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Worksystems and Partners Release 2018 State of the Workforce Report

Findings provide insight into regional economy and labor market

PORTLAND-SW WASHINGTON METRO AREA (Oct. 12, 2018) – As an indication of the region’s improved economy, a recently-released report says there are two online job postings each month for every unemployed worker. The reverse was true In 2016, when there were two unemployed workers for every online job opening.

“The region’s unemployment rate is at historic lows and the strong economy is encouraging more people to (re) enter the labor market,” said Andrew McGough, Executive Director of Worksystems. “We need to ensure that everyone is fully benefiting from the surging economy.”

This information and more is contained in the Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative’s (CWWC) *State of the Workforce Report 2018*.

CWWC is a partnership of Clackamas Workforce Partnership, Workforce Southwest Washington and Worksystems, the three workforce development boards overseeing the public workforce system in the Portland-Vancouver Metro Area.

The report provides information about the quality of the region’s workforce, available and projected jobs, and describes some of the challenges and opportunities facing our region’s businesses and job seekers. The information will help the workforce system understand the balance between regional workforce supply and industry demand to ensure workforce development efforts are aligned with the needs of the regional economy.

“For the region to maintain its competitive edge and continue to prosper, concerted efforts are being made to align workforce supply with industry demand,” said Kevin Perkey, CEO of Workforce Southwest Washington. “Working together and bridging gaps between disciplines, resources and jurisdictions strengthens our ability to prepare workers and assist businesses to find the qualified talent to maintain and grow the regional economy,” continued Perkey.

A few findings from the report:

- The regional labor force has increased 23 percent since 2000 and has the sixth fastest growing labor force between 2015 and 2017.

- The population of people of color grew twice as fast as the overall population in recent years from 12.3 percent nonwhite in 2000 to 15.7 percent nonwhite in 2016.
- The percent of people with a bachelor’s degree or higher has climbed to 40 percent, up 12 percentage points since 2000.
- Over one-fifth of the workforce is over the age of 55 and will retire within the next decade.
- With a strong economy and tremendous growth since the end of the Great Recession, youth unemployment has decreased to below 2000 levels – sitting at 10.5 percent in 2016.

“We expect the needs of business, especially within our targeted sectors and high-growth industries, impacting its workforce at accelerated rates. Planning and finding solutions today will pay off now and future years to come,” said Bridget Dazey, Executive Director, Clackamas Workforce Partnership.

The State of the Workforce Report can be found at www.workforcesw.org, www.clackamasworkforce.org or www.worksystems.org.

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The Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative (CWWC) is a partnership that delivers a unified approach to serve industry, support economic development and guide public workforce investments in the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area. Members are the Clackamas Workforce Partnership, Workforce Southwest Washington and Worksystems. <http://www.workforcecollaborative.org/>

Clackamas Workforce Partnership is a nonprofit organization which serves as an advocate for workforce development within Clackamas County and the State of Oregon. Our mission is to address critical workforce, educational, and training challenges, and develop a skilled workforce that meets the needs of businesses and strengthens the local economy of Clackamas County. Learn more at www.clackamasworkforce.org.

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), a nonprofit organization founded in 2002, contributes to regional economic growth by providing investments and resources to improve the skills and education of the workforce in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. WSW helps businesses find and hire the employees they need and provides people the skills, education and training to find work or advance in their careers. WSW partners with employers, community colleges and universities, labor groups, government and economic development agencies, high schools, community and nonprofit organizations. Learn more at www.workforcesw.org.

Worksystems is the Workforce Development Board for the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington counties. Worksystems is a non-profit agency that accelerates economic growth by pursuing and investing resources to improve the quality of the workforce. Our mission is to coordinate a regional workforce system that supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness. We design and coordinate workforce development programs and services delivered through a network of local partners to help people get the skills, training and education they need to go to work or to advance in their careers. Learn more at www.worksystems.org.