

TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE COUNCIL LOCAL OPERATIONS PLAN

Title I-B and Title III
Workforce Investment Act

SECTION I

CONNECTIONS WITH THE STATE UNIFIED PLAN AND THE LOCAL AREA'S STRATEGIC PLAN FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

A. Consistency with the State's Unified Plan

The Tri-County Workforce Council staff has diligently followed the guidance provided by the Washington State Department of Employment Security and the State Workforce Board instructions and information requisite to establishing local Strategic and Operational Plans. Through council meetings, community forums and focus groups, the Tri-County has informed the public of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requirements and has solicited input and feedback in the development of the local Operation Plan. In its completion, special effort was made to thread local community needs into the plan while maintaining consistency and connection with the goals, objectives and strategies of the State's Strategic Plan as well as the Governor's Goals for Workforce Development.

B. Consistency with the Local Strategic Plan

The Local Operating Plan focuses on the goals identified in the Tri-County's Strategic Plan directly related to WIA Title I-B activities. Programs and activities will be delivered in a framework and incorporate strategies that:

1. Connect with the local K-12 education system and focus on preparation of young people for entry into the workforce.
2. Prepare adults in transition for successful participation in the workforce.
3. Connect with local economic development efforts to expand and retain the present economic base and promote future business growth through the development of a well-trained workforce.
4. Improve access to and increased quality of programs to meet existing and future business needs.

C. Benefit to Customers

WorkSource Core Services

WorkSource Core Services will be delivered to meet the unique needs of all customers and will result in a seamless system of services. Core Services will provide the information, technology, and services that business requires to remain competitive and job seekers need to achieve successful careers. These services will provide both employers and job seekers a convenient, powerful resource through an accessible system where there is no wrong door.

WorkSource Centers have been strategically located in each county throughout the Workforce Development Area. Employers and job seekers know where and how to access the services they desire, and no longer go through a confusing maze of service providers. Adult job seekers will have access to the broadest range of available core services as needed.

Youth

The school dropout rate for the Tri-County area is twice the state rate. There is clear consensus that the Tri-County area must improve the educational level of its residents to improve quality of life, support the labor needs of existing businesses and attract those companies that can offer high skill and high wage jobs. Programs serving eligible youth focus on developing their educational and skill competencies through mentoring opportunities, training and supportive services, incentives for recognition, and opportunities for leadership and community service. These services stem from, connect with and support the state EALR's (Essential Academic Learning Requirements). Participating youth will benefit from the collective efforts of the workforce development system by increasing educational achievement, decreasing the dropout rate, and increasing skill development that leads to productive careers.

Adult

The concern expressed by employers and local leaders in community meetings is the need for workers who bring the necessary skills and work ethic to employment. They further report that too many applicants fail to meet entry-level requirements for local jobs. To address this need, adult workers seeking services under the WIA, will receive core services, intensive services, and training services.

The community at large will benefit from the skill upgrading of the local workers. Workers will benefit by enhancing their options to find and retain employment, as well as increasing their potential for wage gains. On the other hand, employers will view these services as productivity enhancing, cost reducing, profit enhancing, and as a layoff prevention strategy. Businesses will benefit from a workforce with greater occupational skills, communication skills, and literacy. In the long-term, this will raise the wage level of the region and attract those employers who offer high skill and high wage jobs. Adult activities under the WIA benefit both workers and employers, and operate to make economic development more feasible.

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Dislocated Workers

The Tri-County region has experienced a significant level of company downsizing and plant closures across many industries, resulting in worker dislocation. These displaced workers must compete in an already challenged labor market. Any service that provides these workers with job seeking skills, placement assistance or occupational skills will be of clear benefit to the worker as well as the community workforce.

The Rapid Response service to community businesses and workers affected by business closures, downsizing, or other forms of displacement that lead to permanent job loss, will emphasize early intervention to accelerate the re-employment of all those affected.

The emphasis on Rapid Response to businesses and workers incorporates the following strategies:

- Provide the full range of services to dislocated workers through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
- Continue exemplary best practices such as a community response to displacement involving public service employment, the community college system and labor.
- Prioritize dislocated workers' return to work at comparable wages in as short a time as possible.

In addition, the Tri-County Workforce Council is committed to, and believes this region benefits from developing a comprehensive dislocated worker system that includes incumbent worker training and other lay-off aversion strategies such as:

- Working with business leaders to create career, labor market information, and financial assistance information for incumbent workers to facilitate education, training and career choices.
- Working with employers to identify and to provide in-house training that is cost-effective to the employer.
- Developing incumbent worker training that builds skills for entry-level employees to move to higher skilled jobs within businesses.
- Forming industry cluster panels to assess emerging and declining skill needs and for development of training programs to meet these needs.
- Developing secondary vocational-technical program standards linked to industry skill standards, while working with the labor-business and education committees.
- Working in partnership with economic development organizations in attracting businesses to the area or assisting in the new business start-ups through services and incentives provided by the workforce system.
- Assisting at-risk businesses with employment, training and education programs that develop the skills of their workers.
- Supporting business retention, expansion, and new location by

providing comprehensive worker training support services to meet employers' training needs.

D. Key trends in business development, employment opportunities and skill needs:

The identification of key industries is based upon the number of employees and the overall percentage of the workforce employed by a sector. Generally, when the major categories of employment are examined in the three counties, the overall concentration of employment was found in agriculture with a growth of 2.0% in the last 5 years. The other concentrations, food processing and wood products, posted losses over the same period.

There are a large number of smaller businesses throughout the Tri-County Workforce Development Area, which is characteristic of Eastern Washington. The area's small business base is an asset, which may give the economy long-term resiliency and potential for growth. The lack of a single large employer can be strength during economic downturns, which may affect a single industry.

The sector of the economy most likely to experience growth in these three counties is Health Services. It has grown 42.0% in the last five years. Tri-County employers report that finding workers with job-specific skills, problem solving skills and adaptability skills is difficult. As well, downtown businesses indicate that critical thinking, interpersonal/team skills, and workplace ethics are primary workforce education and training needs.

In general, the higher the level of education needed for a job opening, the more difficult it was to find qualified applicants, e.g., medical, education.

Lower earnings for wages and salaries in the Tri-County area have been characterized by the seasonal effect of part-time jobs. The lower income relative to the state average poses service problems into the future as the cost of living continues to increase. Discretionary income, the money available for goods and services, will be limited which ultimately retracts revenues for all businesses throughout the Workforce Development Area.

Hence, training and resources delineated in the services and strategies of the Local Operations Plan will be appropriate to the needs of existing and emerging businesses and their current and future workforce skill needs. The Council will maintain ongoing relationships with employers and local economic development groups to identify areas of growth and skill needs.

Identified skill needs include industry specific skills and core competencies that make an individual employable and an effective worker.

E. Demographic information particularly relevant to the service strategies:

Significant demographic characteristics of the Tri-County area which have been taken into account in the development of the Local Operations Plan include the in-migration of non-English speaking individuals, the seasonal worker population, low-educational attainment, the economically

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disadvantaged, and the migration of many skilled workers to areas with higher paying jobs. The predominate activity of the area's labor force is agriculture. Most work relates to the diversity of farm production. Along with that comes the influx of migrant workers during harvest creating wide spread changes in workforce composition. Due to the seasonal nature of a high percentage of the jobs, the unemployment rate varies, yet remains perennially high. Between 1990 and 1998, the migrant/seasonal population grew by 59.0%. Accordingly, adults in that segment had minimal literacy skills. Factors relating to English proficiency, low education attainment, and poverty have been barriers for their employment. For example, youth are required to help support their families and often do not have the opportunity to obtain the basic educational skill required for better jobs. With the major proportion of the new entrants into the labor force in the 16 to 24-age bracket, education and training programs will focus on their needs.

Limited work skills and low educational attainment too often restricts workers to low paying jobs. The lack of a livable family wage and benefits most certainly contributes to the high levels of poverty for the area. For the region those who are economically disadvantaged and below the standard poverty level, or below 70% of the lower standard income level will be recruited for the Tri-County's education and training programs.

Implications of the demographic profile within the Tri-County Workforce Development Area:

1. Retain the resident youth population through education, vocational, and job development strategies and focus on non-farm labor occupations.
2. Prepare and develop a trained and educated workforce that will work to attract new business with skilled and high paying jobs.
3. Improve strategies to maximize minority participation in the workforce.
4. Increase connection with and participation in health occupational training to provide access to higher paying professional service industry jobs in the health industry.
5. Increase opportunities for education and skill development in non-traditional occupations to help add minorities and women to the workforce.
6. Early identification of the dislocated worker from declining industries will help transition them back into productive jobs.

F. Program features relevant to the Local Operations Plan:

A variety of programs as described in the Local Strategic Plan serves adults in transition, including those leaving Welfare to Work, Dislocated Workers, individuals with disabilities, and job seekers in general. These programs are intended to develop basic work skills needed for entrance into the labor force,

return to the labor force or to facilitate an upgrade in worker skills for job retention and wage progression. Private and public partnerships will continue to be established to enable individuals to advance on the job by the way of developing career ladders throughout their lives. To that extent we will assist in the development of secondary vocational-technical standards linked to industry skill standards.

Expanding and retaining the present economic base and promoting future business growth through the development of a well trained workforce provides opportunities for incumbent workers to further their education in job-related skills or education beyond basic levels. The Tri-County Workforce Council will continue to work with businesses to create career ladders and develop in-house training that is cost-effective. Labor-market and financial assistance information will continue to be provided to incumbent workers to assist them in developing plans that will lead to career enhancement and economic growth.

Incumbent workers will be served through employer-sponsored training as well as education sought out by individual workers for improvement of skills and career advancement. Such programs may be offered by institutions of higher education or by full-standing certificate programs offered by public and private training providers. There are a number of training programs in the local area to meet the needs of the Local Operations Plan. Coordination of these training opportunities is one of the goals of this plan.

To ensure access to programs by all local residents, programs will conduct extensive recruitment through outreach to the limited English proficient by way of newspaper, radio, and TV advertisement. Ongoing contact with rehabilitation and other agencies serving people with disabilities will be maintained to ensure their participation in the process. Public information campaigns will be conducted to educate the community on the range of services available and the importance of workforce development.

Since funds are limited, eligibility and priority services for adults will be given to public assistance recipients and persons below the 175 percent poverty income level. In the Tri-County area, these two categories include substantial numbers of individuals who are basic skills deficient, including limited English proficiency and limited literacy. To ensure equitable services are provided to the residents of the area, the Tri-County Workforce Council will establish policies that set minimum levels of services to target populations.

The Council will amend priority of service policy to include veterans and/or spouses of certain veterans for intensive and training services based on the Department of Labor and State guidance related to the Jobs for Veterans Act.

The Tri-County Workforce Council is committed to improving the quality of workforce employment and training programs to meet existing and future business needs and to improve the quality of life for local residents. As a priority, the Council will encourage and provide opportunities for all groups to work together, share common vision, and be a part of policy and decision-making.

SECTION II

TITLE I-B LOCAL SYSTEM READINESS

SECTION II A

A. Ongoing role for WorkSource partner organizations, business and labor, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and other interested community groups.

LOCAL COUNCIL: ONGOING ROLE OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERS, BUSINESS, LABOR, FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Tri-County Consortium Workforce Area is comprised of Yakima, Kittitas, and Klickitat counties. A Board of three publicly elected County Commissioners represents each county. The County Commissioners are full partners and all major decisions require their concurrence. One County Commissioner from each County serves as a member of a three person Executive Committee. The Executive Committee oversees matters related to workforce development and acts on behalf of the three County Boards.

The Tri-County Workforce Council is comprised of 27 members with a business majority. Individuals appointed to the Council represent organizations and institutions specified in the WIA and as prescribed by the Workforce Training Education Coordinating Board. In addition to the Youth Council, the consortium has established the following three subcommittees to ensure that all stakeholders and partners of the local workforce system are afforded the greatest opportunity to participate.

1. WorkSource Oversight Committee comprised of all participating partners of the WorkSource system. This Committee advises the Council and local elected officials on matters relating to system development, planning and development of policy regarding the local WorkSource system.
2. Planning Committee that is responsible for overseeing the procurement of service providers, policy development, marketing, special events and activities.
3. An Education/Business/Industry Committee who is responsible to oversee business services, industry panels, and incumbent worker training.
4. The Council structure includes a Youth Council that is charged with overseeing matters related to youth activities. The Youth Council also facilitates the sharing of information among workforce development

programs serving youth. The Youth Council includes an eleven person membership to include local Council members, representatives from Jobs Corps, business, education, law enforcement, public housing, a parent and former participant, and may include other individuals as the chairperson of the local board, in cooperation with the chief elected officials, determine to be appropriate.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the local Council, the Youth Council is responsible for the development of the youth related portions of the local plan, recommends (through a competitive process) eligible providers of youth activities for the award of grants or contracts, provides ongoing oversight of selected providers and coordinates the allowable WIA youth activities.

SECTION II B.

A. Fiscal entity responsible for the receipt and disbursement of Title I-B grant funds.

Yakima County is the fiscal and the Department of Employment and Training is the administrative entity for the Tri-County Workforce Council .

Yakima County maintains an integrated financial management system that supports the day-to-day tracking of budgets, funds, encumbrances, payroll and human resources. The Department of Employment and Training (DET), as a department of Yakima County, maintains a fiscal system that comprises all the procedures for reviewing, approving, classifying and recording transactions related to the receipt and disbursement of cash for materials and services.

- 1) The accounts of Yakima County are organized on the basis of funds and account groups, each of which is considered a separate accounting entity. Each fund is accounted for with a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise its assets, liabilities, fund equity, revenues and expenditures or expenses, appropriate. Special revenue funds are established for grants that are designated to finance particular activities of the County.
 - a) Accounting and control requirements for fund disbursement are met at three levels to ensure that all expenditures are allowable and charged to the proper cost category:
 - b) Department of Employment and Training (DET) is responsible for auditing and approving all claims against the (WDC). Claims submitted to the WDC will be validated by a DET staff member and authorized for payment by the Director or an authorized staff.
 - c) The Department of Grants Management of Yakima County is responsible for ensuring proper accounting of grant funds.
 - d) The County Auditor's office is responsible for ensuring proper disbursement of funds on a ten-day cycle and maintaining the general ledger at the level of detail required by the Washington State Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS), and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

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- 2) Solutions for Government (SFG), the integrated financial system currently used by Yakima County, was designed specifically to support the day-to-day tracking of budgets, funds and encumbrances in the local government. This system addresses all of the generally accepted accounting principles as they apply to government units.

B. The competitive process used to award grants and contracts:

With the exception of Yakima County Dislocated Worker Program, the selection of service providers will comply with our local competitive process as well as any Washington State Policy and other applicable regulations. The Tri-County Consortium will use an RFP (request for proposal) system using the competitive Negotiation Method.

The Youth Council will recommend the initial selection for Youth Services to the Tri-County Workforce Council. The Council will make the selection of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Proposals to be funded. These awards will be based on the bidders whose proposals are responsive to the request and are most advantageous to the workforce areas, participants and program goals. All awards are subject to concurrence by the Local Elected Officials.

Example criteria for selection will include the following with an assigned point system weighted to the areas of importance: program design; agency qualification, including program management financial viability; audit and performance reports; performance goals; cost analysis; as well as additional relevant categories.

C. How the Local Council will keep its primary focus on Strategic Planning and accountability:

The Tri-County Workforce Council understands the critical role it must play as a lead workforce organization for the region. To meet this goal, the Council has incorporated in its bylaws and Joint Powers Agreement with Local Elected Officials its primary purpose. That is, to provide policy guidance for, and exercise oversight with respect to, activities under the 5-year Local Operation Plan for the Workforce Development Area in partnership with the respective units of general local government.

The Council, will require of its contractors and service providers, at a minimum, reports on a quarterly basis. Reports will cover core indicators required by the state as well as specific goals and performance outcomes for WIA I-B contractors and providers. As the Council deems necessary, local or state evaluative data such as employer or participant surveys will be used as supplement report information.

D. Avoid conflict of interest and equitably oversee high quality WIA Title I-B program services:

The Tri-County Consortium recognizes the propensity for conflict of interest given its relatively small population and the requirement of Council member representatives who may provide training services. To maintain integrity of the system, the WDC has included in its bylaws the following statement.

*The WDC will ensure that its members will not engage in any **activity**, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of a sub-grant or contract supported by WIA funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when:*

- (i) The individual,*
- (ii) Any member of the individual's immediate family,*
- (iii) The individual's partner or*
- (iv) An organization that employs, or is about to employ, any of the above, has a **financial** or other interest in the firm or organization selected for award; (or any organization, which that member directly represents).*

***Activity**, as used herein, shall be any act including, but not limited to, deliberating, scoring, voting, awarding, administering, or any other act which affects the selection of a contractor or contractors.*

***Financial Interest** shall include employment, contracting, or subcontracting with the contractor.*

The Workforce Council and local workforce leadership recognize the business community's expectation that Rapid Response dislocated worker services for lay-off events be handled at the highest level in the local area., It is also understood that the department will continue to be held by the same fiscal, regulatory and performance standards as any other contracted service provider.

The Council and the local workforce leadership has reviewed the delivery of dislocated worker services in Yakima County by the Department of Employment and Training. An examination of the effectiveness of the region's Dislocated Worker System was conducted at public meetings on August 18, 1999, September 15, 1999, and September 23, 1999. The Council then concurred that a thorough review of the local system was completed pursuant to Federal Regulations 20 CFR661.350.

The board reviewed the program's ability to: a) possess adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain them; b) meet program design specification at a reasonable cost while meeting performance goals; c) present a

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satisfactory record of past performance; d) provide services that lead to the attainment of recognized credentials relating to the achievement of educational or occupational goals; e) present a satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics and fiscal accountability; f) demonstrate the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls; and g) the technical skills to perform the work.

This mode of service delivery was approved by the Council and endorsed by local Workforce Development Leaders including Business, Labor, Service Providers, and Training Providers. It was concluded that this method of service delivery would maximize the accountability and quality of local WIA Title I-B Dislocated Worker Program Services. The Council also found no conflicts since Yakima County Department of Employment and Training is officially a department of Yakima County, reporting to the Board of Yakima County Commissioners. The department represents a separate and distinct entity from the Tri-County Workforce Council.

E. Be accepted by other local workforce development program leadership as the legitimate and proper entity to create the Local Strategic Plan and evaluate the results of the workforce development system in the area:

The Tri-County Workforce Council will continue to exercise every measure to ensure the Council is viewed as the lead workforce organization for the Tri-County area. In the recruitment of new members, individuals were sought who were recognized as leaders from the local community. Representatives of public organizations include the presidents of the community college and a technical school, school district superintendents representing K-12 education, and the top administrators for the local public service employment, welfare and rehabilitation organizations. Additionally, care was taken to achieve a balance of members from consortium counties as well as ensure the Council membership reflects our diverse communities.

SECTION III

TITLE I-B AND WAGNER- PEYSER SERVICE

STRATEGIES

Section III A

A. The Tri-County WorkSource One-Stop delivery system:

The Tri-County Partnership has established a One-Stop delivery system. Originally, monthly meetings were held to review the development of the system and to make (by consensus agreement) decisions regarding financial matters, career center locations, and site operators for the WorkSource delivery system. The delivery system has been designed to include all service providers in the area and has provided a forum in which all partners can share ideas and best practices. This has formed the foundation of an integrated service delivery design within the partnership.

At the onset of One-Stop system development, organizations of the Central Washington Partnership opted for consortium partners to serve as the local One-Stop Operator and lead organizations were designated for each county area. The lead organizations included the Yakima Job Service Center for Yakima County, Columbia Gorge Job Service Center for Klickitat County and People for People for Kittitas County. An oversight committee formed with representatives from a cross section of local partners meets on a bi-monthly basis to keep the development of the system moving and to provide for an equitable process for decision-making. The regular bi-monthly meetings address management, service, and training issues. Consequently, a solid operational base has been established to further refine and improve services.

The Tri-County Partnership WorkSource delivery system is currently comprised of four WorkSource/Career Development Centers, two affiliate sites, and a yet to be determined number of self-service sites. Each center or affiliate site has developed cross-partnership teams to address such issues as service delivery, marketing, and Continuous Quality Improvement and customer service. This approach has led to innovation and buy-in from all partners. The process of sharing responsibility for design and delivery of services has led to the partners working together as a unit from the beginning.

The WorkSource partnership will face many challenges in the near future in light of state and federal budget cuts. Many partners are experiencing a decreasing in staffing levels. Creative strategies will need to be designed and incorporated into the WorkSource Centers as not to have an impact on the delivery of core services.

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WorkSource Centers :

1. WorkSource Columbia Gorge
107 West Jewett Blvd.
P.O. Box 2169
White Salmon, WA 98672
(509) 493-1210 Phone
(509) 493-5000 Fax
Administrative Lead: Anne Goranson-Salas ESD
2. WorkSource Yakima
306 Division Street
Yakima, WA 98902
(509) 574-0100 Phone
(509) 575-2720 Fax
Administrative Lead: Oscar Cerda, ESD
3. WorkSource Kittitas County
401 East Mountain View, Suite B
P.O. Box 519
Ellensburg, WA 98926
(509) 925-5311 Phone
(509) 925-1004 Fax
Administrative Lead: Renee Biles, People for People
4. WorkSource Sunnyside
1925 Morgan Road
Sunnyside, WA 98944
(509) 836-1125
Administrative Lead: Oscar Cerda, ESD

WorkSource Affiliate Sites:

1. Toppenish WorkSource Affiliate Site
Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic/Northwest Community Action
Center
706 Rentschler Lane
P.O. Box 831
Toppenish, WA 98948
(509) 865-7630 Phone
(509) 865-5116 Fax
2. Goldendale WorkSource Affiliate Site
116 East Main St.
Goldendale, WA 98620
(509) 773-5903

The Workforce Development Area has at least one full- service WorkSource Center, located in each county along with several affiliate sites. Given the large rural geographic area, diverse population, and range of businesses throughout the Workforce Development Area, it was decided that establishing affiliate sites as well would best provide service delivery. The WorkSource Centers have set policy and developed local strategies to meet the unique needs of their populations. The affiliate sites working in conjunction with the WorkSource Centers will ensure that each county provides the greatest range of services and broadest access points for their customers.

Consistent with the Governor's Executive order and the WIA requirement for Continuous Quality Improvement, each WorkSource Center and affiliate site will complete a Continuous Quality Improvement assessment based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The assessment has been used to set goals for continuous improvement as well as a criteria for certification. Continuous Quality Improvement teams at the WorkSource Center and affiliate sites will insure the quality process is in place at each site.

B. Memorandum of Understanding:

Consistent with requirements of WIA, the Tri-County Workforce Council has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with all partners of the local WorkSource system. The Memorandum describes:

- The services to be provided through the one-stop delivery system.
- How the costs of such services and the operating costs of the system will be funded through resource sharing agreements.
- Methods for referral of individuals between the one-stop operator and the one-stop partners.
- Duration of the memorandum and the procedures for amending during the term of the memorandum.

The Workforce Council will ensure that the WorkSource operators, WIA and other programs, incorporate and comply with the equal opportunity provisions of WIA Section 188 and its implementing regulations at 29CFR Part 37.

The Council is in the process of updating the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The draft MOU is attached as Addendum A of this plan.

Section III

SECTION III B

A. WIA Title I-B funded employment and training activities for adults and dislocated workers:

The Tri-County Workforce Council is committed to a workforce system that provides meaningful services and training to individuals based on their specific needs. Adults and Dislocated Workers, including displaced homemakers will be able to access **Core Services** as set forth in the Act, regardless of program enrollment eligibility. Comprehensive Employment and Training services will be made available, as customer's individual needs are determined through an individualized assessment. **Intensive Services** and **Training Services** will be accessible to Adult and Dislocated Workers on a case-by-case basis if it is determined more intensive intervention is required.

An individualized assessment for Adults and Dislocated Workers is an independent, comprehensive evaluation of an individual's work and education training needs. It is designed to identify information vital to a service strategy that will culminate in gainful employment.

The assessment is an ongoing process and will not be viewed as a one-time event. It will be a multi-faceted approach, which may include a full array of options such as structured interviews, paper and pencil tests, performance tests, behavioral observations, interest inventories, career guidance instruments, aptitude tests and basic skills tests. From these options, as well as others, staff will select the most appropriate tools for each worker to measure skills, abilities, aptitudes, and interests and to counsel workers on how their assessment results relate to labor market demands. The assessment tools and process will be sensitive to the testing and evaluation environment and the comfort and confidence level of the worker.

The assessment will evaluate a worker's employment barriers taking into account family situation, work history, education, occupational skills, volunteer experience, interests, aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for non- traditional occupations), supportive service needs, and personal employment information as it relates to the labor market.

It should be noted that all program services in the Tri-County area would be offered to adults, youth, and dislocated workers through the local WorkSource Centers and their affiliate sites. This will result in an increase in program accessibility for customers in all three counties.

Integrating the goals of *Universal Access*, focusing on *Customer Choice* and with a commitment to *Continuous Quality Improvement*, we have built a strong foundation for providing services to our diverse populations.

Along with Wagner Peyser labor exchange services, the required Adult and Dislocated Worker services described as Core, Intensive and Training services form the backbone of our One-stop delivery system. To ensure all populations of the local area are served on an equitable basis the Tri-County Workforce Council has created a goal dedicated to the preparation of adults in transition for success in the workplace. This goal is outlined in Goal 2 of the Tri-County's Five-Year Strategic Plan, which is listed below.

Goal 2: Prepare adults in transition (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers and older workers) for successful participation in the workforce.

Objective a: Prepare TANF participants (including non-custodial parents) with the skills needed for entrance to the labor market, and the ability to find and retain employment to achieve self-sufficiency.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to TANF participants, through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. For those seeking self-sufficiency, expand access to and provide the necessary intensive services, as appropriate, to include childcare assistance, transportation, substance abuse counseling and other services that will remove barriers to employment.
3. Focus services on retention of jobs and wage progression.
4. Integrate the Yakima/Kittitas and Klickitat Local Planning Area's Strategic Plan to the local workforce development system.

Objective b: Prepare disadvantaged adults with the skills needed to find and retain employment to achieve self-sufficiency.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to disadvantaged adult workers through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. For those seeking self-sufficiency, expand access to and provide the necessary intensive services, as appropriate, to include childcare assistance, transportation, substance abuse counseling, and other services that will remove barriers to employment.
3. Focus services on retention of jobs and wage progression.
4. Increase access and opportunities in basic skills and English as a second language instruction.
5. Offer incentives to employers for hiring and training low-income workers.

Objective c: Prepare workers 55 and older workers with employment and training opportunities to find and retain employment to achieve self-sufficiency.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to older workers through WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. Provide information to businesses and employers on the advantages of employing mature workers.
3. Offer incentives to employers for hiring and training older workers to increase employment and training opportunities.
4. Provide training programs at times and locations that are accessible and provide mature workers opportunity to learn new skills.

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Objective d: Provide services that will assist dislocated workers in finding and retaining employment at comparable wage prior to dislocation.

Strategies:

1. Provide the full range of services to dislocated workers through the WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. Continue exemplary best practices such as rapid response involving partners from public service employment, the community college and labor.

CORE SERVICES

Core services are provided regardless of eligibility determination and are available to all customers whether unemployed, incumbent worker, life long learners or others in need of employment information.

INTENSIVE SERVICES

Intensive services are provided after it has been determined more comprehensive service will be required to meet the individual needs of the customer served. These may include:

- Comprehensive Assessment
- Individual Counseling
- Employability Planning
- In-depth Career Counseling
- Case Management
- Group Counseling
- Short-term Pre-vocational Counseling for skill building
- Counseling for Development of Learning skills and communication skills
- Interview Skill building
- Counseling on punctuality, personal maintenance and professional conduct skills
- Adult Literacy
- Basic Computer Literacy

TRAINING SERVICES

May be secured through qualified providers and may include:

- Skills Upgrading and retraining
- On the Job Training
- Classroom Training
- Literacy, GED and ESL
- Customized training

- Vocational training
- Entrepreneurial training

Often, Title I-B programs provide the last resource for participants possessing multiple barriers to employment. Some individuals are eligible for services under other programs and may be able to acquire additional financial resources for their training. This information will be made available at the WorkSource Centers and affiliates. In order to meet the comprehensive needs of the individual, the WorkSource staff will work creatively with all appropriate programs to leverage all available resources.

In our rural communities, where public transportation is non-existent, WorkSource affiliates are especially important in providing service to those hard-to-serve populations. To reach this population, affiliate sites will serve as access points and services will be configured in a “user-friendly” manner. This reputation will guarantee that eligible individuals will receive the access and assistance they need to secure training, education and employment services.

Adults requiring adult education and literacy activities are of special concern. The Tri-County region has a large percentage of adults who have the lowest level of literacy proficiency compared to other areas in Washington State and a large number of people with limited English proficiency. Addressing this issue is a prerequisite for further occupational and workforce training. Innovative approaches have been developed to respond to the needs of this special population. As an example, Yakima Valley Community College, in cooperation with local businesses, now provides training in English language in the workplace. Continued development of programs such as this, as well as increased classroom education and language training in local communities will be a high priority of local programs and the WorkSource system.

B. WIA Title I-B funded youth employment and training activities:

Eligible youth will be provided assistance to achieve academic and employment success through mentoring, training opportunities, supportive services, and incentive for achievement. Additional opportunities may include leadership, citizenship, development, decision-making and community service. A strong link with the K-12 education system is instrumental in providing access to education opportunities and in providing these services.

Youth employment and training activities are designed to improve the quality of education through collaboration with business to prepare youth for entry to the workforce. The intent is to strengthen the connection between schools and businesses through the development of programs that help all students, including dropouts and students at-risk, succeed. We will work cooperatively with schools to develop workplace relevancy skills in our curriculum, e.g., integrity, work ethic, interpersonal relations, professionalism, problem solving, teamwork, time-management, and independent research.

Eligible youth will be provided an objective assessment, which will review

Section III

their academic and skill level and determination of service needs will occur. It will reflect: occupational assessment, prior work experience, employability, interest, aptitudes, possibly to include non-traditional. The development of an individual service strategy may begin at this point. The individual service strategy will develop and identify the young person's employment goal, including non-traditional occupations (if applicable), achievement objectives, career goal, and appropriate support services. Service opportunities may include preparation for post secondary education, linkages between academic and occupational learning, unsubsidized employment, and links to the local job market and employers. As part of the services provided, the youth program will have available:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction including dropout prevention strategies including those available through 1) local school districts; 2) non-profit agencies; 3) community organizations and churches; 4) business and volunteer involvement, and 5) program provider initiatives.
- Alternative secondary school services including those provided by 1) school district; 2) community college; 3) private or non-profit organizations; 4) any entity whose education program meets local and state education requirements for a high school diploma or GED; 5) private vocational school; and 6) Job Corps.
- Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning that are designed to enhance academic performance, job skill development, career awareness, and build self-confidence.
- Paid and unpaid work experiences will include internships and job shadowing. Work experiences are planned-structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experiences may take place in the private for profit, non-profit, or public sectors. Work experience shall be designed for youth to gain exposure to the working world and its requirements. Work experiences shall help youth acquire an understanding of personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain and advance in employment and the opportunity for career exploration and skill development. Work experiences may be subsidized or unsubsidized and may include the following elements:
 - 1) Instruction in employability skills or generic workplace skills such as the SCANS.
 - 2) Exposure to various aspects of an industry
 - 3) Progressively more complex tasks;
 - 4) Internships and Job Shadowing;
 - 5) The integration of basic academic skills into work activities;
 - 6) Supported work, work adjustment, and other transition activities;
 - 7) Entrepreneurship; and
 - 8) Other elements designed to achieve the goals of work experience.

- Occupational skill training including occupational and vocational education training provided by 1) a school district; 2) vocational center; 3) community college; 4) apprenticeship program; 5) On-the-Job training contract with local businesses; 6) Job Corps; and 7) other occupational skill training program directed toward the acquisition of abilities, capacities, or proficiencies in earning a living through a trade, profession, or business and approved by the local Workforce Council.
- Leadership development opportunities, which include activities encouraging positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, team work, and other activities as recognized as relevant by the local Workforce Council. Leadership development opportunities may include the following:
 - 1) Exposure to post-secondary education opportunities;
 - 2) Community and service learning projects;
 - 3) Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
 - 4) Organizational and team work training, including leadership training;
 - 5) Training in decision-making, including determining priorities;
 - 6) Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting, work behavior training, and budgeting of resources;
 - 7) Employability skills and positive social behavior development.
- Supportive Services may be provided through in-kind or cash assistance to enable an eligible youth to participate in WIA activities. Those Supportive Services are: 1) linkages to community services; 2) assistance with transportation costs; 3) assistance with child care and dependent costs; 4) assistance with housing costs; 5) referral to medical services, 6) assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work related tool costs, 7) or other services required for the individual to participate in training.
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve months, which may occur both during and after program participation, shall be available to youth participants while they continue to reside within the local service delivery area and contact can be maintained. Adult mentors may include the assignment of a responsible adult from an effort organized by 1) community service organization; 2) human service agency; 3) school district program; 4) service provider, or 5) other mentorship program available to youth operated within the community.

All supportive learning methods are designed to be relevant and meaningful for student success in work and life and also support the importance of life-long learning in the education and business communities. The support is evidenced by expanded pre-employment customized training, pre-apprenticeship programs, apprenticeship programs, and subsidized work opportunities, as well as educational opportunities. Programs will help

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facilitate community involvement and provide the opportunity to develop citizenship skills by connecting students with relevant classroom instruction, service learning, and work-based learning experiences.

- Follow-up services may include:
 - 1) Leadership development and supportive service activities;
 - 2) Regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise;
 - 3) Assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development, and education;
 - 4) Work related peer support group activities;
 - 5) Adult mentoring; and
 - 6) Tracking the progress of youth in employment after training.
 - 7) The scope of the follow-up activities shall be determined based on the needs of the individual and may be less intensive for youth that participate only in summer youth employment opportunities. All youth participants will receive some form of follow-up for a minimum of twelve months, longer if so approved by the Workforce Council.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol and abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

The eligible service providers of the WIA activities will be those selected through a competitive process by the local Youth Council with recommendation to the Workforce Council. As a result of the membership of the Youth Council, we will have participation from entities such as law and justice officials, local education representatives, Job Corps, business, public housing, and others with experience relating to youth activities.

SECTION III C

A. Ensuring that providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants:

The Tri-County Workforce Council recognizes the need for continuous quality improvement in the services it provides to participants and employers. In order to facilitate these services in accordance with WIA, a Continuous Quality Improvement Committee was created to initiate a process for "continuous improvement" of the services and performance provided by the local Workforce Development System.

Performance standards are delineated in the Act and the State. In addition, each local area is required, with the concurrence from the local board, chief elected official and Governor, to adopt local levels of performance standards in Participant/Employer Customer satisfaction.

Our system's effectiveness in meeting the employment needs of local employers and participants can be enhanced with quality information from our Federal, State and local partners. The Tri-County Workforce Council encourages the development of the following:

- Tangible results of the State and Federal employer and participant surveys to identify actions necessary to improve services to meet the needs of both customers.
- The provision of high quality Labor Market information that enables programs to respond to changes in the Labor Market and informs customers about workforce development opportunities.

B. Regional or interstate region coordination activities and operating agreements:

The Tri-County Workforce Development Area currently works under a regional agreement to coordinate activities between Workforce Development Delivery Areas. The agreement provides for the movement of participants across local area boundaries and the coordination of information and resources as appropriate.

Local areas across the state have been aggressive to move beyond coordination activities and have been both active and successful in joint ventures that address local and regional needs. Examples include the Eastern Washington AG/Food processing partnership, a joint project among four Eastern Washington councils, in partnership with the Northwest Food Processing Association and the Food Processors Labor-Management Committee.

These relationships continue to be developed and evolve through partnerships with Benton-Franklin and Eastern Washington WDCs in the implementation of the Customized Employment Grant intended to improve employment and career advancement of people with disabilities through the WorkSource System. On a broader level, the Tri-County Workforce Council is working with the Washington Workforce Association to create and implement new and innovative regional workforce development policy, service delivery models and program practices under the U.S. Department of Labor Work Incentive Grant.

The continue these promising approaches of regional coordination and will also pursue agreements with workforce areas of other states that boarder the region.

C. Coordination of local activities with statewide rapid response activities:

When the Tri-County Workforce Council becomes aware of a substantial layoff or a WARN notification (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) event the following steps will be taken:

- Contact WorkSource partners mobilize Rapid Response. Partners will include dislocated worker staff, Unemployment Insurance Representative, Community College system, and where appropriate

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organized labor.

- Establish early contact with employer and employee representatives to determine layoff schedules, labor negotiation status, and worker skills, promoting and coordinating the establishment of labor/management cooperation
- Disseminate and exchange information about Dislocated Worker program activities, WorkSource business resources, rapid response services to ensure that employers, organized labor, and employees not represented by unions are aware of the services available
- Develop strategies to meet the unique needs of workers
- Conduct, as part of a Rapid Response team, business site orientations to services for employers/employees
- Coordinate with Labor and economic development organizations to prevent layoffs.
- Coordinate activities with the statewide rapid response program utilizing the services of the State dislocated worker unit.
- Conduct Rapid Response Services in accordance with Washington State's Rapid Response Policy.

D. Apprenticeship services:

The Tri-County Workforce Council will continue to work with the local apprenticeship community by providing venues for distributing information concerning apprenticeship programs. The Council will encourage distribution of information to organizations serving Native American, People of Color, women, and other target groups. The curricula will be developed and delivered by labor organizations and offered to Tri-County school districts, out-of-school agency program students, adults and adult dislocated workers. Information pertinent to non-traditional trades and opportunities for the disabled within the apprenticeship realm will be provided for interested participants. Coordinating additional training for entry-level apprentices to meet the minimum apprenticeship qualifications will be instrumental in meeting the needs of employers.

There are multiple apprenticeship programs that meet the training needs of industries operating in the Tri-County regions and throughout Eastern Washington. These programs are combined on-the-job training and supplemental-related instruction. The length of training term varies from two to five years depending on the skill and/or trade requirements. The Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council monitors standards, committee recommendations, and program specifics.

As well, the Department of Labor and Industries facilitates the daily administration of all apprenticeship programs. Local committees determine the need for new apprentices, the type of training to be administered, and formulate minimum qualifications for program entry. Instructor and employee evaluations become part of an apprentice-trainee record in determining their progress toward completion with a certificate awarded as a graduate outcome. The apprentice committee determines wages with a

percentage of journeyman wages established for beginning trainees. Upon completion of the program, wages and benefits fall under the journeyman category.

SECTION III D

Wagner-Peyser Act Services

A. How Wagner-Peyser services will be delivered through the WorkSource system:

The plan's overall goals and objectives have a direct relationship to the Unified Plan for Washington's Workforce Development System and are consistent with the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies described in Section 5 of the Local Strategic Plan. The diligence of the WorkSource centers' staff and affiliates' staff have developed a strong partnership and laid a solid foundation for the operation of the one-stop facilities and the implementation of the WIA.

The affiliates, often beginning as community-based organizations, have successfully sought funding to provide a wide array of human and community services. As such, they are key partners in reaching special groups and assisting them to access the full core, intensive, supportive, and training services provided by the one-stop partners and operators.

They complement the WorkSource center staff, who, for years, have advocated for ideas and possible operational systems that exceeded the technology of the day. On-line job search, resume building, and access to computers have made these ideas a realization.

Employers benefit by matching their worker needs with the resumes and skills of workers in the center's computer job matching services. Businesses also can find assistance with recruitment and layoffs, access labor market information, and locate retraining resources.

Key WorkSource Center staff have made presentations and participated in the partner and community meetings held to discuss and provide ideas in the development of the local Strategic and Operational Plans. This increases the readiness of the Tri-County workforce development system and provides for a strong transitional effort in the implementation of the WIA.

Wagner-Peyser services will be delivered through local WorkSource delivery systems having written agreements with the local Workforce Councils. Wagner-Peyser dollars will be used to support labor exchange activities including the following:

- Job seekers will be assisted in finding employment;
- Employers will be assisted in filling jobs;
- The match between job seekers and employers will be facilitated;
- Participation in a system for clearing labor between the states will occur; and
- The work test requirements of the state Unemployment Insurance system will be met.

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All staff providing Wagner-Peyser Act funded services will be merit staff employees of the State of Washington Employment Security Department.

B. Priority of services:

- Special Disabled Veterans;
- Disabled Veterans;
- All other Veterans and Eligible Persons;
- Persons with Disabilities:
- UI Claimants, Agricultural workers, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, and Food Processing Workers; and
- All Others.

Veterans and Persons with Disability Provisions will be provided preference in the promotion and development of employment opportunities and the provision of other employment and training services [Wagner-Peyser Act, 38 USC, Chapter 41 and 42, 20 CFR 653.100; 20 CFR 1001.120(a), and Department policy].

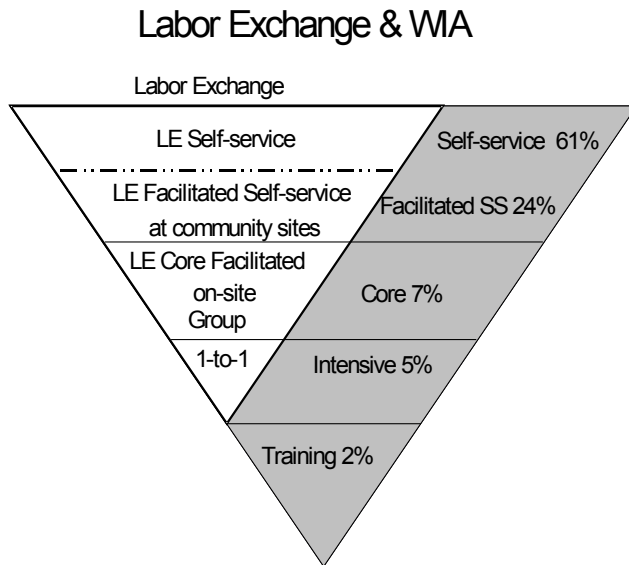
Priority services will be given to workers and employers in the agricultural and food processing industries [20CFR 653.100 and WSJTCC priority].

Veteran's compliance indicators will be met and, in offices that have Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker funds, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker compliance indicators will be met [20 CFR 1001.130 and 20 CFR 653.108].

As noted above, the Secretary of Labor has declared that WIA funds are limited. Under WIA, it is required that priority service be given to public assistance recipients and person below the 175 percent of poverty level income. A description of service priorities will be discussed under Section III E below.

C. Strategies used to ensure the availability of each of the required tiers of labor exchange services:

The inverted pyramid graphic is a customer flow model that offers customer choice in the most efficient manner. This model will be implemented to the extent that service providers can integrate funding and staff. Knowledgeable and customer-oriented staff will ensure that an individual receives all the services under the various programs to which he/she is eligible. In addition to being efficient, it permits the creative use of funding to meet the person's need. It is necessary in this day of limited public funding for programs. This will be essential under the limited funds for the WIA Act.



The Inverted Pyramid

This customer flow model offers customer choice in the most efficient manner. This model will be implemented to the extent that service providers can integrate funding and staff.

All programs and fund sources have a responsibility to ensure integration occurs to the highest degree possible at each tier of service delivery. Service delivery has, as its primary focus, identification of customer needs and satisfaction of customer choice.

Indeed, this service model mirrors the eligibility determination process for adults for core, intensive, and training services under WIA Section 134.

All programs and fund sources have a responsibility to ensure integration occurs in the highest degree possible at each tier of service delivery. Service delivery has, as its primary focus, identification of customer needs and satisfaction of customer choice. All customers are encouraged and supported in their efforts to increase their self-sufficiency. Perceptive staff will ensure that each person receives the level of tier service appropriate to his/her need. This is also the most efficient method for the person to be assisted. Satisfaction of customer needs is essential to quality public service. Moreover, customer satisfaction will be evaluated under the continuous quality improvement endeavor.

Persons have varying degrees of assistance needs that cannot necessarily be determined by a classification such as dislocated worker or veteran. Information, assessment activities, referral services and other methods must be utilized to help direct customers to the type of service that will most efficiently meet their identified needs and for which they are eligible.

The electronic labor exchange is used to provide a direct connection between job seekers and employers. Job search assistance to individuals is provided in a group setting using the six training sessions of the Job Hunter Workshop Series.

The Employment Security Department has combined computers with the telephone to develop a Job Hunter service. During the night, Job Hunter searches Employment Security Department's database of job opportunities to find an opening that matches a UI claimant's skills and interests. When a

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match is found, the claimant is automatically notified on the Benefit Hotline, during their regular weekly call to file for unemployment benefits.

This matching process is available to any Unemployment Insurance claimant who has a work history registration in SKIES (the labor exchange system). Over 99 percent of claimants are registered with a work history and can receive the Job Hunter service within 24 hours of filing their claim for unemployment compensation.

D. Coordination to avoid duplication of labor exchange services:

Labor exchange will be defined as; assisting job seekers in finding employment, assisting employers in filling jobs; and facilitating the match between job seekers and employers. Coordination begins with customer (employer/job seeker) introduction to an automated labor exchange system(s), including such items as centralized job listing system, integrated marketing program, and a shared client history system(s).

Establishing a memorandum of understanding will prevent duplication of labor exchange services. Under sections 121 and 118 of the WIA, the Tri-County Workforce Council will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of its operating partners regarding the operation of the system. Each Memorandum of Understanding will define the provision of services through the One-Stop system; how the service costs and the operating costs of the system will be funded; the referral method of persons between service partners; and other issues. This has been dealt with in Section III A of this plan.

E. Re-employment services to be provided to Worker Profiling and Re-employment Services claimants:

Worker Profiling and Re-employment Services claimants will be receiving services available through the inverted pyramid. Additional group activities may include; orientation, skills and ability analysis, effective job search, selling yourself using applications and resumes, the job market, and interviewing techniques. In line with recent legislative changes, claimants who receive a structured work search review will be referred for labor exchange or other employment and training services.

F. Wagner-Peyser Act funded strategies to be used to provide services to persons with disabilities:

Persons with disabilities will be receiving services available through the inverted pyramid with access to other partners who specialize in providing services to persons with disabilities. Accessible technology and Disability Placement Specialists are available at the primary access points to the WorkSource system.

Persons with disabilities will have access to group job search assistance through the Job Hunter job search workshop series.

Persons with disabilities will receive the same set of core, intensive, and training services under WIA as other adult workers. According to individual needs, they will receive intensive services, such as, one-on-one employment counseling, job development, referral, or training assistance and partner or community offered services. Special efforts will be made to insure that they are included in the provision of labor exchange and other services according to their eligibility. In addition, through home or public computers, persons with disabilities will be able to access electronic labor exchange systems, such as America's Job Bank (AJB), the Internet, and labor market information.

Persons with disabilities are provided service in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

G. Role of the Local Veterans Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program staff in the One-Stop system:

Veteran staff will provide and coordinate with partners the delivery of all veterans' services available through the inverted pyramid. Their focus is on providing services to special disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam Era, disabled veterans other than the special disabled veterans, and all other veterans and eligible persons. Veteran staff will be performing outreach activities to employers, veterans, and eligible persons not currently accessing the system. Case management services will be provided to all Title 38 referrals needing such services.

The needs of multiple barrier veterans and recently separated veterans with military occupational specialties that do not readily transfer to the civilian workforce are case managed on a case-by-case basis. Services may include a combination of self-service, facilitated self-service, group services and/or referral to supportive services. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program are specialists who case manage those Veterans with severe barriers to employment and are in need of intensive one-on-one services. This is done regardless of the agency or program affiliation. In addition, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Programs act as liaisons to ensure that other WorkSource staff are aware of the peculiar needs and priorities of Veterans.

It is the policy of the labor exchange services provided by Wagner-Peyser to provide priority service. Please reference Section III D of this document for that prioritized listing. (Page 29)

Specific preferences are provided to these customer groups in the areas of applicant registration, and selection and referral to job openings and other core services.

Special emphasis is placed upon those Veterans traditionally disadvantaged, homeless, and recently separated from the military, and economically disadvantaged Veterans. The automated job matching system has the capability of file searching solely by Veteran status.

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H. Wagner-Peyser funded services provided to the agricultural community:

Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) staff will provide and coordinate with partners the delivery of all farm worker services available through the inverted pyramid. Services will be provided through varied access points located in areas where MSFW worker and agricultural employer services are most in need. Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker staff will focus on providing services to migrant and seasonal farm workers and their families and agricultural employers. Services will be provided in the primary language of the customer.

Agricultural Workers, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, and Food Processing Workers are provided service in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act; and the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 653. While all WorkSource staff members provide service to Agricultural Workers, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, and Food Processing Workers, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Outreach Workers are also available to serve the needs of this customer group.

I. Data Collection

With the Employment Security Department serving a large percentage of individuals seeking workforce services, it is appropriate here to deal with data and information issues. First, under the Workforce Investment Act a set of common data elements are defined that must be collected on each person seeking Title I-B services. These may raise coordination issues with other programs and the mutual support they provide.

The common data elements that may be collected at intake on program participants are listed as follows:

1. Date
2. First Name
3. Last Name
4. Phone/FAX/E-mail
5. Address
6. Social Security Number
7. Services Requested
8. Gender M/F
9. Limited English Y/N
10. Date of Birth
11. Disability Status:
Do you have a physical or mental impairment that limits the kind or amount of work you can do at a job? Y/N
Prevents you from working at a job? Y/N
12. What is your highest grade completed?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22+

13. What is the highest level of certification or degree you have achieved?
High school diploma; GED; some schooling after high school but no degree or certificate; vocational certificate/diploma; two year Associates Vocational degree; two year Associates Academic Transfer degree; Bachelors degree; Graduated degree; other.
14. With which racial group do you most closely identify? For selection of choices, use current U.S. Census elements.
15. Intake Location
16. Currently Employed: Y/N
17. U.S. Veteran: Y/N
18. Displaced Homemaker: Y/N
19. Out-of-School Youth: Y/N
20. Family Size
21. Receive Public Cash Assistance: Y/N

The Workforce Investment Act envisions improved labor market information for the workforce development system, so much so, that it will be re-named as the Workforce Information System. Like the WIA, it is a work in its early stages.

The Employment Security Department is the generator of and main repository for some of the critical economic and social information for employers, educators, and government. The Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics are actively considering methods to improve the quality, timeliness, detail, and analysis of available data.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is considering expanding the major monthly report on industry employment and earnings by including business starts, closures, and contractions. Timeliness and accuracy would also be improved. Occupational information would be improved in quality. The Occupational Employment Survey will continue to gather wage information by occupation. However, large firms over 500 employees will be surveyed each year and with certainty, that is, all firms will be included in the survey. Occupational projections will be improved. Certainly, some changes will be made in the future.

SECTION III E

A. Local policies which will influence the operation of programs in ways specific or unique to the Tri-County Area:

The Tri-County Workforce Council has authorized staff to develop operational policy to implement the plan and accomplish goals specified in the Strategic and Operations Plan. Consortium Policy Directives will be issued for a WorkSource System (WorkSource Center and Affiliate Sites) and service delivery organizations as determined by the staff. These directives will issue local decisions regarding requirements and interpretations or clarifications of

Section III

policy issues by higher authority. They are not intended to duplicate the Act, Federal Regulations, or State Provisions.

B. Definition of the term "serious barriers to employment," with respect to Non-Economically Disadvantaged Youth:

Up to 5% of youth participants may be individuals who do not meet the minimum income criteria but are within the listed categories of WIA Sec. 129 (c)(5), which include items A through H as follows.

- A. School Dropouts
- B. Individuals who are Basic Literacy Skills Deficient as defined in WIA Section 101 (4) to be at or below 8.9 grade level
- C. Individuals with one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the age of the individuals
- D. Individuals who are pregnant or are parenting
- E. Individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities
- F. Individuals who are homeless or runaway youth
- G. Individuals who are offenders
- H. Other eligible youth who face serious barriers to employment as identified by the local

Our local Council has identified those barriers to employment as:

- Personal or family substance/alcohol abuse
- Victim of abuse
- Other life circumstances that contractor staff deem as barriers to education or work training success. This barrier must have prior Department of Employment and Training approval through a written request.

C. Methods to ensure that any exceptions to the use of Individual Training Accounts are justified:

The Tri-County Workforce Council has adopted an Individual Training Account Policy, which is aligned with Washington State Policy. The Tri-County Workforce Council reserves the right to implement authorized exceptions to use of individual training accounts pursuant to Washington State Policy and Section 134 of the Act. (Addendum B).

D. Eligibility and Priority Service

The Tri-County Workforce Council has set local policies to address priority service issues of the Workforce Development Area. When funding limitations exist, the Council will prioritize service to recipients of public assistance and

other low income individuals and individuals with income under 175% of poverty. Priority of service is extended to veterans and spouses of certain veterans. WIA funding for these groups will be coordinated with TANF WorkFirst, Re-Employ Washington's Workers, the Job Skills Program, and other relevant programs.

Setting program priorities will take the form of Administrative Bulletins that will outline the WDC's policy for priority service. Administrative Bulletins will be disseminated to eligible providers of WIA I-B Services and WorkSource Operators. All Administrative Bulletins shall be consistent with state policy.

Each local operator of a Title I-B Adult-funded program must demonstrate an eligibility determination process that supports these priority services. The WDC will also ensure that services are provided efficiently and effectively in a timely manner without undue delays. For eligibility determination, such factors as funding availability, target group goals, other available resources in the local community and participant need will form the basis of the local policy.

For Dislocated Workers, the Tri-County Workforce Council will develop eligibility criteria that is consistent and in compliance with state provisions, federal regulations and the WIA. The criteria shall include an individual who:

1. has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment;
2. is eligible or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; or
3. has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate, to the appropriate entity at a one-stop center attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered under a State unemployment compensation law; and
4. is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation; has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility, or enterprise;
5. is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; or
6. for purposes of eligibility to receive services other than training services described in section 134(d)(4), intensive services described in section 134(d)(3), or supportive services, is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close;
7. was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters; or
8. is a displaced homemaker.

E. Self-Sufficiency

For the Tri-County Workforce Area, self-sufficiency is defined, as a family of a given composition living in a given community shall be deemed “self-sufficient” when its earned income is adequate to meet its basic needs without public or private assistance. The “Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State” shall be used as a guideline in determining adequate income. For purposes of the Tri-County Area, determination of “self-sufficiency” may also include mastery of basic skills by the family wage earners.

SECTION IV

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY / CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A. Analysis of past results and Employment Services:

The Tri-County Workforce Council recognizes the changing nature of the community and labor market it serves and will maintain in this plan the ability to adapt and changes to meet new workforce challenges as they arise.

Analysis of these results reflects the new economic environment facing the partnership. Past experience has shown that more emphasis is needed to address human capital issues. Experience has proven that businesses are increasingly concerned about educational reforms and the quality of the labor force as they partner with the K-12 education system. Economic growth has been increasingly constrained by a lack of skilled workers in the area. Past experience has indicated that training programs need to include a broad array of services that will develop work habits and technical skills needed for success in the workplace.

This has resulted in the formation of an Operational Plan that sustains/enhances areas of success and addresses the needs of the community. In the analysis extensive time has been spent reviewing labor market information and community feedback. The area has witnessed a steady loss of youth and skilled workers relocating for better work and wage opportunities. This plan has placed a priority on preparing workers and the “hard-to-employ” with modern skills necessary to compete in the Tri-County job market.

B. Management Information Systems SKIES/Swipe Cards, and EJAS

The integration of the Services, Knowledge, & Information Exchange System (SKIES) by WorkSource Washington will serve all the data collection needs for the purposes of WIA Title I and WorkSource performance accountability. SKIES records the common data elements adopted by the Executive Policy Council (EPC) of WorkSource that were based on the Performance Management for Continuous Improvement (PMCI) common data elements previously adopted by the Workforce Board. SKIES collects necessary data on the service record of program participants and any data required on immediate placement activities so that local WorkSource managers can effectively manage on a day-to-day basis. SKIES was implemented in April 2002. The Workforce Council has continued to utilize a modified version of Dataflex for Management Information System (MIS) during the implementation of SKIES.

Section IV

How the Local Council will use performance information on WorkSource and WIA Title I-B to oversee program operation and to manage interventions:

The local Council will use performance information on WorkSource and WIA Title I-B to oversee program operation. The State Workforce Development Board will ensure that participant data collected by SKIES is matched with administrative records for the purpose of measuring indicators related to employment, earnings, and education. These include federal core indicators as specified by Department of Labor, indicators needed for the annual state report to Department of Labor, and the Performance Management for Continuous Improvement (PMCI) indicators. The Workforce Board will also administer surveys of individual participants and employers in order to, among other purposes, measure the Department of Labor customer satisfaction indicators. The Board's surveys will include sufficient numbers of respondents for each area to provide statistically valid results for each local area for WIA Title I and WorkSource. The Workforce Board will provide the results on the indicators to each local Council and, to the extent required, Department of Labor.

The WorkSource Membership System, developed by the Tri-County Workforce Council in 2001, will provide data on the use of self-directed core service activities in our WorkSource Centers and Affiliates. This system keeps track of the activities that WorkSource customers indicate using, when they sign in at one of the Centers. Reports aggregated from this data will provide information to assist in the better management of these Centers.

C. The area's performance results:

The area's performance results are the same as found in Section IV of the Local Strategic Plan, and also are attached as Addendum C in this Operational Plan document.

D. Local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and the Chief Elected Official(s):

Local adjusted levels of performance for the first three years of WIA I-B have been negotiated by Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board with the Tri-County Workforce Council and the Chief Local Elected Officials. The Council will be negotiating Performance targets for years 4 and 5 with the Workforce Training and Education Board in the very near future.

These performance standards incorporate past performance, local economic conditions, and the demographic characteristics of local program participants.

E. The Local Council's criteria and process, for Individual Training Accounts:

The Tri-County Workforce Council has adopted a policy consistent with the state policy regarding Individual Training Accounts. Individual Training Accounts are established on behalf of a participant. Title I adult and dislocated workers will, after consultation with the case manager, be able to

purchase training services from eligible providers in accordance with the limitations set out by Tri-County Workforce Council policy. (See addendum B attached)

The Tri-County Workforce Council Council has reserved the right to implement authorized exceptions to the use of Individual Training Accounts in accordance with WIA Section 134 and WIA 20-CFR 663-430. (See addendum B attached)

F. The Local Council's has implemented a system of continuous quality improvement for WorkSource and WIA Title I-B that is consistent with the quality criteria of the Baldrige Award:

The Tri-County Workforce Council has been designated to carry out employment and training services in Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima counties in accordance with the WIA. The Tri-County Workforce Council recognizes the need for continuous quality improvement in the services it provides to participants and employers.

Consistent with the Governor's Executive Order and WIA requirement for continuous quality improvement, the Tri-County WorkSource system is committed to continuous quality improvement principles. In order to be certified, each WorkSource Center and Affiliate is charged with ensuring a self-assessment and CQI processes and principles are incorporated in center and affiliate operations based upon the quality categories of the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

The categories assessed are:

- Leadership
- Strategic Planning
- Customer Focus
- Information and Analysis
- Human Resource Development
- Process management
- Business Results

These assessments are designed to measure performance excellence as an aid to the WorkSource Centers in determining their progress toward becoming high performance quality organizations.

V. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Participation:

Numerous public meetings have been held in the Tri-County region to brainstorm and obtain information regarding the implementation of the WIA. Key stakeholders and community leaders met during the third quarter of 1999 to discuss WIA issues. With the project consultants the team outlined tasks for each section and approaches to compiling information for the original plan.

In 2002 The Tri-County Workforce Council was awarded funding by the Department of Labor to conduct a Community Audit to define self-sufficiency, define our workforce population, forecast changes in the work economy, and define the support services available to our workforce. The Council procured the services of Corporation for a Skilled Workforce to research and prepare the Community Audit.

Communication:

In 1999, a variety of advertising efforts were employed to provide for public input, including placement of the Strategic Plan on the One-Stop website during its development. With the objective of obtaining input from partners, stakeholders, community leaders, and program service providers, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to solicit ideas on service issues and priorities. Questions were ranked in a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being high priority). Rank and score as follows:

Item Ranked #1	Education, training, and employment of economically disadvantaged. Rating 7.9
Item Ranked #2	Centralized system for matching job openings with job seekers. Rating 7.8
Item Ranked #3	Education and retraining of workforce to upgrade skills and increase earnings. Rating 7.7
Item Ranked #4	Education, training, and employment of welfare recipients and dislocated workers. Rating 7.6
Item Ranked #5	Education, training, and employment of dropouts and improving literacy. Rating 7.5
Item Ranked #6	Provide language training for limited English proficient. Rating 6.2

More recently, the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and the Council staff present the draft Community Audit – “Statement of the Workforce” in each of the three counties soliciting comment and input from community members. The information gathered from these community meetings provided anecdotal information and helped to reshape the focus, not only of that report, but also of the Strategic and Operational Plans.

Review Process:

The Operations and the Strategic Plans were developed under the supervision of the Tri-County Workforce Council. Extra effort has been made to ensure that community, workforce partners and stake holders are provided opportunities to provide input and comment.