ACTION ITEM MEMO
Port of Tacoma Commission

Item No: 6E
Meeting Date: 11/17/26

DATE: November 4, 2026

TO: Port of Tacoma Commission

FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director

Sponsor: Sean Eagan, Director of Government and Community Affairs

Project Manager: Sean Eagan, Director of Government and Community Affairs

SUBJECT: Workforce development contracts authorization

A. **ACTION REQUESTED**

Request authorization for the Executive Director or his designee to enter into personal service agreements for workforce training for the period of January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2027, with the option of two (2) one (1) year renewals at the sole discretion of the Port, for a possible total of three (3) years, with the following:

- WorkForce Central for an annual amount of $130,000 for a total possible amount of $390,000,
- ANEW for an annual amount of $110,000 for a total possible amount of $330,000, and
- Youth Marine Foundation for an annual amount of $90,000 for a total possible amount of $270,000.

Strategic Plan Initiative WD 2: Partner with government and local and regional organizations to facilitate career development through financial investments.

B. **BACKGROUND**

In February 2022, the Port of Tacoma Commission adopted Resolution 2022-03, in which it found that workforce development is critical to achieving the Port's primary mission to serve as an economic development agency generating quality, family-wage jobs and economic growth for the region and increasing operational efficiency and economic mobility. Later that year, in August, the Commission adopted a Workforce Development Strategy. The Commission subsequently updated its strategy in May 2026.

In December 2023, the Commission approved a Personal Services Agreement with Workforce Central to provide workforce training and internship pathways to Pierce County residents. That contract is scheduled to expire in December of this year.

In anticipation of the end of this contract, the Port issued a request for proposals (RFP) on August 9 seeking service providers to provide occupational job training and placement, job advancement and job retention training, pre-apprenticeship training, occupational education or internship programs associated with the maritime, logistics, manufacturing, and/or construction

trades. Submissions were due on September 9. As part of the solicitation, the Port indicated that it was preprepared to offer one or more contracts.

The Port received 12 responsive proposals. After evaluating the proposals, staff recommends the approval of three personal service contracts.

C. **SCOPE OF WORK**

WorkForce Central will provide up to $5,000 per participant for on-the-job training in the maritime, logistics, manufacturing, and construction trades. WorkForce Central will identify a business and job; the business will hire the participant as a regular employee; and the participant will learn the occupation while earning wages. At least 18 individuals will be recruited, placed in jobs, and trained through paid work experience per year.

Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW) will provide two co-ed Construction Boot Camps (CBCs) per year. These are four-week, 160-hour pre-apprenticeship training programs. They will provide hands-on occupational training (e.g., tool basics, construction math), industry-recognized certifications (Flagger, Forklift, OSHA-10), workforce readiness preparation, career coaching, and direct exposure to employers and registered apprenticeship programs. Each CBC cohort would serve 15 students (for a total of 30 students per year).

Youth Marine Foundation (YMF) will deliver a classroom and on-board curriculum that moves participants from orientation and deckhand fundamentals to emergency response, job readiness, and graduation. Participants repeatedly apply skills aboard the *M/V Doolin-Rogers* and supporting vessels, allowing instructors to observe performance and coach improvement. This will pave the way for TWIC certification, Merchant Marine Credential and Medical Certificates. Funding will support 28 students annually, 16 of which would be recruited from Pierce County.

D. **TIMEFRAME/PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The contracts' timeframes are for the period of January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027, with the option of two (2) one (1) year renewals at the sole discretion of the Port, for a possible total of three (3) years.

E. **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

Cost These contracts would feature an annual amount of $330,000, for a total amount of $990,000, assuming the two one-year options are exercised, and the full three years are used. Funding would be allocated between the three contracts as follows:

- $130,000/year for WorkForce Central
- $110,000/year for ANEW
- $90,000/year for Youth Marine Foundation

The Port has budgeted $330,000 in 2027 for these contracts.

Source of Funds Funding for the contract would come from the operating budget, Outside Services Performed, Government and Community Affairs.

Item	Budget Estimate	Expenditure to Date	Anticipated Future Expenditures
Work Force Central	$130,000	$0	$130,000
ANEW	$110,000	$0	$110,000
Youth Marine Foundation	$90,000	$0	$90,000
TOTAL	**$330,000**	**$0**	**$330,000**

F. **ECONOMIC INVESTMENT / JOB CREATION**

Annually, 18 individuals would receive paid work experiences through WorkForce Central, 30 individuals would participate in Construction Boot Camp pre-apprenticeship training through ANEW and 28 students would participate in the Youth Marine Foundation's Merchant Mariner certification program. This means that an estimated 66 individuals would receive workforce development services annually through the Port's investment, with the potential of 198 individuals being served assuming the two one-year options are exercised for all three contracts.

G. **ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS**

Alternative 1: Preferred alternative. Award the three contracts as recommended.

Alternative 2: Award more funding to fewer contracts. The Port received several excellent proposals from a variety of quality vendors. In fact, the variance in scores between the top three vendors was only a handful of points. Each vendor offered robust workforce development opportunities through different pathways (on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeship training, maritime certifications). Wanting to take advantage of the diversity of opportunities, staff recommends partial funding for the top three scoring proposals. The Commission, however, could award all the funding to the top scoring vendor, WorkForce Central. This would allow them to expand their offerings but would come at the expense of the other vendors.

Alternative 3: Award more funding overall. The Commission could provide more funding for any of these contracts to increase the amount of workforce development services provided in the community. Cognizant of the Commission's desire to continue solid Port financial success and fiduciary performance under Strategic Plan Goal OS-1, staff did not make this request at this time. We would suggest, however, that should future Commissions wish to increase the Port's investment in workforce development, many opportunities exists in the community.

Alternative 4: No action. The Commission could decline to adopt the contracts. This would be inconsistent with the Commission adopted Workforce Development Strategic Plan and fail to advance Strategic Plan Goal WD-2.

H. **NEXT STEPS**

Pending approval by the Commission, the Executive Director would sign the three contracts. The three vendors would begin implementation in 2027. Port staff will evaluate the performance of the vendors under the contract later in 2027 to evaluate the merits of executing the first one-year options. Port staff will keep the full Commission informed of developments with this contract.