provide WorkFirst services to help TANF recipients. Community colleges, Tribes, schools, and other agencies all have an important role in bringing knowledge and resources to the table to help parents receiving TANF become self-sufficient. LPAs are led by Employment Security in Chelan and Douglas counties, and by DSHS in Grant, Adams, and Okanogan counties. An annual plan guides the partnership.

TANF caseloads have been reduced dramatically since 1997, due in large part to WorkFirst programs. The Working Connections Childcare program provides no cost, or low-cost child care for low-income workers, and more effective support enforcement collections have been emphasized under WorkFirst reform. Parents who have special barriers to employment may qualify for the Community Jobs (CJ) program. The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development administers CJ, which temporarily places workers in public or non-profit agencies to build worker confidence and teach work readiness skills. Work readiness training prepares WorkFirst participants for success once they obtain unsubsidized employment.

When participants secure employment, they are encouraged to enter continuing education and training programs. WorkFirst education and training programs are block-granted by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges to 34 community colleges and private colleges across the state. Class offerings include English as a Second Language (ESL), basic skills education, and 8 to 22 week Customized Jobs Skills Training (CJST) courses combining basic education and vocational skills training. In some cases, colleges may also offer training for up to one year leading to an occupational certificate and preparing participants for higher-wage jobs. State and national evaluations of WorkFirst education and training services indicate that “ultimately, completing longer certificate and degree programs added the most value.”¹⁴ Tuition assistance for standard programs of study and work study positions may also be available.

The Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program

When the last mill in Chelan County closed in the mountain hamlet of Winton on December 12, 2006, 102 laid off workers qualified for re-employment, relocation, or retraining services through the Dislocated Worker Program. The Rapid Response team placed 17 of them in college programs at the start of the new semester.

Dislocated worker services assist workers in the preparation of retraining plans and budgets for extended unemployment compensation. Staff members guide participants through the maze of financial aid resources.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

¹⁴ *WorkFirst 4th Year Accountability Report for WorkFirst Training Programs*; January 2004; Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, p. 4a.

TAA services apply to dislocated workers whose company has been impacted negatively by the proliferation of foreign imports, or when production is moved offshore. Secondary firms impacted by downstream effects may also be eligible. Workers, their union or company, the One Stop operator, or the State Dislocated Worker Unit may apply to the Department of Labor for TAA certification.

TAA provides education, training, income support (if training is away from home and the displaced worker must maintain their home), job placement assistance, and relocation assistance when necessary. Strict time limits apply for using TAA benefits, so certified workers are advised to seek TAA counselor assistance as soon as possible after being laid off. Once certified, displaced workers are eligible for services and benefits to help them prepare for and re-enter the job market.

Once unemployment benefits run out, dislocated workers who are participating in remedial education courses, training, or are searching for a job can apply for Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRAs) to extend support payments.

Worker Retraining

The Worker Retraining Program is a Washington state vocational education and employment program providing tuition and fee assistance, help purchasing books, and support services to dislocated or unemployed workers training for in-demand occupations. Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) and Big Bend Community College (BBCC) serve eligible unemployed and dislocated workers through Worker Retraining. This modest program serves between 2 and 3 percent of new students at the college. Started in 1993, Worker Retraining has consistently yielded a good return for state dollars spent. A study of Worker Retraining concluded that participants have generally recovered between 86 and 114 percent of their prior wages.¹⁵

Figure C-1: High- and Low-Wage Community College Programs in North Central Washington	
Higher-Wage Programs	Lower-Wage Programs
Air Frame/Power Plant	Administrative Support
Nursing	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries
Computer Maintenance Technician	Culinary Arts
Drafting	Early Childhood Education
Electrical Equipment Repair	Marketing and Sales

¹⁵ *Worker Retraining: Seventh Accountability Report*, May 2003; State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, p. 15

Electronics Technology	Nursing Assistant
Engineering Technology	Social Services
Industrial Technology	Veterinarian Assistant
Information Technology	
Legal Assistant	
Medical Lab Technician	
Radiologic Technician	
Other Health Technician	
Welding	
Source: Wenatchee Valley College & Big Bend Community College 2008	

Veterans Programs

Programs are available through WorkSource to help veterans and eligible families navigate employment and training opportunities. Local Veterans' Employment Program representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program representatives provide counseling and referrals to services such as the Army Navy Relief Fund and Veteran Health Services, and provide access to Department of Veterans Affairs programs. Newly discharged veterans receive help in making the transition from the military to the civilian workforce. Counselors for the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program provide a number of services including assistance in filling out veteran benefits applications. Veterans will continue to receive priority of service in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

The Workforce Investment Act Adult Program

The Adult Program is staffed by SkillSource personnel in Moses Lake and Wenatchee, and by Employment Security in Omak. Low-income adults receive priority for pre-employment and training services through this program, which provides services ranging from workshops in skills assessment and computer applications, to Individual Training Accounts (ITA) that help participants pay for vocational training. Adults who are eligible may also receive on-the-job training with an employer who contracts with the administering agencies. These businesses then train and may eventually hire the individual. In 2006, to increase the potential reach of Workforce Investment Act benefits, the WDC expanded income eligibility to enable more low- or near low-income workers to qualify for skills training funded by the Adult Program.

General Employment Services and Programs for Individuals with Disabilities

Services for people with disabilities are available to both youth and adults with disabilities. Public school systems 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 North Central Washington Technical Skills Center has programs for disabled individuals that focus on vocational training and community experience. Workforce development programs for young people with disabilities are almost entirely focused around public schools. One Stop Disability Action Team (DAT) members have provided resources to local groups to help them better transition disabled youth to postsecondary education, training, or employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation for Adults with Disabilities

Vocational Rehabilitation is also available throughout the region. Disabled individuals have an advocate in the WorkSource system and in its many partner organizations. In North Central Washington, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), and WorkSource partners have varying levels of expertise and resources to serve the needs of adults with a wide variety of disabilities. WorkSource offices are equipped with accessible computer workstations that can provide people with disabilities access to the internet and software programs.

The *Ticket-to-Work* program encourages employment networks to place job seekers who are receiving Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. A Disability Program Navigator (DPN) position was funded for 2005-2006 to organize Disability Action Teams (DAT) to carry out efforts that would increase access for people with disabilities to employment and training services for people with disabilities across all employment programs. The DATs work to improve staff understanding of effective ways to serve people with disabilities and build WorkSource's systemic capacity to provide universal access to services.

The Washington Farmworker Investment Program

The Washington Farmworker Investment Program, administered by the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), educates and trains agricultural workers. English as a Second Language courses, basic skills, and vocational training are provided to individuals working in jobs subject to seasonal unemployment and low wages. OIC maintains an office in Moses Lake, co-located with SkillSource.

Adult Education and Literacy, including English Language Learner Programs

Adult education and literacy programs are integral to the large immigrant community within the region. Illiteracy is often an enormous barrier to skills training. Community college programs assist English language learners (ELL) who often have had little formal education, even in their native language. Many need years of instruction before they are able to learn enough English to earn a GED. Wenatchee Valley and Big Bend Community Colleges provide a variety of ESL classes at times and locations that are convenient for both employed and unemployed workers needing ESL and vocational skills training. We acknowledge the excellent collaborations that are taking place to serve those with low literacy skills. One particularly important project was the collaboration between Big Bend Community College, SkillSource, the Teamsters, and OIC that assisted workers affected by the mass layoff at Simplot in Quincy. A

multi-year commitment to providing ESL, re-employment, pre-employment, and I-BEST training to workers has helped up to 60 ELL workers affected by the Simplot layoffs.

Postsecondary Career and Technical Education

Postsecondary training is important for workers, both adult and youth, in the region. The Tech Prep program is operated by two consortiums of participating school districts aligned with Wenatchee Valley College and Big Bend Community College. Tech prep consortiums are encouraged to participate in the broader workforce development system. There is a growing awareness throughout the region that collaboration between these school consortiums and workforce development practitioners would help to align services. A number of activities, including annual school conferences highlighting high-demand careers, non-traditional career days for girls and women, the *Destination Healthcare* program developed by area community colleges and Washington Business Week, and Wenatchee Valley College's invitation to the WDC to regularly participate in Tech Prep meetings, have brought educational institutions, the workforce, and interested business partners together. By developing these links further, a more seamless service network will be created.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCSEP serves workers aged 55 and over in the North Central region. Individuals in this age bracket who meet income guidelines may receive employment and training assistance from the SCSEP program. The program has changed in the past few years to emphasize attainment of unsubsidized employment for seniors who need to acquire new skills to continue working and supporting themselves. Service providers have changed fairly regularly both nationally and throughout the region. Currently, AARP and SkillSource are under contract to recruit eligible seniors for the program. AARP SCSEP program representatives are co-located in the Wenatchee and Moses Lake WorkSource Affiliate offices. SkillSource, in combination with DSHS, which administers the state's SCSEP program, manages openings for eight program participants.

Programs for Youth in Transition

All youth need support as they move through adolescence to adulthood. Vulnerable youth face transitions made particularly challenging by stressful life events, emotional trauma, poverty, homelessness, discrimination, running away from home, emancipation, experience in the foster care or juvenile justice system as well as a number of other difficult circumstances. A growing body of knowledge indicates that these youth need community-wide webs of support to make these transitions to adulthood successfully. There are a number of programs in Washington state that help young people make these transitions.¹⁶

Job Corps

Job Corps is a free education and training program that helps young people learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED, and secure a good job. The Columbia Basin Job Corps Center is located adjacent to Big Bend Community College. This proximity facilitates communication

¹⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures: <http://www.ncsl.org/>

between the two organizations. The Job Corps office is becoming a magnet center for individuals looking to start careers in healthcare. Many young people who participate in the Job Corps program are from outside the area and are hoping to learn skills that are in-demand within their own communities. Healthcare workers are in high demand across the state. Big Bend has explored partnerships between its Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) program and Job Corps, and SkillSource hopes to see even more of their Learning Center youth make the positive transition into Job Corps.

The AmeriCorps Program

AmeriCorps has served the region well in past years. Both WorkSource Okanogan and WorkSource Wenatchee have requested and obtained several AmeriCorps workers over the years and will likely continue to do so. With staff resources dwindling, the classroom assistance provided by AmeriCorps workers has been integral throughout the area.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship provides an excellent combination of structured classroom and on-the-job training for a variety of occupations, yet programs often have too few local applicants. Statewide, there are numerous apprenticeship programs available for job trainees. The most competitive are those in the construction trades and with public utilities.

Apprentices are paid for their labor while receiving training and work experience in a supervised setting. Most trades-related apprenticeships require between 4,000 and 8,000 hours of paid on-the-job training, and many apprentices start out earning approximately 40 percent of journeymen wages. A certain amount of unpaid classroom vocational preparation is also required through most apprenticeship programs. The more time an apprentice spends training and improving skill competencies, the more that individual can expect to earn on the road to becoming a journeyman.

A recent state report indicates that apprenticeship programs, while underutilized, are highly successful in terms of placement and wage progression. WorkSource Centers post bulletins that advertise apprenticeship openings, and information is also available from the regional Labor and Industries apprenticeship coordinator based in Moses Lake. Since 75 percent of students will never attend a university or four-year college, it makes sense to encourage more young people to build a resume, even in high school, that will make them competitive in apprenticeship programs.

The Workforce Investment Act Youth Program

The Youth Program primarily serves impoverished youth who have dropped out of high school or alternative school. SkillSource and school districts have worked together over the past decade to establish Learning Centers throughout the region, which include the Omak Learning Center operated by WorkSource Okanogan in Omak, SkillSource Learning Center in Wenatchee, SkillSource Learning Center in Moses Lake, and the Othello Learning Center in Othello.

The Centers, staffed with certified teachers and training counselors, teach and guide about 1,000 at-risk youth annually. The emphasis of Learning Center programs is on helping students to achieve literacy and numeracy gains, helping youth with few high school credits to earn a GED or high school diploma, and teaching pre-employment skills. The Learning Centers have achieved amazing results with students that face great challenges. However, too few students transition to postsecondary education, training, and/or employment after participating in Learning Center programs. While some do go on to secure employment, too many earn their GED and continue to struggle. It is important for schools and Learning Centers to work on transition planning so fewer youth drift through their late teens and twenties.

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 adventure-based learning experiences to help them 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. The Challenge Program primarily focuses on education and life skills development.

The 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program builds on the adventure model, connecting at-risk youth with the natural environment and teaching them life skills. Participating youth are given “on the job” training for work opportunities in natural resource management related to safety procedures, tool use, and protocols of various governmental agencies. The U.S. Forest Service gives participants in this program special consideration for the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP), since they have already learned core skills. In 2008, the Washington State University Extension 4-H Eco-Stewardship Program was named a 4-H Program of Distinction in Natural Resource Education.

The WSU Extension also coordinates the 4-H Mobile Technology Program and 4-H Science, Engineering, and Technology Program. The Mobile Technology Program brings diverse educational opportunities to limited access areas, using the Mobile Technology Van and the Mobile Technology Lab. The van houses 15 laptops and a satellite dish that provides internet connectivity to the computers, which can be rolled into classrooms. The lab consists of a set of 15 computers stored in portable cases that can be set up in minutes.

The Science, Engineering, and Technology Program provides youth with hands-on learning experiences that foster exploration, discovery, and passion for the sciences.

Employer-sponsored Training

Employer-sponsored training comes in all different forms, from formal education programs, to informal peer-to-peer support. However, one thing is certain; investment in training, whether

career, technical, or management development, gives employers and employees a leg up in a competitive marketplace.

As expected during the economic recession, the U.S. corporate training market shrunk from \$58.5 billion in 2007 to \$56.2 billion in 2008, the greatest decline in more than 10 years, as businesses have been forced to tighten their belts. However, spending is still higher than in 2006 when \$55.8 billion was spent on training. Average training expenditures per employee (which include training budgets and payroll) fell 11 percent over the past year, from \$1,202 per learner in 2007 to \$1,075 per learner in 2008. Staff resources also took a hit. In 2008, large companies employed 3.4 training staffers per 1,000 learners, down from 5.1 per 1,000 in 2007; mid-sized companies employed 4.9 staffers per 1,000 learners in 2008, compared to 7.0 staffers per 1,000 in 2007.¹⁷ Less training is now being delivered, and by different methods. The rise of online training has come to a halt, as organizations switch to on-the-job training and less costly methods. Program spending allocations also have changed, with the priorities now on mandatory and job-specific training.

According to a new study, the opportunity for growth and advancement within an organization is one of the three key elements driving employee engagement and productivity. Sixty-five percent of respondents to a survey conducted as part of the study answered that “the quality of training and learning opportunities” positively influenced employee engagement to a high or very high extent.¹⁸ This question elicited the strongest response of the entire survey. Suggestions for providing growth and advancement opportunities for employees include:

- Offering mentoring opportunities for all employees.
- Pushing employees out of their comfort zones, allowing them to explore new roles and duties to keep them interested and challenged.
- Offering short-term job assignments or limited-run project assignments where employees have an opportunity to explore new responsibilities for a period of time.
- Providing training for engagement building skills, and including these skills as part of managers’ development plans.
- Involving employees in designing their own career plans.¹⁹

Both employees and employers benefit from training. Employees learn skills that can lead to higher wages and increased responsibility, and employers who invest in training retain workers at a higher level than those who don’t. By offering training programs, employers show their employees that they are valuable, which makes them more likely to stay with the company. In the North Central Workforce Development Area, organizations use a variety of training techniques to improve the skills of employees and other community members.

Formal Training

¹⁷ *2008 Industry Report*, Training Magazine, 2008, p. 5

¹⁸ *Learning’s Role in Employee Engagement*, American Society for Training & Development, 2008, p. 13

¹⁹ *ibid*

Formal training generally follows a designed form. Programs outline a set of competencies that trainees are intended to learn, and training activities are designed to help individuals master those skills. At the end of the training period, there is generally an evaluation to assess whether or not trainees have attained the desired abilities. Formal training can include classes, seminars, conferences, workshops, and internships. Throughout the area, there are a number of companies that make formal training options available to employees.

Stemilt Growers, one of the major fruit warehouses in North Central Washington, is currently partnering with the Wenatchee Valley Literacy Council to provide on-the-job English language training to employees who do not have the time necessary to complete language courses outside of work. Classes are taught by the Literacy Council and are offered twice a week for 90 minutes per session. According to Courtney Mathison, director of corporate social responsibility for Stemilt, a number of these workers would be promoted if they had the English language skills necessary to take the next step. The program is free to employees.²⁰

Wenatchee Valley Medical Center and **Central Washington Hospital** both offer training programs for employees. The Medical Center's "Clinic U" extends training for nurses and medical assistants by eight weeks. The program has been very successful and nearly 40 nurses and medical assistants, out of a total 150, have completed the training.²¹ The program may soon be expanded to include newly-hired receptionists as well.

Central Washington Hospital's Education Services Department provides education opportunities to employees, physicians, students, and the general community. A variety of courses are offered to help individuals develop competencies necessary within the healthcare field. These classes range in price and duration. Some are free, while certain advanced clinical courses may cost up to \$300.

The **YWCA** in Wenatchee has turned the lower level of its building into a café that will be used to provide on-the-job training to women living in the organization's transitional housing facility and who, for various reasons, lack the skills and training necessary to survive in the workplace. The restaurant will also serve as a source of revenue for the YWCA, taking the place of certain fundraising events.²²

Informal Training

Walk through the halls of any office and you will likely encounter informal training in one of its many forms. Two coworkers standing around the water cooler, discussing a new technology, or a senior staff member who takes it upon him or herself to mentor a new hire, are just two examples of "incidental" skill building. Mentoring, discussions, debates, verbal and written communication, peer-to-peer conversations, even reading books, can all be considered types of informal training.

²⁰ "On-the-job Language Training," *Wenatchee World*, March 10, 2009

²¹ "WVMC extends training for nurses, medical assistants," *Wenatchee World*, April 13, 2009

²² "Our World: A big effort for a small café," *Wenatchee World*, April 10, 2009

These methods lack the explicit training goals and evaluation criteria of formal training, but are just as important. In fact, the two forms of skill building are often interconnected. According to a case study analyzing the interplay between these two types of training among low-skilled workers, formal training often sparks employee interest in a subject, motivating them to explore the topic further. Conversely, an issue that comes up informally within a workplace may lead to the recognition of a need for formal skill building. Informal training generally leads to higher employee productivity over time, and workers with lower pre-training proficiency levels benefit the most from such interactions.²³

A Focus on Youth

An effective strategy for developing a well-trained workforce must focus heavily on youth. Well articulated programs between high schools, colleges, and technical programs are necessary, as are classes that help students map out an appropriate career pathway. It will be important to effectively market these opportunities to youth and their parents and support instructors by providing the equipment and resources they need to best serve their students. Vocational career fairs and in-service days for teachers and college instructors should operate together, rather than as separate systems. Integration would build cooperation and serve to unify secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs.

Partnerships between high schools, the North Central Technical Skills Center, and community colleges, must remain strong. These connections can be revitalized in a number of ways. College instructors should be invited to high schools regularly in order to share postsecondary opportunities with students and faculty. Additionally, high school vocational teachers should spend time observing instructors within vocational programs at community colleges, so educators can pass information about postsecondary training to students. Finally, regular joint meetings between high school teachers and college instructors of vocational programs should be held so curriculum can be better aligned and students better served.

Education Partners

K-12 – According to Governor Christine Gregoire’s *Washington Learns* report, the state must educate more people to achieve higher levels if Washington is to remain competitive in the global economy. According to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, if current trends hold, only two out of ten students entering kindergarten in 2001 will go on to earn at least a two-year college degree.²⁴ In order to reverse the trend, Governor Gregoire, through the creation of the Department of Early Learning and the Thrive by Five public-private partnership, has focused heavily on preparing the state’s youngest learners for success in school before they reach kindergarten.

²³Xiangmin Liu and Rosemary Batt. "The Economic Pay-Offs to Informal Training: Evidence from Routine Service Work" *Industrial & Labor Relations Review* 61.1 (2007).

²⁴ Elementary and Secondary Education Act presentation Jan. 22-23, 2002 by OSPI

However, currently in Washington:

- Less than 50 percent of children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Only 74 percent of ninth graders graduate from high school with their peers.
- Only 60 percent of black and Hispanic students graduate from high school with their peers.
- We have been importing educated workers from other states and nations to fill our best jobs, leaving the less stable and lower paying jobs for people educated in Washington.
- One-third of the adult population has only a high school diploma or less.
- The younger working age population is less educated than their older counterparts.
- Nearly one-quarter of employers report difficulty finding qualified job applicants with occupation-specific skills.²⁵

By 2012, Employment Security estimates that 42 percent of job openings in Washington state will require at least one year of college.²⁶ Observers of economic trends agree that to meet the demand for employees with higher skill levels, we must provide all K-12 students with a solid foundation in basic education and enhance career pathways.

Goals of the Washington Learns Steering Committee are to:

- Fully integrate our early learning, K–12 and postsecondary education systems so that the transition from one step to the next is seamless.
- Ensure all children thrive early in life and are prepared to enter school.
- Ensure all students master the skills they need to participate thoughtfully and productively in their work and their communities.
- Close the achievement gap that academically sidelines low-income and minority students.
- Make higher education and workforce training opportunities relevant and affordable so our workforce can compete within a global economy.

Table C-1: North Central K-12 Enrollments, 2008-09		
County	No. of Districts	Average FTE Enrollment
Chelan-Douglas	13	19,733
Grant-Adams	15	22,430
Okanogan	8	6,408

²⁵ *Washington Learns*, p. 5, Nov. 2006

²⁶ Employment Security Department as reported in *HSHW 2004*, p.8

Total	36	48,571
Source: Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, County-level Enrollment Data, 2008-09		

Sixteen of the school districts in North Central Washington are meeting the state’s 73 percent on-time graduation target, and nine are making progress toward that goal. However, nearly one in three high school students will not graduate with their class, and only four percent of those students will graduate by age 21.

The safety nets for dropouts in the North Central WDA are local SkillSource Learning Centers and Alternative High Schools. Four Centers and a number of alternative schools, staffed by certificated teachers and trainers, are open to retrieve high school dropouts and assist at-risk youth.

First, trainers and teachers must develop rapport with individual youth. Mentoring from trainers is crucial for many at-risk students who often have few positive adult role models. Together, the trainer and student develop an individual education and employment plan and set skill attainment goals for completing high school and gaining work maturity. Both in-school and Learning Center students gain work maturity through employment workshops and subsidized work experiences with employers. In addition, support services and incentives for attendance and academic progress are effective at retaining youth in an appropriate secondary educational setting.

Most Learning Center youth have left school more than once, and only 50 percent actually go on to earn a diploma or GED. Having at-risk students participate in subsidized short-term work opportunities helps them stay in school and earn a diploma. Most of these youth respond positively to a combination of school and work and subsequently move on to the entry-level workforce. Trainers and teachers encourage students to enter vocational education and training programs through community colleges or apprenticeships.

Wenatchee Valley College - Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) is a comprehensive community college offering a wide spectrum of academic, workforce education, distance learning, and continuing education programs. WVC Workforce Education programs also include short-term, on-demand classes, workshops, and certificate of accomplishment programs. The school serves approximately 8,500 students, 700 of whom attend classes at the Omak campus.

The Omak campus provides a vital link to postsecondary education for young people and displaced workers in Okanogan County. The school’s nursing program is vital to local health workers in the area for its ability to fill critical staffing needs.

Workforce Education – WVC structures Workforce Education programs to culminate in the attainment of an industry-recognized certificate, Associate of Technical Sciences degree, or for some programs, a transfer degree. Concurrent with occupational skill building, workforce

education programs prepare students for success in the workforce by emphasizing communication and writing skills, applied math skills, computing skills, and human relations competencies.

ABE/GED and ESL - Adult Basic Education (ABE) is the avenue toward high school completion, or the front door to college. ABE and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are widely available throughout WVC's district. The State Board of Community and Technical Colleges estimates that demand for basic skills training will increase by 16 percent through 2012. Blending basic skills, including computing skills, with workplace skills is the most effective strategy the colleges have at this time to expand opportunities for the student population.

Current Workforce Education programs available are:

Wenatchee Campus Programs of Study

- Accounting
- Accounting Clerk
- Administrative Assistant
- Associate Degree Nursing
- Automotive Technology
- Building Technology
- Business Information Technology
- Business Information Technology – Legal Support Certificate
- Business Information Technology – Medical Transcription Certificate
- Business, General
- Chemical Dependency Studies
- Computer Applications Specialist
- Computer Service Technology
- Computer Technology – Network Administration
- Computer Technology – Software Development
- Criminal Justice
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Sign Language Interpreter
- Energy Technology
- Environmental Systems and Refrigeration Technology
- Industrial Electronics Tech
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Laboratory Technology
- Natural Resource/Environmental Studies
- Nursing Assistant
- Practical Nursing
- Radiologic Technology
- Sustainable/Organic Fruit Production

Omak Campus Programs of Study

- Accounting
- Business
- Business Information Technology
- Chemical Dependency Studies
- Early Childhood Education
- Medical Office Assistant
- Medical Laboratory Technology
- Nursing
- Tribal Gaming Management

Big Bend Community College - Big Bend Community College (BBCC) in Moses Lake is a comprehensive two-year community college serving the Columbia Basin and Odessa in Lincoln County. BBCC collaborates with partner organizations and agencies in serving students and the community at large. The school operates the Office of Information Technology (OIT) program for workforce education students at the SkillSource Learning Center. Student recruitment and job placement for OIT is predominantly shouldered by SkillSource trainers. BBCC also partners on Rapid Response projects. ESL classes and a Bi-lingual Combination Drivers License training (I-BEST) are also provided.

BBCC's goals in providing learning opportunities include:

- Courses and training for university and college transfer
- Occupational and technical programs
- Basic skills and developmental education
- Pre-employment and customized training for local business and industry
- Support services for students

Professional/Technical programs of study include:

- Accounting Technician
- Agriculture
- Automotive Technology Program
- Aviation Commercial Pilot
- Aviation Maintenance Technology Program
- Chemical Technology
- Civil Engineering Technology
- Commercial Drivers License
- Computer Systems
- Drafting
- Electrician
- General Office/Clerical
- Information Sciences
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Office Management
- Microcomputer Applications
- Nursing Assistant

The challenge for workforce programs will be to prepare as many youth and adults as possible by coordinating resources for education and training beyond high school with the goal of at least one full year of vocational training toward a certificate or completion of industry skill standards.

- Nursing, Associate Degree or Bachelor Degree
- Practical Nursing
- Processing Machinery Maintenance and Repair Technology
- Secretarial and Office Management
- Teacher Assisting
- Welding/Brazing/Soldering

Section D: Performance Accountability

This section provides a summary of the North Central Workforce Development Area's performance results. We will refer to the state and federal indicators for WIA Title 1-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs for which the WDC has the most direct responsibility. In addition, performance information for other workforce development programs is summarized from state sources.²⁷ Required WorkSource and WIA Title 1-B programs data will continue to be collected and maintained for performance accountability that will inform service integration and continuous quality improvement.

Performance Information and Strategic Planning

System performance data will be used to provide the Workforce Development Council 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 Workforce Development Council has limited authority over any program outside WIA 1-B, it shapes local strategies to address broad workforce development issues. Program performance data will provide important information for those strategies.

Data Collection

SKIES (Services Knowledge and Information Exchange System) will serve as the backbone for data collection of Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title 1-B performance accountability information following state and Department of Labor proposals.

Program Performance and Continuous Quality Improvement

Service providers continuously collect, monitor, and review program performance data in relation to customer outcomes. Common Measures performance was added July 1, 2006 to the existing 27 federal and state WIA 1-B programs performance measures. Performance data is made readily available to WorkSource partners and WIA program operators through SKIES and through special reports generated no less than quarterly from the WDC administrative office. WIA Title 1-B program operators meet monthly to review performance data and budgets and to problem solve. One Stop Partner meetings and WDC Committee Meetings are other venues for performance evaluation. In addition, WorkSource sub-area meetings are held to coordinate services across programs for job seekers and business customers.

Performance-based Intervention

²⁷ WTECB, 2008 Workforce Training Results

The Workforce Development Council will be accountable for the results of WIA Title 1-B programs through a system of performance-based interventions. It will also share in accountability for vocational education and adult education results through WIA section 503 performance incentives.

WIA authorizes incentive funding for states that exceed the “adjusted levels of performance” in WIA Title I, adult education and family literacy, and Carl D. Perkins vocational education. A state that achieves 100 percent on the average of all the federal core indicators will be considered to have exceeded the adjusted levels of performance.

If Washington receives the 503 incentive award in this planning cycle, the Workforce Board is expected to allocate the funds to local areas that achieved the expected level of performance in these programs. Washington will likely use the same 100 percent formula for determining whether or not areas have exceeded their expected levels of performance, except that Washington will include performance on the state core indicators as well as the federal core indicators. While the local councils may use the funds for any purpose authorized under any of the program authorizing legislation, the funds must be used for system-building initiatives as opposed to simply adding resources to individual programs, i.e., WIA Title 1-B Adult, Title II Education and Family Literacy or Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education.

For WIA Title 1-B, the state will earmark a portion of the state set-aside funds to reward local areas that exceed 100 percent of the average of the expected levels of performance for the state and federal core indicators. The Employment Security Department will allocate these funds to local areas.

If the state fails to meet the adjusted levels of performance on the federal core indicators for WIA Title 1-B for two consecutive years, the Department of Labor (DOL) may withhold up to 5 percent of the state’s WIA Title 1-B funds. DOL will consider states to have failed to meet the level if the average level of performance across the indicators falls below 80 percent.

If a local area fails to achieve 80 percent average performance across the state and federal core indicators for WIA Title I, the Employment Security Department will require the local Council to submit either a performance improvement plan or a modified local plan to the state. If such failure continues for a second consecutive year, the Governor may require a reorganization plan. If the state is sanctioned by DOL for poor performance, ESD will withhold a proportional amount of funds from local areas based on their average performance across the state and federal core indicators.

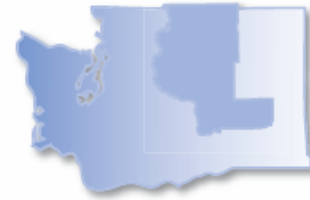
WIA Title 1-B Performance

Necessary program data are collected and maintained for performance accountability for WorkSource and WIA Title 1-B following state and Department of Labor protocols. Data sharing agreements are included in the protocols. North Central’s most recent annual performance sheet is provided below showing long-term results:

Table O – Local Performance (Includes One Chart for Each Local Area in the State)

Local Area Name	Total Participants Served		
North Central ETA Assigned #53045	Adults	494	
	Dislocated Workers	295	
	Older Youth	85	
	Younger Youth	276	
	Total Exitters		
	Adults	257	
	Dislocated Workers	155	
	Older Youth	36	
	Younger Youth	161	
		Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level
Customer Satisfaction	Program Participants	78.0	84.9
	Employers	69.0	72.2
Entered Employment Rates	Adults	83.1%	79.4%
	Dislocated Workers	89.5%	89.4%
	Older Youth	74.6%	65.4%
Retention Rates	Adults	85.0%	87.7%
	Dislocated Workers	91.0%	89.5%
	Older Youth	84.4%	94.7%
	Younger Youth	74.1%	64.3%
Average Earnings (Adult/Youth)	Adults	\$11,611	\$11,196
Six Months Earnings Increase (Older Youth)	Dislocated Workers	\$18,380	\$14,034
	Older Youth	\$3,517	\$3,290
Credential/Diploma Rates	Adults	40.7%	58.7%
	Dislocated Workers	36.5%	79.2%
	Older Youth	32.7%	54.5%
	Younger Youth	62.1%	61.4%
Skill Attainment Rate	Younger Youth	88.0%	90.1%
Youth Placement Rate	Youth (ages 14-21)	N/A	64.3%
Attainment Of Certificate	Youth (ages 14-21)	N/A	55.9%
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	Youth (ages 14-21)	N/A	59.8%
Other State Indicators of Performance			
Customer Satisfaction	Adults	90.0%	96.4%
	Dislocated Workers	91.0%	98.3%
	Youth	95.0%	97.0%
Employment in Q3	Adults	77.8%	82.6%
	Dislocated Workers	84.9%	83.0%
	Youth	76.0%	67.4%
Median Annualized Earnings	Adults	\$19,489	\$19,082
	Dislocated Workers	\$24,263	\$26,183
	Youth	\$10,140	\$8,874
Credential Rate	Adults	61.6%	59.5%
	Dislocated Workers	69.7%	65.8%
	Youth	75.7%	67.2%
Overall Status of Local Performance (Excluding State Credential Rates)	Not Met - 5	Met - 8	Exceeded - 13

Workforce Development Councils annually provide a one page overview of regional WIA highlights – another means of demonstrating value. North Central’s submission for 2008 is as follows:



College at Work

Full-time employees struggle to attend college. Schedule conflicts and distance often prevents these workers from furthering their education. To overcome this barrier, SkillSource facilitated taking college to the workplace.

After traveling 70 miles round trip from Othello to the Big Bend Community College campus for a few quarters, the Othello processing plants said the cost to commute was too great. Accustomed to keeping strangers away from proprietary equipment, Emily Anderson convinced the plants to host the classes and allow competitors' employees on-site. She was not going to let this opportunity slip away.

As a result, Big Bend taught MMT 220 (Predictive and Preventative Maintenance) for three credits and MMT 295 (Work Experience) for two credits at McCain Foods in Othello where they were joined by employees from JR Simplot.

Over the past two years, 69 out of 70 food processing employees have completed at least one Maintenance Mechanic college course on campus or on-site and 65 remain employed in the industry. To date, 30 have received a Certificate of Accomplishment and 18 have been promoted.

One employee said the development of skills directly lead to a promotion, "This class helped me pass the Maintenance test. I got the job."

College at work doesn't happen on its own. It takes a special Workforce Investment 10 percent grant from the Governor, special company personnel like Becky Tallman and Varon Blackburne of McCain Foods and Shelley Ottem of JR Simplot, special instructors like Bill Autry and Dennis Finney of Big Bend Community College and special coordinators like Emily Anderson from SkillSource.

Up, Up, and Away

SkillSource received a \$152,500 Microsoft grant (\$70,000 cash and \$82,593 in-kind) to provide digital literacy workshops in Wenatchee, Moses Lake and Othello. Operating Windows and using the Internet enable workers to research the labor market, explore careers, find education opportunities, create resumes and identify job openings.

Microsoft's Unlimited Potential Program provided grants to six community-based, non-profit agencies around the State totaling over \$435,000 to reach disadvantaged populations.

"Employment in some of Washington's fastest growing industries increasingly requires an understanding of basic IT skills," said Pamela Passman, head of Microsoft Corporate Affairs. "Learning these skills can provide job seekers and workers with increased

economic opportunities, while ensuring that Washington State remains competitive in the global knowledge economy."

For Ricardo Espinoza, job prospects were limited after leaving high school without a diploma. But he found the SkillSource Learning Center and studied computer and leadership skills while preparing for his GED. Then while attending the NCW Technical Center, SkillSource placed Ricardo in an internship at Fisher Radio where he works full-time today.

Four hundred seventy-five low-skilled adults, older workers and limited English speakers completed the initial two-day workshop. Of the 277 disadvantaged youth, 171 passed the Microsoft online digital literacy tests

Project Learning: Skills & a One-Stop Center

Project Learning (PL) develops youths' employment skills such as cooperating with others and problem solving; skills employers say are in short supply among new hires.

The Moses Lake Learning Center is a partnership between SkillSource and the Moses Lake School District that retrieves dropouts and retains students at risk of quitting school. Most are impoverished, defy authority, and all struggle to learn "the old fashioned way." PL gets students out of their books and off their seats. Up to half the day is hands-on, "outdoor" class. Students interested in construction were eager to landscape the new one-stop center – WorkSource Central Basin. PL improved attendance, increased achievement and transitioned youth to work.

Teenagers accustomed to arguing discovered the key to solving problems is communication and cooperation. For example, when an irrigation valve failed to open, tracing the cause required students at each end of the line to send and receive test signals, check connections and explain what they observed.

PL students' attendance in math and English class increased sixteen percent and instructors observed increased peer support and encouragement in the classroom. Skill attainment and GED pass rates also improved. Youth said connecting academics to activities was "cool and fun"! Eight of the PL students found related jobs during or after project activities. PL connects students to the work world by making learning relevant and product oriented. At-risk learners improve math and English and develop important work skills.

Table D-1: [PLACEHOLDER FOR NEW TARGETS AFTER NEGOTIATION W/STATE]

The published WIA 1-B program performance chart²⁸ measures the long-term results of enrolled participants who exited between April 2006 and September 2007. Federal program measures include Customer Satisfaction both for employers and program participants; Entered Employment Rate; Retention Rate; Earnings Change/Earnings Replacement in 6 months; Credential/Diploma rate; and Skill Attainment rate. It also includes Younger Youth measures including Youth Placement rate; Attainment of Certificate; and Literacy/Numeracy Gains. Other state indicators of performance include customer satisfaction; Employment in the third quarter after exit; Median Annualized Earnings; and Credential Rate.

Common Measures

A new performance measurement system across all Department of Labor (DOL) programs took effect July 1, 2006. DOL states, “The value of implementing common measures is the ability to describe in a similar manner the core purposes of the workforce system: how many people found jobs; did they stay employed; and what did they earn.”²⁹ North Central is subject to the state Common Measures policy 1002 which is derived from the federal directive.

Table D-2: Common Measures	
Adult Common Measures	Youth Common Measures
Entered Employment	Placement in Employment or Education
Employment Retention	Attainment of a diploma or Certificate
Average Earnings	Literacy and Numeracy Gains
Source: Department of Labor, 2006	

All necessary documentation will be recorded in SKIES on the specific operational parameters for each of the six common measures for reporting.

Other Workforce Development Programs Return on Investment³⁰

Return on investment ratios do not explain the comparative difficulty of achieving net benefits for the various target participant groups. Apprenticeship shows an enormous return on investment. We must keep in mind, however, that apprentice hopefuls must compete with others wanting to be selected for coveted apprenticeship slots. In contrast, other target groups have attributes which amount to significant barriers to employment. Vocational Rehabilitation

²⁸ WTECB, *Washington State Annual Report on the Workforce Investment Act Title 1-B*, Sep 30, 2008

²⁹ DOLETA, Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 17-05, p. 3

³⁰ WTECB, 2006 Workforce Training Results. The Upjohn Institute for Employment Research assisted the state in calculating estimated returns on investment.

services and Youth programs serve individuals with multiple barriers to employment. The WorkFirst program was not included in the return on investment calculations.

Another View to Appraising Program Value

Workforce programs as a whole offer positive return on investment for public dollars. The state estimates an average benefit to cost ratio of about 6 to 1 for programs. But beyond this is the social value of people's lives changed.

Section E: Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Goal 1: Youth

Our future citizens and workforce will reach their potential, participating fully in the economy and life of their communities.

Objective 1.1

Reduce the number of high school dropouts through prevention and recovery.

Strategies

1.1.a. **Advocate:** Advocate for strategies to reduce poor elementary and intermediate achievement such as: *re-inclusion after school discipline; teaching English Language Learners and students with learning disabilities; Accommodating different learning styles; reducing homelessness and neglect; eradicating substance abuse; fostering healthy families; preventing social alienation; finding avenues to success for juvenile offenders.*

1.1. b. **Alternative High Schools:** Continue alternative education opportunities for students who have dropped out or are at-risk of dropping out.

1.1. c. **Learning Centers:** Provide year-round, technology-based, second and third chance learning solutions through multi-agency, community-based Learning Centers staffed with adults who specialize in serving disadvantaged youth.

1.1. d. **High Schools:** Continue and improve existing drop-out prevention strategies to enable all students to graduate such as Gear Up.

Objective 1.2

Ensure basic skills, life skills, social skills, critical problem solving skills, and workforce maturity skills are acquired by students.

Strategies

1.2. a. **Assessments:** Incorporate validated student assessments. Recognize GED as a “certificate of secondary proficiency” in addition to WASL.

1.2. b. **Competency Based Learning:** Individualize learning and hold students accountable to achieve minimum level of competency (including IT literacy) so that graduates are sufficiently prepared for employment or post-secondary education or training.

1.2. c. **Integrate Employment Competencies:** Integrate competencies into the curriculum for all youth through applied, hands-on, real life lessons.

1.2. d. **Continuously Examine Curricula and Technology:** Address service gaps or outdated processes that can hinder learning.

1.2. e. **Reward Student Achievement:** Reward achievement with incentives to reinforce effort and performance.

Objective 1.3

Assist students in career exploration and in their personal plans to transition, whenever possible, to employment in their chosen career pathway, Job Corps, AmeriCorps, Service Corps, apprenticeship, postsecondary education and training, or the military.

Strategies

1.3. a. **Career Exploration:** Continuously tie career guidance into school curricula using youth motivators such as outdoor adventure, service learning, guest speakers, field trips, equipment demonstrations, etc.

Support Navigation 101 by schools which adopt this guidance program.

1.3. b. **Labor Market Information (LMI):** Provide or facilitate access to current labor market information sources for partners, teachers, counselors, trainers, students, businesses and the general public.

1.3. c. **Career Pathways:** Explain career pathway foundational skills; industry skill standards; recommended preparatory coursework; leadership, work experience and citizenship activities desired for entry into and advancement within various careers.

Utilize Magellan

1.3. d. **Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Formal Vocational Training Accessible to Secondary Students:** Encourage the expansion and utilization of CTE and other vocational training resources including the North Central Technical Skills Center, Moses Lake Skills Center, and Wenatchee Valley and Big Bend Community Colleges. Enroll disadvantaged youth into summer offerings followed by placement into work-based learning.

Objective 1.4

Provide workplace learning opportunities for youth.

Strategies

1.4. a. **Work-based learning:** Improve and expand opportunities for job shadowing, work experience, internship and other work-based learning experiences. Arrange summer work experience opportunities for disadvantaged secondary students related to career interests.

1.4. b. **Best Practices:** Advise supervisors on mentoring and other best practices to get the most out of informal workplace learning experiences.

Goal 2: Adults in Transition, Dislocated Workers & Individuals with Disabilities

Acquire and maintain, through life-long learning, the skills employers want.

Objective 2.1

Assist unemployed individuals gain and retain employment.

Strategies

2.1. a. **Work Readiness Assessment:** Compile a work readiness assessment and certification toolbox to certify that workers have the employability skills employers want. Assessments include, but not limited to: WorkKeys, Prove it, Internet Core Computing Competency, CASAS, and CareerScope. Certificates of mastery document skill levels for workers to navigate their career pathway and for employers to know they have the skills needed for the job.

2.1. b. **Universal Core services:** Continuously improve universal core services through one stop centers and affiliates.

2.1. c. **Service Delivery and Coordination:** Connect and combine resources to enable adults and dislocated workers engage in education and training.

2.1. d. **Reduce Barriers:** Coordinate with United Way and community agencies for housing, child care, transportation, nutrition, health care, etc.

2.1. e. **Disability Action Teams (DAT):** Self-directed Disability Action Teams consisting of a point person from partners will continue the focus on improving access to services for customers with disabilities, including learning disabilities, and other potential obstacles to employment.

2.1. f. **Bi-lingual Staff:** Continue to provide on-site, bi-lingual staff to serve the significant percentage of limited English customers.

2.1. g. **Professional Improvement:** Provide Career Development Facilitator training to enhance professional staff performance.

2.1. h. **Post-employment Services:** Follow-up graduates encouraging life-long learning and career advancement.

Objective 2.2

Provide opportunities for low-skilled, low-income workers to participate in opportunities training and enhance their skills.

Strategies

2.2. a. **Pre-Vocational:** Provide vocationally-centered Basic Skills training including Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Literacy, soft skills, life skills, and workplace skills.

2.2. b. **Workplace Training:** Facilitate workplace learning to build occupational skills.

2.2. c. **Training Completion:** Provide wrap-around services (i.e. career decision making, on-going counseling, job placement assistance and follow-up support) for participants with significant skill gaps

2.2. d. **Demand Occupations:** Continuously identify and facilitate informed career decision making and goal setting.

2.2. e. **Self-sufficiency:** Concentrate on building programs especially targeting foundational skills and occupational training for companies and industry clusters that are increasing local employment leading to self-sufficiency.

2.2. f. **Apprenticeships and Non-traditional Occupations:** Increase awareness of apprenticeship including opportunities in non-traditional apprenticeable occupations.

Support pre-apprenticeship programs and assist students and job seekers to make connections with employer association, individual employer-employee association (plant), or individualized apprenticeship opportunities.

2.2. g. **Certifications:** Inventory industry-based certifications that may enhance employability and earnings; inform participants about options and advantages.

2.2. h. **Distance Education and Modularized Training:** Explore distance education and modularized training options for isolated rural participants and incumbent workers for whom regularly scheduled centralized classroom training is not feasible.

2.2. i. **Education:** Provide post-secondary vocational/technical education to gain occupational skills. Deliver dual language vocational programs following the I-BEST model.

Objective 2.3

Assist dislocated workers, especially those with long-term attachment to the blue collar labor force, to receive rapid response for re-employment, relocation or retraining.

Strategies

2.3. a. **Rapid Response:** Maintain sharp partnership readiness to deliver rapid response services to affected companies and employees in limited or mass layoffs and plant closures.

2.3. b. **Career Transition Counseling:** Maintain and develop staff expertise assisting dislocated workers make positive career transitions utilizing assessment, labor market information, and career counseling.

2.3. c. **Financial Aid and Income Support:** Maintain and improve staff expertise in assisting dislocated workers to apply for and coordinate financial aid and income support for Training Benefits (extended unemployment compensation), Individual Training Accounts (Workforce Investment vocational scholarship), Worker Retraining (state financial aid), Federal Financial Aid (i.e. Pell grant, Stafford loan, etc.), Trade Adjustment Assistance (vocational scholarship), Trade Readjustment Allowance (extended unemployment compensation), etc.

GOAL 3: Industry

Individual companies and industry clusters with similar workforce needs are a vital customer segment. Training today's workforce improves tomorrow's profits and leads to economic advancement for communities. Smart companies invest in employee education and training.

Objective 3.1

Marshal and coordinate the resources of all workforce programs to provide comprehensive business services. Maintain excellence in building business relationships with individual firms and/or trade associations through system-wide expertise in recruiting, job-seeker preparation, job matching, placement and retention of employees.

Strategies

3.1. a. **Business Teams:** Continue to review progress of business services teams and market clear services and resources.

3.1. b. **Hiring and Career Fairs:** Organize and promote hiring and career fairs. Explore various modes including virtual job fairs.

3.1. c. **Community Awareness:** Disseminate success stories and acknowledging industry partners. Encourage one stop partners to contribute information for the development of a comprehensive orientation video and participate in recognition ceremonies to celebrate success.

Objective 3.2

Respond to employers' changing workforce needs.

Strategies

3.2. a. **Skill Gaps:** Identify and address skill gaps through the results of work ready assessments. Address identified needs through a combination of basic skills and occupational skills learning options that can be rapidly adapted for incumbent workers and the pipeline of new workers preparing to work in the industry.

3.2. b. **Economic Development Linkages:** Provide workforce services when requested by economic development councils, municipalities, counties, and new businesses.

3.2. c. **Skill Panels:** Support the continuation of industry skill panels and the formation of relevant new skills panels to address skill gaps and workforce supply challenges.

Goal 4: One Stop Integration

Deliver integrated services that are effective, efficient, timely, and seamless. Services will be "High Touch" in terms of personalized appeal and effect.

Objective 4.1

Develop leadership within the local workforce development system.

Strategies

4.1. a. **One Stop Partnership Building:** Build participation of required and optional partner programs through regular business meetings.

4.1. b. **Learning Community:** Foster a *learning community* among one stop system partners through joint staff training and activities requiring shared responsibility. Convene local conference.

Objective 4.2

Continuously improve one stop processes.

Strategies

4.2. a. **SKIES, Common Assessments, and other Shared Processes:** Incorporate system processes such as MIS data collection in SKIES, Common Assessments and other processes that are required or may prove beneficial.

4.2. b. **Integrate Front End Services:** Integrate front end services to fully inform customers of all available one stop services and assist them in gaining access to the services they need.

Objective 4.3

Regularly monitor, report on, and respond to performance indicators.

Strategies

4.3. a. **GMAP, Common Measures, and Customer Responses:** Stay informed and responsive on system performance via GMAP, Common Measures, customer feedback and other performance overviews.

Appendix

The Strategic Planning Team

The North Central Workforce Development Council's strategic planning team consists of three members:

- Dave Petersen, North Central WDC Executive Director
- Trina DeCamp, SkillSource Program Administrator
- Kelsey Mertes, SkillSource Planner

Description of the Public Review and Comment Period

Every two years the North Central Workforce Development Council completes a process for updating its strategic plan under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Signed into law in 1998 by President Clinton, WIA mandates progress toward seamless local One Stop workforce development systems serving employers, workers, and youth—the future workforce—in every area of the country.

The North Central WDC placed a legal notice in the *Wenatchee World* newspaper during the week of March 30 through April 3, to inform the public that the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan is now available for comment. The notice explains where and how the plan can be accessed, and how to send questions or concerns. The *Wenatchee World* is distributed throughout the North Central region. Additionally, we have emailed a copy of the plan to our partners in order to solicit any edits or comments they may have. We will also convene a series of meetings with our economic development partners.

Addendum to the North Central Strategic Plan 2009-2011: (Senate Bill 5613)

Traditional employment (working for someone else's business) is sought by most job seekers and is often the most feasible means of livelihood. However, when customers, especially skilled dislocated workers, request more information regarding self-employment they are referred to providers who specialize in entrepreneurship, including small business development centers.

In response to SB5613, One Stop Centers will have posters in the resource areas which notify the public that entrepreneurship information and referrals are available. The U.S. Small Business Administration is a reliable provider of entrepreneurial information and education. The SBA has several online tools for inquiring entrepreneurs. Customers will be assisted to access the SBA tools that range from exploring whether entrepreneurship is right for them, to working through the small business start-up guide. Some colleges also offer training courses in entrepreneurship and classes such as accounting that can benefit business owners. One Stop Center staff occasionally request volunteer retired business professionals (SCORE) present workshops when there are customers interested in starting a business.

Youth can also be involved in learning entrepreneurship. The Title 1-B Youth Program in Moses Lake is planning to pilot a café at the area's new One Stop Center that is expected to operate as a school-based enterprise. Youth, under the direction of their teachers, will learn about all the aspects of operating their own small business and learn basic academic skills in the process.