JAN 2023 - JUN 2026

Strategic Framework
State of the Workforce

**Absolute Labor Gap:** The sum of the total count of unmatched job seekers and job postings at a single point in time.
**Unmatched Job Seekers:** A job seeker whose skills do not match any available job postings.
**Unmatched Job Postings:** A job posting for which there are no available job seekers with adequate skills to fill the job.

### Pierce County Labor Supply & Demand by Skill

**Absolute Labor Gap (Nov 22):** 10,768

**Unmatched Job Seekers:** 1,859

**Unmatched Job Postings:** 8,909

### Facts and Figures

- **140K** currently under-employed
- **107K** not participating in the labor force
- **24K** seeking employment
- **13,667** Young Adults not connected to training programs/employment
- **72,180** Pierce County residents live below the poverty line

Pierce County wages show a disparate gap when separated by race and gender across all education levels.

- **On average, median wages have increased 6.5% annually since 2019.**
- **On average, cost of living has increased 6.3% annually since 2019.**

1 in 8 Households are dependent on food stamps, despite the fact that 84% have one or more working adults.

2.5 active job postings for every worker on unemployment.
Pierce County Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industries</th>
<th>5-Year Trend</th>
<th>Current Employment &amp; 5-Year Forecast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare &amp; Social Assistance</td>
<td>61,865</td>
<td>61,865</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>26,621</td>
<td>39,238</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>23,816</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
<td>17,886</td>
<td>22,195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>16,949</td>
<td>23,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admin. Support &amp; Waste Mgmt./Remediation Services</td>
<td>21,296</td>
<td>25,762</td>
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<td>Transportation &amp; Warehousing</td>
<td>18,248</td>
<td>24,185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>13,994</td>
<td>20,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>13,886</td>
<td>17,623</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>12,654</td>
<td>19,828</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Services (Except Public Administration)</td>
<td>11,990</td>
<td>15,765</td>
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<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance</td>
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<td>Arts, Entertainment, &amp; Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Rental, &amp; Leasing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, &amp; Hunting</td>
<td>1,973</td>
<td>2,576</td>
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<td>Management of Companies &amp; Enterprises</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>1,328</td>
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<td>Utilities</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining, Quarrying, &amp; Oil/Gas Extraction</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pierce County 5-Year Employment Trend

Employed (2022 Q3): 348,334

Current Unemployment Rate

2020 2021 2022 2023 2024
Our theory of change is our hypothesis, based in evidence and data, on what will happen when we implement a set of strategies within our local workforce system. At a high level, it guides us in our impact. It describes what will happen when we implement the strategies we design and the impact we set out to accomplish for job seekers and businesses.
VISION:
Economic equity and prosperity for our customers and the region.

MISSION:
WorkForce Central stewards the Pierce County workforce development system and bridges the gap between job seekers, employers, and community organizations to build a robust workforce and ensure economic vitality across the region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
• Commitment to anti-racism, equity, diversity, access, and inclusion throughout all facets of work
• Regional responsiveness across Pierce County
• Bias toward innovation and action in vision, mission, and strategy

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:
• Job Seeker Solutions
• Business Solutions
• Regional Alignment

PRIORITY SECTORS
• Healthcare
• IT (Across Industries)
• Social and Human Services
• Transportation, Warehousing, & Logistics
• Maritime Industries
• Construction
• Green Economy Industries
• Manufacturing
• People experiencing poverty
• People with disabilities
• People experiencing homelessness
• Young people who are not connected to education or work
• Justice-connected individuals
• Transitioning military, veterans, and military spouses
• People who are dislocated from work, experienced layoffs, and face barriers to reemployment

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY &amp; PRIORITIES</th>
<th>02/22</th>
<th>04/22</th>
<th>06/22</th>
<th>08/22</th>
<th>10/22</th>
<th>12/22</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOALS &amp; OBJECTIVES</td>
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<td>ACTIONS &amp; MEASURES</td>
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<td>ENGAGEMENT &amp; REVIEW</td>
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</tbody>
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2023 Strategic Framework | p. 5
Outcomes

We start our strategic framework with our “why”. The reason we invest, design, and implement revolves around the impact we will have for businesses, job seekers, and workers. We begin with our outcomes because all strategies that follow roll up into this impact.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

• **800** businesses are engaged through outreach, events, and partner referrals
• **400** businesses receive one or more core business solutions services
  • **75%** businesses engaged will be from high-demand priority sectors
  • **40%** of businesses served will be small business with 50 or fewer employees
  • **50%** of businesses served will be owned by Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/e, Asian American, Pacific Islander and/or American Indian, Alaska Native, women, and/or veterans
• **1,200** unique business services provided to businesses
• **50** partner-led economic development and workforce projects are supported with labor market data and analysis for business recruitment, retention, and expansion

JOB SEEKER ENGAGEMENT

• **2,000** individuals directly served in WorkForce Central programs
  • **75%** of people served identify as being impacted by poverty
  • **60%** of people served identify as Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/e, Asian American, Pacific Islander and/or American Indian, Alaska Native
  • **15%** of people served identify as having a disability
  • **10%** of people served identify as experience homelessness
• **3,000** individuals will be served through local WorkSource Pierce Centers

WORKFORCE EDUCATION & TRAINING

• **420** individuals completing or attaining certification
• At least **100** employed workers complete training across 8-10 business-led upskill/reskill trainings
• Cohort training for job seekers are implemented in at least **4** in-demand occupations annually
• At least **100** individuals will be trained in cohorts with an **80%** completion rate
• **75%** training completions are in WorkForce Central high-demand sectors
• **60%** WIOA enrolled individuals will attain industry-recognized credentials and certificates and/or demonstrate measurable skills gains
WORK EXPERIENCE

• 200 individuals will be placed in subsidized and/or paid work experience or quality/registered apprenticeship programs

EMPLOYMENT

• 450 people connected to employment
• 75% of people completing training will be connected to industry-aligned jobs or continued education and training
• 45% of individuals enrolled in WIOA programs will be placed in jobs
• 66% of people placed in jobs will meet or exceed income adequacy through initial placement
• 62% of WIOA participants placed in jobs retain employment for the first year
• WorkForce Central demonstrates parity in employment, wage, and retention outcomes for Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/e, Asian American, Pacific Islander and/or American Indian, Alaska Native and women

REGIONAL ALIGNMENT

• 20 partner organizations actively using Common Referral System (over 50 referrals per year)
• Tracking system for receipt of referrals and subsequent services provided is established
  • 90% of referrals between organizations receive follow up
• Business Solutions establishes a shared customer management system with ESD; business touchpoints and supports are tracked collectively between these two teams
• 150 people engaged and entered in referral system quarterly at mobile one-stop sites across the county; Average 25 partner organizations engaged per mobile one-stop event
• Inaugural WorkSource partners conference is executed - goal of 100 staff attendees across 22 partners
• Inaugural Lens of Equity Summit is developed and executed - goal of 200 attendees
STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1

Job Seeker Solutions

Job seekers have access to workforce services and programs that holistically meet their needs and that lead to sustained self-sufficiency.

1. Connect job seekers to training, education, and quality jobs in high-demand sectors with an emphasis on supporting individuals facing systemic and other barriers to economic opportunity.

- Include placement in self-sufficient wage jobs as priority outcome
- Prioritize placement of job seekers into subsidized employment, internships, and other paid work experience and training
- Prioritize short to mid-term industry recognized credentials and certifications in high-demand sectors
- Implement technology-driven outreach platform(s) for individuals receiving unemployment benefits based on their skills and interests
- Invest in navigation capacity through community-based partner organizations to expand equitable reach and access to the workforce system
- Integrate Leadership Development training into services for young adults

2. Implement and advocate for equitable workforce services that are human-centered and designed in partnership with community and that meet people where they are while removing barriers to workforce opportunities.

- Contract with providers who demonstrate equity-centered outreach strategies and strong connections with populations facing barriers to employment
- Remove paperwork and documentation barriers to ensure a “no-barrier” enrollment process for job seekers
- Include data and customer feedback in the continuous improvement and design of all initiatives
- Disaggregate data from all programs by race, socioeconomic status, and geography
  - Use disaggregated data to drive program design
- Grow WorkSource connection sites and mobile one-stop sites to reach people from all areas of the county in the communities where they live
- Incorporate stipends and supportive services into trainings and workforce services
- Produce robust data reports to build awareness among employer and partner organizations focused on inequities in workforce development and evidence-based solutions
STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2

Business Solutions

WorkForce Central advances robust programming and resources to support businesses with their workforce development needs and connects employers to job seekers.

1. Implement business engagement strategies that increase equitable recruitment, hiring, and retention of populations facing systemic/other barriers to employment in quality jobs.
   - Consult with employers on equitable recruitment, hiring, and retention practices, including quality job development, skills-based hiring, work-based training, and forecasting future demand
   - Utilize subsidized wage and paid work experience to support employers to hire people to gain experience and training in-house
   - Directly connect businesses with job seekers who complete cohort and individual trainings
   - Provide layoff aversion strategies to support worker retention, including subsidized wages and upskill/reskill training resources

2. Increase ‘earn while you learn’ opportunities across the region.
   - Grow and expand paid cohort trainings focused on high-demand industries
   - Grow and refine employer reskill/upskill grants for businesses to train their current workers
   - Build awareness of and connection between apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and system partners
   - Annually publish and maintain Pierce County Apprenticeship Program Guide
   - Facilitate alignment of regional ecosystem for internships across community organizations and grow county-wide internship opportunities

3. Support ‘priority populations’ with a focus on ‘in-demand sectors’.
   - Prioritize Business Solutions for the workforce needs of ‘priority populations’
   - Strengthen business-centered feedback process to integrate customer feedback in continuous improvement strategies
   - Conduct regular labor-market assessment of demand and growth to cater training and other services to local businesses

4. Grow awareness and access for employers to business solutions team for workforce development needs.
   - Provide labor market data and workforce analysis to businesses and economic development partners to support business recruitment, expansion, and competitiveness
   - Maintain robust public-facing data dashboard with pertinent information on workforce development trends in Pierce County
   - Implement streamlined navigation via web portal for employers to connect to business services and broaden communications platforms to reach a more diverse array of businesses
STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3

Regional Alignment

Ensure county-wide alignment among service providers and agencies to increase access to resources for the community.

1. Strengthen use and effectiveness the Pierce County Common Referral System (CRS).

- Facilitate workgroup toward continuous improvement and increased use of the Common Referral System (CRS)
- Implement tracking mechanism for receipt of referrals and subsequent services provided
- Integrate mechanism for individuals to make self-referrals into the system

2. Strengthen alignment across partner organizations in the workforce system to reduce barriers and increase access for job seekers and businesses.

- Facilitate System Partners Network and drive group toward shared outcomes
- Build a comprehensive workforce development communications plan and strategy between partners to reduce silos of information
- Develop shared tracking system between business solutions partners to ensure alignment and reduce duplication in business outreach and support
- Develop plan to assess efficacy of current WorkSource sites
- Develop and implement expansion plan for WorkSource sites within and outside of Tacoma
- Determine and implement more robust model for integrated service delivery

3. Prioritize shared training for human-centered, equitable service delivery across partners

- Continue facilitating and funding networks of community members with lived experience facing barriers to employment to co-design workforce services
- Measure impact through equity lens, disaggregating data across outcomes, and adjust strategies based on equitable impact across system
- Launch annual Lens of Equity Summit
- Establish annual WorkSource System provider conference for service providers focused on quality, equitable, human-centered service delivery
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Partners & Gratitude

The partners who gave most to this work are the community members we worked closely with over the last year who face significant and systemic barriers to employment. They showed up, and they are the experts. We worked with a talented and community-based group of facilitators to support facilitation and engagement, and it was critical that we compensated every person for their time, just as we would experts in any field.

We’ve learned that we can’t come from a place of extracting from a community and instead chose deep reciprocity. We are committed to that model throughout our work moving forward. Thank you to the community members and community facilitators who trusted us on this journey. We especially want to thank QuadC for their diligence, honesty, and commitment to making this a community-driven process. Without their leadership, we would not have the robust plan we are presenting.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Pierce County Executive

Victoria Woodards
Mayor of the City of Tacoma

Marty Campbell
Pierce County Councilmember

Kiara Daniels
City of Tacoma Councilmember

April Lynne
WDB Chair
Chief Operating Officer, Proliance Surgeons

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WDB Chair, Chief Operating Officer, Proliance Surgeons

Irene Reyes
WDB Vice Chair; CEO & President, Excel Gloves & Safety Supplies

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Acceleration, The Boeing Company

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Dale King
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Mandy Kipfer
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Ann Medalia
Vice President Operations, TERRA Staffing Group

Rachael Pease
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Jolita Perez
System Manager Workforce Development, MultiCare Health System

Patty Rose
Secretary/Treasurer, Pierce County Central Labor Council

Dave Shaw
CEO, Global Business Resources/ Cyber Business Analytic

Lynn Strickland
Executive Director, AJAC

Norton Sweet
Central Sound Regional Director, Employment Security Department

Deb Tuggle
Owner, Bite Me, Inc.

Blaine Wolfe
Project Executive, Absher Construction Company

Lin Zhou
President, Bates Technical College

SYSTEM PARTNERS

• Bates Technical College
• Career TEAM
• City of Tacoma
• Clover Park Technical College
• Goodwill, Olympia & Rainier Region
• Invista Performance Solutions
• Joint Base Lewis-McChord
• Korean Women’s Association
• NineLine Veteran Services
• Northwest Education Access
• Palmer Scholars
• Pierce College
• Pierce County
• Pierce County Library System
• Puyallup Library
• Sound Outreach
• Tacoma Community College
• Tacoma Community House
• VALEO Vocation
• WA State Department of Labor & Industries
• WA State Department of Services for the Blind
• WA State Department of Social & Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
• WA State Employment Security Department