

**Workforce Snohomish CEO Report to the Snohomish County Future Workforce Alliance  
October 7, 2020**

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**Transferable Skills Research**

Workforce Snohomish, in partnership the Snohomish County Future Workforce Alliance and Snohomish County Office of Economic Recovery and Resiliency have issued a Request for Proposals to support Transferable Skills Research.

Workforce Snohomish and the Snohomish County Future Workforce Alliance are seeking research to inform policy, strategy and service delivery in the County, with the intent to retain and support workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and empower them to leverage their past experience and credentials, obtain training and enter occupations that are aligned with current and future employment demand in family-wage, high-demand careers. Moreover, this research shall serve to provide critical information to post-secondary education providers in the County, enabling them to align existing programs with industry and dislocated worker needs; and develop new programs that meet the needs of industry and the labor force. The full RFP can be viewed here: [workforcesnohomish.org/rfp/transferableskills](http://workforcesnohomish.org/rfp/transferableskills)

Timeline for the RFP process is as follows:

Activity	Date
Release of RFP	September 24, 2020
Submission Deadline	October 16, 2020, 5:00 PM
Convene Review Committee & Review Evaluation Process	October 12th – October 16th
Individual Review of Submitted Proposals	October 19th – 21st
Committee Discussion and Selection	October 22nd – October 26th

**Request:** Volunteers to serve on the review committee for submitted proposals, consisting of delegates from the Future Workforce Alliance and Workforce Snohomish Board of Directors.

## Local Area Plan

Snohomish County’s Local Area Plan narrative is under development and will require Future Workforce Alliance engagement and input prior to its approval. Workforce Snohomish is working on revising specific sections of the plan to reflect the changes in service delivery linked to COVID-19, the short and long-term implications and opportunities these changes present. The plan also encompasses a number of sections on workforce development strategy, linked to the roles and responsibilities of the local workforce development board. This strategic framing will provide WFS with the opportunity to revise/align or affirm its narrative on service delivery.

The State Workforce Board originally requested plans be submitted at the end of October, however we have requested an official extension until mid-December to enable the Board to engage in the development of the plan prior to the final plan being presented to the board for a vote. Below is a proposed timeline for FWA engagement and draft iterations prior to December’s Board meeting.

Activity	Date
Strategy questions distributed to FWA	Week of October 12th
1st revised draft of Local Area Plan completed	Week of November 2nd
Option(s) for further review and feedback on draft	November 9th – 20th
Revised version complete and distributed to FWA with Board Packet	December 1st
FWA Board Vote	December 10th
Submission of the Plan to the State Workforce Board	Following approval by Board

## U.S. Department of Labor, H-1B One Grant Program

Proposal Due Date: November 11, 2020

Award Floor: \$500,000

Award Ceiling: \$10 Million

Required Partners: Businesses, Education and Training Providers and Workforce Development entities.

The US Department of Labor recently released a grant “H-1B One Workforce Grant Program.” The funding supports a focused effort to upskill the workforce to meet high-demand employer needs in sectors and/or occupations that utilize H-1B Visas. Sectors include: **IT and IT-related industries, Advanced Manufacturing (including biotechnology), and Professional Services (encompassing engineering and surveying occupations)**. If proposals seek to target specific occupations outside of these sectors (occupation strategy), it must be supported by data on certified H-1B Visas issued in the target geographic area(s).

Key components:

- **Employer driven:** Employers in targeted sectors must be actively engaged in the design of the program and partnerships expanded throughout the life of the grant. The

program will not work and the proposal will not be funded without strong employer engagement and alignment with employer needs for middle-to-high skilled workers (including incumbent worker training), or entry-level occupations on a career pathway leading to middle or high-skilled occupations.

- **Public-private partnerships:** Designed to leverage resources across federal, state and local funding streams, as well as private sector. Partnerships will work toward a coordinated approach to preparing a skilled workforce within an economic region. All applicants must demonstrate leveraging at least 25 percent of the total amount of grant funds requested.
- **Sustainability & Replicability:** Design a project that will sustain efforts beyond the granting period and can produce evidence of impact and established methods to enable replication.

The intent of this grant program aligns with the vision set forth by Executive Somers in the establishment of the Future Workforce Alliance. It provides a unique opportunity to catalyze this work in targeted sectors or occupations and lay the foundation for future work across sectors. In short, proposed programs must include the following elements:

- 1) Build new or expand existing sector partnerships that develop a workforce strategy across state and regional workforce and related sector agencies, including employers within the proposed sector-based initiatives and education and training entities;
- 2) Establish new or expand career pathways in the proposed sector-based initiative(s) that focus on the skills, competencies; and credentials needed for jobs within the targeted H-1B industries and occupations;
- 3) Offer high-quality training options to prepare individuals to successfully move into middle- to high-skilled employment within the targeted H-1B industries and occupations
- 4) Ensure that participants receive the supportive services necessary to participate fully in employment and training activities;
- 5) Develop a new or leverage an existing system for reviewing and collecting data, and monitor results to assess program performance; and
- 6) Create a new or leverage an existing infrastructure to successfully sustain the program components and partnerships after the life of the grant.

**Next Steps:** Workforce Snohomish has proposed a regional partnership to pursue this grant opportunity, encompassing King and Pierce Counties (consider adding Kitsap). Once applicant partnership is formed, outreach and engagement of employers in targeted sectors will commence to solicit input into program design and engagement. Future Workforce Alliance Board participation is welcome and encouraged.

## CARES Programs

Workforce Snohomish is honored to administer a number of County CARES-funded programs. Overviews of each program are outlined below.

### Snohomish County Small Business Relief, Recovery, and Resiliency (R3) Grant

Launched in early June, the R3 program, intended to support small business sustainability (with fewer than 20 FTE) through the COVID-19 public health emergency. Workforce Snohomish received 2,194 R3 applications totaling over \$41 million in requests in the first round, adding an additional 509 applications in Round 2. Additional funds were recently allocated by Council to fund a third round, supporting additional grants to applicants that were not selected in prior rounds.

	<b>Grant Funding Allocated</b>	<b>Number of Grantees</b>	<b>Total Funding Remaining to Distribute to Grantees</b>
Round 1	\$5,720,430	309	\$160,000
Round 2	\$7,087,710	437	\$390,000
Round 3	\$3,960,000	236	3,960,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,768,140</b>	<b>982</b>	

### First in Flight Fund (F3)

Launched in early June, the focus of the F3 grant program is on aerospace companies and Paine Field businesses that are critical to supporting Snohomish County's recovery. Funding is intended to support business sustainability through the COVID-19 public health emergency. Workforce Snohomish received a total of forty-eight (48) applicants, representing \$26,712,648 in funding requests.

F3 grants were announced in late June to twenty (20) companies, representing a \$7 million investment. Grantees estimated that 271 jobs will be retained as a result of this funding. Grantees will submit a report at the end of November on the impact of the grant in relation to employee retention and other metrics outlined in their grant applications.

### Aerospace Employment Recovery & Training Program (AERO-ERTP)

In recognition of the profound change COVID-19 has had on aerospace businesses and its workforce, Snohomish County launched a customized short-term training initiative known as the Aerospace Employment Recovery & Training Program (AERO-ERTP). The program aims to increase the resiliency of local businesses and to facilitate the reintegration of furloughed workers into the workforce, primarily through cohort-based trainings.

Grants were awarded in early August and training has commenced across all grantees.

- Eleven (11) companies awarded funds, totaling \$2,480,560.
- An estimated 1,145 employees will participate in training
- An estimated 172 layoffs will be averted as a result of this investment
- An estimated 56 employees could be recalled and 35 new workers may be hired. Note we have already seen evidence of employers recalling furloughed employees as a result of this program/investment; however, hiring, by in large is anticipated to have a longer trajectory (~early to mid-2021).

Employers/grantees are utilizing employees with subject matter expertise, private training providers (including vendors of specialized equipment) and community colleges to support their training plans. Training is employer choice and proposed training is broad in scope amongst grantees. WFS leveraged our WIOA Incumbent Worker training program processes and requirements to support the development of the program, adapting to blend Customized Training and On-the-Job Training models and support the County's objectives. The majority of awarded companies have incorporated certification of employees in their training plans, however not all will be completed within the timeframe of this grant program (as all funds must be expended and training completed by 11/30).

Grantees will submit a final outcomes and fiscal report in early-December. Our experience to-date with AERO-ERTP grantees has made clear their dedication to their employees and commitment to retain and/or recall as many as possible.

### **CARES Jobs**

Workforce Snohomish, in partnership with Snohomish County Human Services has launched the CARES Jobs program. This program provides subsidized jobs for eligible individuals in Snohomish County. Initial inquiries to cultivate subsidized job opportunities in Snohomish County among organizations that are addressing critical needs (food, shelter, healthcare, childcare); as well as limited spaces in high-growth sectors have yielded overwhelming results within the first week – highlighting the tremendous needs in our community.

Workforce Snohomish is making a concerted effort to engage BIPOC communities in this program – both business owners, organizations providing critical needs support in these communities and participants. Workforce Snohomish is investing its resources to support this objective – beginning with issuing contracts to Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest (supporting translation services) and Latino Education Training Initiative (LETI). Additional outreach and engagement efforts are underway.

Workforce Snohomish has partnered with Parker Staffing to support program implementation that is fully operational as of September 29th. Workforce Snohomish estimates the ability to place between 100 and 120 individuals in subsidized jobs between October 1, 2020 – December 30, 2020 with these funds. We anticipate funds could be fully obligated within 2-3 weeks.

## **Other Updates & Initiatives:**

### **National Dislocated Worker Grants**

Workforce Snohomish has received allocations from statewide Dislocated Worker Grants, as Disaster Grant and Employment Recovery as previously reported. Subrecipient contracts have now been executed and the team, consisting of Workforce Snohomish leadership, Workforce Navigators and subrecipients are working to stand up customer processes, outreach and communication. Workforce Snohomish continues to work with Snohomish County Emergency Management and VOAWW to identify disaster-relief subsidized job opportunities.

Workforce Snohomish will leverage the CARES Jobs program to develop the pipeline of potential candidates that would benefit from enrollment in Dislocated Worker Grants.

### **Regional Coordinating Network**

The Regional Coordinating Network (RCN), supported by a grant from Employment Security Department and Career Connect Washington consists of a partnership between Workforce Snohomish, NW Workforce Council, Snohomish and NW STEM Networks and Northwest Educational Service District 189, covering Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan and Island Counties. The STEM Networks and NWESD 189 were awarded a High Needs Grant in August to expand their work serving rural communities across the region (WFS is passing through 100% of funds for this project). Efforts are underway to virtualize STEM Network programming and increase meaningful, place-based career connected learning opportunities in rural areas and cities like Darrington.

Under the auspices of this project, Workforce Snohomish continues to support and expand Career Launch and Career Connected Learning programs serving Snohomish County – including Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships and Project BioPath (in partnership with Shoreline College and Life Science Washington).

*RCN & Life Science Sector.* Discussions continue with Life Science Washington, Shoreline College and Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council regarding a bootcamp program created in partnership with AGC Biologics to support access to entry level positions in the sector (Project BioPath). The program was unsuccessful in attracting candidates for Summer 2020 and has been postponed until Summer 2021. WFS is working with Shoreline College and Seattle-King WDC to support a re-design the program to align with WIOA (participants required to be enrolled/eligible) and explore additional work in around career pathway development (including transferable skills identification). The Life Science sector is hiring across a wide variety of positions and skill levels. Life Science WA has expanded their job board to highlight these opportunities. In addition, WFS provided input to Life Science Washington's workforce plan that will be finalized in mid-October.

## Asset Building Coalition

Effective July 1, 2020, Workforce Snohomish has assumed the responsibility for the Asset Building Coalition of Snohomish County (previously hosted by United Way). ABC is a working collective composed of staff from area workforce, social and human service organizations working to improve financial literacy and empowerment in the community. The Snohomish County ABC is one of sixteen coalitions that operate statewide with guidance from the Washington Asset Building Coalition. The stated mission of the Washington ABC is:

*[To] promote policies and programs in Washington that assist low-and-moderate income residents build, maintain & preserve assets through investments in education, homeownership, personal savings and entrepreneurship. We partner with policy-makers, financial institutions & service providers on the regional, state and federal levels to create, innovative, systemic solutions to addressing poverty so that all Washingtonians have an opportunity to achieve a secure economic future & live with dignity.*

While each coalition shares these goals, they have significant latitude to develop resources and programming that address their local priorities. The Washington State Department of Commerce provides funding to support the operations of the coalitions. For the past 15 years, the Snohomish County ABC has focused on training frontline staff to build confidence in incorporating financial education into service delivery.

Workforce Snohomish will continue to focus Department of Commerce grant funding (\$8100/yr) in supporting training of front-line staff, and hosting educational events, Workforce Snohomish has invested additional resources to expand the scope and capacity of ABC in the coming year. This investment includes the development of a series of short videos on financial topics that will be posted to the Workforce Snohomish/WorkSource Snohomish County websites, as well as re-assignment of a staff Navigator (Jared Shapiro) to concentrate on advancing this work. It is our goal to build and integrate this capacity across the workforce development system – through a blended approach of professional development for staff, enabling them to leverage this knowledge when advising job seekers and youth; cultivation on online resources; as well as constructing a network of external partners to support customer referrals. We believe this investment will improve the outcomes of our customers – from increased rates of training completion, job entry, retention and career and wage progression.

**Innovation & Entrepreneurship:** In August, WFS invested in the NW Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC), seeding the development of new programs and services aimed at retaining talent in the region and fostering the innovative start-ups. The project is progressing nicely. I have included updated outreach materials on the program – Project ReInvent™. NWIRC has made great progress in designing this program and WFS has work to do to determine how we can reach dislocated workers that may be interested in engaging and how we may be able to support worker engagement with small businesses enrolled in the program.



# Project ReInvent™

**Project ReInvent™ is seeking innovative small businesses to help springboard their growth and success**

Workforce Snohomish and NW Innovation Resource Center have forged a partnership to support economic growth and vitality amongst small businesses and startups in the region. The project seeks to provide resources who possess useful skills and knowledge to businesses that may need to pivot or reinvent themselves as a result of the recent economic crisis linked to COVID-19.

Project ReInvent™ will bring together highly trained and skilled workers who can potentially support small businesses through mentoring, consulting or even direct employment as businesses pivot or re-invent themselves due to the impact of COVID.

We are interested in hearing from small businesses in the innovative and technology sectors who would like the opportunity to benefit from this program, particularly from one of the following industries, although we welcome inquiries from all areas:



## How does the program work?

Many startups fail as they typically lack the key resources needed to provide the necessary technical, project management and business support. In addition, an increasing number of existing small businesses are recognizing the need to pivot or reinvent their business to address shifting market conditions and would benefit from some of the same actions and access to talent required of startup businesses.

If you are looking to accelerate growth or perhaps reinvent your business due to recent economic changes and think that you could use some additional support then Project ReInvent™ can help you.

The project is also forming a network of highly skilled individuals who are seeking to utilize their time and skills to support small innovative businesses. These individuals possess a broad range of skills from product development to financial management. Individuals will be available to act as mentors, consultants or employees on short- or long-term engagements. The NW Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC) will also provide educational workshops and facilities to help participating businesses make the leaps in performance they are seeking.

### **Benefits of Project ReInvent™**

Small businesses participating in the project who may need additional resources to grow or adapt to the changing marketplace have the opportunity to connect with highly skilled workers and receive guidance and expertise from our corps of individuals who are participating in Project ReInvent™. Additional resources such as team workspace, podcast rooms and more are available for use at TheLab@everett and TheLab@arlington. The small business benefits from short-term support to solve challenges or complete projects which may accelerate the pace of success with their new focus.

### **How do I apply?**

For more information or to apply to participate in Project ReInvent please go to <https://nwirc.com/programs/project-reinvent/>.



# Project ReInvent™

**Have you ever dreamed of starting your own business or becoming an entrepreneur?  
Can you see yourself working with a high paced small business startup?**

Workforce Snohomish and NW Innovation Resource Center have forged a partnership to support individuals whose previous jobs may have been affected over this past year due to the economic impacts or who may simply find themselves seeking a new start in their careers.

Project ReInvent™ seeks to connect highly trained and skilled workers with opportunities to start their own business as an entrepreneur, or join forces with others to grow a new or existing small business. We are looking for individuals who have any kind of background, skills, who are interested in starting their own business or have interest in supporting a small business. While we welcome inquiries from all categories, we have particular emphasis on the following industry sectors.



We are looking for all skillsets from product design to financial or program management who would like to get started in the technology sector or who simply want to share their knowledge with a small business in this field. If this sounds like you, contact us so we can learn more!

### How does the program work?

There are two elements to the programs: 1) for individuals that want to be entrepreneurs and have an idea to start their own business; 2) individuals that have skills and experience and want to support a small innovative business.

### *Entrepreneurs*

This track is for those who may have found themselves displaced from the traditional workforce and now have the opportunity to perhaps start their own business that they have always dreamed about. Or perhaps it's simply time to make that career change. Project ReInvent™ will work with you to help provide resources and mentorship to get you started, from design workshops to seeking investor funding. We can also offer a place to meet, think and create, at our lab in Everett or Arlington, where we offer space to meet with others who can get your idea off the ground.

### *Individual support to Small Business & Startups*

Many startups fail as they typically lack the key resources needed to provide the necessary technical, project management and business support. In addition, an increasing number of existing small businesses are recognizing the need to pivot or reinvent their business to address shifting market conditions and would benefit from some of the same actions and access to talent required of startup businesses.

If starting your own business isn't for you, you may be excited to work with a small business in a dynamic, startup environment. If this is the case, you can become part of the Project ReInvent Corps - a group of highly skilled individuals that are available to connect with small businesses to share their extensive knowledge and skills to improve the success level of these new and existing small businesses. This could be in the form of mentoring or consulting/advisory capacities with the goal of forming relationships and business connections.

### **Benefits of Project ReInvent**

Whether you are interested as an entrepreneur or as an individual supporter, Project ReInvent™ offers many benefits. Maybe you are someone who has an idea and wants to see it through to market. For those seeking to get their own business off the ground or want to license an idea, we offer a range of readily available resources and support mechanisms.

For individuals who may find themselves displaced from previous employment due to economic conditions, being part of the Project ReInvent Corps allows you to maintain positive business engagement helping to get drive our economic recovery. Also, during a time of non-permanent employment it offers a means of ensuring concurrency on your resume through active participation with businesses while also establishing connections for future endeavors.

### **How do I apply?**

For more information or to apply to participate in Project ReInvent™ please go to <https://nwirc.com/programs/project-reinvent/>.



**Workforce** Snohomish



Workforce Snohomish and NW Innovation Resource Center have forged a partnership to support innovative small businesses and startups who are building their businesses for the future economy. Many startups fail as they typically lack the key resources needed to provide the necessary technical, project management and business support. In addition, an increasing number of existing small businesses are recognizing the need to pivot their business to address shifting market conditions and would benefit from some of the same actions and access to talent required of startup businesses. As of June 2020, 44,165 Snohomish County workers have lost their jobs. While efforts persist to engage, upskill and re-employ this workforce, this dislocation of the workforce affords an opportunity to expand start-up activity in the region; as well as provide start-ups and existing, established businesses with access to talent.

In response to the confluence of these factors, Workforce Snohomish and NW Innovation Resource Center have committed to co-develop a program by the end of September 2020, to afford opportunities for innovative small and start-up businesses and dislocated workers. This plan will outline target audiences, articulate the mechanisms for outreach and engagement, and the facilitation of matching talent to business needs. Existing resources will also be incorporated, including NWIRC workshops, advisory services, facilities and when feasible, utilization of workforce development resources to support the engagement of dislocated workers. Costs components associated with implementing and scaling this program in Snohomish County will also be assessed.

Upon implementation, the goals of this program include:

- Increase innovative start-up activity in the region, with an emphasis on recovery, resiliency and building the future economy;
- Support existing, innovative small business retention and recovery;
- Increase start-up and innovative small business access to regional talent;
- Retain talent in the region's workforce, particularly in science, technology, engineering and financial disciplines; and
- Provide an opportunity to expand entrepreneur experience of dislocated workers and recent graduates.

It is envisioned that this project will provide an opportunity for dislocated workers to share their extensive knowledge and skills to improve the success level of these new and existing small businesses; as well as explore entrepreneurial opportunities for their own ideas and engage in workshops. Additionally, the program seeks to cultivate opportunities to engage recent college/university graduates to work with innovative start-ups or existing small businesses to gain experience and cultivate entrepreneurial skills, with the support of an experienced mentor.

August 20, 2020

The program will emphasize support of innovations that align with the digital economy of the future and emerging technology. By working together, we can help the current economy while at the same time building the skills and technologies needed for our future economy.

Next steps.

Workforce Snohomish and NW Innovation Resource Center is in the process of reaching out to organizations to support effective outreach and engagement of the target audiences for this program and completing a document to articulate program design and implementation.

For more information, please contact:

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