

OVERVIEW

The Tri-County Workforce Area is comprised of Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima Counties located in the South Central region of Washington State covering approximately 8,477 square miles. The dense forest and mountainous terrain of the Cascades form the western boundary. The timbered covered mountains of Kittitas County make a natural northern boundary. The Columbia River flows along the sagebrush covered eastern flanks of Kittitas and Yakima Counties. The river then moves slowly through a series of dams on its way West to the Pacific Ocean where it marks the southern most edge of the region and the state.

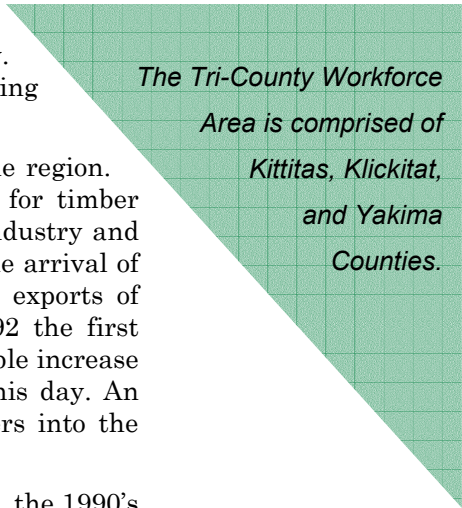
The Cascade mountain range forms a barrier to the moisture-laden clouds from the coast causing rain and snow to be deposited in the mountains depriving the lowlands of most of its moisture. The valleys tend to be dry and the crops must be irrigated from water originating from 5 major dams located in Kittitas and Yakima Counties.

The city of Yakima in Yakima County is the largest metropolitan area, with a population of 71,845 residents and the 7th largest city in the State. Scattered throughout the remainder of the geographic region are small to medium cities and towns. The City of Ellensburg, with a population of 15,414, is the largest Kittitas County municipality. Goldendale, where 3,760 people live, is the largest community in Klickitat County. The combined population of the three counties is 275,104, according to the latest decennial Census, in 2000.

Native Americans were the first people to live and prosper in the region. Later, settlers came bringing cattle and fruit trees. The need for timber brought about the formation of the lumber and wood product's industry and the foundation of a resource based economy was then formed. The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1884, opened the doors to the exports of agricultural and timber products to the world beyond. By 1892 the first major irrigation system was developed which brought a considerable increase in productivity and diversity of agricultural products up until this day. An ever-increasing demand for labor slowly brought migrant workers into the farm areas to help in the harvesting of crops and other activities.

While agriculture has been the primary fuel of the local economies, the 1990's have produced slow but steady growth. The development of the overseas market for agricultural products has been a major contributor to this development. However, the largely seasonal nature of the work has been a major factor in the lower than average earnings from wages and salaries. Overall economic growth remains lower than average throughout the region.

This area is equally rich in the diversity of the residents and their respective cultural heritages. Each County has experienced a significant increase in the Hispanic population. A small but significant population of Asians and Black Americans reside in communities across the service area. Within the borders of the local workforce development area lies the Yakama Indian reservation providing the source for a significant population of Native Americans in both Yakima and Klickitat Counties.



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Two community colleges, two major universities and twenty-two school districts serve the region educationally. The high school dropout rate has declined over the last few years but still remains high and twice that of the state average. Today's challenges that are being faced in the educational system have a direct impact on the quality and strength of the future workforce development system.

The Tri-County community's rich diversity raises the contemporary issues of increasing economic diversity and the full incorporation of all citizens into educational and economic parity in an increasingly technical society. Progress has been made in all these areas but much remains to be done. Economic development has advanced in the industries of transportation, education, medical care, and services. However, the lumber and wood products industry has declined in its historical strength as productivity increases and environmental concerns have reduced timber harvest levels and employment.

In the last decade, public and business leaders have become active in addressing quality of life issues for local residents. In every discussion, the topic of creating more livable wage jobs has become a central point and is recognized as a cornerstone necessary for building a strong economy and a healthy community. The Commissioners, Workforce Council and partners of Yakima, Kittitas and Klickitat Counties recognize the unique and important role of workforce programs in the development of economic and social health of its communities.

A strong and sustained effort must be maintained in the development of a local workforce system that respond to community concerns and address the needs of its customers -- workers and business. As we enter a new century, the Tri-County Consortium is committed to the development of a workforce system that provides opportunities for all residents to receive a quality education and avenues for pursuing training that will lead to productive, satisfying, and livable wage jobs for themselves and their families.

To achieve this end, the scope of the workforce delivery system must be expanded to include all public and private organizations that have the common vision (directly or indirectly) of improving the quality of life for local residents. This means new partnerships and relationships must be forged with schools, post-secondary organizations, economic development agencies, business, labor, state agencies and public organizations. The new system must connect these key players in a single network as a way to achieve efficient use of the public dollar, increase worker readiness for existing and new businesses and improve the quality of life for local residents. The Tri-County Five Year Strategic Plan is the blueprint for this new system.

SECTION I.

PROFILE OF THE TRI-COUNTY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

A. Key Industries:

When the major categories of employment were examined in the three counties, the overall concentration of employment relative to the state was found in agriculture. Most other industries that recorded a higher index were primarily related to **agricultural production**. These were **food processing, paper and allied products, trucking and warehouse and shipping and packing** industries. A closer look of key industries by county is detailed below using the location quotient (percentage of total employment in a given industry divided by the proportionate distribution in the same industry at the state level).

Kittitas County

- **Government** (34.8% or 4,940).
- **Retail sector** (21.8% of total or 3,100 employees).
- **Agricultural production** (8.3% of total or 1,171 employees).
- **Transportation and warehouse** (3.6% of total or 510).

Klickitat County

- **Government** (30.3% of total or 1,710 employees).
- **Agricultural sector** (25.1% of total or 1,133 employees).
- **Manufacturing** (7.8% of total or 440 employees).
- **Transportation and public utilities** (7.3% of total or 410 employees).

Yakima County

- **Agricultural production** (23.2% of total or 21,639 employees).
- **Wholesale trade** (5.4% of total or 5,000 employees).
- **Manufacturing** sector (11.7% of total or 10,900 employees).
- **General merchandise and apparel** (2.4% total or 2,200 employees).
- **Health care** industry (9.1% of total or 8,500 employees).

Many small businesses exist and continue to emerge throughout the Tri-County service area, which is characteristic of Eastern Washington. The disadvantage to local workforce development is the lack of private business supported resources for training and the lack of career ladders for employee growth.

While dependence on a single large employer can provide some economic protection from downturns, which affect a single industry, declines in the aluminum, lumber and wood product firms over the last decade have demonstrated that negative changes can have a detrimental impacts to local communities. The area's small business base is an asset, which may give the economy long-term resiliency and potential for growth.

The medium sized businesses located in the Tri-County area provide for the higher paying higher skilled jobs. These businesses such as manufacturing are linked and far more sensitive to the state and national economy. Historically, significant downturns in Boeing will ripple through the area causing employee reductions at those companies that sub-contract goods and materials to the airplane manufacturer.

B. Declining Industries:

In recent years, industries that have shown the largest employment declines have been resource-based. Other industry employment decreases have been minor in contrast.

DECLINING INDUSTRIES:

Food Processing
Wholesale
Agriculture
Timber

1. Employment in ***agricultural production*** has primarily manifested itself in Yakima County. Jobs there have decreased by 2.0% or 350 people from a total of 17,533 in 1993. Kittitas County had a lessor loss of 13.0% or 80 workers from a total of 616 in 1993.
2. ***Food processing*** employment in Yakima County has shown the largest loss (11.4% or 505 workers) from a total of 4,418 in 1993. Closure of a major food processor in Kittitas County also reflected in its losses.
3. ***Lumber and wood production*** posted losses across the region. Kittitas County's employment decreased by 34.6% or 56 workers from its high of 162 in 1993. Klickitat County recorded the largest loss of 30.9% or 207 workers from a total of 671 in 1993. In Yakima County, payrolls in this industry dropped 7.8% or 134 workers from its total of 1,726 in 1993.
4. Through consolidation of some of the shipping and packing firms, ***wholesale trade*** employment declined. In Klickitat County the loss was 72.9% or 159 from a total of 218 in 1993, which was an exception as employment increased in ***agricultural production***. Yakima County had a loss of 6.7% or 385 workers from a total of 5,776 in 1993.

Public policy and product demand will play a key role in which industries will decline over the next five years.

Agricultural production and some sectors of manufacturing are predicted to show a decline through the year 2005. Increased competition from overseas apple production with lower prices may mean lower output here at home.

Mechanization in the ***food processing*** industry will continue to take its toll in this industries' work force. Increased worker productivity because of new technology and demand factors in ***lumber and wood products*** will keep employment at the same levels or will go lower if the Boise Cascade plant in Yakima County closes.

C. Industries Experiencing Growth:

Total growth has always been related to the cycles inherent in the agricultural and timber related industries. The past 5 years and looking forward to the year 2005 small shifts towards nontraditional areas of the current economy are:

- In manufacturing, the expansion of ***fabricated metals, machinery except electrical***, and other small producer's employment provides new opportunities and a shift of emphasis.
- Expansions in ***wholesale trade*** will not be dominated by the non-durable goods or food sector as in years past but in a smaller measure it will be in ***durable goods***.
- The health care industry will be even more dominant as the population ages. ***Health services*** establishments are already the largest employers in the economy of these three counties.

GROWTH INDUSTRIES:

Fabricated Metals

Health Services

Durable Goods

Machinery

In **Kittitas County**, since 1993 ***health services*** has grown 42.0% or 180 jobs from a total of 429. By 2005, the ***service industry*** will expand by 18.4% or 420 jobs, most of which will be in the health care sector. The continued expansion of Central Washington State University and tourism will boost the ***retail sector*** by 18.4% or 500 workers.

Klickitat County's service sector will lead the way in 2005 with an increase of 26.7% or 160 jobs. This increase will be primarily related to ***health care***. Other sectors will expand along the same lines as the other counties.

Health Services will lead the growth in **Yakima County**. Health Services will produce the highest rate of growth at 28.6% or 2,200 workers over the next five years. ***Fabricated metals*** will help create more job openings in manufacturing by 2005, as will ***Machinery, except electrical*** establishments. ***Business and personal services employment*** will also expand by 2005.

D. Skill needs and the Local Workforce:

Statewide more than 94% of employers surveyed have reported that they are having difficulty in finding workers with job-specific skills, as well as problem-solving skills (89%), communications skills (85%), work habits (85%), computer skills (80%), and adaptability to change (80%). A 2002 study by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board found that 40% of Tri-County employers were prevented from expanding, and 80% of them suffered lowered productivity because of skill shortages.

Similarly, a recent workforce survey conducted by the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce area supported the above findings. Employers indicated those critical thinking skills basic skills, interpersonal/team skills, and workplace ethics were the primary education and training needs of workforce. The employer community has made it clear that these skills, though expected and essential, can no longer be taken for granted. These

same concerns have been expressed by the workforce development system as well.

Other surveys of Tri-County businesses have indicated that they have experienced a shortage of skilled, professional, and technical workers. Skilled workers have been difficult for employers to find locally and often they recruit from outside the area.

Demand occupations are sorted into the three categories:

Those jobs requiring less than a high school education,

Requiring a high school education, and

Jobs requiring post-secondary education and/or technical skills training.

The following demand occupational analysis is based upon those jobs requiring at least a high school education and those jobs, which require post-secondary education and/or technical skills training. Higher job openings may occur in industries, which may be due to the larger turnover of workers in that industry.

Kittitas County

Require high school diploma		Require post secondary	
Jobs	Openings	Jobs	Openings
Waiters/waitresses	24	education: instructor & coach, sport	12
fast food cooks	6	teacher aide, paraprofessional	4
office and sales general office clerk	18	food service work: cook	8
secretary except legal and medical	18	food service & lodging manager	5
Bookkeeping accounting & auditing clerks	6	carpenters	8
Reception information clerks	5	construction and maintenance jobs: maintenance repairer, general utility	10
Salesperson, retail	18	medical work: registered nurse	6
Equipment operators: truck driver, heavy	9	office and sales work: first line supervisor, sales & related	6
Medical: nursing aide	7		

Klickitat County

Require high school diploma		Require post secondary	
Jobs	Openings	Jobs	Openings
waiter and waitress	7	education: teacher aide, paraprofessional	2
office and sales work: general office clerk	6	food service work: cook, restaurant	3
Bookkeeping accounting & auditing clerks	3	food service & lodging manager	2
Salesperson, retail	18	carpenters	4
Equipment operators: truck driver, heavy or tractor-trailer	9	construction and maintenance jobs: maintenance repairer, general utility	3
farm equipment operator	3	medical work: emergency medical technician	2
Operating engineer	5	office and sales work: first line supervisor, clerical	2
Medical: nursing aide	7	automotive mechanic	2

Yakima County

Require high school diploma		Require post secondary	
Jobs	Openings	Jobs	Openings
Warehouse work: hand packer & packager	122	teacher aide, paraprofessional	45
grader & sorter, agricultural products	111	medical work: registered nurse	45
all other help, labor, material mover, hand	44	construction and maintenance jobs: maintenance repairer, general utility	42
all other freight, stock, material mover, hand	39	and carpenters	24
retail sales work: cashier	139	other manager & administrator	30
food service jobs: combined food preparation & service	77	office and sales work: first line supervisor, clerical	31
food preparation worker	43	first line supervisor, sales & related	43
food processing work: cannery worker	40	sales representatives, except, retail, science, related	19
Agricultural, forestry and fishing jobs: all other agricultural, forestry, and fishing	72	all other professional, paraprofessional technical	19
		automotive mechanic	18

These high growth occupations appear to parallel the occupations statewide which Labor Market Economic Analysis Supply-Demand survey notes as having the greatest hiring difficulties: professional-technical, and management-administration. The *1999 Occupational Outlook*, indicates that the higher the level of education needed for a job opening, the more difficult it was to find qualified applicants. The Employers in the Tri-County area are currently experiencing this skill gap as well.

E. Earnings from wages and salaries

Demand for employment and increased earnings have always been correlated with jobs that require post- secondary education and/or technical skills training. The majority of these jobs are full time as opposed to part time. In a resource-based economy, such as ours, the lower earnings are a reflection of the seasonal variations in demand for workers and lower rates of pay. High concentrations of workers throughout the Tri-County area have been characterized by this seasonal effect.

F. Income from all Sources:

The differential between the Tri-County Area and the State's earnings from work throughout the industries is a major factor in the statistics regarding median household income. In addition, per capita income is one of the most important indices of the wealth for a region. If the growth of per capita income lags that of the State and Nation then the concomitant effect is an increasing level of poverty. See chart below:

Income	Kittitas County		Klickitat County		Yakima County		State
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount
Median Household							
1990	\$21,826	65.0%	\$24,758	73.8%	\$25,780	76.8%	\$33,554
1999	\$32,546	71.1%	\$34,267	74.9%	\$34,828	76.1%	\$45,776
Per Capita							
1990	\$15,063	76.8%	\$14,742	75.2%	\$15,531	79.2%	\$19,605
1999	\$18,928	82.4%	\$16,502	71.8%	\$15,606	67.9%	\$22,973

Percent distribution is calculated as a share of the State amount.

The decline in personal income relative to the State poses serious problems into the future in our area as the cost of living continues to increase. Discretionary income, the money available for the purchase of goods and services, will be limited which ultimately restricts revenues for all businesses throughout the workforce area.

G. Implications of the local economy and of needed skills:

The assessment of the local economy outlines the critical need for development of strategies to prepare a quality workforce for current and future needs. To meet the labor demands, the Tri-County workforce system will:

- Work in partnership with and support the academic benchmarks of the Washington State’s K-12 education system. Emphasis will be placed on strategies that increase student’s understanding of the importance of work, and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities (Essential Academic Learning Requirements Goal 4).
- Coordinate education and training efforts at the local level will create a seamless system of services. Program services will be made available to all residents of the local area, with priority levels set for special populations and those who are most in need of services and skill development.
- Develop education, training and employment programs that focus on improved employer productivity and satisfaction. Industry skill standards will be identified and developed for growth occupations and industries to assess the emerging and declining skills needs.
- Develop education and training programs linked to economic development efforts within the region to prepare workers for existing, expanding and new industries.
- Be inclusive and recognize the diversity of the region and create opportunities for non-traditional employment, people of color, the limited English proficient and those with disabilities.

H. Analysis of the local area’s economic development strategies

Economic development has become a high priority for central Washington communities. County, municipal and tribal organizations have become active in formulating short and long-range plans for vitalization and growth of local communities. Reviewing the economic development plans across the region reveals five common goals.

1. Retain and build upon existing businesses.
2. Recruit new businesses.
3. Develop infrastructures to support businesses.
4. Provide technical assistance to businesses.
5. Provide workforce development assistance to existing and new businesses.

Kittitas County has a joint Kittitas County – Ellensburg City economic development organization called the Phoenix Group. The organization, located in

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Ellensburg, is privately and publicly funded. In addition to the above goals, their primary focus has been on labor issues with the philosophy that businesses' top concern is finding a skilled workforce. In response to merging opportunities, the organization has reached to form strategic partnerships with local workforce organizations. Some of their current projects include the re-vitalization of Bowers Airport and studying the issue of a road connecting I-90 to the airport.

Klickitat County's economic development organization, Klickitat County Public Economic Development Authority, which is under county government, has established six economic development goals beginning in 1996. Priorities are established based upon their yearly funding. This is particularly true of their efforts to develop utility infrastructures. A major effort here is the return of hotel/motel tax revenues to support tourism through their visitor information centers. An objective is to make the visitor centers operational year-around. Other objectives include:

- Through technical, financial, and organizational support, develop the water and sewer infrastructure serving the key residential, industrial, and commercial areas of the county.
- Retain and expand Klickitat County's existing business and employment base.
- Recruit small to medium sized business that diversify the economy and create quality employment opportunities.
- Increase employment opportunities in agricultural production and processing in Klickitat County by recruiting new businesses and expanding existing businesses.
- Maintain Klickitat County Public Economic Development Authority (the EDA) as an organization that fulfills its mission in a professional manner that is responsive to the needs of the residents and businesses of Klickitat County.
- Increase total expenditures by tourists in Klickitat County.

A countywide agency and municipal organizations, such as, the City of Yakima, Zillah, and Sunnyside serve **Yakima County**. Yakima County Development Association, also known as New Visions has the primary responsibility to promote economic development and to diversify the economy in all of Yakima County. To that end New Vision has developed a five-year economic diversification program that will measurably improve the Yakima County economy. These efforts are being spearheaded by a private-public partnership that focuses on:

- Growing and retaining our local manufacturers
- Marketing Yakima County as a destination for new corporate facilities;
- Responding to companies interested in expanding or relocating to Yakima County; and
- Providing leadership on key issues that affect our local business climate

Also residing within Yakima County is the Yakama Nation. The Nation's economic development efforts are well established after 20 years of operation. Each project is part of the Tribal strategic plan for long term economic growth based upon resources that the Tribe possesses. The Yakama's currently have one of the highest unemployment rates in the area estimated at 70%. This reality has placed an importance on increasing the skills of their workforce and at the same time developing the Tribal employment opportunities for their people.

Distinct economic and demographic differences between the upper and lower Yakima Valley has given rise to specific efforts by Sunnyside, Inc, who is the official organization representing the City of Sunnyside, Sunnyside Port District, and the Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce. This economic development partnership primarily focuses its efforts on the following areas:

- The creation of year-round family wage jobs;
- The diversification of the local economy;
- The retention and expansion of existing business;
- The recruitment of new business;
- Support of programs and projects for the sustainability of agriculture; and,
- Support of programs and projects which enhance the quality of life and environment in Sunnyside.

The City of Zillah first established an Economic Development Organization in 1991. In September 1999, the Zillah City Council, in a public meeting, established a wide array of goals. Four goals are of immediate importance for workforce development.

- To develop and maintain an infrastructure that will support a diversified economy and high quality of life and promote sustainable growth.
- To promote a diversified economy that will enhance the greater community of Zillah.
- To strengthen the partnerships with the school district. To continue and expand the educational and recreational activities.
- To promote economic development.

As seen above, employment maintains a high priority in economic development goals for all Tri-County areas. A consensus exists that a prepared workforce is a critical element to an area's economic future, and it is critical that the workforce development systems prepare workers to meet those demands. A timely and rapid response capability for worker training must exist in order to meet the needs of expanding or new businesses.

A mutual reciprocity must exist between the Workforce Development System and the Economic Development Community:

- A well-prepared workforce is required for businesses to be productive, competitive in developing superior products and services, competitive in pricing, to be profitable and endure.
- Economic development is required to provide the economic opportunities to meet people's needs and to retain the area's population, especially the youth.

In the Tri-County Workforce Development Area, a shared vision exists for the rich diversity that each person brings to the community. Each person has a responsibility to contribution to the community for it to function as a whole. It is important to recognize that most of the economic development organizations have very thoughtfully and analytically crafted comprehensive and detailed plans and programs to achieve their economic development goals.

It is apparent that economic development and workforce development go hand in hand. Employment opportunities and livable wage jobs require businesses that prosper, yet the ability for businesses to grow is highly dependent on the availability of prepared and skilled workforce. To strengthen and continue to build this partnership the Tri-County Workforce Council incorporates the following principles.

- Workforce development organizations will rely on the professional expertise of economic development agencies in their efforts to retain existing businesses, assist them to expand their operations, recruit new firms, develop the necessary infrastructures, and assist with regulations to promote economic development.
- A consensus exists that employers' need a well-prepared workforce for maintaining and expanding current companies as well as attracting new businesses.
- Timely and rapid response capability for worker training must exist in order to meet the needs of expanding or new businesses. This is a companion principle to the rapid response capability expected for those firms and their employees who are facing large layoffs or business closures.

*Economic development
and workforce
development
go hand
in hand*

SECTION II.

TRI-COUNTY CURRENT AND FUTURE

WORKFORCE

A. Employment

During 2002, Yakima County employed an average of 21,639 farm workers or 23.2 % of the total workforce. Klickitat County had 1,133 farm workers or 25.1% and Kittitas had slightly more farm workers with 1,171 but it had a lower percentage rate of 8.3% of total employment. Due to the seasonal nature of the agricultural economy, the unemployment rate for the Tri-County area remains perennially high, directly influencing the classification of the area as a “Surplus Labor Area” by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The cyclical nature of an agricultural based economy produces sharp fluctuations in employment throughout the year. As local farms and ranches begin preparation for the growing season, unemployment figures begin to decline. As farm production enters it heights in the summer months, the Tri-County area will typically see its lowest jobless rate figures. By fall, harvest has reached full production and unemployment rates steadily begin to increase, and sharply move to highest joblessness rates for the year by early winter months.

While jobless figures typically follow the trends reported by the state, downward movement is minimal and rates typically stay significantly higher than the state average. In 1990, Yakima County had a **10.7%** jobless rate followed by Klickitat County with an **11.7%** rate, and Kittitas County at a **7.6%** rate. In 2001 Yakima County’s rate edged up with an annual unemployment rate of **11.3%**. Klickitat County has experienced the greatest drop at 10.2% prior to 2001, but with closure of the aluminum plants in the area is reaching levels approaching 15%. Kittitas County achieved an all-time low unemployment rate of 5.6% in 1999. That rate has lately inched upward to 5.8%. Economic forecasts project increases by the year 2005 and jobless rates will respectively rise to **12.9%**, **13.0%**, and **7.5%**.

Unemployment in the Tri-County area remains high due to the seasonal nature of the agricultural economy.

In the foreseeable future there will be a deceleration in the national rate of growth in the labor force, principally due to the aging of the population. The Tri-County area will show variability in its rate of growth into 2005, but rates will begin to diminish as the baby boom population reaches retirement age. The annual average rate of growth for the Yakima County labor force from 1990 to 1998 was **1.5%** and is expected to rise by **1.8%** per year to 2005. Kittitas County will slow from a **2.3%** rate to **1.6%** by 2005, while a reverse trend will be seen in Klickitat County with increase from a **1.3%** to a **2.1%** growth rate.

B. Education and literacy

Perhaps no place in the state can the skills gap be more clearly seen than in the Tri-County area. Despite what appears to be a more than adequate supply of labor, many employers find it more difficult to find and hire qualified people. Local businesses are reporting more and more that hundreds of jobs are being left unfilled as job seekers lack sound basic educational and technical job skills to perform the work.

The ability to read, write and perform math forms the basic requirement for any skilled job. Since a high school diploma is viewed as the indicator of acquisition of basic educational requirements, the profile of educational attainment in the Tri-County area is revealing. The following statistics from the 2000 Census indicates that 59% of Yakima County's population has a high school education or less, Kittitas County 44%, and Klickitat 53%.

Educational Attainment	Yakima County %	Kittitas County %	Klickitat County %
Education less than 9 th grade	17	4	7
Education between 9 th and 12 th grades:	14	9	12
High school Diploma or equivalent	27	31	34
Received some college – no degree	21	24	25
Received Associates Degree	5	6	6
Received Bachelors Degree	10	17	11
Attended Graduate School	6	9	5

U.S. Census 2000.

Literacy among the adult population remains a continuing quest for improvement. Factors relating to **English proficiency**, **low educational attainment**, and **poverty** without question are barriers to successful employment.

The basic literacy levels in the Tri-County area are comparatively higher than the State percentage. For example the State percentage for literacy at Level 1 is 15%.

Literacy Levels	Yakima County	Kittitas County	Klickitat County
Percent at Level 1	23	14	21
Percent at Level 1 or 2	52	36	49

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Literacy levels as defined by the Office of Adult Literacy are as follows:

- Literacy ABE & ESL I/II Grade Level 0 – 1.9
- ABE Level II Grade Level 2.0 – 5.9

Based upon this definition, 52% of the adult population in Yakima read below the 6th grade level, and 23% read below the 2nd grade level. In Kittitas County 14% read below the 2nd grade level and 36% read below the 6th grade level, in Klickitat 21% have literacy skills below the 2nd grade and 49% below the 6th grade.

C. Demographic Changes

From 1990 through 2000 the population in Klickitat and Yakima Counties grew more slowly than the State’s 21.1% change. Klickitat County grew by **15.3%** over the ten years and Yakima County grew 17.9%. The reverse was seen in of the growth of Kittitas County, which added more people percentage wise than the state: 24.8%. Projections for population growth show rates slowing for all three Counties through 2005. The three counties will grow at or near **1.0%** per under the estimated 1.3% yearly growth rate for the state.

The net migration of people (the residual from births minus deaths subtracted from the total increase) into the counties was significantly different between the three counties. Yakima County had a net migration of **590** from 1990 to 1999 which was the 4th lowest in the State of Washington, Kittitas County had **4,926** and Klickitat had a net migration of **1,938**.

D. Characteristics of those who live and work in the Tri-County area

The total population is a large pool from which the labor force is derived. Those 16 and older are considered candidates for the workforce while children from birth through 15 are the potential future job seekers. People are categorized as either employed, unemployed or looking for work, or they are not participants in the labor force. As the demographics of the population shifts, the labor pool is affected. The most salient challenge in the future is the changes that are taking place now.

The major proportions of the new entrants into the labor force are in the 16 through 24-age bracket. This group will generally decrease at a slow rate until the year 2020. It is anticipated that from 1998 through 2005, Yakima County will show a **slight decline** in the 15-19 and the 20-24 age groups. At the same time Kittitas and Klickitat will experience a slight decline in the proportion of 15-19 year olds while the 20-24 age bracket will show slight increases.

At the other end of the spectrum the proportion of those 55-64 years of age will increase from 1998 to 2005 as the baby boom population begins to move through retirement age and this increase is projected to continue to the year 2020. This will bring about a shift in the age structure of workers further slowing the growth of the local labor force.

The need for a quality workforce to meet the demands of current business needs has had a direct effect on this segment of the worker population. Older workers are now being encouraged to remain in the workforce longer as their training and knowledge can provide continuity in productivity for businesses. Many employers have indicated that they cannot find new job seekers with the necessary skills.

The **minority population** represents some of the highest proportions in the State, primarily in Yakima County. These proportions have been expanding partly due to an amnesty granted to Hispanic individuals who could claim residency under the new law in early 1990's. Between 1990 and 1998 all three counties experienced an increase in the Hispanic population. In 1990, 29.8% of the total population in Yakima County was Hispanic and in 1998 the percentage increased to 43.3% of the total population as evidenced in the chart below.

The minority youth population showed significantly higher proportions in all three counties as compared to the overall population. Generally, the minority youth will not migrate out of the area, as they tend to stay and help support their families. The potential for helping to increase minority youth participation in the labor force will pay dividends in the future.

Population estimates by Age and Hispanic Origin

Source: Office of Financial Management

Kittitas						
Age	Total 1990	Hispanic	% Of Total	Total 2000	Hispanic	% Of Total
0-14	4,786	280		5,566	516	
15-19	2,719	253		3,264	190	
20-24	4,044	391		5,249	338	
25-54	9,694	492		12,394	554	
55-64	1,940	42		3,018	45	
65+	3,542	38		3,871	25	
Total	26,725	1,496	5.5%	33,362	1,668	5.0%

Klickitat						
Age	Total 1990	Hispanic	% Of Total	Total 1998	Hispanic	% Of Total
0-14	4,102	581		4,200	560	
15-19	1,151	157		1,449	170	
20-24	810	170		780	127	
25-54	6,918	640		8,002	574	
55-64	1,394	57		2,086	34	
65+	2,241	40		2,644	31	
Total	16,616	1,645	9.9%	19,161	1,496	7.8%

Yakima						
Age	Total 1990	Hispanic	% Of Total	Total 1998	Hispanic	% Of Total
0-14	48,830	21,199		59,160	30,540	
15-19	14,582	5,836		18,598	8,185	
20-24	12,684	5,466		14,873	7,583	
25-54	73,450	19,397		87,852	28,723	
55-64	14,872	2,326		17,177	2,615	
65+	24,405	2,084		24,921	2,259	
Total	188,823	56,308	29.8%	222,581	79,905	35.9%

The Female proportionate share of the population will change little although their participation in the labor force will continue to rise. As older workers retire (most of which are male), and more women enter the workforce, men's participation rates in the workforce will decline over time.

E. Tri-County area youth

The K-12 population of young people is a reflection of and the resource characteristics of the workforce. During the 2001-2002 school year there were **48,015** students enrolled in Yakima County schools. Over one half, **28,059 (58.4%)** were minority students. Kittitas County had the next largest share of **4,751** of the region's students. Of these, **591 (12.34%)** were minority. Klickitat County enrolled **3,677** students of which **740 (20.1%)** were minority.

According to the 1996-1997 School Year School Dropout Report for grades 9 through 12, the Tri-County Workforce Development Area experienced a significantly higher "dropout rate" and "status unknown" than any other WDA in Washington State.

WDA	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	State
% Of Dropout	4.4	4.1	5.2	3.0	3.4	4.0	3.6	5.6	7.1	3.4	3.5	5.7	4.2
% Of Status Unknown	4.8	4.2	3.3	4.2	3.9	5.2	6.0	4.8	8.4	3.1	4.1	5.8	4.7

Tri-County WDA is represented as WDA IX

The region's dropout rate stands at **7.1%** and Status Unknown rate is **8.4%** of the total student's enrolled. These percentages are much higher than any other area in the State. High School dropouts are a top concern for the communities within the Tri-County area. Youth who have a high school education will experience higher rates of unemployment, be more likely to participate in public assistance programs, be involved in the criminal justice system, and will earn less money as compared to those youth with a high school education.

F. Adults in transition and incumbent workers

Adults who are in transition include those moving from welfare to work, disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers, injured workers, and other adults seeking employment.

Dislocated Workers: Many workers may be dislocated from their work either because of a business failure or downsizing. During the period of 1995 to 1999 there were **7,429 (34.0%)** people receiving unemployment benefits who were dislocated. The majority **6,067 or (88.9%)** resided in Yakima County. Kittitas County had **801 (10.8%)** of the region's total while Klickitat County had **561 (7.6%)** of the region's total.

TANF Participants: This group represents a segment of the population who is receiving public assistance because of impoverished conditions. The region has a population of **264,000** in 1999 which represents **4.6%** of the total State population, the TANF population of the three Counties represents **4,854 (8.2%)** of the State's total of **59,339** cases.

Disadvantaged Adults: High levels of poverty continue to plague the region. Many of those who live below poverty levels do not receive any form of assistance and are usually marginally employed, while others may work in jobs but not earn a livable wage to support their families. During 1995 Yakima County had the highest number of disadvantaged living in poverty, **43,713 (20.2% of total population)** of any County in the State. Children below age 18 who were living in poverty represented **27.6%** of its total population. **This is the highest poverty rate for children in the State.** Klickitat County had a poverty rate of **16.0%** while Kittitas County had a **14.1%** rate. The State rate was **10.8%**.

Older Workers: In 1996, the Tri-County region reported a total of 63,508 individuals who would be eligible under the JTPA Title II A, Title IIC and Older Worker programs. **Older workers represented 14%** of the total population, **8,964** individuals. In relation to the total population in 1998, individuals 55 years and older comprised **20.6%** of the total population in Kittitas County, **22.3%** in Klickitat, and **20.5%** in Yakima County. Those percentages increase slightly in 2005.

People with Disabilities: According to the State's Supplementation to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) May 1999 report, the Tri-County area had **5,641** individuals who were receiving SSI benefits. Yakima County had 4,221 disabled and Klickitat and Kittitas counties both reported 347. There were 33 blind individuals in Yakima, 7 in Kittitas, and 2 in Klickitat County.

Status	Kittitas County		Klickitat County		Yakima County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Literacy Rate @ Level, 1996 ¹	3,037	14.0%	2,571	21.0%	31,674	23.0%
Limited English Proficiency, 1996	217	1.0%	490	4.0%	9,640	7.0%
Poverty Estimates, 1995 ²	4,119	14.1%	2,984	16.0%	43,713	20.2%
Work Disability, 1996 ¹	2,820	13.0%	2,204	18.0%	19,280	14.0%
Dislocated Workers, 1995 ³	801	31.1%	561	41.3%	6,067	33.8%
TANF, 1999.						
Cases (Family Units)	189	3.9%	318	6.6%	4,347	89.6%
Adults	165	4.6%	279	7.8%	3,113	87.5%
Children	306	3.1%	590	6.0%	8,983	90.9%

Source: Department of Commerce and Department of Social and Health Services.

¹ Based on the 16+ population, 1996. Level 1 is the lowest level of performance

² Total living in poverty.

³ Percentages are proportions of Unemployment Insurance Beneficiaries.

G. Implications of the demographic profile of Tri-County Workforce Area

The changing demographics and needs of the current and future workforce have clearly created new challenges for the education, training and employment community. Business must have workers who possess good work habits, technical skills, and the ability to change and adapt to new technologies and methods of doing work.

Workforce training programs must be restructured and redirected to assist dislocated workers to re-connect with job opportunities; help adults, older workers and TANF recipients develop the skills and overcome barriers to enter and retain jobs; and assist youth in making the connection between school and work and identifying career pathways that will lead to productive employment and rewarding careers.

To meet these challenges, the Tri-County Workforce Council will strive to develop a comprehensive workforce system that will provide an effective, comprehensive, and fully integrated workforce delivery system for workers and employers.

Given the current economy, demographics and workforce, the Tri-County Workforce Council will focus on the following priorities

1. Retention of the resident youth population through education, vocational, and job development strategies.
2. Development of strategies that will promote school completion for youth through special programs, and partnerships with education and business.
3. Utilization of the area's greatest resource -- people to fill the gap of skilled workers in the Tri-County area. The social/economic advantages of increased utilization by developing the skills of the new residents, TANF participants, dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults and older workers will be a large step in providing workers to meet local business needs.
4. Since the minority populations have a higher than normal distribution of youth, improved strategies should be developed to maximize the potential of this worker pool. Programs that will enhance the educational attainment of career and technical education for students with limited English proficiency will be developed.
5. The aging of the population with its increasing needs for health care will provide higher paying professional jobs in this service industry. Industry Skill Panels will be formed to assess emerging and demand occupations such as health care and will assist in developing new training strategies that will prepare the local residents for entrance into these occupations.
6. Labor force participation rates will continue to rise for women. Increased opportunities for education and skill development in high wage, high demand occupations will help add more women to the workforce. Workforce programs must be proactive in the recruitment of women to non-traditional training programs.

7. Early identification of those dislocated from declining industries and occupations will help transition these people back into productive jobs. Tri-County workforce development area must continue practices of working closely with business and labor to ease the transition of workers to new jobs in the community. Goals for dislocated worker programs must prioritize recaptured earnings and benefits, and provide for career growth and future earning potential.
8. New strategies must be implemented that provide for career development and growth for incumbent workers at minimum wage or low paying jobs. The Tri-County Workforce Council recognizes that these workers can provide a pool of candidates who can receive training to move to higher wage and higher skilled jobs. The success of training low wage, entry level incumbent workers to higher skilled jobs will also produce the availability of entry level jobs for those who are entering the workforce for the first time.

H. Local Data

The Consortium heavily relies on state data for the purposes of planning, setting service levels to significant groups and development of local programs that address current and future needs. However, time lags, reporting limits and levels of data are not always sufficient for local planning and responses to changes. To address these shortages in data, the Consortium may supplement state data with local information. Such information may include surveys conducted by local economic development agencies and chambers of commerce, information available through the Consortium's Management Information System for WIA I-B and WorkSource, and other reliable and relevant data produced by the local Conference Of Governments, community-based organizations or government agencies.

SECTION III

TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE SYSTEM

A. Local Structure

The Tri-County Consortium is comprised of Yakima, Kittitas and Klickitat Counties. A board of three elected county commissioners represents each county. One County Commissioner from each area serves as a member of three person executive committee to oversee matters related to workforce development.

The local Workforce Council is comprised of 27 members with a business majority. Individuals appointed to the council represent appropriate organizations and institutions specified in the WIA and as prescribed by the Washington State Workforce Investment Board. A Board of Directors

comprised of 9 Council Members meet monthly to conduct the regular business of the Board. The Board of Directors is also responsible for making recommendations to the full Council, Legislative Issues, and Board Recruitment.

The council structure includes a **youth council** that is charged with overseeing matters related to youth activities and will facilitate the sharing of information among workforce development programs serving youth. The youth council includes an eleven person membership to include local Workforce Council members, representatives from Job 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

The following three subcommittees of the local council have been developed to ensure that all stakeholders and partners of the local workforce system are afforded the greatest opportunity for participation.

1. A WorkSource Oversight Committee comprised of all participating partners of the WorkSource system will advise the council and local elected officials on matters relating to system development, planning and development of policy regarding the local WorkSource system.
2. A Planning Committee who 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, incumbent worker training.

B. Local WorkSource (One-Stop) Strategy

The distinct economic, demographic, and employment needs of the Tri-County Workforce Development service area has created a need for new and innovative approaches to meeting local workforce needs. Labor exchange programs must respond to the employment demands of business in a timely, coordinated and efficient manner. Workforce training programs must be structured to maximize local resources and deliver cost-effective training that provides the necessary skills in the least time possible. This will require significant changes and realigning of local programs into a comprehensive workforce system meeting the needs of business and job seekers.

To meet these new challenges, the Tri-County Consortium will strive to develop a One-Stop delivery system consistent with the goals and objectives of Washington State's WorkSource system. The local WorkSource system will focus on leveraging resources, identifying new resources to sustain the system and synergizing organizations to improve the delivery of education, training and employment services in Yakima, Kittitas, and Klickitat Counties.

*Our local One-Stop partnership
is already working toward
improved workforce
development in
Central
Washington.*

Partners of the local One-Stop Partnership have already begun this process for change and have embraced the challenge of working in concert to improve workforce development in Central Washington. Through a Washington State Employment Security implementation grant, local partners developed a working blueprint for a One-Stop system in the Tri-County area. This plan contains the Integration and Accountability sections of the Tri-County's One-Stop Business Plan.

C. Tri-County Workforce System Partners

Historically in the Tri-County Workforce Development Area, it has been imperative that state and local agencies work together to provide services to both the employer and the job seeker. The Workforce Investment Act has provided an opportunity for local agencies to work in partnership and develop new strategies to meet the demands of the new emerging workforce and the employer community.

The new Tri-County Workforce Development System includes, but is not limited to:

Employment Security, whose mission it is to help people succeed throughout their working lives. The Department carries this out by supporting workers during times of unemployment, by connecting job seekers with employers who have jobs to fill and by providing business and individuals with information they need to adapt to a changing economy.

Individuals to be served: General Public, Youth, Adults, Dislocated Workers and Veterans.

Services to be provided:

- WorkSource Lead Organization in Yakima and Klickitat Counties
- Wagner-Peyser activities under WIA Title III
- Timber Retraining Programs

- Veterans Services
- Services for Agricultural workers
- WorkFirst and Welfare to Work Service Provider
- WIA I-B Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker provider in Klickitat County

Annual Budget is approximately \$2 million.

Department of Social & Health Services, whose mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need, and helping achieve safe, self sufficient, healthy, and secure lives

Individuals to be served: Adults, Youth, and Children in need.

Services to be provided:

- Core, Intensive, and Training Services for WIA I-B Adults who are on public assistance (may contract out): annual WorkFirst Budget is approximately \$5,500,000, which includes support services, contracted services, and staffing.
- Cash Assistance – Provides temporary cash assistance to families in need.
- Food Stamps – Provides food assistance to families in need
- Medicaid – medical coverage to eligible families and individuals

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) – Subsidized child care program for individuals who are 175% of poverty people and are working and/or participating in a WorkFirst.

K-12 Educational System who are preparing students to be successful through mastering the skills outlined in Washington State’s Educational Reform Initiative and preparing students to transition into full-time employment, the military, post-secondary training, and/or baccalaureate education while becoming responsible citizens.

Individuals to be served: Youth and Families

Services to be provided: General Education

Activities funded by Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act of 1998 for secondary vocational education activity.

Yakima Valley Community College and Clark Community College As learning-centered institutions, they serve a diverse community, assisting students in acquiring the knowledge in basic literacy, academic, professional, and technical programs and skills for life-long learning.

Types of Individuals Served: In-School Youth, “At-Risk” Youth, Dislocated Workers, Adults in Yakima, Kittitas, and Klickitat Counties.

Services to be provided:

- Intensive and Training Services to WIA IB Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers
- Employer Sponsored Training

- Workfirst Services
- Program funded under Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act of 1998.
- Work related adult basic education and literacy programs funded under the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIA Title II)

Annual budget to support the above programs is approximately \$18,000,000.

Perry Technical Institute provides industry with well-trained people who are motivated to work as team members in our rapidly evolving technological world.

Individuals to be served: Youth and Adults who have a High School Diploma or GED.

Services to be provided: Established technical training and provide contractual training for employers in Yakima, Kittitas and Klickitat counties.

The school has an operating budget of 3.6 million dollars for the 1999-2000 school year.

Washington State University, Central Washington State University, and Heritage College. These four-year institutions provide opportunities for individuals to gain the credentials or degrees beyond those offered by the K-12 system, Community College, and/or Technical Schools.

Individuals to be served: Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers

Services to be provided: Post-Secondary Baccalaureate education.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation mission is to enable individuals with disabilities to obtain and keep employment. Participants must have a disability that makes it difficult to get or keep a job and requires the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services in order to work.

Individuals to be served: Individuals with disabilities

Services to be provided: Core and Intensive Services and other supportive services.

Annual budget to support programs in Yakima, Kittitas, and Klickitat Counties is approximately \$1,000,000.

Department of Services for the Blind promotes the economic and social well-being of people who are blind and all other individuals with significant visual disabilities by encouraging and assisting them to become economically and socially independent and to stimulate their integration into society.

Individual to be served: Individuals who are blind

Services to be provided:

Core and Intensive Services to WIA I-B Youth (transitional students, as well as out-of school) and Adults in Yakima, Kittitas and Klickitat Counties

Fort Simcoe Job Corps funded by Title IV-B of the Job Training Partnership Act is designed to increase the employability of severely disadvantaged, out-of-school young people ages 16-24. Fort Simcoe offers a wide array of vocational skills and addresses other needs that bear on a student's employability.

Individuals to be served: Disadvantaged, Out-of-School, Drop-out Youth between the ages of 16-24.

Services to be provided: Core, Intensive, and Training Services for economically disadvantaged youth meeting program eligibility requirements.

People for People whose mission is to strengthen the community by providing quality human services.

Individuals to be served: Adults, TANF recipient, and Dislocated Workers

Services to be provided:

- WorkSource Lead Organization in Kittitas County
- Core and Intensive to WIA I-B Adults in Yakima and Kittitas Counties
- Core and Intensive Services to WIA I-B Dislocated Workers in Kittitas County.
- Welfare-to-Work and WorkFirst Community Jobs in Yakima and Kittitas Counties
- Transportation Service for special needs populations.

Annual budget to support the employment programs is approximately \$3,948,711

Yakima Valley Opportunities Industrialization Center's mission is to help in the elimination of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy so that people of all colors and creeds can lead their lives with greater human dignity.

Individuals to be served: Youth who are In-School and "at-risk", Out-of-School, and School Drop Outs, and Adults.

Services to be provided:

- Core, Intensive, and Training Services under WIA I-B for Youth in Yakima and Kittitas Counties
- WorkFirst Programs in Yakima County
- Job Training Partnership Title IV-A Section 402 Program service to migrant and seasonal farm workers in Yakima, Kittitas, and Klickitat Counties
- Youthbuild Program funded by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals funded by United States Department of Health and Human Services in Yakima County.
- Ex-Offender Work Orientation Program for felony ex-offenders released to Yakima County.
- Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services

Annual budget to support above services is approximately \$3,000,000.

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic / Northwest Community Action Center (NCAC), mission is to create measurable change that will empower at-risk and economically disadvantaged individuals and families to achieve a greater level of self-sufficiency by engaging the local communities and

business through advocacy and coordination of financial, material, and human resources.

Individuals to be served: Economically Disadvantaged Families, In-School “at-risk” Youth, and Adults on Public Assistance in Yakima County

Services to be provided:

- Core, Intensive, and Training Services for youth under WIA-I-B
- “Readiness to Learn” Grant providing case-management services in K-12 system
- GEAR Up Grant –Partnership with University of Washington Elementary Schools, Parents and Students
- Seasonal Childcare Referral Services for Seasonal and Migrant Farmworkers
- WorkFirst Programs in Yakima County
- AmeriCorps Fostering Youth Program
- Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
- Medical and Dental Clinics for Farm workers and other low-income individuals.

The Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic’s corporate annual budget exceeds 27 million with Northwest Community Action Center’s budget exceeding 3 million.

Kittitas County Action Council, mission is to build a community where all people can live a life of hope, dignity, and self-reliance.

Individuals to be served: Low income - Youth, Adults, and Families in Kittitas County

Services to be provided:

- Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Victim Service
- Transportation Assistance
- Other support services

Annual budget is approximately \$1.4 million to deliver services in Kittitas County.

Klickitat – Skamania Development Council mission is to prevent and alleviate poverty through programs, which will build stronger individuals, families, organizations and community.

Individuals to be served: Low income - Youth, Adults, and Families in Klickitat and Skamania Counties

Services to be provided:

- Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant services
- WorkFirst Programs
- Timber Workers Assistance Programs

➤ Other support services

Annual budget is approximately \$875,000 to \$1,000,000.

Labor Organizations such as Carpenter-Employers Apprentice and Training Trust of Western Washington and Laborer's Local #614 who provide training for indentured carpenter apprentices.

Individuals to be served: Youth and Adults

Services to be provided:

➤ Training Services in Yakima and Kittitas Counties– Apprenticeships

Business Organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce will be providing Business Services as described in WIA through the WorkSource Centers. They will serve as a forum for the development of goals and strategies benefiting the business community and to articulate these goals and strategies to the public and promote support for them.

Economic Development Organizations will be providing Business Services as described in WIA through the WorkSource Centers. Their mission is to retain and expand existing businesses in the community and recruit new businesses into the community to provide employment opportunities to diversify the economic base.

The following are other **One-Stop System Partners** who are part of the Tri-County WorkForce Development System:

- AARP/Senior Employment
- Provident Industries
- Catholic Family Services/Child Care Resource and Referral
- Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health
- Goodwill Industries
- Providence Health Systems
- Rural Enterprise Community
- Women and Minorities Enterprise Program
- Yakima County Aging and Long Term Care
- Yakima County Coalition for the Homeless
- Washington State Migrant Council
- IAM CARES
- Yakama Nation
- Division of Child Support
- Elmview
- Project Change
- And other organizations

D. Changes in the Local System

Our communities are finding that businesses are increasingly concerned about educational reforms and the quality of the labor force. Economic growth will be increasingly constrained by a lack of skilled labor within unless more emphasis is placed on the development of human capital.

Strong partnerships must be forged with business groups that include local economic development agencies, labor groups, chambers of commerce and other business organizations. The spectrum of linkages will take different forms to include:

1. Using business as a primary source for identifying workforce needs and designing training services that will provide workers with the skills and abilities for jobs in the local community.
2. Using skills training as an incentive for economic development initiatives that will attract new businesses to the area and assist existing businesses to remain in the community, including training programs for incumbent workers to facilitate career growth and economic earnings.
3. Development of innovative programs that will train youth and adult workers for skills that match emerging job opportunities that provide livable wages and opportunity for career growth.
4. Development of industry specific training that responds to urgent and specific needs of business.
5. Relationships, such as business compacts, will be formed that provide the opportunity for employers to participate in job training programs according to their own level of interest and resources.

Programs for adult in transition will emphasize job training to those individuals that are most in need and that will provide the adult worker with the skills necessary to achieve employment at a sufficient living wage and provide opportunity for occupational and economic growth. The Tri-County Workforce Council will link Welfare-to-Work, Workfirst, WIA I-B adult and dislocated worker services, state programs for workers with disabilities, financial aide programs and other services to provide a pool of resources that will support skill development of adults in the Tri-County area.

Given the rural and agricultural nature of the service area, the local council recognizes the need for service to migrant and seasonal farm workers in the Tri-County area. In order to assure access, participation and employment for this segment of the population, the local council will provide basic education, English as a second language, and skill training that allows migrant and seasonal farm workers to acquire the basic and technical skills required of local business.

Youth services will be connected to Goal 4 of Washington State's Essential Learnings, whereby school-based learning will be connected with work-based learning to develop the cognitive connection between what is learned in the classroom with the workplace. Emphasis will be placed on the development of portfolios and selections of career majors. Partnerships will be formed with business to market career opportunities to youth and their parents. Services will be constructed around activities that will lead into entrance or further training for high-skilled and high wage jobs.

As a primary initiative, the Tri-County Workforce Council will strive toward a single regional partnership that will link the range of employment, training and post secondary programs for youth. Through the Tri-County's youth council, services such as Running Start, two + two + two academic degrees, Tech Prep, and School-to-Work transition will be connected through common goals, objectives and strategies.

SECTION IV.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Tri-County Performance System

Commissioners of the Tri-County area, the Workforce Council and WorkSource partners are dedicated to the delivery of quality services in the Yakima, Kittitas and Klickitat Counties. To achieve high levels of performance the council recognizes the need for clearly defined measures that identify the system's progress and areas needing improvement. The Tri-County Workforce Council has received the Washington State Workforce Board's baseline core indicators. In development of local accountability measures, care was taken to consider the unique characteristics of the local area that directly influence performance outcomes. Discussion and proposed indicators are found at the end of this section.

*Focusing on customers
(workers and employers)
is the hallmark of our
Workforce
System.*

The Tri-County Workforce System understands the importance of focusing on customers of the system, both workers and the employer community. In the development of the local One-Stop system and in preparation of the transition to WIA, the local system has already adopted the "Simply Better" model for continuous quality improvement (CQI). In oversight of the local WorkSource system the local council will use the CQI model to obtain customer feedback for improving core, intensive and training services, identifying service gaps and developing strategies to eliminate or resolve issues.

B. Data Collection and Reporting

To track local performance indicators the council will employ automated tracking systems and will report information that is consistent with federal and state requirements. The Tri-County Workforce Council WIA programs and other WorkSource partners have implemented a state-wide case management information system called SKIES.

The Services, Knowledge and Information Exchange System (SKIES) is an Internet based application. It is designed to support the delivery of services across multiple programs, by providing universal access to Employment and Training services in a One-Stop environment.

The primary functions in SKIES are Management Information, Performance Information, Labor Exchange activities and Case Management (plan and track customer services and needs).

WorkSource centers provide customers with a "one-stop shopping experience" to find employment and training services and resources. Many WorkSource partners offer intensive and training services. But the overwhelming majority of residents who visit WorkSource centers take advantage of the many "self-service" activities made

available in our resource rooms and lobbies. While SKIES tracks performance and provides case management tools for customers receiving intensive and training services, our WorkSource system lacked a means to track the activities of these self-service customers.

In early 2001, the Tri-County Workforce Council saw this need, and developed the WorkSource Membership System (WMS, originally called WorkSource Tracking System). This Internet-based system provides us information about the self-service activities of our WorkSource customers, as they sign in using their magnetically encoded membership card, and voluntarily reporting their activities.

Other workforce areas in the state have since adopted the Tri-County WMS system, and it is expected that the system will be fully operational in the state by late 2003.

The Tri-County Workforce Council firmly believes that good performance is a primary cornerstone to a credible system. To ensure the local workforce system is achieving acceptable levels, the Council, at a minimum will require of its contractors and operators of the One-Stop system performance reports on a quarterly basis. Reports will cover both those core indicators required and as made available by the state as well as specific goals and performance outcomes tracked locally by the council and WIA I-B contractors. As the Council deems necessary, local or state evaluative data such as employer or participant surveys will be used as a supplement to evaluate the local workforce system.

C. Provider Eligibility

The Tri-County Consortium contracts the majority of WIA I-B services. The selection of service providers is based on a procurement procedure that complies with federal, state and local procurement processes. The criteria for selection includes:

- Quality of training
- Characteristics of participants
- Cost
- Performance goals
- Staff capability
- Organizational experience
- Financial viability
- Audit and performance reports
- Past performance

The Tri-County geographical area is large with many small communities located throughout the region and distanced from major population centers. For residents of the rural communities technical schools, trade schools, four-year colleges and community college programs are not readily available and accessible. In a time when the workplace is frequently changing and jobs require new skills, employers often require specialized training programs

that are not available through local training institutions. When a provider of training develops programs to address these needs and seeks WIA funding or the use of WIA Individualized Training Accounts, the local council will require an application for review and approval. Once approved, the local council will provide the state Workforce Board and Employment Security a list of approved providers. The criteria for approval will include:

- Review of course content for appropriateness of skills needed in the local labor market.
- Review of instructional staff to ensure instructors are qualified to deliver the training.
- Review tuition and fees to ensure that costs are reasonable.
- Review of the organizations past performance.
- Other criteria required by the Workforce Board.

D. Performance and Interventions

In the delivery of services through sub contacts, the local council will review performance to monitor progress against state core measures as well as those individual measures proposed and negotiated with the bidder. For each contract, the council will set monthly benchmarks and a range for benchmark performance.

In the event a contractor falls below the tolerances set by the board, administrative staff will review the performance deficiencies to determine the appropriate action needed for correction. If the findings are non-significant in nature, staff will inform the organization of the problem in writing and request a written response that details the actions that will be taken and timelines for correcting deficiencies. Should problems continue to exist or where the issues identified are substantial and significant, the council at its discretion shall institute any one or combination of the following actions.

- Sanctions
- Contract suspension
- De-obligation of funds
- Contract termination

The consortium has historically recognized good performance of service providers in the system and will continue this practice in the implementation of WIA. Incentives are provided to sub-recipients, when, the consortium has reached performance benchmarks set by the state that results in incentives to the local area, and when the sub recipient performance has at the end of their contract period met or exceeded the goals of their contract. Incentive payments to contractors are prorated to contractors of the system based on the proportionate share of services provided through their subcontract.

The Tri-County Workforce Council is part of the larger state Workforce Investment System. All performance-based interventions shall be consistent and comply with the Washington State Workforce Board Plan and subsequent policy.

II. Performance-Based Consequences

A. SYSTEM LEVEL

WIA authorizes incentive funding for states that exceed the “adjusted levels of performance” in WIA Title I, adult education and family literacy, and vocational education. The amount expected to be available to a state will be in the range of \$750,000 to \$3 million. A state that achieves 100 percent on the average for all the federal core indicators will be considered to have exceeded the “adjusted levels of performance.”

E. Continuous Quality Improvement

The Tri-County Workforce Council is committed to the improvement of programs and services. To achieve this goal, the local council will develop an annual assessment of the local system that will focus on the following Malcolm Baldrige Criteria:

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Customer focus and satisfaction
- Information and analysis (self-assessment and benchmarking)
- Human resource and management development
- Process management and improvement results

The “Simply Better” model has been selected by the local One-Stop partnership and implementation has already begun in the local WorkSource (One-Stop) system. In addition, the local council will continue to pursue quality throughout the local workforce system and may use additional practices that:

- Objectively measure services that are relevant to workforce outcomes and performance objectives.
- Provide clear information necessary for changes to expand or improve delivery of core services, referral, contract and access options, and/or points of service.
- Identify service gaps.
- Provide information that will lead to the improvement of the “feel” of service sites and “satisfaction” of services received by customers.
- Utilize existing CQI models and tools that have already or will be developed by the Department of Labor and the Washington State Employment Security Department.

F. Performance Measures

In proposing performance measures, the local council and the local elected official considered the unique characteristics of the local workforce and needs of the business community. The high incidence of unemployment (in all cases in excess of the state average), TANF participation, school dropouts, poverty, low literacy rates and individuals with limited English speaking ability clearly make the case for prioritizing services to the hard to serve. At the same time, the local council recognizes that the cost and time investments must be balanced with the current needs of business and equitable service to the entire community in need of workforce training and employment services. Following are the goals for the first, second and third years of WIA for the Tri-County Workforce Development Area.

When considering performance levels for education and skill credentials, the council recognized that high numbers of the local population without a high school completion created the appearance that significant gains could be achieved in this area. At the same time, the desire to improve this area had to be tempered with the understanding that very low education levels, lack of English speaking ability and illiteracy in non English speakers heavily influence the program's ability to show significant gains in short periods.

The Council was careful to consider extraneous factors that were out of immediate control of the workforce system in setting levels for placements and wages. While the local economy shows steady growth, the growth is slow and predominately agriculturally driven. The seasonal nature of work and traditionally low paying wages is the largest factors in high unemployment rates and low family wages. The council was careful to set placement, retention, and earnings benchmarks at a level that took into account these economic conditions.

Finally, across all performance indicators, the council was uncomfortable with and expressed concern over the newness of WIA and limited available data. With baseline data taken from a single year, lack of final definitions for performance indicators and significant changes anticipated under the new law, the council believed a conservative approach was a wiser path to take in the first few years.

The Council is pleased to report that the Tri-County area has met and/or exceeded all of the State and Federal Performance Targets listed below for the first two years of WIA and predict the same high level of performance for the third performance year. The Tri-County area will be negotiating performance targets with the State for years four and five in the very near future.

1. State Educational Attainment (percentage of participants attaining an appropriate credential)		
Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth
Year 1: 23%	Year 1: 21%	Year 1: 33%
Year 2: 26%	Year 2: 23%	Year 2: 34%
Year 3: 29%	Year 3: 25%	Year 3: 36%

2. Federal Employment and Credential (Of the participants who received training services: the number of participants who were employed in the first quarter after exit and received a credential divided by the number of participants who exited.)

Adult	Dislocated Worker
Year 1: 73%	Year 1: 75%
Year 2: 74%	Year 2: 75%
Year 3: 74%	Year 3: 76%

3. Federal Skill Attainment for Younger Youth (14 – 18)

Youth
Year 1: 50%
Year 2: 59%
Year 3: 69%

4. State Employment (percent employed in the 3rd quarter after participation. For youth, employed or in school)

Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth
Year 1: 69%	Year 1: 80%	Year 1: 56%
Year 2: 69%	Year 2: 80%	Year 2: 58%
Year 3: 69%	Year 3: 80%	Year 3: 60%

5. Federal Entered Employment (percentage of participants not employed at registration and were employed in the first quarter following exit.)

Adult	Dislocated Worker	Older Youth (19 +)
Year 1: 77%	Year 1: 76%	Year 1: 66%
Year 2: 78%	Year 2: 76%	Year 2: 67%
Year 3: 79%	Year 3: 76%	Year 3: 68%

6. Federal Employment Retention (Of those participants who were employed first quarter after exit, the number of participants who were employed in the third quarter after exit divided by the number of exits.)		
Adult	Dislocated Worker	Older Youth (19 +)
Year 1: 78%	Year 1: 90%	Year 1: 68%
Year 2: 80%	Year 2: 90%	Year 2: 70%
Year 3: 80%	Year 3: 90%	Year 3: 72%

{Dislocated Worker and Adult: although below the state mean, employment retention is highly influenced by the high levels of unemployment of the Tri-County area in relation to the state average, the seasonal nature of employment which force layoffs across industries, and the rate of hard to serve populations characterized by limited English speaking ability and low basic education skills. Additional concerns include the lack of ability to track placements outside Washington. In 1998, 8.5% of placements were in jobs outside of Washington State.}

{Older Youth: Older Youth Employment Retention is maintained at a level lower than the state average based on the large population of youth from migrant and seasonal farm families. These youth are often connected to the family and follow the migrant paths to California and Texas.}

7. State Employment Earnings (annualized quarterly earnings in the 3 rd quarter after participation)		
Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth
Year 1: \$14,200	Year 1: \$18,850	Year 1: \$6,900
Year 2: \$14,600	Year 2: \$19,230	Year 2: \$7,480
Year 3: \$15,000	Year 3: \$19,700	Year 3: \$8,100

8. Federal Earnings Gains (Earnings in the 2 nd and 3 rd quarter before registration from earnings in the second 2 nd and 3 rd quarter after exit, For dislocated workers, earnings in the 2 nd and 3 rd quarter after exit by earnings in the 2 nd and 3 rd quarter before separation.)		
Adult	Dislocated Worker	Older Youth (19 +)
Year 1: \$3,900	Year 1: 97%	Year 1: \$2,300
Year 2: \$4,000	Year 2: 97%	Year 2: \$2,550
Year 3: \$4,100	Year 3: 97%	Year 3: \$2,800

{Youth: Federal Earnings Gains for youth is based on low average wage for area, earnings in 3rd and 1st quarter effected by seasonal nature of work, wage growth is less substantial in area given limited pay range of jobs.}

{Adult: Federal Earnings Gains set lower than state average due to low average wage for the local area, wage growth is less substantial give limited pay range of jobs. Also concern if incumbent worker training becomes part of the mix when determining gains}

9. Federal Employer Satisfaction - employment services (based on employer responses to State Workforce Board Survey)

WorkSource
Year 1: 64%
Year 2: 65%
Year 3: 66%

10. State Participant Satisfaction (former participant reports of satisfaction with programs based on two questions)

Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth
Year 1: 89%	Year 1: 87%	Year 1: 94%
Year 2: 89%	Year 2: 87%	Year 2: 94%
Year 3: 89%	Year 3: 87%	Year 3: 94%

11. Federal Participant Satisfaction federal (former participant reports of satisfaction base on 3 federal questions)

Overall
Year 1: 75%
Year 2: 75%
Year 3: 75%

12. Federal Credential Rate	13. Federal Diploma or Equivalent Attainment Rate	14. Federal Retention Rate
Older Youth	Younger Youth (14-18)	Younger Youth (14-18)
Year 1: 53%	Year 1: 48%	Year 1: 50%
Year 2: 53%	Year 2: 49%	Year 2: 53%
Year 3: 53%	Year 3: 50%	Year 3: 57%

{Younger Youth: set below the state average given the substantial number of migratory students and inability to track students to California and Texas.}

SECTION V.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

MISSION STATEMENT

Establish, maintain, and improve a customer driven workforce system to increase skills, employment, job retention and earnings resulting in a quality workforce and enhanced productivity and profitability of Tri-County area businesses.

A. Planning Process

The strategic and operations plans were developed under the supervision of the Tri-County Workforce Council. Extra effort was made to insure community, workforce partners and stakeholders were provided opportunity to provide input and comment. In 2002 the Tri-County Workforce Council was awarded a Community Audit Grant from the Department of Labor to:

- ❑ Define Self-Sufficiency
- ❑ Define our Workforce Population
- ❑ Forecast expected changes in the workforce economy
- ❑ Define the support services available to our workforce (e.g. child care, transportation, training)

On several occasions this past year, the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Workforce Council staff presented the draft Community Audit – “State of the Workforce Report” 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 these plans.

In April 2003, The Council, in partnership with several community groups, sponsored Workforce Week. Job Fairs, Youth Career Fair, open houses and public seminars and workshops highlighted this week of workforce-related events. Nationally known keynote speaker, Ed Barlow, led many of these events, and elicited input from business, education, and community members, which provided direction to the Council for strategies for the next year.

B. Workforce Priorities

The workforce priorities for the Tri-County area were identified by leaders from business, K-12 and post-secondary education, labor, the Yakama Tribe, economic development agencies, community based organization, and local government in 1999.

The recent community meetings, such as Workforce Week and the Community Audit, expanded these priorities. The priorities are as follows:

- Workforce programs need to develop and implement services that improve worker productivity and employer satisfaction.
- Programs should target development of challenging jobs that provide workers with opportunity for career and economic growth.
- The Workforce System needs to connect and work in partnership with the K-12 education system. Emphasis should be placed on supporting Washington States' four essential learning goals and the development of skills that are applicable to the workplace.
- The workforce system must be inclusive, recognizing the diversity of the region and creating non-traditional employment opportunities for people of color, under-represented genders and people with disabilities.

The local council also recognized that while many community comments were valuable and relevant to the positive development of the workforce system, some community recommendations fell outside the purview of the policy body, others were more characteristic of the philosophies that need to be maintained to create an equitable system and one that supports other systems connecting to workforce development. All comments and recommendations were considered important and have been incorporated as operating standards and principals for the system.

1. The local workforce system must value, support and work cooperatively with the K-12 education system. The council and the partners of the workforce system must work cooperatively with, encourage and support schools in the development or modification of curricula that teaches workplace skills and the development of individual career plans for all youth. Further, the council will support state education reform through the four essential learning goals and development of a certificate of mastery.
2. The council must value the pursuit of vocational and/or technical training in high schools. The council also supports students seeking immediate entrance to the labor market to pursue vocational or technical studies, and training through technical schools and apprenticeship training programs.
3. The council must maintain a strong priority and commitment to post secondary training and communicate to local schools the need for challenging and demanding courses that will prepare them for entrance into post secondary programs.
4. The council supports efficiencies in the use of public dollars and time investments of students. The council will support programs, such as Running Start, two + two + two academic degrees, and other community college courses for the "double efficiency" they offer in completing high school graduation credits and college credits. This

also includes efficiencies in education for all students by encouraging workforce organizations and education to coordinate among schools, adult basic education, and English as a second language programs.

5. Services to young people need to be holistic. Assessments should consider the needs of students and families. When providing services, system staff needs to recognize the changing family life styles such as job relocation and the demands placed on seasonal work and farm worker families. Support communities in their efforts to address child care needs and parenting skills.
6. The local council must be proactive in making positive change at a local and on a state level. This will take the form of direct communication with the state legislature to encourage support of local funding for economic development, education and other programs.
7. The council will operate in a manner that seeks and promotes full participation from all of community's groups, including the disenfranchised, community-based organizations, the faith-based community, labor, employees, and employers through on-going and as-needed focus groups. Council members on a regular basis will meet with respective constituencies and report on workforce activities.
8. The council will develop a close alliance with economic development agencies to promote a diverse economic base that provides vertical (value-added) and horizontal integration.
9. The council will continue to encourage and provide support in the development and promote customer service training to the Workforce system including training in serving target populations.
10. The council recognizes and celebrates the diversity of our communities and encourages the Workforce Council and the WorkSource staff to reflect the diversity of the communities.

C. Commitment to Special Populations

The Tri-County Workforce Council is committed to equitable services to all segments of the local population. The local council will set appropriate levels of service to specific target groups, after considering all available and current demographic data. Specific groups targeted for service include female, disabled, TANF recipients, older workers, Hispanic, Black, Native American and Asian. The Council will continue to encourage the development and promote customer service training to all WorkSource partners to include training in serving target populations.

Economic Issues

While the development of new infrastructure for adequate roads, utilities, and ready-to-build sites maintain the highest priority, work force development is recognized as an integral and vital element of local economic development plans. A strategy common to all economic development agencies across the region is focus on the expansion of present business, creation of new local businesses, and marketing of the region to attract new companies. Industries targeted for growth, expansion, and attraction, include:

- High tech industries
- Agriculture and related industries

- Manufacturing (including assisting Puget Sound firms with production bottlenecks)
- Recreation

As seen in previous discussions, education and job skill levels are low compared to other parts of the state. To increase skill levels and prepare the local workforce, it was agreed that industries with an \$8 to \$12 hourly pay range provide the greatest opportunity to employ the current pool of unemployed workers. To achieve wage and job progression, future emphasis would be placed on existing or new businesses offering hourly wages in the \$12 to \$15 category, followed by higher end technology industries providing significant employment opportunities in the \$15 and higher category.

Over the past few years, economic development agencies and workforce organizations have recognized the vital link between a quality workforce and business success. As a result, training institutions have become closer aligned with economic development agencies to implement workforce training programs that address employment needs. Such practices include development of community college curricula to address specific need requirements of new and expanding businesses. As companies consider the Tri-County area for expansion or new business start-ups, workforce organizations work closely with economic development staff to package and market training programs and employer incentives.

D. Economy and Skills Needs

Like other parts of Washington State, businesses in the Tri-County area are finding it harder to fill job openings. Although worker supply is high in the Tri-County area, businesses see too many job openings left unfilled due to the lack of applicant education and job skills. Too many employers report that the available workforce lacks the basic education, work maturity, and job specific skills currently needed in their business.

While the economy in the local area has historically been sluggish, community leaders remain optimistic and confident that the local economy can be vitalized through careful implementation of a comprehensive plan. A cornerstone of this plan includes a restructuring of the workforce system to create new training programs, strategies and practices that build on the strength of current workforce to address business needs. To achieve this end the workforce system must:

1. Be responsive to current and future employment needs of business. Workforce programs must gain a greater understanding of the skill requirements; create an efficient system for referral to openings and design training programs that provide sound basic education, work maturity, and job specific skills.
2. Address skill needs of current workforce. Training programs should focus on developing skills for current jobs in the labor market, provide increased opportunity for improving basic educational skills, and increased opportunities for language training for those with limited English speaking ability.
3. Maximize resources and integrate services. The cost of training and retraining is high. To maximize resources, training organizations must

wisely use funds from all sources to provide the greatest opportunity to those needing training. Services must be integrated in a fashion that reduces unnecessary duplication and simplifies the process for customers seeking training or employment.

4. Design programs that are flexible and innovative. Business expansion or start-ups can occur quickly with little advanced warning. Workforce organizations must be positioned to assist businesses in screening, recruiting, and hiring to fill a few or many positions. Training institutions and programs must be ready to develop new curricula or adapt existing programs to develop worker skills in the shortest time possible.
5. Work cooperatively with education to solidify the connection between the classroom and workplace. Consistent with Washington State educational reform, workforce organizations can play an important role to the K-12 education to achieve Goal 4 of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Workforce organizations are uniquely positioned to serve as the bridge between schools and business.
6. Maintain a priority for service to disadvantaged adult and youth. Given the high rates of school dropouts, TANF participation, and poverty levels of the Tri-County Workforce development area, services must target the less fortunate providing all residents the opportunity to improve their quality of life through higher paying jobs that provide future growth.

E. Goals of the Tri-County Workforce Area

The Community Audit results and information collected from community meetings during Workforce Week 2003 continue to support the information collected in late January of 2000 when the Tri-County Workforce Council convened in a two-day work session to examine the worker and business needs of the local area and to establish the direction of the local workforce system into the new century. The council carefully considered the many comments received through the community planning process as well as the priorities set forth in the Governor's Executive Order and those articulated by the State Workforce Board. In most cases, they found all shared a common theme. That is, workforce programs needed to:

- Build a strong partnerships with education K-12, post-secondary, technical colleges and other workforce organizations
- Strengthen worker readiness through education, work maturity, and job skills.
- Include full participation of all residents of the area.
- Focus on significant worker populations (youth, adults in transition, dislocated, public assistance recipients and incumbent workers).
- Connect workforce training with economic development to retain and promote economic growth.

To achieve the aforementioned the Tri-County Workforce Council has set forth the following goals and objectives.

Goal 1. Improve the quality of education in all local area school districts through collaboration with business to prepare youth for entry into the workforce.

Objective a. Strengthen the connection between school and the workplace.

Strategies:

1. Establish a clearinghouse of workforce learning materials available to the Tri-County Region to support education.
2. Recruit and maintain a pool of employers (business people) who can serve as resource speakers and instructors for job readiness classes.
3. Develop labor-business advisory committees to serve as a resource to local educators in the development of curricula, classes and programs that utilize contextual, applied and work-based learning opportunities.
4. Develop a database of employers who will provide first hand work based learning experience to youth through internships, work experience, and job shadowing.
5. Establish teacher internships to keep educators abreast of the skills needed in the workplace.

Objective b. Develop programs that will help all students, including dropouts and students at risk, succeed.

Strategies:

1. Develop programs and organize efforts to assist the dropout students with school reentry to achieve a high school diploma or access alternative education opportunities for GED completion.
2. Develop programs that focus on development of basic education skills for high mobility students, migratory students and students of farm families.
3. Develop tutoring programs that will assist students in mastering reading, writing, and math skills.
4. Develop employer mentoring/counseling programs to help dropout youth understand their employment potential.
5. Link “second-chance” programs for youth who are out-of school with the “first-chance” system for youth who are in school.

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 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 age 55 and older 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.

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 WorkSource (One-Stop) system.
2. Continue exemplary best practices such as rapid response involving partners from public service employment, the community college and labor.
3. Prioritize return to work at comparable wages in as short a time as possible.

Goal 3: Expand and retain the present economic base and promote future business growth through the development of a well-trained workforce.

Objective a: Provide opportunities for incumbent workers to further their education in job-related skills or education beyond basic levels.

Strategies:

1. Work with business leaders to create career, labor market information, and financial assistance information for incumbent workers to facilitate education, training and career choices.
2. Work with employers to identify and to provide in-house training that is cost-effective to the employer.
3. Develop incumbent worker training that builds skills for entry-level employees to move to higher skilled jobs within businesses.

Objective b: Create private-public partnerships to enable individuals to move up job and career ladders throughout their lives.

Strategies:

1. Form industry skill cluster panels to assess emerging and declining skill needs for development of training programs to meet those needs.
2. Develop secondary vocational-technical program standards linked to industry skill standards while working with the labor-business and education committees.

Objective c: Implement workforce services and programs that enhance business development, expansion and retention.

Strategies:

1. Work in partnership with economic development organizations in attracting businesses to the area or assisting in new business start-ups through services and incentives provided by the workforce system.
2. Assist at-risk businesses with employment, training and education programs that develop the skills of their workers.
3. Support business retention, expansion, and new location by providing comprehensive, worker training support services to meet employers' training needs.

Goal 4: Improve access to and quality of workforce training and employment programs to meet existing and future business needs.

Objective a: Encourage and provide opportunity for all groups to work together, share a common vision, and to be part of policy and decision-making.

Strategies:

1. Conduct extensive recruitment through outreach to organizations representing groups with significant memberships having limited English proficiency, by advertising outreach programs into targeted

communities, via newspapers, radio and TV, and Spanish radio for limited English-speaking listeners.

2. Remove physical or artificial barriers and negative incentives for people with disabilities, and other populations with unique obstacles to employment.
3. Develop and implement public informational campaigns that educate the community on the importance of workforce preparation.

Objective b: Increase the capacity of high schools, community and technical colleges, universities and apprenticeship programs to provide high quality workforce education and training programs.

Strategies:

1. Partner with industries to provide facilities, faculty, and equipment in high wage, high demand fields such as construction trades, information technology, and communications, working with education and labor-business committees.
2. Expand apprenticeship training to non-traditional fields and expand pre-apprenticeship programs.
3. Seek and replicate best practices in all institutions through vocational and technical education. Provide assistance, if necessary, to educational institutions in the Tri-County region.