



Snohomish County
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Snohomish County Invests \$4.3 Million in Workforce Development and Job Pathways Programs

Awarded Programs Focus On Highly Impacted Populations Including Youth, Immigrants and Refugees, and People with Disabilities

Snohomish County, Wash., July 27, 2023 – Executive Dave Somers today announced that Snohomish County is investing \$4.3 million in seven workforce development and job pathways programs. The seven awarded projects provide enhanced employment training and/or address challenges to employment, with the goal of connecting individuals to stable jobs or career pathways. The projects focus on highly impacted populations including youth, immigrants and refugees, and people with disabilities. They are funded through the County’s federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the workforce, and Snohomish County employment has not caught up to pre-pandemic levels. An estimated [9,000 fewer people are working today than at the start of the pandemic](#), largely due to the increasing retirement rates of thousands of workers and lack of child care availability. Although countywide unemployment rates are near historic lows, some groups are lagging behind. Young people ages 16-24 have an unemployment rate of 11.9 percent, which is nearly four times the countywide unemployment rate of 3.4 percent.

“When we talked to the community about their priorities for pandemic recovery, supporting our workforce came up in nearly every conversation we had. Right now, employers are struggling to hire the staff they need, and vulnerable populations are struggling to find good-paying jobs due to systemic challenges,” said Executive Somers. “With these investments, we are creating a gold-standard workforce development system that meets the needs of community members and employers.”

“Snohomish County has made workforce development a high priority even prior to the pandemic. From advanced manufacturing and aerospace to building and construction trades, we must develop a skilled workforce for the future success of our region,” said Vice Chair Nate Nehring ([District 1](#)). “These investments will help ensure we can connect even more individuals to high-quality, good-paying careers in industries where our county urgently needs more workers.”

“These partnerships offer exciting new investments for our workforce and they fulfill a critical need by focusing on highly impacted populations,” said Councilmember Megan Dunn ([District 2](#)). “With these programs our youth, immigrants and refugees, and people with disabilities will have stable pathways to meaningful employment and our employers gain skilled and dependable workers.”

“I am grateful to Executive Somers’ team for getting these investments out the door. We know that people are struggling to find jobs that can keep them in our community and this commitment to action across the county will do just that. These programs will pay dividends for years to come,” said Councilmember Strom Peterson ([District 3](#)).

“Putting these dollars into the community is vital to the continued growth of our economy, and it will provide invaluable workforce training to many of our residents that need that assistance to move forward in their career paths. I’m excited to see the development that is to come,” said Councilmember Sam Low ([District 5](#)).

All awarded projects originate from submissions to the County’s [Workforce Recovery Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#). Addressing workforce shortages and creating pathways to good-paying jobs was identified as a top community priority during the County’s communitywide [pandemic recovery engagement effort](#). All funded projects are detailed below.

Workforce Snohomish – Data Analytics Boot Camp

Awarded \$1,500,000

Workforce Snohomish will partner with Northwest Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC) and Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest to convene a data analytics boot camp for participants ages 18-24 and other individuals who have challenges to employment. These bootcamps will accelerate new technical abilities, enhance existing capabilities, and add data analytics to the participants' overall skill set.

Economic Alliance Snohomish County (EASC) and Snohomish STEM Network – Youth STEM Career Exploration

Awarded \$1,197,887

This award will allow EASC and Snohomish STEM Network to bring expanded youth career exploration programming to the entire county by way of broad partnerships in K-12, higher education, and career connected learning organizations. The program will increase STEM programming access to over 5,000 students.

“With these funds, we can significantly increase the number of youth engaged in career exploration through STEM concentrated programming,” said Alyssa Jackson, Director of Snohomish STEM Network and Co-Director of Career Connect Washington Northwest Region. “Together with our partners, we can positively impact career connected learning that has been affected by COVID.” Snohomish STEM, powered by Economic Alliance Snohomish County (EASC), engages with education, business, community-based organizations, and government to improve equitable access for all students to strengthen future workforce talent.

“We are very thankful for the opportunity provided by Executive Somers and Snohomish County,” said Garry Clark, President and CEO of EASC. “This ARPA funding will help to continue our core effort to provide opportunity to thousands of youth throughout Snohomish County. Snohomish STEM and Career Connect Washington Northwest remain instrumental in the future workforce development and talent pipeline for the region. Thanks to the dedication of Snohomish STEM Director, Alyssa Jackson, and our EASC leadership, we know this program will continue to be a true success.”

Edmonds College – Link Light Rail Construction Pre-Apprenticeships

Awarded \$594,549

Edmonds College partners with Sound Transit and the City of Lynnwood to offer a 10-12 week construction pre-apprenticeship program to train students to work in the trades supporting Snohomish County industries that include transportation and commercial and residential infrastructure. This funding supports five cohorts of 10 students and will allow Edmonds College to partner with Latino Educational Training Institute (LETI) and Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest (RISNW) to modify instruction to better serve Snohomish County's linguistically and culturally diverse population including increasing access for non-native English speakers.

"This grant allows us to continue offering the pre-apprenticeship program which fills a need for well-trained construction trades personnel in Snohomish County. The program has proven to be successful with our graduates going on to join unions or be hired by private businesses where they are earning a living wage and supporting the needs of the community. We are very thankful to the county for their support of the program and of Edmonds College," said Dr. Amit B. Singh, President of Edmonds College.

AJAC – Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships

Awarded \$474,410

This project is a regional expansion of adult and youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in the aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries. Youth program expansion efforts will focus on participants between 16-24 years old, including youth with disabilities as well as high school students at Sno-Isle Skills Center and school districts from Everett, Snohomish, and Granite Falls.

HopeWorks – Stipends for Training Academy

Awarded \$245,920

This funding will allow HopeWorks to expand supportive services provided to trainees in the HopeWorks training academy. The training academy engages participants in pre-employment education and paid hands-on job training in sought-after career pathways. Funded supports include meals, incentives, transportation costs, navigation staff, and trainee stipends.

Housing Hope – Human Services Career Pathways

Awarded \$169,330

This funding will allow Housing Hope to develop a human services career pathway in the existing Housing Hope Employment and Education program. This program serves unemployed, underemployed, and underserved communities. Housing Hope will hire a human services trainer to deliver a comprehensive four-week classroom instruction on best practices for providing human services, as well as support job shadowing for participants.

Cares of Washington – Enhanced Access and Job Retention

Awarded \$128,672

Cares of Washington will increase its enhanced employment access and intensive job retention services to people with disabilities, people with low incomes, non-native English speakers, people of color, and women. This funding will allow the organization to support more people for a longer period of time, increasing the likelihood of each person making lasting progress and achieving economic stability through living wage jobs in Snohomish County.

Once awarded projects begin serving individuals, anyone interested can learn more about the projects on the County's [COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard](#). Executive Somers established the Office of Recovery & Resilience to guide the County's recovery work by ensuring federal pandemic relief is administered quickly, effectively, and equitably. Information on the County's recovery work can be found at www.snohomishcountywa.gov/recovery.

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