



The Portland Metro Workforce Development Board

Strategic Workforce Plan

2020—2024

Worksystems
1618 SW 1st Ave., Suite 450
Portland, OR 97201
503.478.7300
www.worksystems.org

Worksystems is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. To place a free relay call in Oregon dial 711. These programs funded in whole or in part through the US Department of Labor.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the steepest economic downturn since the Great Depression. The onset of the pandemic caused regional unemployment claims to reach nearly 213,800 and experts predict the regional will not return to pre-pandemic job levels until 2025. While the full impact of the pandemic has yet to unfold, Black Indigenous and People of Color, women, immigrants, disabled individuals, younger, less educated, and lower-income workers have disproportionately suffered from the health and economic devastation caused by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 crisis has also revealed serious flaws in the systems intended to serve and support people during difficult times. More than 48,900 are currently unemployed, a 121% increase from February 2020. Over the course of the last year, the number of regional residents living in poverty increased substantially. Thousands more are behind on rent, struggling to put food on the table, and running out of options. When you unpack the numbers, Black, Indigenous and People of Color, immigrants, women, and lower income workers are once again disproportionately bearing the brunt of the economic downturn and safety net failures.

To return from the COVID-19 crisis as a stronger region, we must strengthen our commitment to those residents most impacted by the COVID crisis. We can't go back to the way things were. The inequities highlighted by the crisis cannot be allowed to continue. This will require us to continue building partnerships with community-based organization and especially those offering culturally and population specific services. Our efforts must put racial equity and front-line workers at the center and bring decision making and solution building as close to the community as possible - allowing local voices to respond to local economic circumstances, priorities and needs. We need to continue to build connections beyond skills and address other barriers such as childcare, transportation and housing. We must support equitable economic recovery that is strategically responsive to the current economic context and promotes the creation of high-quality regional jobs.

Responding to a crisis of this magnitude will require unprecedented collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including governments (at all levels), community-based organizations, businesses, labor unions, philanthropy, economic development, and educational institutions.

This plan identifies four goals to support equitable economic recovery, build a more inclusive, coordinated, and adaptive regional workforce system, and foster a more equitable and prosperous future for our region.

Mission: To coordinate a regional workforce system that supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness.

Vision: People have the skills and support they need to successfully engage, advance, and succeed in the labor market and employers have qualified employees to grow and thrive.

Guiding Principles: Collaboration — Equity — Accountability — Inclusiveness — Relevance — Excellence



Local Workforce Development

July 2021— June 2022 Goals and Initial Strategies

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4
<p>The regional public workforce system* is aligned, provides integrated services, efficiently uses resources, and continuously improves to provide maximum value for employers, job seekers, workers and community-based partners</p>	<p>Regional Workers most impacted by COVID-19, including Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, individuals with disabilities, women, immigrants, younger, less educated, and lower-income workers, have the skills and supports they need to fill current and emerging quality jobs</p>	<p>Regional youth facing barriers* gain the academic knowledge, work skills and support services needed to succeed in the workforce of today and the future</p> <p><small>* Barriers may include income, homelessness, race, disability, LGBTQIA, foster care, the juvenile justice system and other life circumstances that qualify youth for public assistance.</small></p>	<p>Employers can find the regional talent they need to recover, grow and remain competitive</p>
<p>12-18 MONTH STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships across organizations that provide workforce and related support services to break down barriers, increase access to services and improve results, including childcare, stipends and internships, transportation, etc. Involve community-based organizations and culturally specific service providers to provide input, improve access, and inform continuous improvement. Promote system services and information sharing across organizations and communities. 	<p>12-18 MONTH STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a high-functioning, community-based provider network that benefits from a variety of WorkSystems grants and programs such as WorkSource, centralized housing and childcare assistance, federal sector grants and the SNAP 50/50 program. Provide Career Coach professional development opportunities, especially those that are led by Career Coaches themselves. Secure partnerships and resources that address barriers and increase success for people in poverty, people of color and other disadvantaged populations such as childcare, transportation, housing and mental health services. Recruit community-based organizations to actively participate in mutually beneficial Aligned Partner Network membership to keep priority populations well-served. 	<p>12-18 MONTH STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships across organizations that provide workforce and related support services to break down barriers, increase access to services and improve results, including childcare, incentives/stipends, enhanced mobility and affordable housing. Involve community-based organizations and culturally specific service providers to provide input, improve access, and inform continuous improvement. Market system services and information sharing across organizations and communities. 	<p>12-18 MONTH STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on industry sectors that offer pathways to family sustaining jobs and include employers willing to engage and use the system. Pursue relationships with industries and employers who benefit from hiring diverse, qualified job seekers from our programs and who in turn benefit our partners and programs by hiring the job seekers we serve. Create career pathways that draw on the diverse job seeker pipelines engaged in our community-based programs including Economic Opportunity Program, NextGen, Aligned Partner Network and Workforce Navigators. Focus on developing career pathways with low barriers to entry for job seekers that have been most impacted and historically underserved, including workers of color and front-line workers. Build regional employer partnerships to inform and revise curriculum, address skill shortages and prepare qualified workers; convene employers to expand access to and availability of quality jobs.
<p>SUCCESS & PROGRESS INDICATORS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> All Portland Metro WorkSource Centers are reopened for in-person services and partners are working together integrally to support seamless services. Aligned Partner Network is engaged in system improvement efforts such as revision of WSO Standards and day-to-day WorkSource Center operations. MyWorkSource portal is launched with revised customer registration process in place to improve access. Rates of community partner customers engaged in WorkSource employment and training services. Defined process for supportive service resource referral for all system customers. Quality Jobs Framework developed and integrated into program design and services. 	<p>SUCCESS & PROGRESS INDICATORS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Share of Economic Opportunity Program, NextGen, Aligned Partner Network and Workforce Navigator customers benefiting from high-value WorkSource services such as training scholarships, internships and On-the-Job Trainings. Number and proportion of partners and providers who are community-based, culturally-specific and population-specific. Career Coach feedback regarding access to WorkSource services, centralized services, and service provider training, technical assistance and communities of practice. For participants served, gap analysis of key supports including housing supports, access to childcare, mental health services and transportation. 	<p>SUCCESS & PROGRESS INDICATORS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number and proportion of partners and providers who are community-based, culturally-specific and population-specific. Number and proportion of youth of color served. Partner feedback regarding access to centralized services such as paid internships, WorkSource services, and service provider training, technical assistance and communities of practice. For youth served, gap analysis of key supports including housing supports, access to childcare, and transportation. 	<p>SUCCESS & PROGRESS INDICATORS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Jobs framework developed and integrated into business engagement efforts. Increase workforce program participant hires by businesses who meet Quality Jobs standards. Increase number of workforce program hires by businesses engaged in Quality Jobs Initiative. Talent Pipeline Report developed and aligned with hiring demand from partnering employers. Share of Economic Opportunity Program, NextGen, Aligned Partner Network and Workforce Navigator customers served through industry-specific trainings with direct connections to employer partners, such as BankWork\$, CareerWork\$ Medical, Recycling & Waste Haulers Industry Training, and CompTIA. Number and proportion of job seekers trained and placed who are referred from community-based, culturally-specific and population-specific partners.

*For purposes of this plan, the Regional Public Workforce System is defined as those resources and organizations required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the State of Oregon to provide integrated services via WorkSource Oregon, including the Oregon Employment Department, the Oregon Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Oregon Department of Human Services - self-sufficiency programs, Adult Basic Education programs administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act resources managed by WorkSystems.