

DATE: March 7, 2022
TO: Commissioners Keller and Meyer
FROM: Leslie Barstow
CC: Port of Tacoma Commission, Eric Johnson, Sean Eagan, Judi Doremus
SUBJECT: Inventory of existing workforce development resources and recommendations

A. BRIEFING

This memo is intended to brief the Commission on the inventory of existing workforce development resources in the Pierce County. Staff also recommendations for next steps and seeks feedback and guidance from the Workforce Development Committee. While no formal action is request of the full Commission, staff always welcomes input from all five commissioners.

B. BACKGROUND

The Workforce Development Committee—with visibility by the full Commission—directed staff in May 2021 to focus the Port’s workforce development strategy on well-paying jobs that do not require a four-year college degree. Fields of particular interest would include: the building trades, the manufacturing trades and transportation and logistics trades. The Committee also approved a roadmap for developing the Port’s workforce development strategy.

The first step of that roadmap involved a survey of employer needs, which was completed in the autumn of 2021. The second step of the roadmap was the inventory existing workforce development programs in Pierce County to understand how these programs meet the identified needs of employers surveyed and where gaps exist that—potentially—the Port could assist.

Subsequent to the launch of the inventory, the Commission adopted Resolution 2022-03-PT Workforce Development Policy, affirming that workforce development is critical to achieving the Port of Tacoma’s mission as an economic development agency, focused on well-paying jobs in Environmental, Building, Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics organizations to facilitate career development and business growth in Pierce County to include diversity, equity, and inclusion. Because the inventory was in progress and close to conclusion, staff has not yet had an opportunity to survey programs developing the environmental workforce.

C. INVENTORY RESULTS

Attached is a detailed inventory of existing resources.

Major themes resulting from the inventory include:

1. There are a robust number of programs already available. The challenge may be that individuals, including persons of color, may not be aware of the opportunities available to them.
2. While programs exist, resource constraints can limit the number of individuals served by programs.

3. While several CDL programs exist in the county, there is limited space (like large, open lots) upon which train.
4. The demand for construction, manufacturing and logistics workers in Pierce County is significant, even in the next 12 months.

D. NEXT STEPS

1. March 21 Workforce Development Committee briefing on apprenticeships—Michael Dehner from Human Resources will provide an overview of what it would take to establish an in-house state certified apprenticeship program
2. Mid-April Workforce Development Committee overview of investment options—Staff will provide a list of potential investments the Port might consider, with high level cost estimates. Staff will seek committee guidance on which items to prioritize for further research and to develop specific recommendations.
3. May Staff seeks input from labor and communities of color on investment options. Staff refines investment options and finalizes recommendation for Workforce Development Strategy.
4. June Workforce Development Committee review and approval of Workforce Development Strategy recommendation.
5. July Commission consideration of Workforce Development Strategy
6. August Department budget recommendations updated based on Commission action on Workforce Development Strategy
7. November Commission budget adoption
8. December 2022- January 2023 Commission consideration of contracts (if needed)
9. January 2023- Implementation of Workforce Development Strategy