



**Our Mission:**

To coordinate a regional workforce system that supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness.

**Local Elected Officials**

Roy Rogers, Washington County  
Commissioner

Susheela Jayapal, Multnomah County  
Commissioner

Ted Wheeler, City of Portland, Mayor

**Local Business**

James Paulson, JMPDX, LLC, Chair

Travis Stovall, eRep, Vice-Chair

Brittini Beers-Branco, ESCO

Carl Moyer, Parr Lumber

Caryn Lilley, KGW Media Group

Deanna Palm, Hillsboro Chamber

James Posey, JLP Business Group

Jane Leo, Portland Metro Realtors Assoc.

Keith Mays, Electronic Wood Systems

Lila Leathers, Leathers Fuel

Norm Eder, Mfg. 21

Pamela Treece, Westside Economic Alliance

Sheila Holden, PacificCorp

**Education**

Mark Mitsui, Portland Community College

Lisa Skari, Mt Hood Community College

**Economic Development**

Kimberly Branam, Prosper Portland

**Labor**

Bob Tackett, NW Oregon Labor Council

Eryn Byram, Labor's Community Service

Aida Aranda, Oregon & So. Idaho Laborers

Employers Training Trust

**Partner Organizations**

Naomi Ulsted, Springdale Job Corp

Rolanda Garcia, Dept. of Human Services

Kadie Ross, Vocational Rehab

Danell Butler, Oregon Employment

Department

Joe McFerrin, Portland OIC

Biljana Jesic - Home Forward

Komi Kalavor, Housing Authority of

Washington County

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March 15, 2019

Honorable Lew Frederick  
Honorable Susan McClain  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Education  
900 Court St. NE, S-419, H-477  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Frederick, Senator McClain and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Worksystems, the Portland Metro Workforce Development Board, to encourage your continued support for the local workforce development resources contained in HB 5024. These State investments have had an extremely positive impact on our local workforce and economy.

Using the Industry Engagement funds we have built deep relations with several critical local industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, information technology and construction. These investments, and the support they provide, ensure local industry has a leading voice in informing local workforce development initiatives and that workers are prepared with the skills and experience they need to succeed and advance in the regional economy. Our industry partnerships have helped develop a collaborative approach to funding and addressing workforce and related challenges. This collaborative approach has encouraged innovation, increased our impact and improved results.

For example, through our industry engagement work, we learned Portland area hospitals and health systems had a dire need for more registered nurses. At the same time, the industry expressed a need for a more diverse pipeline of health care workers to provide culturally competent care to an increasingly diverse population in the Portland area.

In response, we partnered with the Oregon Nursing Association and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) to create the Immigrant Nurse Credentialing Program (INC). This innovative program is one of the few in the country helping foreign-educated nurses enter professional nursing practice through a one-year re-entry program approved by the Oregon State Board of Nursing. Funded by Industry Engagement resources, INC launched its first cohort in January of 2018 with 16 participants from nine different countries including Japan, Cuba, Ethiopia and Ukraine - each facing unique barriers to success. INC provided wrap-around support to training participants and in December of 2018, all 16 successfully graduated. This relatively short intervention quickly created a multi-lingual, diverse group of future RNs for employers desperate for diverse talent.

Locally, some State funds are used to support training costs for SNAP recipients. As non-Federal resources, these investments are eligible for 50% reimbursement under a SNAP 50/50 grant we have with the Department of Human Services. Last year, our pilot year, we generated more than \$200,000 in reimbursements. These

resources are added back into our regional WorkSource Centers to support additional programs and services. These state investments have helped mitigate the impact of cuts to Federal workforce resources and represent a sustainability strategy for the public system when paired with the matching SNAP 50/50 grant. We anticipate a significant increase in SNAP earnings over the next biennium.

Even in today's economy, unskilled regional residents continue to struggle with insufficient, stagnating wages. At the same time, employers are grappling with a shortage of skilled labor. State investments helped eliminate this divide through Work Experience (WEX) and On-the-Job Training (OJT). These resources helped incent employers to hire candidates they might have otherwise overlooked due to a criminal background, poor work history, low skills or other barriers. OJT funds are also critical for small employers who do not have resources for training. 70% of all OJT employers in our region are small businesses employing less than 20 people.

The workforce resources contained in HB 5024 are smart investments that are helping "move the needle" for employers, job seekers and workers across the state of Oregon. Your consideration and support for fully funding HB 5024 is most appreciated.

If you have any questions or want additional information regarding the use and impact of these resources in the Portland Metro Area, please contact Andrew McGough, Executive Director, at 503-478-7371 or [amcgough@worksystems.org](mailto:amcgough@worksystems.org).

Best Regards,



James Paulson, Chair