

Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment and Career Awareness Grant Program



2020 annual report pursuant to RCW 43.329.050

Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

Introduction..... 2

2019 Grant Outcomes 3

Grant Administration 3

Introduction

Authorizing Legislation

In 2017, the Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5713, now codified in Chapter 43.329 RCW. This legislation created the Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment and Career Awareness Training Program (Skilled Worker Awareness or SWA). The intent of the program is to educate and train individuals to perform skills needed in the workforce and award industry or state-recognized certificates, credentials, associate degrees, professional licenses or similar evidence of achievement.

RCW 43.329.050 directs the Department of Commerce to establish a grant review committee to review grant applications and make recommendations on who should receive a matching grant and the amount. Pursuant to RCW 43.329.070(2), the grant review committee is required to submit an annual report as follows:

(2) By December 1, 2019, and by each December 1st thereafter, the grant review committee shall submit an annual report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature in accordance with the reporting requirements in RCW 43.01.036. The report must include:

(a) The number of matching grants awarded in the prior year, including the amount, recipient, and duration of each matching grant;

(b) The number of individuals who enrolled in and completed training programs promoted by each grant recipient;

(c) The number of individuals who obtained employment in a position that uses the skills for which they were trained through a training program promoted by a grant recipient; and

(d) Other information obtained from grant recipients' reports under subsection (1) of this section.

Background

As businesses, industries, and workplaces become increasingly complex, employers need workers with skills and education that allow them to adapt and excel in evolving environments.¹

In the 2017-19 biennium, Commerce received an appropriation of \$300,000 to administer the program and oversee a grant process to meet program objectives. Eligible applicants include any government or non-government entity, association or organization that is not a private vocational school. By statute, grant recipients must provide a 2:1 cash match (no in-kind contributions allowed). The Grant Review Committee has awarded grants in three rounds as follows:

2018 Grantees

- Global Business Resources
- Washington Hospitality Association
- Whatcom Community College

2019 Grantees

- Whatcom Community College
- Washington State Hospitality Association (WA Hospitality Association)
- Association of General Contractors

¹ Washington Student Achievement Council, A Skilled and Educated Workforce 2017 Update

2020 Grantees

- Inland Northwest Associated General Contractors
- Whatcom Community College
- Aerospace Machinist Institute

This 2020 report provides data on the 2019 grantees.

2019 Grant Outcomes

Table 1. Grant Recipient Outcomes

Outcomes	Whatcom Community College	WA State Hospitality Association	Association of General Contractors
Grant amount	\$30,000	\$32,000	\$20,000
Duration	7/1/2019 - 6/30/2020		
Enrollment	101	2279	65
Program Completion	48	2279	62
Employment (in field of study)	33	2279	41
Other Information	The program coordinator worked closely with the navigator to help ensure student success through a challenging and sudden transition to online learning.	Working with underserved populations to create awareness training and support has been a key vision for the foundation's outreach phase of this project.	COVID-19 has been a major barrier this quarter. Due to the regulation of social distancing, it took time to set up a virtual curriculum to begin classes again.

Grant Administration

Overview

Commerce convened an 11-member grant review committee consisting of representatives from the following organizations:

- Department of Labor and Industries
- Employment Security Department
- Department of Enterprise Services
- Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

- Two representatives from business
- Two representatives from labor, and
- Two representatives from the Washington Apprenticeship and Training Council.

The grant review committee established criteria for ranking eligible applicants for matching grants including:

- Potential to reach a broad audience that includes populations with barriers to employment as identified by the state's strategic workforce plan;
- Demonstrated collaboration with and use of Centers of Excellence;
- Ability to increase enrollment and completion of their skilled worker training program;
- Potential to fill existing needs; and
- Demonstrated ability to provide monetary contributions and secure an industry partner.

The application process opens Jan. 1, and awards announced by April 1 of each year. In 2020, committee awarded three final grants totaling \$65,683 dollars.

Program Expiration

The program expires on July 1, 2022. The grant review committee will submit a final report providing outcome data for grants issued in 2020.