

Securing Employer Input on Local Workforce Development

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Abstract

In 2015, the US Department of Labor (DOL) set funding aside to align workforce development initiatives with employer needs within key local economic sectors.¹ In this study I explore how the Workforce Development Council (WDC) for Snohomish County used DOL funds to produce and identify employer concerns within regional economic sectors. In accordance with the WDC funder DOL, WDC held roundtables for Snohomish County employers. Employers from the major sectors of the local economy identified their current and predicted concerns within their sector's workforce pipelines, development, and retention. I will identify the concerns from each sector and across the multiple sectors. I will lay out policy suggestions about what will most benefit Snohomish County's workforce development. Finally, within this study I will identify the strengths and weaknesses of WDC's approach as a tool in prioritization and assessment of workforce development programs.

¹ United States. Department of Labor. Employment and Training Administration. *TEGL 31-14 Sector Partnership National Emergency Grants*. By Porta Wu. Washington DC: US Department of Labor, 2015. Print.

Purpose of the Study

The widespread perception that public funds for government agencies are inefficiently spent is often based on the assumption that a regular non-internal feedback loop is missing. Without external feedback and accountability, organizations can become self-serving. The US Department of Labor (DOL) funds workforce development through state governments and local organizations. Workforce development is the human resource strategy for managing the broad needs within the regional workforce in concerns of the supply and creation of those needed skills and talents. DOL funding is tied to meeting outcome matrices as defined by national policy; these outcomes are general enough to address the broad issues faced locally. By design, policy allows for broad interpretation in order to permit implementation of the national policy that accommodates unique local issues and constraints. Funding can be withdrawn or blocked in the future for failing to achieve outcomes. This means in practice that organizations receiving these funds tend to focus on implementation of programs that are more likely to achieve general outcomes within the local environment. The general nature of the national focus may lead to the development of local target goals that do not maximize community benefits. The DOL's standard outcome measures are typically calculated using participant data such as training completion, obtaining employment, and employment retention five quarters after exit, among others. Another broad measure used to monitor local programs is the total or percentage of funds used for training and/or development programs. Systematically, having measures on total expenditures pushes for max funds to be spent. But such expenditure measures provide limited accounting of the cost / benefit analysis for the local community. For example,

expenditure measures may not be sufficient to assess whether actual training attended to the skills needed within a given community. If this occurs, it may lead to the false conclusion that additional funds are necessary, when instead the problem is actually misaligned local programming. Similarly, the type or level of employment targeted or achieved may not be appropriately weighted. Temporary positions over 16 months or entry-level employment may not be distinguished from career placement into high-demand fields. In these ways, current policy and practices do not provide systematic feedback to check program alignment with local communities' needs. External feedback is also essential because these needs change over time. Finally, issues of coordination and evaluation of community benefit are compounded by the multiple identities that make up the workforce development system (workforce councils; primary, secondary, adult and higher education; chambers of commerce; local governments; non-profits; among others) even at the local level. Policy implementation is improved when program evaluation is linked to externally defined community needs.

Local employers are primary stakeholders in the development of skills and the employment of jobseekers. As articulated through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, a primary goal of DOL-funded workforce development organizations is to place people in career pipelines that develop into self-sufficient wage-level employment among local employers.^{2,3} DOL is not alone among the federal agencies in moving

² United States. Department of Labor. Employment and Training Administration. *Workforce Investment Act -- Adults and Dislocated Workers Program*. US Department of Labor, 22 Apr. 2008. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <https://www.doleta.gov/programs/general_info.cfm>.

³ United States. Department of Labor. Employment and Training Administration. *TEGL 17-05 Common Measures Policy for the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Performance Accountability System and Related Performance Issues*. By Emily DeRocco. Washington DC: US Department of Labor, 2006. Print.

policy in this direction. The Department of Education notes that employers comment on the inadequacies of graduates, and states that career readiness is a key assessment standard being developed for K-12 and higher education.⁴ The Department of Education defines nine skills that are required to make a person career-ready, and education in the U.S. should be judged on providing these skills.⁵ As such, identifying and addressing business concerns is required to reach the end goals stated by multiple federal agencies that direct the national workforce development.

Unfortunately, coordinated business engagement has been severely limited among various workforce development organizations such as K-12 schools, higher education, technical training, certificate programs, re-employment, and adult education. Accordingly, program foci and local demands may be unaligned, resulting in significant inefficiencies and the less-than-optimal achievement of individual career potential, as well as reducing the growth and stability of the local economy and mismanaging limited public resources.

Workforce development organizations typically define their outcomes as the provision of training or other resources that help individuals into career pathways leading to self-sufficiency. This means that for the vast majority of these organizations, the end goal requires placing their clients in the productive workforce of local businesses. As such, DOL believes that identifying business needs and concerns should help structure priorities within local organizations focusing on workforce development. Despite the fact that many publicly funded organizations running

⁴ United States. Department of Education. *College- and Career-Ready Students*. By Chad Aldeman and Kevin Carey. Washington DC: US Department of Education, 2010. Print.

⁵ United States. Department of Education. *Employability Skills Framework*. US Department of Education, 2010. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <<http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/>>.

workforce development programs may see themselves as helping to prepare participants for the local workforce, DOL believes that regular and systematic business feedback and validation can improve local program outcomes. Also, this feedback could provide validation when businesses ask for community services and training. Would the provision of a space for businesses to openly talk about issues, concerns, and desired skills within their local workforce, confirm or signal a need to realign programs within local community organizations around different priorities? Based on these questions, DOL in 2015 released a \$138 million grant with a focus on creating sector partnership development with the clear requirement that employers must be engaged in the planning process.⁶ This was the start of a long-term structural change goal in which business re-defines priorities within the workforce development system. This is to be accomplished through an industry-led body of representatives from a single local economic sector that meets on a regular basis. The subcommittee on higher education in the US House of Representatives reported, “Sector partnerships are industry-led collaborations between key stakeholders connected to a local or regional industry that optimize investments by carefully targeting training to local and regional employer skill needs.”⁷ In 2015, then-Secretary of Labor Perez stated, “Building a better workforce system means doing things in smarter more effective ways”.⁸ He also stated that the

⁶ Hanks, A. (June 19, 2015). DOL awards sector partnership grants. National Skills Coalition. Retrieved on April 8, 2017 from: <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/news/blog/DOL-awards-sector-partnership-grants>

⁷ United States. Government Printing Office. *MODERNIZING THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT: DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE JOB TRAINING SYSTEM FOR WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS*. Washington DC: U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, 2011. Serial No. 112-41. *Government Printing Office*. Web. 1 June 2017. <<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112hrg68532/html/CHRG-112hrg68532.htm>>.

⁸ United States. Department of Labor. Newsroom. *\$150M Available To States To Strengthen And Expand Innovative Job Training And Reemployment Strategies For Laid-Off Workers*. By Jason Kuruvilla. US Department of Labor, 29 Apr. 2015. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <<https://www.DOL.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20150794>>.

system should build partnerships of a “diverse set of stakeholders, including labor organizations, public or private employers, and the local workforce system. We also gave special consideration for partnerships that included community-based organizations.”⁹ The DOL training guidance statement that “successful sector partnerships are industry-led” has led to many states forming employer-led bodies that include members of the public, education, training, and other community organizations.¹⁰¹¹ These bodies are places to identify workforce concerns and limitations and arbitrate ways to align them with sector needs locally.

The purpose of this study is to assess the effort to start sector partnership implementation within Snohomish County. The study accepts the DOL premise that there are issues with the current lack of industry-led program development within workforce development programs, which is believed to have led to wasted time spent in training, a shortage of skilled workers demanded by employers, harm done to economic stability and growth, and mismanagement of public resources. Workforce Snohomish, the Workforce Development Council (WDC) that covers Snohomish County, won a portion of the abovementioned grant funds and has taken the initial steps to advance sector partnership development within their area, providing a base by which they hope to achieve greater accountability in their community. In this study, I will code the

⁹ United States. Department of Labor. Newsroom. *Testimony of Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis before the Committee on Education & Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, February 3, 2010*. By Hilda Solis. US Department of Labor, 3 Feb. 2010. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <https://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/congress/20100203_Education.htm>.

¹⁰ United States. Department of Education. Employment and Training Administration. *Industry Champions. WorkforceGPS*, 3 June 2016. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjCqt_xvp3UAhWnrLQKHY1SBBgQFggnMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbusinessengagement.workforcegps.org%2F~%2Fmedia%2FWorkforceGPS%2Fion%2FFiles%2FNew%2520Sector%2520Strategies%2FSS_Skill_Building_Industry%2520Champions_20160603FINAL.pdf&usg=AFQjCNH76EO4wFVP9WIXZJxtX-Eggybn9w>.

¹¹ DeRenzi, Brooke, and Bryan Wilson. *Skills in the States Sector Partnership Policy*. Washington DC: National Skills Coalition, 2015. Print.

concerns collected by the WDC that were expressed by employers during five separate sector meetings and assess the strengths and weaknesses of using that input to advance the WDC process of implementing industry-led sector development partnerships. A primary goal of workforce development programs work is to place individuals on career pathways to economic self-sufficiency within local businesses. In this research, I explore the following questions:

- What are the concerns Snohomish County employers identify within their economic sector?
- What would businesses like to see prioritized or changed within local workforce development programs?
- Do business roundtables provide policy suggestions that can be acted upon by particular workforce development agencies?
- What additional information may be necessary to implement effective sector development programs at the local level?
- Taking stock of the approach, what were its strengths and weaknesses for considering the next steps in advancing development within specific sectors?
- What does this study indicate would be the most useful next steps for the WDC?

In line with the strategic model currently supported by the DOL, the answers to these questions should indicate how an industry-led model would affect future public policy within Snohomish County workforce development.

Literature Review

David Muhlhausen has published reports reviewing external and internal governmental analyses indicating that federal job training fails to benefit participants, and that their elimination would save around \$27 billion in the budget by 2025.^{12,13,14}

The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported in 2009 that research at DOL on workforce development was insufficiently prioritized. Consequently, DOL is unable to inform workers or policymakers which of its workforce development programs are most effective.¹⁵ The GAO reported:

“WIA’s [WIOA predecessor program] statutory funding formulas, states’ funding levels may not always be consistent with the actual demand for services. This occurs because formula factors are not aligned with the target populations for these programs.”¹⁶

Responding to the GAO, in May 2016 the DOL released the results of a randomized controlled trial study. The report affirmed that clients who utilized intensive services benefited from the program, but evidence suggests that the majority of clients who participated in less intensive training performed no better than a control group that

¹² Muhlhausen, David. "Making Job Training Work is a Tough Job." *The Heritage Foundation*. N.p., 24 Aug. 2005. Web. 29 May 2017. <<http://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/commentary/making-job-training-work-tough-job>>.

¹³ Muhlhausen, David. "Job-Training Reform: Finding Out What Works." *The Heritage Foundation*. N.p., 13 June 2014. Web. 15 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/report/job-training-reform-finding-out-what-works>>.

¹⁴ Muhlhausen, David. "So Far, Federal Job-Training Programs Have Been Outright Failures." *The Heritage Foundation*. N.p., 15 Mar. 2017. Web. 15 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/commentary/so-far-federal-job-training-programs-have-been-outright-failures>>.

¹⁵ United States. Government Accountability Office. Office of Public Affairs. *WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT: Labor Has Made Progress in Addressing Areas of Concern, but More Focus Needed on Understanding What Works and What Doesn't*. By George Scott. 09th ed. Vol. GAO. Washington DC: US GAO, 2009. Print. 396T. pg 8

¹⁶ Ibid. pg 7

received no services.¹⁷ The study additionally found that higher-cost trainings were negatively related to various outcome variables. These results support Muhlhausen's analysis that spending more does not necessarily result in better service to the public.¹⁸

One means of responding to these efficiency concerns involves the development of sector partnerships. The National Governors Association report, *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age* (2013), suggests that local or state workforce development will be more successful than national programs.¹⁹ Key members of sector partnerships include public school systems, adult basic education programs, community colleges, universities, community-based organizations, human services organizations, organized labor, apprenticeships, workforce boards / One-Stops (Worksources), and economic development organizations. Each sector partnership would be centered on industry members from a single economic sector.²⁰ These partnerships would set public policy by having industry leaders identify their needs, including workforce concerns. The sector partnership would arbitrate and coordinate resources in a sector-specific strategy to answer the concerns of industry, which would allow for economic development. The report finds that many states are at various levels of implementation of the model and reviews multiple states' proofs of concept.

DOL had supported sector development at various levels in the past, but in 2015 released \$150 million in Sector Partnership National Emergency Grants (SPNEG) to

¹⁷ McConnell, Sheena, et al. *Providing Public Workforce Services to Job Seekers: 15-Month Impact Findings on the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs*. Mathematica Policy Research. Washington DC. Pg xxvii

¹⁸ Muhlhausen, David. "Federal Job Training Fails Again." *The Heritage Foundation*. N.p., 10 Mar. 2017. Web. 15 Mar. 2017. <<http://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/report/federal-job-training-fails-again>>.

¹⁹ *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age: Implications for State Workforce Policymakers*. Washington DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2013. Print. pg.2

²⁰ Ibid. pg. 3

implement local sector partnership development across the nation.²¹ The guidance letter states that businesses must be central to defining how an area is developed, and that workforce programs should be demand-driven, “thinking more broadly about what a workforce organization or intermediary can do to help businesses thrive and grow beyond simply placing workers in jobs and arranging training.”²² Along with the guidance letter, the DOL sent an Implementation Framework for all its funded agencies to use.²³ That document suggests that the implementation of workforce development should be implemented in 5 steps: 1) data-informed decisions by involved industries; 2) industry engagement; 3) sector-based service delivery; 4) sustainable and continuous improvement; and 5) organizational capacity and alignment.²⁴

Along with DOL, other federal agencies, including Department of Education, have begun to require business partnership involvement.²⁵ ²⁶ The Department of Education defines nine skills necessary for “career readiness” that all educational institutions should use to judge their own success.²⁷ Additional support for partnerships with local businesses involved in workforce planning and implementation is now defined as a goal. In its 2015 report *Skills in the States Sector Partnership Policy*, the National Skills

²¹ United States. Department of Labor. Employment and Training Administration. *TEGL 31-14 Sector Partnership National Emergency Grants*. By Porta Wu. Washington DC: US Department of Labor, 2015. Print.

²² Ibid. pg.5

²³ United States. Department of Labor. Employment and Training Administration. *ETA Sector Strategies Framework*. Washington DC: US Department of Labor, 2015. Print.

²⁴ Ibid. pg. 3

²⁵ United States. Department of Education. Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. *Tools for Building Employer-Educator Partnership*. US Department of Education, 2015. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <<https://lincs.ed.gov/employers/about.htm>>.

²⁶ United States. Department of Education. *College- and Career-Ready Students*. By Chad Aldeman and Kevin Carey. Washington DC: US Department of Education, 2010. Print. pg.1

²⁷ United States. Department of Education. *Employability Skills Framework*. US Department of Education, 2010. Web. 8 Apr. 2017. <<http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/>>.

Coalition revealed that 21 states ran sector workforce development programs.²⁸ Each of these states defined their own focus. Levels of support for their programs ranged from \$200,000 in Kentucky to \$10,000,000 in Tennessee.²⁹

Implementation

Implementation of sector strategies involves partnerships between public and community resources, in addition to bringing businesses together.³⁰ It can take time for these organizations to learn to work together effectively. Working with private-sector partners challenges public-sector agencies whose practices may have stemmed from years of internal systems and studies supporting their own perceived value.

Colleges provide an example of some of these challenges. They are an important aspect of workforce development, and can be a key partner within sector development partnership. But they are generally large multi-dimensional organization that can have a multitude of internal priority-setting sub-divisions. As such, the right representation among college leadership can add value to sector planning and provide the feedback and accountability for college programs. Also many colleges are driven by enrollment, justifying their practices under the assumption that higher enrollment is better for society. Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl theorize in “Help Wanted” (2010) and “Recovery” (2013) that supporting college attainment aids economic recovery and growth.^{31 32} Organization believe they are adding value without an external body arbitrating there

²⁸ DeRenzis, Brooke, and Bryan Wilson. *Skills in The States Sector Partnership Policy*. Washington DC: National Skills Coalition, 2015. Print. pg.2

²⁹ Ibid. pg. 8

³⁰ *Training Manual*. Phoenix : Next Generation Sector Partnership, 2017. Print. Pg.6

³¹ Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl. "Recovery: Job growth and education requirements through 2020." (2013).

³² Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl. *Help wanted: Projections of job and education requirements through 2018*. Lumina Foundation, 2010.

focus it hard for organizations to see any reason to join a partnership that may not share the same value perceptions as the colleges. Partnership with college leadership may enhance understandings that are critical to workforce development. Even within colleges, it is apparent that many college students are either unemployed or underemployed. More to the point, even though internal college assessments point out problems, the colleges themselves are not held directly accountable. McGhee in "University of Washington Undergraduate Degree Recipients Five and Ten Years After Graduation (2008): Frequencies and Cohort Differences" (2009) reported for the questions "How well did your University of Washington experience prepare you for" with all answers including "not at all", "little" and "somewhat" [all below a positive response] equaled the following: graduate school 34.7%, everyday life 44.1%, contributing to society 40.3%, lifelong learning 39.9, and current or most recent job 27%.³³ Colleges, like other organizations, would like to continue to build their reputation for enhancing community benefits, and productive involvement in workforce partnerships are a vehicle by which they may do so.

Internal feedback and research is one aspect of evaluation, but it is much larger step to become invested in a partnership populated by organizations that do not hold the same interests, and will at times likely set priorities that do not align with one or more of its members. Continuing with the previous example, within a sector partnership college representatives would operate within a group containing apprenticeships and unions that together would focus on non-college priorities. Robert I. Lerman in

³³ McGhee, Debbie E. "University of Washington undergraduate degree recipients five and ten years after graduation (2008): Frequencies and cohort differences." *University of Washington Office of Educational Assessment* (OEA Report 09-02) (2009).

"Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities in the United States" explains how, "Despite the well-documented high average returns to college, variations in interests, capacities, and learning styles suggest many young people would benefit far more from alternative pathways to rewarding careers than they do from academic-only pathways." Using other countries as a frame of reference shows the benefits of public investment and helping those that go through these programs.³⁴ Also, the state of Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board in the 2015 Workforce Training Results Apprenticeships found that employers that engage with and use apprenticeships are very satisfied with the skills and knowledge of those that come out of those programs and view the apprenticeships as necessary and desirable.³⁵ This is highlighted by the federal Department of Labor in their "Notice of Availability of Funds and Funding Opportunity Announcement for: Apprenticeship USA State Expansion Grants" making significant investments in developing apprenticeships in the United States. These reports highlight the fact that colleges will have to compete with non-academic organizations.

However, colleges are only one of the workforce development organizations possessing limited incentives to enter a workforce development sector partnership. For this reason, the DOL's current grant cycle focuses on processes that will lead to a future industry-led sector partnership. One of the many reasons for a push to bringing a business focus into planning and leading feedback about resources is to have workforce

³⁴ Lerman, Robert. *Proposal 7: Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities in the United States*. Washington DC: The Hamilton Project, 2014. Print. Pg.1

³⁵ United States. Washington State Employment Security Department. *Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. 2014 Workforce Training Results: Apprenticeship*. Olympia, WA: Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, 2014. Print.

development be demand-driven. Businesses tend to have demand-driven opinions on what programs and types of training will better align with community needs and enhance their ability to stay competitive in an increasingly global market. But as the above examples show, there are many vested interests within workforce development from all organizations that pose challenges in creating effective sector partnerships.

Success stories

Success stories in workforce development within the sector partnership model have been covered within the paper “Workforce Development: Moving down the supply chain with Strategies of Engagement”.³⁶ This paper focuses on initiatives in Tennessee in advanced manufacturing and healthcare and indicates that once the sector partnership system is implemented, success depends upon trust between the workforce partners and stakeholders. The report concludes that developing a 21st-century workforce is critical to regional economies. The report’s findings were supported by a separate impact study conducted on three separate state programs.³⁷ That study found that participants going through sector-focused programs fared better than control groups in terms of wages, employment, hours and even benefit packages.³⁸ This was supported by the Subcommittee on Higher Education within the US House of Representatives, which reported that well-designed industry-led sector partnerships can

³⁶ Bell, Robert R., et al. "Workforce development: moving down the supply chain with strategies of engagement." *SAM Advanced Management Journal* 79.2 (2014): 4.

³⁷ Maguire, Sheila, et al. "Tuning in to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study." *Public/Private Ventures* (2010).

³⁸ Ibid. pg.12

have significant positive outcomes for low-income workers, including earnings gains, steadier employment, and increased access to health care and other benefits.³⁹

One of the many successful programs of sector partnership has been the King County WDC. Through their IT partnership, they helped build a career pathway by working with a local community college, local businesses, Joint Base Lewis McCord and local veterans' groups. This program took recently discharged veterans and trained them in IT, specifically for job openings with Amazon. The company provided the funds for training, the military base with community groups provided job seekers with soft skills and the willingness to train, and the community college over multiple iterations was able to align its training of the specific population with the actual needs of the businesses. The job seekers were provided with a guaranteed local job, businesses gained a skilled workforce, and the college had non-debt-funded programs.

³⁹ United States. Government Printing Office. *MODERNIZING THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT: DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE JOB TRAINING SYSTEM FOR WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS*. Washington DC: U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, 2011. Serial No. 112-41. *Government Printing Office*. Web. 1 June 2017. <<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112hrg68532/html/CHRG-112hrg68532.htm>>.

Data and Methods

The beginning stages of the WDC's implementation of sector partnership development within Snohomish County, it was necessary for them to first determine the sectors on which Snohomish County should focus. With identified sectors, the WDC convened the Snohomish County employers to collect data on workforce concerns. From this data, I could identify the business's perception of the needs of the community that are and are not being serviced by local workforce development entities was summarized. I conducted an examination of the level of information gathered by this process. Additionally, I performed an analysis during this research to evaluate how the WDC process of sector partnership development was carried out to identify best practices and needed improvements for moving forward.

This study used the data the WDC produced by bringing companies with comparable needs together by categorizing them by their economic sector of the economy, under the assumption that businesses within the same economic sector pull from the same skill pool and thereby would share similar workforce concerns. For this study, the top five private economic sectors employing the highest number of people within Snohomish County were chosen:⁴⁰

1. Manufacturing
2. Retail
3. Tourism
4. Healthcare
5. Construction

⁴⁰ EMSI; 2017.1 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; accessed 3-23-2017

Business sector interviews were conducted in cooperation with the Snohomish County WDC and led by WDC's Program Manager. Within each of these sectors, employer focus groups identified workforce concerns within their sectors. Participants included owners, human resource managers, business leaders and/or, depending on the sector, union leaders. WDC staff acted as notetakers and recorded the open-interview conversations. Their notes were then summarized and collated by the staff at the WDC. All names and other identifying material were removed.

Over the course of the five industry focus group events, a total of 83 individuals participated in the events, representing 58 Snohomish County employers. After holding the five events, it became clear that different focuses and concerns arose out of the different sector groups. This supports the concept that dividing the regional economy into separate sectors will produce more focused and useable feedback. This was also seen through the shared interest of the businesses that attended. It became apparent that even within the local area many businesses do not communicate with their industry competitors on a regular basis.

The previous steps conducted by the WDC lay out the creation of the raw data on which I base the following study on. It was important to identify the concerns being shared among multiple businesses within and across sectors to inform workforce development policy. For the research, the raw data from the sector group interviews were coded to reflect concerns or priorities that businesses identified to drive policy change within local workforce development. Within the data, six reoccurring categories of concerns were identified within the five sectors' group interviews. They are:

1. **Pipeline:** Concerns related to how workers enter or get hired in the sector.
2. **Development:** Concerns regarding the training or development of people already in the field.
3. **Retention:** Concerns related to keeping people within the business and the industry in general.
4. **Millennials:** Concerns that specifically relate to the younger generation entering the workforce.
5. **Work Culture:** Concerns related to the inability of employees to enter or adapt to work culture.
6. **Other:** All other concerns not covered within the above categories.

These concern categories were derived by recognizing and coding the type of issues identified in the data. The type of issues identified in the data and the concern category under which this study has placed them are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Variables Identified by this Study

Category	Code	Type of Issue Identified
	P	Perception of Work
	KoP	Knowledge of Career Pathway
Pipeline	MO	Military Veteran Outreach
	HSO	High School Outreach
	PQ	Pipeline Quantity
	WS	OneStop System
	HE	Higher Education
	MAR	Misaligned Resources
Development	bED	Basic Education
	TP	Technical Proficiency
	Bi	Bilingual Ability
	NL	No Local Resource
	In	Internal Development Program
	RN	Retention
Retention	Age	Aging Out
	JH	Job Hoping
Millennials	M wk.	Issue Within Work Culture

	M out	Outreach To Millennials
	WC	Work Culture
	PD	Personnel Development
Work Culture	L	Leadership
	CS	Customer Service
	IS	Interpersonal Skills
	ex	Expectations
	IT	Entitlement Attitude
	ID	Interview Development
	exp	Experience
	RE	Reliability
	cell	Cell Phone
	pre	Presentability
	CC	Child Care
	Tr	Transportation
	WD	Wage Deference (Cross-County / Cross Industry)
Other	HB	Health Benefits
	Reg	Regulations / Legal
	DR	Drugs
	RI	Rural
	CD	Cultural Diversity

I aggregate the concerns generated within the open group interviews for each sector. Concerns with a high degree of consensus are highlighted. Analyzing these results permits us to see what recommendations represented businesses might make regarding workforce development. Analysis of the results also provides insight into the strengths and weaknesses of information generated by sector group interview events, and how to improve information gathering in order to help guide the development of the sector partnerships.

Results

Summary of Overall Outcomes:

Over the course of the five separate sector group interview events, a total of 83 individuals participated in events representing 58 Snohomish County employers. Their concerns were collected into summary notes and formatted with bullet points. These bullet points were coded to the type of issues listed in Table 1. In total, 908 issues were coded.

Table 2: Frequency of Concerns Identified within Employment Sectors

Concern Category	Issues Identified	Total	Retail	Healthcare	Manufacturing	Hospitality	Construction
	Perception	38	16	0	14	0	8
	Knowledge of Pathway	55	8	33	10	3	1
Pipeline	Military Outreach	5	1	0	3	0	1
	High School Outreach / Younger Generation	18	4	3	6	1	4
	Pipeline Quantity	31	0	13	3	8	7
	OneStop System	33	0	0	6	27	0
	Higher Education	8	1	3	0	1	3
	Misaligned Resources	44	0	28	13	0	3
Development	Basic Education	15	9	1	3	2	0
	Technical Proficiency	38	2	27	6	1	2
	Bilingual Ability	11	2	3	3	3	0
	No Local	7	0	2	5	0	0
	Internal Development Program	42	2	16	11	8	5
	Retention	26	2	9	5	10	0
Retention	Aging Out	9	0	2	3	1	3
	Job-Hopping	16	7	2	4	1	2
Millennials	Issues within Work Culture	29	9	0	14	1	5
	Outreach to Millennials	19	5	3	6	1	4
	Work culture	118	35	5	21	34	23
	Personnel Development	48	18	9	11	6	4
Work Culture	Leadership	11	6	0	1	4	0
	Customer Service	29	17	1	5	5	1
	Interpersonal Skills	53	23	3	21	3	3
	Expectations	38	14	8	10	1	5
	Entitlement	22	10	0	9	0	3
	Interview Development	39	12	6	12	8	1
	Experience	8	2	3	3	0	0
	Reliable	38	26	0	5	2	5
	Cell Phone	4	2	0	1	0	1
	Presentability	8	6	1	1	0	0
	Child Care	4	2	2	0	0	0
	Transportation	9	4	1	3	1	0

	Wage Difference	6	1	1	2	2	0
Other	Health Benefits	2	1	0	0	0	1
	Regulations / Legal	11	0	9	1	0	1
	Drugs	3	0	0	1	0	2
	Rural	4	0	1	3	0	0
	Cultural Diversity	9	1	5	0	0	3

Through these events it became clear that, in addition to internal sector concerns, cross-sector issues were also identified. I categorize and define the major cross-sector concerns as follows:

Pipeline

- A lack of understanding of the pathways to careers was mentioned 55 times across all sectors. Businesses believe that high schools, the workforce system and higher education should provide more information about the variety of career pathways students can take to employment. The failure to understand how to enter and enhance employment within a field can limit job seekers opportunities within all sectors.
 - Retail employers believed that this caused a shortage of people pursuing better-paying and high-level positions. This affects the mid-level management positions the hardest. Employers believe these positions do have family wage potential far above the average retail positions and for the low-barrier requirements, can be a pathway for many.
 - Healthcare employer felt that there career development maps for most occupations in the healthcare field are missing, and this is because of the constant and ongoing regulation changes in the industry. There is also a lack of knowledge of all the jobs within the field even within internal human

resources, with most of the employers always looking for more workers at all levels of experience.

- Unhelpful employee perceptions were mentioned 38 times across the retail, manufacturing, and construction sectors. Employer within these fields felt that despite opportunities within their industry with higher wage potential, the imbedded cultural perception turns people away from working within their industries. As such, there are not enough workers entering this fields.
 - Retail employers recognized that employees do not see quality career paths within this field. They reflect that this is likely why most retailers lack job applicants and operate below full staffing most of the time.
 - Manufacturers feel traditional blue-collar jobs are disrespected or seen as demeaning. This is despite the fact that many such jobs offer wages that are higher than white-collar jobs within this or other sectors covered by this study. Employers believe the current emphasis on academic degrees limits the number of people entering the manufacturing field.
 - Construction employers feel they have a perception as a bad career. They agree that this is compounded by the fact that during the last recession the field crashed. Employers hope that the current high demand with low barriers and higher wage potential could help change this perception.

Development

- Technical proficiency was mentioned 38 times. All sectors identified that there is a need for further technical proficiency within their staff, but these skills were by and large sector-specific.

- Specifically, healthcare employers' saw that they experience shortages in many specific technical skills. This problem is compounded by the fact that with ever-increasing regulation within the industry, technical certificates are increasing in number and are a legal requirement to move into positions.
- Internal development programs were mentioned 42 times. Every sector identified internal practices they need to work on to be more open or better able to adapt to changes in the industry and economic conditions. These were mostly sector-specific.
 - Specifically, in healthcare increasing regulations have broken the traditional career progression pathways, as each position is now a separate technical certificate program and not a natural career path. The businesses were very interested in trying to find innovative ways to develop internal systems that recent regulations have dissolved.
 - In recreation businesses see this as important because wages are lower here than for most sectors, so developing internally is a key aspect of the industry.
 - Manufacturers and construction are trying to adapt to cultural changes and become a more sought-after career choice. Even with higher wages, company cultures are making changes to draw people into the industry.
- Misaligned training resources were mentioned 44 times within the healthcare, manufacturing, and construction sectors. The employers say local resources are misaligned as existing training is inappropriate for actual occupation and some

certificates are not being accepted by employers. They believed schools are training to test and not to industry standards. Employers said training programs that do produce graduates in line with the industry needs produced too few trainees. Other training programs are not located locally, which means it is even harder or most costly to bring those skills into the community.

Retention

- Job-hopping was mentioned 16 times. This was the only universally shared retention issue across sectors. There is a belief that this is an increasing problem. Businesses claimed that job-hopping limited the energy spent on investing in internal development, as a sense of loyalty is no longer a trait possessed by many workers. Turnover is a very costly and relevant concern to the employers.
 - Retail, manufacturing and construction mentioned poaching from neighboring companies is a common practice within their sectors. This is common because skills are transferable wherever you go. This is viewed even by the employer practicing it as increasing the issue and not a solution to the root problem.
 - Specifically, construction employers mentioned that job hopping is compounded by the fact that it is very normal for even good companies to hit dry spots every couple of years where work will be low, making it even harder to retain top employees.
- Aging out of the industry was mentioned nine times across all sectors except retail. This is causing concern within multiple sectors as the most experienced

baby boomers move out of the sectors leaving gaps in personnel and institutional knowledge.

- Both construction and manufacturing employers are currently concerned about the number of experienced workers that are about to age out of the trades. Because of the poor pipeline of workers over the last few decades, the bulk of workers is approaching retirement age.
- Specifically, in healthcare their administration and nursing staff have a sizable portion of the workforce near retirement age.

Millennials

- Concerns about millennials within the workforce were mentioned 29 times within all industries other than healthcare. Being that these workers are the future to all companies, multiple sectors have a large interest in them. The businesses feel that the younger generation is not entering the workforce with a work ready level of understanding of expectations. Employers state the younger generation does not know how to communicate interpersonally. This causes a lot of drama in the workforce and hurts customer service provision. Employers believe millennials have a sense of entitlement that makes it hard to train and groom them. Also, that attitude and dedication to work is no longer instilled in workers, which makes it also very hard to train and develop them into career-minded individuals. Millennials seem to not be looking at a lifetime career, just the instant gratification. This likely plays into the job-hopping concern already mentioned above.

- Retailer believed that many younger job applicants lack the basic skills needed even for entry-level positions.
- Manufacturers believing that they are missing basic mechanical skills that were natural in previous generations. This reinforces why they support placing vocational training and shop back into schools.
- Employers in construction fell they are trying to work with millennials to bring them into the trade and work to change the internal culture in construction, but the younger generation is lacking mechanical skills and work ethic. The construction trade works on tight timelines that cannot be changed in some regards. Safety regulations are strict, and skilled work is needed at all times. The industry cannot adapt as much as other fields to ease and be welcoming to millennials, as the safety risks and timetables cannot allow for the relaxation of standards.
- Outreach to the younger generation was mentioned 19 times through all sectors. This is a concern, as employers feel it is hard to motivate millennials in comparison to other generations. In addition, most sectors are facing a retirement wave caused by the baby boomers, and so they need people to backfill these positions.
 - Healthcare, like all sectors, is trying to find new or more ways to outreach to millennials to get them into their sector. They would like to do more hands-on training in high school and perhaps organize tours to generate more interest in the field.

Work Culture

- Work culture was mentioned 118 times. Concerns about the lack of readiness to work and ability to adapt to the working culture was shared by all sectors. These concerns centered on understanding hierarchical structures, how to communicate with leadership, following policies, having the drive to complete tasks given, and other traits that employers feel should be understood prior to seeking employment.
- Interpersonal skills were mentioned 53 times. Businesses feel that many workers need to know how to work alongside other people. The ability to express themselves clearly, being approachable, taking feedback and guidance, and to behave appropriately in a shared working environment.
- Personnel development concerns were mentioned 48 times. There are traits and attributes that job seekers and employees need to improve their career progression. Companies do not feel they can train people in these ways, individuals either have them or they do not. Examples of some of these are the willingness and capacity for training, flexibility, loyalty, confidence, moral understanding, and self-direction.
- Interview concerns were mentioned 39 times. One of the great limitations to entering the sectors is the ability to present oneself well in a resume and an interview. This comment came up for every sector, as the importance of legible applications and presentability in interviews are shared concerns.
- Expectations concerns were mentioned 38 times. Inappropriate work expectations regarding wages and other conditions can create longer term

problems. Employees fail to understand that experience provides a way to build advance in a field. Also, unrealistic expectations too often result in turnover that wastes everyone's time and resources.

- Health care employers specifically cited concerns that new hires are not ready for the work or the work environment when they arrive. Employees have very different expectations of the job than what they encounter. This has led to a number of people entering the healthcare field and quitting after years of training because they cannot adapt to the environment.
- Customer service concerns were mentioned 29 times. Businesses believe that a lack of interpersonal skills also translates into a lack of customer service abilities. Every sector, regardless of the position, stated a need to be able to communicate with external and internal customers.
- Reliability concerns were mentioned 38 times by all sectors other than healthcare. Employers feel that many workers lack a sense of the importance of being reliable. Many employers experience unreliable workers regarding attendance and punctuality.
 - Within construction because of tight timeframes, contractors must keep up with their work, which requires them to keep their team on time and on track. Falling behind can threaten the employment of the entire staff, which makes construction employers more likely to let go of non-present staff quicker than other industries.
- Workers' sense of entitlement was mentioned 22 times by the retail, manufacturing, and construction sectors. Some employees feel a job is a right,

and that they are owed a wage regardless of effort or outcome. This type of worker is harder to train and is seen as less productive with more interpersonal issues with other workers. This attitude will set the worker up for a downward career progression and if possible being replaced if another jobseeker is available.

Other

- Transportation was mentioned nine times across all sectors except construction. Many of the workers lacked transportation, and public transportation did not service all locations or at all times of the day. This limits some job seekers from employment, and causes inconvenience or harm to some to keep employment.

In the next sections, I consider key issues identified within each of the five sectors that were not mentioned above.

The Retail Sector

On September 27, 2016, a roundtable focusing on retail employer concerns in Snohomish County was held. Twenty individuals representing 16 retail businesses were present. From this, 248 issues were coded in the takeaway summary of the roundtable. Highlights of the coded issues in the concern categories are:

Development

- The need for adult basic education was mentioned nine times. Developing retail staff is restricted by a lack of basic education. This is because once hired, some workers cannot move up in the company due to their lack of the basic writing and math skills necessary for advancement into higher positions.

Other Concerns

- Childcare was mentioned two times. This was an issue for workers, and the businesses felt that it was not their responsibility to provide it and that it was a worker's responsibility.

The Healthcare Sector

On October 26, 2016, a roundtable focused on healthcare employer concerns in Snohomish County was held. Nine individuals representing eight healthcare businesses were present. From this, 200 issues were coded in the takeaway summary of the roundtable. Highlights of the coded issues in the concern categories are:

Pipeline

- The quality of the workforce pipeline was mentioned 13 times. Healthcare employers feel that they are facing an epidemic of low numbers of people interested in coming into healthcare compared to their need for a workforce. The regulations within healthcare create high barriers to entry and make the technical requirements and number of specific job positions almost incomprehensible even to those within the system. It was important to note that employers were missing both clinical and non-clinical workers.

Retention

- Retention concerns were mentioned nine times. With the low workforce pool in healthcare, retention remains a constant and costly issue in the field. Most workers can find other employment rather quickly. The best location to gain skilled clinical staff is from other hospitals, which has led to poaching being a prime way to gain staff. Also the working environment is also high-paced and stressful, which leads to many leaving the field.

Other

- Regulation concerns were mentioned nine times. Outside of these nine mentions, health care spent a great amount of time talking about the seemingly impossible situation of regulations in the field. This limits the pipeline, making training more expensive, reducing growth, and breaking career pathways in upward development. Individual businesses have no actual pull in the creation of the regulations and must react to the political forces that keep adding regulations and restricting the healthcare industry.
- Cultural diversity was mentioned five times. There was a great desire for more cultural diversity in health care. This was based on a desire to have people become better able to communicate and give better bedside assistance to those from different cultural groups.

The Manufacturing Sector

On November 31, 2016, a roundtable focusing on manufacturing employer concerns in Snohomish County was held. Fifteen individuals representing seven manufacturing businesses were present. From this, 225 issues were coded in the takeaway summary of the roundtable. Highlights of the coded issues in the concern categories are:

Pipeline

- High school outreach was mentioned six times. Manufacturing was more interested than any other group in reaching out to youth and changing the perception of careers in manufacturing. They also want vocational training and shop classes placed back into schools.

Retention

- Retention was mentioned five times. For some employers, retention is a concern because once employees have some experience, their opportunities to move elsewhere increase. There is also a large pay difference within the field, and employment at Boeing is especially viewed a lucrative opportunity.

Other

- Rural concerns were mentioned three times. Some manufacturers cannot find people to work in their rural locations.

Hospitality and Recreation

On January 25, 2017, a roundtable focusing on hospitality and recreation employer concerns in Snohomish County was held. Twenty-five individuals representing 19 recreation businesses were present. From this 134 issues were coded in the takeaway summary of the roundtable. Highlights of the coded issues in the concern categories are:

Pipeline

- Concerns about the workforce system were mentioned 27 times. Businesses felt the public workforce system was not effective in providing reliable and quality workers, and that the online public job posting system is too complicated.
- Concerns of the workforce pipeline quantity were mentioned eight times. There was a significant lack of quantity of workers going into multiple occupations in the field. Employer feel this is because the industry is one of the lowest paying.

Retention

- Retention concerns were mentioned ten times. Retention is hard at all levels because wages are generally below those of most other sectors; as such, most

in in the field must like the occupation itself to stay in it. As such, businesses try to find those workers who enjoy the working environment and travel options in the field.

Work Culture

- Leadership concerns were mentioned four times. The businesses highly valued individuals that showed any level or desire of leadership, which is rare in the field.

Other

- Wage differences were mentioned two times. The wage difference in King County pulls many workers out of the area, as they have higher wages for the same position and skill level.

The Construction Sector

On February 22, 2017, a roundtable focusing on construction employer concerns in Snohomish County was held. Fourteen individuals representing 8 construction businesses were present. From this, 101 issues were coded in the takeaway summary of the roundtable. Highlights of the coded issues in the concern categories are:

Pipeline

- Concerns with workforce pipeline quantity were mentioned seven times. Currently there is a boom in construction, and all residential, commercial, and infrastructure contractors are low in workers. They must go out of state to recruit people for local jobs. Also, there are very few non-traditional workers entering the field.

Other

- Cultural diversity was mentioned three times. Because of regulations about diversity, construction employers are always looking for non-traditional workers to join, but it is very hard to draw new workers into the field.
- Drug concerns were mentioned two times. Drugs are an ongoing issue, as the state has legalized marijuana, but many companies still test employees for drugs, as federal regulations see them as illegal. This has resulted in many employers having to let skilled workers go.

Reflections on the Data Produced

In this section I assess the extent to which actionable information has been attained through this initial implementation of the DOL model. The goal of the WDC process is to produce information to better align community resources with regional sector employment needs.

First, I will look at the quantity of information produced. As this is the first time these types of events have been held locally there is nothing to compare it to. I assessed from the 908 data points coded that the open interview format can produce an extent of information. I expect that if this process is continued and in a more reoccurring fashion way within the sectors, further helpful information would be gained.

Second, I will look at the specificity of the data. A concern is the generality of the information that was recorded within the data from the first wave of group interviews covered in this research. While concerns were identified, at times it can be hard to identify what the employers were exactly addressing. For example, when employers in healthcare and construction discuss training issues we cannot be certain whether that information should be addressed at the instructor, program, or institutional level. Similarly, when a need for additional workers is mentioned, the specific occupations may not have been precisely recorded. When employers mentioned the various pathways into the sector, little to no more information on the specific pathways was given. I conclude that a single group interview does not provide sufficient data to be actionable in guiding strategies for sector development. To specify the sectors' concern, I conclude that further meetings with both employers and workforce organizations would

need to be engaged to draw out more specific data points to allow the creation of actionable programs and industry alignment.

Thirdly, I will look at the potential uses of the data that collected by the WDC. Although the generality of the information gathered can be problematic, the quantity of data allows for multiple points of usability. I assess the primary value is employer-driven information on the local level within Snohomish County is currently very sparse. As such, I believe the uses for the WDC generated data is the following:

- The WDC can use this data for preliminary planning. The employer feedback provides a general idea of what resources and partners will need to move forward implementing the multiple sector partnerships within Snohomish County.
- The local One-Stops (the employment assistance resources) can make a connections with the businesses that engaged with the roundtables with a general sense of the needs within their sector. This will help workers that make up the One-Stops engage with local businesses by providing them with a greater understanding of their needs.
- This data can be used within grant funding applications for local training and economic development programs. This is because employer-driven data is highly valued within local, state, federal, and private grant offering organizations.
- Having the employer feedback that counters the cultural perceptions of the sectors can help change the workforce system from perpetuating false perceptions. A couple of examples within this data: retail has no career possibilities, construction is demeaning, manufacturing is a poor career choice, or that college is the only route to family wages.

Reflections on Building Sectoral Partnership

- Even with the general understanding of the programs and trainings that were identified as misaligned or unwanted can provide a point to start the process of bringing organizations into the partnership. This is because this data can be useful to the organizations which may not know themselves. As organizations, likely would not purposefully create misalignment of services provided and community needs, it could be that their internal processes have not kept them in line. I assume most organization will wish to maintain and build a reputation of offering the best services. Thereby they would want to hear to critics that their internal review process failed to capture in a manor designed to improve their benefit to the community. Handled correctly, this part of the data could lead to a sense of value from the partner organizations to continue to collect this type of data and build partnership.
- Finally, the data can be used for engaging with local and state political officials about the local workforce concerns from the Snohomish County businesses perception.

I assess if this data collection method continued further usages and actionable items would develop as the quantity and specificity of data would increase over multiple engagements.

Reflections on Building Sectoral Partnerships

To understand and assess the process that Snohomish County WDC used to start the industry-led model implementation, I document the successes, concerns, and lessons learned during the five roundtables. It was not expected to be fully implemented by the end of the research period, but to make future progress, it would be necessary to understand where in the process the current system is.

A major concern involves the limited involvement of employers within multiple economic sectors. This may be because employers within specific sectors engage in their own associations or similar groups. In sectors having strong employer associations, additional events run by WDC were often perceived as duplicative and potentially harmful. Retailers, on the other hand, were particularly interested in continuing their conversations, as this is an innovative concept in their sector. Having the WDC convene employers in sectors that lack strong pre-established sector-specific business associations was seen as positive and beneficial to sectoral development. This is supported by the stronger buy-in from the retail and construction businesses, which noted that they were not used to cross-talk between different organizations. The manufacturing and healthcare sectors, on the other hand, have their own associations that address workforce issues at the state or national level. Members of the hospitality and recreation sector told the WDC that having local associations support and sponsor the meetings likely improved participation.

A second concern is that the WDC lacked mechanisms to direct systematic changes. The process the WDC has created involves the collection of business feedback. However WDC cannot require anyone to use that feedback. Having an

industry-led model cannot be claimed until there is a process that has some capacity to cause change within the system based on the businesses' feedback. Only the first steps of the implementation of the DOL model have been taken. The WDC will need to identify how the partnership and the data can create value for all partners.

A practical concern involved setting times for meetings. Restaurants, in particular, found our morning meeting times were not convenient. It was assessed that the time of day should be flexible depending on the sector being engaged.

A positive takeaway from that business enjoyed conversations within others in their sector. Most businesses do not have a forum to talk about their shared concerns, and as such, most participants were very engaged within the conversations, which was assessed to likely lead to further participation in future events.

Another takeaway was that each sector did have sector-specific concerns. Generally, as the group interviews went on a number of concerns that the participants shared greatly outweighed the non-shared interest. This also seemed to support the sector partnership development approach to business engagement. By and large, many shared issues were seen to arise from conversations among similar employers. This was assessed as a benefit to continuing the practice of separating economic sectors within a local region.

The final takeaway was that each roundtable event was able to produce feedback that was locally focused and could be used to give guidance to local workforce development programs. This seems to reinforce the DOL-supported model of developing another feedback mechanism to assess local implementation of programs. At this early stage, the feedback may not have a way to show direct program

Reflections on Building Sectoral Partnership

effectiveness, but many concerns about what is missing and training that is not aligned to needs indicates that this forum can lead to insight into what is and is not currently working from an employer perspective.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the experiences and results of the business roundtables, I am now in a position to offer some policy recommendations on the implementation of the sector development process in Snohomish County.

First, it is recommended that the process of creating sector-specific employer groups with the end goal of forming interest-led sector-specific partnerships should be continued and supported. Even the first round of these events showed that there is interest on the part of employers to engage with a system from which they have felt excluded. Employer feedback identifies some misalignment between training programs and prerequisites for successful job entry. Also, businesses that feel engaged and have a sense of ownership will be more supportive of giving continued feedback to the system. These events have shown to facilitate new voices in the system, as many of the businesses that attended do not currently sit on community leadership boards. It is believed that having continued ongoing feedback about the local workforce and concerns of local business has been and will be beneficial moving forward.

Second, it is necessary to set up and support a process to ensure business feedback is part of workforce development. Currently, local partnerships cannot be called industry-led, as the guidance received from business is not a systematic part of program evaluation or assessment. Therefore, the current process has no observed effect on the workforce system. Even if the WDC or another organization starts to be an official arbitrator between partners, some process to cause change in the system needs to be in place to have the full benefit of receiving employer feedback. If changes come through in a timely manner, then the businesses will see value in engagement, as it

becomes apparent that their time and feedback is valued. Currently, other than passive interest within the workforce system in what businesses have to say, there have been no actionable examples of systematic change or even a response to the businesses presenting the value of their feedback within the observed research time period.

Thirdly, it is recommended that after the second point is addressed, these events should become more regular and ongoing. The information gained from a single event within a sector was potentially beneficial, but it would be better to build an ongoing group of business members meeting regularly. This would provide a time and place to hear further concerns and share provided and developing solutions to those concerns the businesses have identified, allowing for deeper and clearer data to be collected and developed on a more regular basis. Additionally, this would create a reciprocal support from the sector partnership that would develop practices and partnerships that could further support aligning the system.

Finally, it is recommended that the facilitator have the businesses rank their concerns within their sector—instead of just collecting the notes of the concerns that business identify within each sector, to set additional time aside to have the participants rank their concerns. This would allow for a priority list of action items for the sector on which the sector partnership would be better able to focus its resources, meaning that the limited resources available would go towards the most critical concerns businesses identified.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Finally, it is necessary to discuss the limitations of this study and to propose future areas of research regarding sector development within Snohomish County.

Limitations of the Study

There were multiple limitations relevant to the output of the study. The first is that this study is a single-level analysis based on a defined limited population's perception of the issues. As such, this study takes employer comments as objective because the goal of the study is to identify their understanding of the concerns in the workforce. A multi-level analysis may result in different interpretations of the data.

Proportional representation of companies within categories may not be similarly conceptualized by the participants. This study relayed heavily on data collected from a small number of participants with largely different economic categorizations. Not all businesses may see themselves as being in the economic categories that the WDC identified. It would also be hard to state if any single roundtable had sufficient participation to be conclusively representative of a sector as a whole.

Data collection from the roundtables was collected by summarizing summary notes from multiple people's point of view from usually different tables within each event. This does mean that the data used for this study is simplified and generalized and not derived from transcripts. It is believed that the aggregated concerns were documented, but more specific concerns and data may not have been documented.

It must be noted that some concerns documented within the sectors were not tied to a specific occupation within the sector. This could make it hard to link policy

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implementation to specific education partners or workforce programs, and may limit the impact of some concerns raised by the research.

The multiple agencies that helped conduct the events placed a heavy emphasis on collecting concerns and data focused on workforce issues. This means that some feedback received in an open forum may not have been documented in the summarized outcome documents.

This study was primarily based on the subjective assessment of summarized qualitative data from open interviews. As such, the conclusions have a large bias in terms of the researcher's interpretation of the data.

The researcher was also the program manager of the WDC and was heavily involved with the hosting and organizing the events, so author biases and priorities may affect the assessments and conclusions reflected in this study.

Future Recommendations

Additional research questions arose during the course of this research that, while outside the scope of this particular paper, would make for significant areas of research in their own right and could add significant value to further sector development by identifying consequences and benefits in Snohomish County.

- 1) Conduct the same research within the greater Seattle economic area. It would be important to identify if the county or the economic region would be the best place to conduct sector specific development. As 60 percent of the workforce within Snohomish travels to King County for employment, it may be better situated to

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look at the three WDC areas of Pierce, Sea-King, and Snohomish together, as economically it would be hard to separate the effects that each has on the other.

- 2) Research how vocational training became misaligned within industries' standards. With ongoing support for bringing back vocational training as a greater asset of developing the workforce, it would be necessary to find out how these training programs can become unaligned to the point that they are seen as negative by the industry for which they are supposed to be directly training.
- 3) Specifically, for healthcare, it would be beneficial to identify which regulations have broken the career progression route of medical staff and which regulations have raised the entry barrier for the field. This study would be an added value if it had a way to determine the cost of the regulation against the supposed damage against which it was likely in place to protect.
- 4) Future research to identify the best practices for creating an industry-led workforce partnership. Having assessments of the tiered systems of implementations and what limitations along with the successes of each system would be beneficial to have for policymakers that wish to create a local plan of action.
- 5) A study to review and clarify the justification for why an industry-led partnership model is the primary model supported by the national workforce system.

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Appendix

Workforce Snohomish's Sector Development Strategy

Sector Development / Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant Goals:

Developing sectors related to local job creation.

Executive Summary

Sector Development is a Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration push to conduct regional planning and develop sector strategies for the locally identified significant economic sectors nationally. These strategies will be developed to provide activities focusing public and private regional resources to in-demand career pathways that result in stronger economic development within each sector of the economy resulting in opportunities in employment within in-demand occupations.

Objective

The objectives of developing sector-specific strategies locally in Snohomish County are to identify the business needs within the local target sectors in regards to their workforce; to align the local training, public, and community resources to address these identified business workforce needs; identify fields of steady career progression to the local populace to create sustainable employment pipelines into family wage opportunities within the local sectors.

Purpose

The objectives will result in the investment in a higher skilled local workforce and lead to advancement of the international competitiveness of the local workforce, culminating in the continued elevating of the economic advantage of conducting and operating businesses within Snohomish County.

Sector Selection

The Sectors have been selected from combing regional organizations (Snohomish County Executive's Office, Puget Sound Regional Council, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board, and the Employment Security Department Washington State) sectors and prioritizing them by the sectors to benefit from local workforce development within each sector locally.

The following is in a priority order:

- 1) Manufacturing
- 2) Retail and Whole Sale
- 3) Technology
- 6) Transportation and Construction
- 7) Agriculture, Fisheries and Forest Products
- 8) Tourism

- 4) Education, Life Science, and Global Health
- 5) Trade and Business Development
- 9) Energy and Sustainability

Way Forward

Sector Development will be a long term and continual process of maintaining employer engagement and refocusing local resources to address their ever-changing workforce needs, both in the short and strategic time frame and within each of the local critical economic sectors.

Forming sector focus groups

Within the target sectors, various means will be used to build active groups of representatives within the sector specific business community. These groups may be formed around a preexisting convener from industry sector membership organizations, committees, panels, or subgroups of other organizations. The method for convening will be determined by the particular sector's business community. If a natural preexisting convener is not present locally, a convener for specific sector focused group may be a representative from a local organizations, such as, the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County, Workforce Snohomish, Snohomish County Trade and Economic Development, or another regional organization. Each sector-specific focus group will be determined by what form best engages their participants. This non-uniformed approach across the sectors will lead to local resources being used more beneficially, because it avoids duplicative efforts or groups and forms complementary organizational structures that fit the diversity of each local area sector and thereby efficiently utilizes resources to reach the end goal of forming an active association of invested participants within each sector.

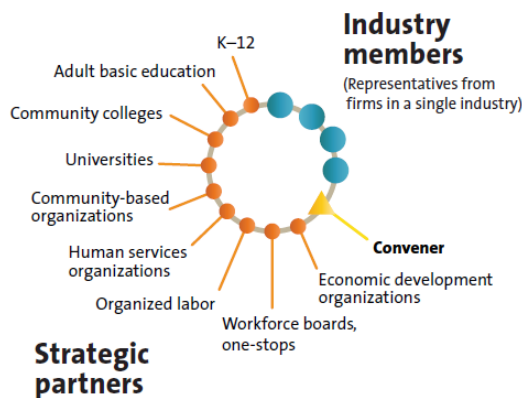
Purpose for Forming the Focus Groups

From the industry members of these participant groups within each sector, groups will evolve over time to form sector focus groups, panels, and committees depending on the sectors level of engagement and participation. Once these groups are formed they will meet in annual intervals in order to maintain a relevant operational viewpoint of the sector's current needs.

The primary focus of the sector-specific meetings will be to support employers in identifying current and predicted workforce related issues directly from the employers within each sector. To call out the diverse workforce related issues (skillsets, experience, certificate, legal, educational, and recruitment) within the various specific occupations in each sector. Having a cross section of the sector's employers confirm from their operation viewpoint concerns other businesses within the sector are experiencing or foreseeing, and having confirmation or dispelling issues being assessed based on the local economic and workforce statistical data. By this means, a more complete picture of current business workforce needs and workforce pipeline issues can be revealed and documented.

Using the Sector Information

The recorded business input and feedback will allow the local community strategic partners (Outlined in the graphic on the right) to digest the current operational business environment within each sector. From the position the strategic partners can identify possible solutions to issues. From the solutions the group can recognize means to align its members’ resources of educational, public, and private organizations around the defined solutions and open the needed workforce pipelines for the sector, leading to the further development and competitiveness of the sector.



Benefits of Sector Development

Over time, the feedback loop of the operational viewpoint of businesses and the success of the community partners’ solution to workforce issues will allow ongoing refinement to each sector’s workforce pipeline and thereby the sectors’ economic development. Thus mitigating both the lack of skilled workers and potential employees being trained within a not-in-demand skillsets; increasing the efficiency in the local return in the public and private investment developing the local workforce.

With an ongoing market alignment of the local workforce training, resources will flow more in line with in-demand skill sets, leaving potential employees better positioned to hold necessary and desired skill sets needed within each sector, thereby raising the productivity of businesses and prospective employee’s wage potential. This process will result in higher employment stability.

Investment into a workforce holding locally demanded sector-specific needed skill sets will further provide a competitive advantage to conduct and operate businesses within Snohomish County, not just within the region but within the global workforce marketplace. These results lead to sustaining and growing employment opportunities well into the future as businesses continue to stay in and relocate to Snohomish County.

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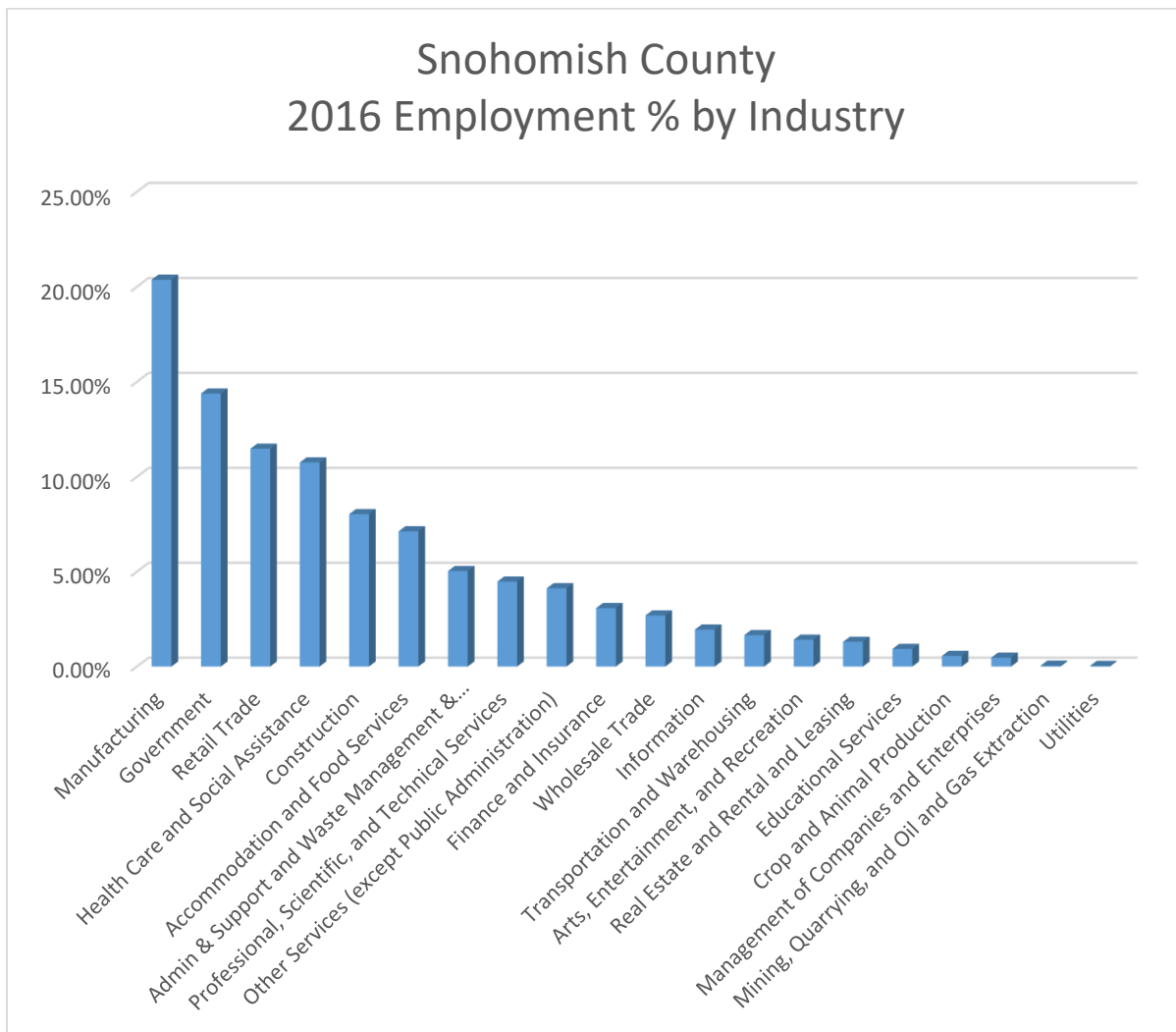
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Workforce Snohomish

Updated 3-1-2017

Workforce Sectors

Examining the top eight sectors in Snohomish County, defined by the percentage of the population employed in private industries, manufacturing easily outranks all other sectors. Even when faced with potential layoffs within the aerospace industry, manufacturing because of its dominant size, will remain the largest industry in Snohomish County. Continued efforts from Economic Development departments and organizations to attract new businesses will help diversify Snohomish County’s manufacturing hub. Shown by companies such as Philips Medical and Fluke (Danaher) which continue to have a strong non-aerospace influence in the county.



Source: EMSI; 2017.1 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; accessed 3-23-2017

Takeaways from the Manufacturing Roundtable Meeting on 11/31/16

How to Read: underlined are the Different Sections, red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements**, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations**. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. What do you feel is missing from current applicants?
 1. A general lack of work ethic.
 - a. Applicants/new workers lack strong work ethic
 - b. No loyalty to the company
 - c. Lack of professionalism
 - d. Lack of commitment
 - e. Not being punctual.
 - i. Work ethic cannot be trained at work. They come with it or they will not have it.
 - ii. Veterans have a lot of skills and characteristics that you're talking about.
 1. Most employers don't know how to tap into Veteran hiring pools.
 2. Some employers had experience with hiring veterans and would probably do it again
 2. Employees no-show,
 - a. The employee doesn't get prior approval for missing a day off
 - b. Simply doesn't show up and doesn't call in.
 3. Lack of interview skills.
 - a. Applicants have not done research on the company
 - i. They don't know anything about the company they are interviewing with
 - b. They do not know what questions to ask during the interview,
 - i. Such as starting with "how many holidays do I get?"
 4. Entitlement attitude
 - a. They want to set their own roles
 - b. They do not know their worth and grossly over estimate their importance
 5. Not having confidence in themselves
 - a. Bring parents or wife to interview
 - i. Have wife call to set up interviews
 6. Experience in the industry (especially in the specific part of manufacturing)
 - a. Lack of experience with a particular piece of equipment.
 7. Many applicants don't have necessary skills to do the work even after they finish a two-year training program (welder and painter).
 - a. Many job seekers have been trained within local training programs and "think" they have experience, but the employer sees that as education and not experience in a real-world setting.
 - b. Employer feel instructors only teach students to pass a test, not to be employed.
 8. Most schools don't have specific training programs (not just a single class, a more broad program)
 - a. Painters
 - b. General manufacturing mechanics
 - c. Non-aerospace CnC (Computer Numeric Control)
 - d. Manual manufacturing skills
 9. Lack of skills:
 - a. Interpersonal relationships,
 - b. Personal interaction,
 - c. Communication skills.
 - d. Being comfortable with difficult conversations.
 10. Multiple generations in the workforce.
 - a. The old-timers don't always "buy-in" to changes.

- b. Trying to implement social activities (i.e. chili cook-offs) to build relationships, establish company loyalty, etc.
- 11. Lack of technical skills
- 12. Lack of repair skills
- 13. Younger Generation / Millennials
 - a. The younger generation doesn't have the skills needed for manufacturing.
 - b. Their expectations are too high.
 - i. We within the system need to calibrate expectations related to wage potential
 - 1. During training not always mention the average wage or normal career wage
 - 2. Spend time explaining career growth
 - a. Entry level is a necessary step
 - b. Students will not start at average salary with no experience outside of school or certificate program
 - ii. There's a need to build appropriate expectations for starting pay.
 - 1. Experience in the company and skills learned still determine pay
 - c. Entry level applicants do not want to start as a machine operator,
 - i. They wish to go straight to programming machines.
 - 1. The criticism is that if someone doesn't know how the machine operates, or how it is used within the shop, they will not be a good programmer regardless of their education or training.
 - 2. The best programmers start as machine operators and are then trained as programmers.
 - d. Millennials don't have the opportunity to work on cars, learn shop skills from their dads/uncles anymore so they don't have the innate experience that previous generations have had.
 - e. Millennials see the world differently than others.
 - i. They don't have loyalty to a company.
 - ii. They are seeing a model in the IT world, where it's expected to move around a lot and that's not the culture in manufacturing.
 - f. Maybe we (businesses) can't expect the young to adapt to our world, we may need to make changes to adapt to their world.
 - i. In recruitment, benefits, company culture, and events
 - 1. Possibly hiring managers could use training on how to recruit and retain millennials
 - 2. Millennials are interviewing you.
 - ii. But businesses need work ethic from the employees
 - g. Entry level workers need to get over their "entitlement."
 - i. Businesses do not owe wages or even a position purely because a person is alive, they owe to those that show and produce value.
 - h. There are many challenges when trying to hire millennials.
 - i. This is a generation growing up with a lack of vocational hobbies and skills. (lack of High School shop classes)
 - i. Millennials aren't comfortable with face-to-face communication.
 - i. They are more likely to text or email.
 - ii. They need to learn how to interact with colleagues.
 - 1. There is often a communication gap.
 - j. One employer gave a tour to local college students
 - i. One kid acted as if he knew more than the employer did.
 - 1. Arrogance is annoying and not desired.
 - ii. "They think they know everything."
 - k. What resources are available for companies to understand youth?

2. What are the issues with Manufacturing Retentions?
 - 1) Positions within shipping and warehouse
 - a) Very high turnover rate.
 - 2) All entry level positions are short people in their pipelines
 - 3) Welders and painters are in great demand.
 - 4) Job hopping is a serious issue.
 - a) Many employees jump from job to job for small amount of extra money.
 - b) Some will stay long enough to reset unemployment
 - 5) Employee turnover can be costly.
 - 6) Some companies state that there are less issues around retention, compare to recruitment which is a much larger issue.
 - 7) The “gray wave” (retirement age) has hit the local employers with massive retirements.
 - a) There are always open Engineering positions
 - i) With experience, some jobs pay over \$100,000 still cannot fill.
 - 8) Some companies are trying to focus on building a culture where people want to work there, and will stay with the company.
 - a) May not pay as much as the larger companies, but have better benefits, or vice-versa.
 - b) Providing an environment where people want to work
 - i) allowing for flex schedules (4x10s),
 - ii) telecommute
 - (1) Manufacturing shops still have to maintain shifts –
 - (a) Flexible schedules don’t work in that environment.
 - 9) Employers provide employee the opportunity to move up to management, but many of employees aren’t interested.
 - a) They don’t want to take greater responsibility.
 - b) Employers identify workers to invest in through:
 - i) Their work quality
 - ii) Their willingness to work
 - iii) Their mechanic inclination
 - iv) Their understanding of the work environment
 - v) Their motivation and drive
 - (1) Especially when given the opportunity
 - vi) Their stated interest in progression
 - (1) Be willing to ask management that they want to advance in the career
 - (a) Not just pay:
 - (b) With leadership, skill development
 - (2) Matched with proving themselves
 - (3) Managers engage them to ask about career plan
 - 10) Some want to move quickly, and ask for a raise within 90 days.
 - a) Must have shown a spark and work ethic that most applicants lack
 - 11) Without honest, well-designed reviews and constructive discussion, it is challenging, perhaps not even possible, to build a truly successful company for the long term.
 - a) This is limited because many cannot take or wish to listen to anything other than positive comments
 - b) We’re willing to invest in the person if they’re willing to work hard.
 - 12) Lacking skill set: customer service
 - a) Everyone in the company has either internal or external customers
 - i) including engineers and project managers
 - 13) Companies lack a clear career development plan.
 - a) At least one employer is working on implementing the structure.
 - b) Ask the employee for their career goals.
 - c) The hard skills are there, if they are mechanically inclined and want to work, they will do well.
 - 14) If employees know that a career takes time they would be better prepared for occupations.
 - a) Younger generation wants quicker rewards.
 - b) Advancement takes time and experience.

- c) Be patient. Work hard. Reward will come. "We're willing to pay you more if you're doing good work."
3. What could help develop the workforce in manufacturing?
- 1) The work itself turns people off.
 - a) Need people who want to work with their hands
 - b) Many people don't want to get their hands dirty.
 - 2) Skills needed to be developed
 - a) Project management,
 - b) Interfacing with internal and external customers
 - c) Networking skills
 - d) Being able to identifying internal customers
 - i) To understand our responsibilities that go to those customers
 - ii) provide constructive communication
 - e) Customer service
 - i) Asking customers what they need
 - (1) (i.e. asking shipping how they want a box of parts loaded).
 - 3) Employers recognize "We need to do a better job internally with mentoring less experienced people."
 - a) Typically less experience starts at night shift and there is less experienced mentors available on that shift.
 - 4) Manufacturing positions are suffering from "image problem" with younger generations.
 - a) Millennials, in particular, stigmatize blue-collar jobs.
 - i) As the result, millennial workers are largely turning away from jobs in manufacturing.
 - ii) For many years, American education largely ignored the value of blue collar careers.
 - iii) Advertising or outreach to the younger generation is needed to build interest
 - 5) Many schools only focus on the aerospace industry
 - a) This limits the structured pathways in to the broader manufacturing opportunities
 - b) Also limits the technical skill labor pool that many manufactures need.
 - c) Software specifically for aerospace
 - i) Other types of manufacturing use different programs
 - d) General manufacturing industry have different materials than aircraft.
 - e) Using different software from Boeing, so they would not hire some college graduates.
 - 6) Skill Centers
 - a) Kids get 1000 hours of training and "get it" so they move faster through training
 - 7) Robotics and mechatronics programs are helping
 - 8) Over time businesses have lost some employees to Boeing, but not that often.
 - a) Many employees regard Boeing as the golden ticket.
 - 9) Mentorship programs
 - a) It's hard to take people out of their work zone in a production facility for that kind of role.
 - 10) Mid to senior level positions need to know how to interview applicants.
 - a) There is interest in this type of leadership development
 - 11) Many companies don't have open machines for training.
 - a) Some jobs are specialized, so school can't really teach. Employers have to train the employee themselves.
 - 12) K-12 education changes are needed to focus on the importance of soft and basic skills.
 - a) Employers are open to having schools/students tour their facilities.
 - b) How many high schools still have shop classes? (Sedro Wooley, Arlington, Snohomish)
 - c) One father of 13-year old volunteered to have his son's middle school class tour their facility but there is no money for busses.
 - d) The earlier we can get kids interested the better. "There must be some kids like us out there."
4. Recruitment?
- 1) Some of the employers stated that WorkSource system truly helps

- a) The business solutions staff have been very helpful
- b) One employer states that since the switch to the new system they post every job posting on WorkSourceWA
 - i) Craigslist is still their primary hire from source
- 2) Other employers had never heard of WorksourceWA or WorkSource Businesses Solutions
- 3) Recruiters often use Indeed (white collar) and Craigslist.
- 4) Pre-employment drug testing is often used.
- 5) Lots of language barriers with applicants.
 - a) One company has a bilingual (Spanish) lead that can translate and give directions to other workers.
 - b) Most companies don't have those resources.
- 6) Remote business locations can impact the employment
 - a) Such as businesses in Sultan are negatively impacted
 - b) Bus line access or operational schedule
- 7) Many turn down the job after learning they will lose unemployment security benefits.
- 8) Experience is the most important one for welder, painter, and mechanic.
- 9) Assemblers can easily be trained, so soft skills are important.
- 10) Employers are looking for candidates who are motivated and responsible.
- 11) Hiring ex-offenders
 - a) Since most people who have spent time in prison find it difficult to get jobs and re-enter society, they'll likely be extremely grateful and loyal to any employer who gives them a chance.
 - b) Ban-the-box laws
 - i) The "box" refers to the question on job applications that asks applicants whether or not they have ever been convicted of a crime. Ban-the-box laws require employers to remove this question—as well as any other queries about criminal history—from job applications.
 - c) Employers still don't want to hire ex-offenders with serious criminal history. The risk is high for employer.
 - d) Some businesses have hired ex-offenders and felons.
 - i) They are not worse nor better than other applicants.
- 12) Companies have open position but feel that they have not received enough qualified applicants.
 - a) Don't have large enough applicants pool to select from.
- 13) How can applicants present themselves better?
 - a) Showering before interview and orientation.
 - b) Be able to speak for themselves and be confident.
 - i) To not bring wife/mom to interviews
 - c) Applicants should understand that total compensation is not just wage, also includes benefits, holidays, and so on.
 - d) If a job seeker can't spell "machinist" they won't get an interview. (Misspelled words and/or improper grammar will make it difficult to get an interview)
 - e) Employers stay away from job jumpers, even when they are desperate
 - f) It's hard to see if a person has "drive" in a resume. It takes a couple of interviews and often not obvious until the person has been on the job for a couple of months.
 - g) Don't know how to dress for an interview. Applicants come dressed too casually – in a t-shirt and jeans – and although that would be proper attire for the shop, it is still not appropriate for an interview.

Takeaways from the Healthcare Roundtable Meeting on 10/26/16

How to Read: underlined are the Different Sections, red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements**, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations**. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. What are the pressing issues you are experiencing related to hiring?

- Healthcare is experiencing “pandemonium” there is such a shortage of talent.
 - Hospitals are predominately short on talent
 - Especially in nurses
 - All the sub groups within that field and specialties
 - Lack of nurses and only about 65% of final providers
 - There is huge demand for registered nurses (RN) and the supply is low.
 - A high percentage of the nurse workforce is female.
 - Challenges include the need for flexible schedules.
 - Critical care staff
 - This is not just in this county, but all along I-5
 - Cross-trained staff and those willing to be cross-trained in multiple areas
 - No clear way to address the situation and issues faced
 - All this creates fierce competition among employers to keep and pull (steal) talent
- Struggle with different pipelines
 - Not just nurse and doctor.
 - Hard to hire multiple skills
 - Certain degree and certificates
 - Required by law and non-negotiable
 - Others are hard to come by (IT, HIPA, etc...)
 - Sterile processing technician
 - Not provided in the local region
 - Anesthesia technician
 - Not provided in the local region
 - Surgical technician
 - Community Health Workers is another important position.
 - Mid-level experience is hard to have in the right area and skills
 - Entry level is having issues to fill. But is the numerous specific skill within each occupation that is far harder to recruit and keep staffed.
 - Add to this many of these key positions are under the radar and unknown to even to those within the field
 - Many sub positions of an occupation are required by law. It is not until a person leaves, will it become clear that the person also field key positions within the system
 - Ongoing needs for Health Unit Coordinators that doesn't require a degree
 - Need to be IT savvy, and take medical terminology courses.
 - Nonprofit health providers also have a lot of demand
 - 1-on -1 in-home health care aides
 - State laws are barriers to hiring people
 - Social Worker

- Lack supply on social workers, especially for high-level education personnel.
 - Social workers are important to mental and behavior health patients.
 - There is significant need for social workers
 - discharge planners
 - care coordinators
 - transition planners
 - behavioral health workers
 - Community health workers are needed and helpful,
 - But almost no one chooses it as their first path into health care
 - Likely finding the position after already being in the field
 - This limits the pathway into the position
 - Seeing increased needs in acute care (more acute care patients)
 - Children care specialist are hard to find
 - High need for Dental Assistants.
 - The Dental Assistants pipeline is very small.
 - Generally, cannot pay as high as other healthcare positions
 - But can guarantee hours
 - Family Medicine Associates - people to help navigate people round the systems
 - Hard to find people willing to learn the job
 - Many positions available
- Telemedicine and virtual healthcare is the future (including telesocial work)
 - Growing telehealth and are challenged to attract healthcare providers that want to use technology differently.
 - They need to manage complex cases utilizing technology.
- Consumers want medical apps that connect directly to providers which is complicated.
 - Tech Talents
 - Healthcare industry is looking for software engineer and product manager who can think outside of the box.
 - Healthcare sector is always hiring tech positions, but have trouble filling those jobs.
- Overall there is a higher level of care needed in the hospital which demands more staff
 - There are plenty of applications for entry level positions in food service, janitorial, etc.
 - But many applicants are lacking a H.S. diploma or GED which is required
- One of the businesses has 500 employees in the Bothell office and have approximately 45-50 positions open daily and they continue to grow.
 - They need employees at every skill level
 - High turnover leads to always having open positions
- There is a lack of diversity in talent pipeline.
 - There is still a struggle to hire Medical Assistants and RNs especially those that speak Spanish.
 - Increasing the number of minorities who become health workers could bolster the supply and have the additional benefit of improving delivery of culturally sensitive care.
 - One hospital couldn't find a Spanish speaking nurse for several months.
 - Need more cultural diversity that reflects the low income patient population and more sensitivity to a variety of cultures.
- People generally don't understand the number of jobs available in healthcare

- People don't understand the career paths into healthcare positions
 - When we think of careers in health, many of us only think of doctors and nurses.
 - However, there are many other jobs in healthcare field.
 - Many of them are in high demand with good job outlook.
- Snohomish County employers have to compete with the Seattle/King County market that typically offer higher wages.
 - It can be difficult to attract Sea/King workers to Snohomish County.
 - Most people go to Seattle market, and it's difficult to bring them back
 - Large portion of people commute and this area could start to pull from those sick of the traffic commutes
- Recruits at two levels:
 - High available talent and Low available talent.
 - These two talent pools are recruited differently.
 - Low availability is "high touch" recruiting throughout the entire process.
 - High availability recruiting has lower minimum requirements and just need "to keep them warm."
 - They have received too many applications for entry level, and too few applicants for high level position.
- Recruiting providers in rural areas is difficult.
- Many organizations are using "Skill Survey" to obtain professional references that includes about 30 survey questions.
 - Hiring managers are using it as a 360 interview tool with peers and managers.
- There's a need for teleinterpretive services
- Students need more help with resumes.
 - The resume should actually reflect the person.
- Hiring needs to be more direct
 - Clearer requirements and wants for the position
 - Shorten application process
 - Hard because of the long process required by federal law
 - Have human contact through the process
 - High touch to keep them engaged

2. What are the retention issues you are facing?

- Fierce competition for experienced nurses
 - Nurses are able to pursue better options for themselves and their families (i.e. going to King County)
 - Employers struggles to retain staff.
 - They often hire entry level
 - Once the worker has gained experience they leave for increased wages at competing healthcare providers
 - Hospitals used to have training funds
 - but not anymore
 - Especially helpful in training lower level nurses in acute care
 - Some organizations have training funds to help move entry level people (e.g. environmental services and dietary) into healthcare positions
 - There's significant need for work-based learning
 - But because of regulations in healthcare, it is a challenge
 - Majority of healthcare workforce is female.
 - Thus many of them put family as a priority over their career.
 - Employees are required to work at night and weekend.

- It has been difficult to retain employees.
 - Many workers couldn't support themselves with low salary.
 - Address the provider burnout
 - Limit the different locations a job requires their staff to work at
 - Have 3-4 hours from home tele-working
- Middle-aged care providers (45-50 years) are exiting the field
 - The most talented and experience is leaving the field
- There are no small steps along a career path from entry level positions to upper level positions,
 - i.e. to surgical technician or diagnostic imaging.
 - The path is long, hard and costly
 - There are lots of people in the pipeline

3. Suggestions for future workforce recruitment

- Start outreach in high schools for grassroots recruitment
- More information about the variety of healthcare positions available
 - Can climb the ladder quickly even entering on the low level of the field
- Work with colleges and universities to really amp up programs and recruitment into programs
 - Educate general public about different types of occupations
 - Talk to college and university students, and teach public about the variety of healthcare occupations.
 - Many people enter nursing programs without prior knowledge of the field.
- Training for working at hospital
 - Homecare is different from hospital
 - Many individuals want to work at hospital but lack education.
 - Today's community college education only focus on homecare.
 - Gap between college and hospital
- Develop high school program
 - Need to develop program for supporting roles
 - Many other occupations within healthcare only require quick and low-cost education.
 - Ideal for people who come out right after high school
 - Medical Assistants is a quick program to get people in (lots of opportunities)
- Some of the hospitals have a pipeline for interns (physicians)
- Managed Medical Assistance is a 3-year program, and is a job that most are retrained into and could be trained directly into
- So many skills and so many routes lead to an unclear picture on how to pull people into specific occupations

4. Training/Education Needs

- Need collaboration with community and technical colleges to provide adequate training
- Need improved college advisory boards (for healthcare) because what is in place right now isn't working
- Need better communication with programs at colleges to provide training components that are not currently being done
- Better teachers and facilities focused in community college
 - Create program to train professional teachers.

- Hire experienced personnel from the industry, similar with MBA.
 - Better teaching indicates better graduates.
 - However, being a teacher usually makes less money than people in the industry.
 - Healthcare is difficult for people to do job shadow, and expose to healthcare working environment.
 - There is nothing like being within a real working setting.
- Becoming a doctor or high-level position within the sector could be costly due to training, licensing, and time.
- Ideally training and employers would be in line
 - Employers feel that the schools do not listen to them
 - Because of this, patients can be put into risk
 - Employees need confidence before hands-on client experience
 - Colleges are not providing the skills and experience to be hireable
- Need training programs within hospitals and clinics
- Some certs are on a limited time frame and have hard requirements that stress that any missed class will equal failing the class
 - Creates huge barriers for those with unstable lives and limits them
- There is a need for Sterile Processing Technicians and Surgical Technicians but there are no local programs.
- Students are entering training programs without a real understanding of the different roles within healthcare
 - Some go through the training and once they reach the field and get real world experience, they leave the occupation
 - Need more practicums in school
- Community and Technical Colleges need faculty to teach (current technology and techniques)
 - but the challenge is wages are lower so it's hard to recruit faculty
 - How to repurpose experienced nurses? (Could they become faculty?)
- Need robust medicine simulation labs and more interactive training
- Need more clinical externships (possibly partner with healthcare organizations to provide trainings?)
- Need regular talks between educators and employers
 - Some certificates being taught are not accepted by employers
 - Many occupations have high barriers
 - College training needs vastly more work-based and less class-based learning
 - Opportunity in internship programs
 - Outpatient care is overshadowed by in-patient
 - Create teacher externships
 - Shorten length of health education and more time in the field
 - Many get hired and learn quickly that they do not like working with people.
 - This may be years in class to find out that the field is wrong for them

5. Suggestions for job seekers

- Be flexible
 - It's difficult to secure full time positions right away.

- Be willing to work part-time or per diem to gain experience.
- To determine what kind of healthcare position may be the best fit, look at the open positions on www.monster.com or on company websites.
 - Self-educate about the opportunities.
- There are many entry level jobs that only require 9 – 12 months of education.
- Be aware experience in long term care or personal home care isn't always a pathway to clinical care.
- Employers are looking for applicants with:
 - the “sparkle”
 - soft skills
 - customer service
 - professionalism
 - communication skills
 - team work
 - appearance
 - flexibility
 - reliability
 - practical experience
 - Job seekers need to read applications before they fill them out.
 - Apply for jobs that are posted not the ones they want.
 - Understand what they are applying for
 - Self-educate on position
 - Most hiring managers are spending 4 to 7 seconds scanning a resume.
 - Anything out of place they will move on
- Be aware that Healthcare does not have hundreds of large businesses, they have five mega employers
 - So when applying do not just apply for only one position with each organization. Apply for many within each
- Be aware that most healthcare jobs in the future will be in clinics instead of hospitals

6. Other comments :

- Healthcare may be overregulated and overcertified and needs additional advocacy to lower barriers
 - Government Intervention
 - Family Medical Leave Act regulations lead to staffing challenges.
 - Recruiters believe government overregulate many things.
 - Healthcare industry have many barriers due to regulation and laws.
 - This makes the healthcare industry difficult to enter, especially when many students come from disadvantage families.
 - Many employers stressed that over requirements and over certificate barriers greatly limit hire ability of new hires and pulling people into the field.
 - Greatly limits entry level pipelines

Takeaways from the Retail Community Conversation on 9/27/2016

How to Read: underlined are the Different Sections, red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements**, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations**. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. Mindset or perception of retail careers
 - a. Retail is not necessarily what people think of as a long-term career
 - i. Causes a talent crunch at middle- and senior-level managements
 - ii. Causes a high rate of employee turnover
 - b. Commonly believed that retail is a dead-end career
 - i. There are 20 year old cart pushers
 1. Many times these situation have been largely a personal choice
 - c. Retail jobs are often perceived as lousy jobs
 - d. No knowledge of any pathway into higher positions
 - e. Just no expectation of work environment or what is expected
 - f. Lack of flexibility: Most people only want Mon – Fri job, especially for younger generation
 - g. Employee must overcome a number of common challenges and misconceptions about the work environment
 - h. Transportation and child care are two issues for employees, not the employer
 - i. Feeling of entitlement
 - i. Employers agreed that new employees know more about what their own rights are but do not know what their responsibilities are (or do not want to do what they have been asked to do).
2. Outreach
 - a. Outreach will be a way to change the perceived image of retail
 - b. We need to be able to convey a message that retail is not a “dead end job”.
 - i. There are many jobs open in retail, not just entry-level
 - ii. Retailers are specifically looking for those with leadership skills and some higher education
 - iii. Retailers want to keep people and offer options to move around, some can even offer better pay.
 1. There are options to stay within many companies
 - c. Benefits of retail experience is that they will learn:
 - i. Critical conversation
 - ii. Customer services skills
 - iii. Interpersonal skills
 - d. Student relations programs
 - i. Work summer programs
 1. Have position for students to come back to or move up in after finishing school
 - ii. Programs to introduce kids to hard jobs
 - e. Could recruit applicant by letting them know they will hold jobs for those in military so they can enter the positions when they retire from active duty
 - f. Create a new understanding of this industry and what it means to workers
 - g. Need to sell the store brand and the benefits within the organization to our current employees
 - h. Preparing for interviews is serious business
 - i. Significant training and one-on-one coaching can help retail employees meet customer expectations and alleviate some frustrations
3. Key characteristics that stand out in an applicant
 - a. Stability

- i. If an applicant has not worked for over 6 months, may not even receive an invite for an interview
 - 1. Unless they explain why they have a gap in employment.
 - b. Tailor their resumes
 - c. Clarity in applications
 - i. Explaining why, after a few years or months at an employer or different industry, all of a sudden an applicant is applying at this store.
 - 1. May not be considered unless the applicant explains why they are leaving (or have left) their last employer
 - 2. May need to clarify how commute is sustainable
 - a. For instance, the job could be in Kent, the applicant lives in Snohomish County, without clarification the employer may question the employee's sustainability
 - d. Integrity
 - e. Dependability
 - i. Calling in is becoming very regular and common
 - 1. Employees will still post on Facebook or other social media what they are actually doing, despite having called in sick to work
 - 2. Employees will not just be open and forward about upcoming conflicts (doctor, family, child or personal appointments) and will just call in or just not show up
 - f. Leadership
 - g. Interpersonal skills
 - h. Outgoingness
4. Work skills that are generally missing from job applicants
- a. Applicants do not know how to express themselves.
 - i. Examples: On a resume they write down "MS office skills" and do not explain how they use MS Office, example of their work, etc.
 - ii. Generally speaking the quality of answers applicant provide are not good.
 - 1. Too brief
 - 2. Does not related to the actual questions
 - b. Understanding friendly engagement
 - i. This can be difficult to engage on and train in the work environment
 - c. Basic work ethics
 - i. Being on time
 - ii. Willingness to work
 - iii. Doing what was asked
 - iv. Not hiding from task
 - d. Missing general life skills
 - e. Missing soft skills
 - i. Communication
 - ii. Sales skills
 - iii. Understanding customer service
 - iv. Knowing how to engage with co-workers
 - v. Understanding how to talk to a boss
 - f. Lack of flexibility
 - i. Retail is not a 9 -5 M-F job
 - g. Not being reliable
 - i. Not missing work unless it is absolutely necessary
 - 1. Especially in the first few months.
 - h. Being afraid to ask your manager or co-workers for help
 - i. Interpersonal communication is necessary; it's a great way to learn and build team cohesion.
 - i. Lack of experience

- i. Some employers will not consider a candidate whose time with previous employer was short.
- j. Finding people that want to be more than stockers or cart gatherers
- k. Hard to find people that have an idea of what they want in the next 5 years
- l. Hard to find those that have an accurate expectations of the job
 - i. Understanding what the work environment involves
 - 1. Mentally
 - 2. Physically
 - ii. People just do not understand norms of working
 - iii. Those that understand a job is harder than just doing what they want to do
- m. Passing assessments
 - i. Most assessments are behavioral and some test basic math
 - 1. Many applicants cannot pass the basic assessment test
 - a. Some companies mentioned that over 50% of all applicants are unable to pass the initial assessment
- n. Not knowing how to use basic technology: Basic computer skills, data entry
- o. Most people are intimidated by technology, especially the older generation
- p. People are afraid of change, all different types of jobs
- q. Lack of basic math skill
- r. Applicants don't understand reality of retail jobs, such as the need to do things that you don't like to do such as cleaning bathroom and working at night

5. Skills employers are looking for

- a. Work ethics and soft skills
 - i. Phones need to be turned off
 - ii. Not flexible with task and scheduling
 - iii. Not dependable coming or while at work
 - iv. Respect the work schedule
 - 1. Shows up on time
 - 2. If they have a doctor's appointment, they need to let the supervisor know ahead of time
 - 3. If they leave work for a doctor's appointment, they need to return back to work if that was the schedule
 - v. Employees with sales skills
 - 1. How to make a sale
 - 2. How to recognize body language
 - vi. How to count back change
 - vii. Not accountable for their actions
 - viii. Communication skills
 - ix. Committed to work and employment
- b. Transferable leadership skills
- c. Looking to invest time within the company
 - i. Job hopping is an ongoing issue
 - 1. The millennial generation is about what is instant gratification
 - a. Will quit for a minimal pay increase and not think about asking for promotion or working up the company ladder
 - ii. How can a company invest in people that are not willing to invest their time in the company
- d. Retail experience
- e. Able to handle more than one task.
 - i. Competent to take a list of tasks and prioritize them and work to finish them
- f. Being able to present themselves in a professional manner:
 - i. In attire
 - ii. Physical appearance

- iii. Physical and verbal communication
 - g. Being trainable
 - i. Within job responsibilities
 - ii. Willingness to cross train
 - h. Long term focus
 - i. Team worker
 - j. Availability and willing to work
 - k. Understands the reality of retail
 - i. Job requirements
 - ii. Working with the public
 - l. Initiative
 - m. Outgoing personality
 - n. Employees that understand how to deal with non-native English speaking customer.
 - i. It is good to have employees who are bilingual.

- 6. Necessary higher skills that your business needs within its mid to higher management positions
 - a. Willingness to learn new things constantly
 - b. Motivation
 - c. Employees need to be engaged to ensure that the retailer improves upon its customer experience
 - d. Commitment for long term career.
 - e. Understanding of the employment ladder
 - i. Seasonal > part time > full time > management level
 - f. Ability to be straight-forward and to the point
 - g. Availability for different time frames / shifts
 - h. Leadership skill and interpersonal skill
 - i. Customer service skills
 - i. How to deal with difficult people
 - j. People skills
 - i. How to deal with co-workers
 - k. Work ethic and initiative
 - i. Not having to always being told to "do something" or "what to do"
 - l. Dependability
 - i. Showing up on time, and ready to work
 - 1. Not taking first part of the shift just getting ready to work
 - m. Being trainable and cross-trainable
 - i. Leadership is more than "I just want to do my job"
 - n. Strong leadership skills

- 7. Other issues facing retail businesses
 - Staff demanding that employers balance schedules to work for the employees
 - i. Too many do not show up to work
 - 1. High level of excuses from employees, such as, because they didn't know they were scheduled
 - 2. Almost all employers have employee schedules out two to four weeks in advance
 - a. Generally still need to call people in because of people not showing up
 - b. Employees do not know how to use computers for work purposes
 - i. MS office
 - ii. Professional applications
 - iii. Non-social media applications
 - c. Lacking "business like" behavior such as how to dress, how to groom, how to interact with external and internal customers, and how to communicate with managers.

- i. Many need to be taught what is “appropriate” at work and what is “not appropriate”
 - d. Many employees bring or engage in drama at work
 - i. Cause issues with customers and co-workers
 - e. Argue with managers
 - i. Many workers do not comprehend hierarchical structure
 - f. Employees do not understand the concept of teamwork
 - g. Lacking self-initiative
 - i. Such as fixing on the spot (shelves, around cash register, etc).
 - ii. Will only do what they have been told to do
 - h. Many employees use public transportation so they cannot work late shifts
 - i. The cost of child care is affecting the careers of working parents.
 - j. Being the first job for many people, many workers are just learning to deal with interrelationship drama of being teenagers and workers.
 - k. Seattle pay leads to many deciding to try driving to seek work in Seattle.
 - l. Teens only want Monday through Friday shifts with no weekend work
 - m. Call-ins have gotten worse and can ruin scheduling
 - i. Workers will still post on Facebook their real activities.
 - ii. Larger businesses can lose 30-40 hours of work per day from employee call-ins.
 - iii. Millennials value their time off, but do not always value a job which is a different world view from boomers
 - n. The current generation feels entitled to do less even when company gives more
 - o. Retail has tried to cater to millennials
 - i. Millennial shoppers want and enjoy coming to retail
 - ii. But millennial workers do not want to be within retail
 - p. Many workers have 2-3 jobs
 - q. Many workers feel they should get to decide what their job is
 - i. It is about what “I get paid for” and not more
 - r. Public generally lacks application, resume, and interview skills
 - i. Sense of urgency
 - ii. Confidence
 - iii. Dressing appropriately not just at interviews but at all times
 - s. Some employers agreed that they are lacking intensive internal training
 - i. Training about workplace expectations may be needed as well. Because of high numbers of part-time workers and relatively low pay, retailers frequently serve as first employers
 - ii. Culture aspect and diversity of population
 - t. Some customers don't like employees with tattoos
 - u. Sometimes customers are sensitive
 - v. Staff do not want to work longer hours for fear of losing benefits
- Many workers do not know how to identify advancement opportunities in the workplace

Takeaways from the Hospitality and Recreation Roundtable on 1/25/17

How to Read: the red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements** identified by the businesses, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations** identified by the Businesses. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. Key characteristics that Employers are looking for:
 - a. Great communication skills and presentation to the public
 - b. Bi-lingual
 - i. Especially Japanese and Chinese
 1. Copy organization will bring in interns from China to work and help visitors from around the world
 - c. Trusted individuals
 - d. High School Students as business wish to get young people started in the career field in hopes that they will stay and grow within in it.
 - i. Need self-initiative, accountability factors and learning work ethics
 - e. Logistical thinkers
 - i. Trying to find individuals that can look at the end project (i.e. event) and work out the steps it will take to get there
 - f. Confidence
 - i. This is often missing from individuals coming from Worksource
 1. For various reason, (retraining, layoff, LTU)
 - a. Worksource should be looking for a mechanism to build this within its clients
 - g. Functional resumes rather than traditional
 - h. Applicants need to read the full application directions
 - i. Often times they apply and are missing 1-2 items requested
 - i. Having a LinkedIn account
 - i. Shows employers that you have some knowledge about the workforce.
 - j. People with passion
 - k. Customer service attitude
 - i. Skills can be taught, attitude can't be taught
 - l. Work ethic
 - m. They hire personalities, not skills
 - n. Good communication skills
 - o. Tulalip has a different approach
 - i. They will hire most people who are authorized to work (including non-tribal members) and will work with the individual to gain skills
 1. Important note: only 10-15% of Tulalip Resort employees are tribal members
2. What skills are generally missing from job applicants?
 - a. Customer service skills
 - b. Problem solving skills
 - c. Passion (especially in younger generation)
 - d. Hard time keeping employees at the job
 - e. Follow through
 - f. Time management skills
 - g. Basic computer skills with office software
 - i. Can't do spreadsheets
 - h. Basic phone etiquette

- i. Email etiquette is important too.
 - i. Applicants need to be timely for interviews
 - i. Need to show up
 - ii. Return calls
 - j. Ability to compartmentalize personal problems/issues from work
- 3. Retention of employees
 - a. Trying to instill an ownership mentality
 - i. Treating this job, this person as if it were their own company
 - b. Employees who know how to follow-up with customers, goals and objectives given to them
 - i. Finding the employees that will not only check things off a task list, but think beyond that, and fill in gaps
 - c. Employers need to be educated in the difference between generation
 - i. they need to understand what is important, how it affects advancement
 - d. They want to retain employees that are career-driven
 - i. Will do the job they were hired for, but are also willing to grow and develop in the career
 - 1. That they show initiative.
 - e. Mentoring is very important to both the employee and employers
 - f. When people are hired they are told that the schedule is flexible
 - i. but they do ask that change requests be made in writing
 - g. Some of the businesses have a push for education
 - i. will also help with scholarships
 - ii. Many housekeepers are in ESL classes and their class time changes as they move up in school so hotel is flexible especially if the employee is a good worker
 - iii. Will reimburse up to \$2,000 a year for tuition
 - 1. Also have scholarships for sons and daughters
 - iv. Some businesses encourage staff to attend the WSU/Everett Campus hospitality program.
 - h. Lots of turnover in entry level positions like housekeeping
 - i. Part-time “operations staff” (code for manual labor) set-up and take-down of events, but can’t guarantee hours
 - j. Seasonal workers (ebbs and flows in industry so it’s hard to keep good staff during the off-season)
 - k. Retention is important
 - i. It would be nice to work with other locations and “piece together” seasonal work.
 - ii. Many staff are part-time and seasonal
 - 1. big push is winter and the Silver-Tips
 - a. Wish could “share” employee with other location in off season so employee would come back in winter, for example.
- 4. Specific occupation/position that are in constant need?
 - a. Housekeepers
 - b. Food service
 - c. Event managers
 - d. Valet workers
 - e. Retail sales associates
 - f. People to work the floors at hotels, restaurants, and casinos

- g. Small vendors can't afford to hire
5. From an employer standpoint – what attracts you to your job and keeps you there
 - a. Enjoyment of working with people and having fun doing that
 - b. Working a job that is multi-faceted
 - i. allows you to wear different hats on different days
 - c. Working for the betterment or enjoyment of a community and getting local businesses engaged
 - d. Knowing that you have the skills and knowledge to do your job and do it well
 - e. Passion for what you love and being able to do this every day.
 - f. People who “stick with it” usually have a passion for customer service and feel compelled to stay
 - g. Organizational culture can play a big part of why people stay
 - i. Supervisors that know how to coach and mentor
 - h. Culture begins at the top and filters down. “Say what you mean and mean what you say.”
 - i. Some companies have internal training programs which provides employees with gateways to other jobs with better earnings.
 - j. We treat guests as families and have a lot of “return” guests and have a less corporate environment
 - k. Each day is different, keeps it fresh and exciting
 - l. Want guests to have a good time and come back
 - i. We do see a lot of return Silvertip fans – this is a “warm and fuzzy” feeling for staff
 - ii. They also have partner hotels that they refer attendees to.
 6. What type of life skills are desired?
 - a. Something that indicates commitment (i.e. school extracurricular activity, scouting, held a job for some length of time)
 - b. Confidence
 - i. even if they aren't actually confident, but just portraying confidence (“fake it until you make it”)
 7. WorkSource system useful?
 - a. Some employers hold hiring events at WS Everett (Tulalip)
 - b. Others use labor ready for housekeepers and operations staff
 - c. Some use agency that contracts with foreign students
 8. Gaps in hiring positions and experience with WorkSource
 - a. Need new job descriptions
 - b. We want a breath of experience in multiple departments and varied experience
 - c. Also want previous supervisory experience
 - i. It is hard to teach someone to manage
 - d. Where we post our job openings depends on what position we are posting
 - i. Often we use Craigslist
 - ii. ZipRecruit (for hospitality)
 - iii. We get good candidates from Indeed.
 1. We are looking for front desk people and maintenance.
 - e. We need skilled maintenance because it takes a lot of time and cost to train new people
 - f. Referrals from Work Source have not been good.
 - g. We have used Work Source for job fairs but do not have a contact there
 - i. We have had -0- hires from the job fairs though.
 1. So we then use Indeed, H-Careers and LinkedIn for managers

- h. Corporate Office has accounts and discounts with hiring sites – so they use them a lot
 - i. WorkSource has too much information on their site (think WorkSource WA)
 - i. Staff that are being laid off are more comfortable talking with internal staff than WorkSource
 - 1. HR staff tried to educate self from website
 - a. Site take too long to surf
 - b. Too overwhelming
 - c. Site is not as intuitive as she hoped
 - d. Difficult to print the calendar of classes
 - i. Had to cut and paste too much
 - e. Very frustrating
 - f. User wants it to be more user friendly
 - j. Did not even know about WorkSource
 - i. Just received an invite to this meeting
9. Advancement Opportunities
- a. When interviewing, managers are looking to see if a candidate could eventually be a supervisor or manager to build the workforce pipeline.
 - b. Employees who take the initiative “step-up” are typically made supervisors.
 - c. Cross-training is important and can help keep good staff during the slow periods (e.g. train housekeepers in food & beverage)
 - d. We will give out responsibility changes, but not title changes to help a person grow
 - e. We want to be “Champion of Market” – we value internal growth, we have many new hotels and want to grow managers. We created “lead positions” which were added to their job titles with an addition \$1 an hour.
 - f. All employers want to grow employees
 - g. We grow employees who want to learn and have initiative
 - h. For employees to move into supervisory or management they must demonstrate good communication skills, people skills and customer service
 - i. Attitude and work ethic will advance an employee more than anything else
10. Does the Seattle hourly wage attract your staff to leave?
- a. The \$15 an hour wage has been so broadcasted (even though Seattle previously paid more) that it does make staff want that salary
 - b. Training is expensive and it is easy to lose staff
 - c. Our employees don’t want to commute to Seattle – they live here
 - d. Most employees live in this area
 - e. Hospitality is a low wage career so people leave to make more money in other industries; \$15/hr minimum wage in Sea/King makes it very hard for businesses in South Snohomish County to retain good employees

Takeaways from the Construction Roundtable on 2/22/17

How to Read: the red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements** identified by the businesses, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations** identified by the businesses. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. Pipeline Issues:
 - A. Difficult positions to fill
 - o Laborers
 - o Truck drivers
 - Having to re-evaluate disciplinary policies because drivers can get another job the next day)
 - o Employer needing painters
 - Partnered with community college's auto collision program to expand into construction painting/coatings
 - B. Not enough young people coming into the trades
 - o Younger generation does not view construction as a worthy career and it is beneath them
 1. There is a need to put the "gleam" in young people's eyes about construction
 - o When recruiting on college campuses, "Curiosity is a great indicator" to business if their message is tailored for the audience
 - o Younger people have a sense of entitlement
 1. Expect higher than starting wage with no experience
 - C. Trying to figure out "what makes millennials tick?" (example research shows they don't want formal reviews, they'd rather just have supervisors talk to them along the way.)
 - o Find out what do employees want from the employer.
 1. Microsoft offered a workshop on how to talk to Millennials.
 - o Millennials appreciate authenticity, be straight with them, express clear expectations
 - D. There are 20-30 year old graduating with construction management degrees
 - o but lack construction experience
 1. They also expect to start at the top
 - o Anticipation of higher wages to start
 1. Do not understand wage progression
 - a. Average occupation wage is not a starting wage
 - E. Bigger differential between supervisors and laborers
 - o It is more difficult to find people who want to get their hands dirty
 - F. Middle and High Schools don't have shop classes anymore
 - o how do students get exposure to the trades?
 - o Need to start in elementary school with building blocks and advance to geometry, etc.
 - o Something needs to be done to get students more interested in the trades (or at least exposure to opportunities) career fairs, etc.
 - G. Potential hires cannot pass drug test
 - o State may of legalize weed, but still cannot have it on jobsites
 - H. Workers are looking for dependable companies
 - o they want to keep busy throughout the year
 1. Allot of Construction is seasonal
 - I. Long wait lists for apprenticeship opportunities (CITC) <http://www.citcwa.com/> specifically mentioned carpentry and HVAC – up to a year to get on wait list (Marysville training center?)
 - J. State does not have electrician reciprocal certifications so workers from other areas only are permitted up to 90 days

- K. Private and public sides of this sectors experiencing similar workforce challenges
- L. Using temp hiring because they cannot find full time employees
- 2. Retention issues:
 - A. Worker's lack soft skills
 - o Not showing up on time or at all
 - o Punctuality
 - One thing they have found that has helped with tardiness, etc. is to explain how it impacts the whole crew/team. Some people respond to that.
 - o Politeness
 - o Human interaction (trouble reading people)
 - o Customer service
 - o Lack of dependability
 - B. Younger people have a sense of entitlement
 - o Do not take instruction well
 - C. Aging workforce
 - o Older workers can't continue the physicality that the job demands and knowledge base will leave with retirement
 - M. Need "old-fashioned work ethic" it still takes hard work to get ahead
 - N. Lack of trained workforce bumps the schedule, slows down productivity, and affects the bottom line of the construction businesses and the businesses that are relying on construction to be on time
 - O. Construction is "old school" and change is slow
 - o It's hard to change older workers' mindset
 - P. Safety First
 - o Some workers don't understand why they must turn off phones, headphones
 - o Need to build-in safety issues in training so workers can easily identify
 - o Need to get training standards higher
 - Q. In exit interviews, some workers state that the reason they are leaving is because
 - o Health insurance premiums are high
 - o They aren't busy enough
 - R. Job hopping is a chronic issue in the field
 - o When workers see, their project ending, they will jump to another employer to make sure they have secure employment.
 - D. Hire veterans and sprinkle them through workforce because their good habits sometimes rub off (dependable, punctual, etc.)
 - E. Pair older workers with younger workers to form mentorships
 - o Do a mind meld with best workers to gain their knowledge
 - o Encourage supervisors to see their roles as mentors.
 - F. Employers are having to change with the times
 - o Culture needs to change, i.e. yelling at employees is no longer okay
 - G. Company has tuition reimbursement program
 - o But they are so busy, workers don't have the time to go to school
 - H. Government contracts have specific workforce diversity targets
 - o But there is still too few women and minorities in the trades (need to reflect the general population)
 - o There is still an "old boys network" that some find distasteful
 - I. Huge need for high schools to help identify opportunities for students (Career Days, Touch-a-Truck, etc.)
 - J. Project Labor Agreement (PLA) has phenomenal training programs
<http://www.soundtransit.org/About-Sound-Transit/Doing-business-with-us/Project-Labor-Agreement>
- 3. How do you identify people to upskill into upper jobs?
 - A. Reliability
 - B. Takes initiative
 - C. Eager to learn, and open to learning

- D. Willing to learn from their mistakes
- 4. Why do you do this work?
 - A. Immense respect for the hard workers, their contribution is undersold
 - B. Grew up in the business
 - C. Take pride in building things and seeing the project to completion
 - D. Enjoys taking a vision and making it a reality
 - E. Wants to see something built from the ground up
 - F. Likes the company they work for
 - G. Enjoys the diversity of projects and opportunity to collaborate
 - H. Wants to help people get good jobs (S3 – women, people of color)
 - I. I use my hands to make the vision real
 - J. Work as a team to finish a project
 - K. Former middle school math/science teacher, sees the need for hands-on work for students who may not be college material
 - L. Job always changes, lots of diversity in the work
 - M. Love seeing things built from the bottom up
 - N. Pride in building something from nothing (and with no safety issues)