



TACOMA WORKS



TACOMA WORKS SUMMIT SUMMARY REPORT

Greater Tacoma Convention
and Trade Center
March 22, 2017

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

GOAL: identify strategies to increase employment of Tacoma-Pierce County residents in the construction field

Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland convened the Tacoma Works Summit on the morning of March 22, 2017. Approximately 80 people representing the construction industry, job training and workforce development organizations attended. The four-hour session was supported by Tacoma City staff and an independent facilitator. This report summarizes the major themes offered by Summit attendees over the course of the event.

The Summit included three separate panel presentations, listed below.

TACOMA WORKS SUMMIT PANEL PRESENTATIONS

- **Panel 1:** General Contractors /Construction Trades Employers' panel
- **Panel 2:** Education and Job trainer's panel
- **Panel 3:** Job Connectors' panel



After each panel presentation, attendees discussed their reactions and ideas. Attendee comments were transcribed by City staff serving as facilitators at each table. The themes in this summary report are based on the notes from the table discussions.

After the panel presentations and discussions were concluded, table facilitators shared major discussion points (see Section 3 of this report). Following the report out, attendees were invited to offer other comments (see Section 4 of this report).

PART 2: THEMES FROM ATTENDEES FOLLOWING PANEL PRESENTATIONS

PANEL 1: GENERAL CONTRACTORS /CONSTRUCTION TRADES EMPLOYERS

Panelists: **Stephanie Caldwell**, Small Business Program Manager, Absher Construction
Kurtis Kingsolver, City Engineer/Public Works Director, City of Tacoma
Johnny Morgan, Senior Construction Manager, Skanska
Nick Valpaine, Flatiron
Kevin Young, Owner, M.A.D. Construction

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY THE PANEL:

- What job trends do you see in your field? What types of jobs will be in demand?
- What are the qualifications and average salary for these jobs?
- What is your biggest barrier to finding qualified workers?

THEMES FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWING THE PANEL PRESENTATION:

- Aging workforce is a challenge. Older workers provide important mentoring for younger workers, provide a bridge to the next generation.
- Diversity is an important goal: employers must buy in to this goal in order to see progress.
- Expand basic life skills training—in schools, summer programs, case management, etc. —to increase likelihood of success for younger employees. Examples: basic math, driver’s education, shop classes, basic workplace expectations and how to meet them.
- Expand pre-apprenticeship programs. Success here means linking schools and employers.
- Expand on-the-job training opportunities.
- Increase awareness of existing job training programs, job connection programs.
- Shift communication about the trades: it is a good career path. School counselors, families, all can help shift the messaging. Need to attract people coming out of high school. College isn’t for everyone.
- Expand job fairs and other opportunities for trades employers to reach young people and the underemployed.
- Lack of transportation is an important barrier to be addressed. Solutions could include employers collaborating to provide transportation.



PANEL 2: EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINERS

Panelists: Dan Fey, Director of Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries, Olympics and Rainier Region
Michelle Hillesland, Dean of Instruction, Clover Park Technical College
Ron Langrell, President, Bates Technical College
John Page, Director of Career and Technical Education, Tacoma Public Schools
Diane Siderius Kocer, Executive Director, AGC Education Foundation

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY THE PANEL:

- For which programs do you have the highest and lowest placement success rates?
- What is the primary reason for attrition in programs?
- Do you feel well-connected to the industries for which you are producing skilled employees?

THEMES FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWING THE PANEL PRESENTATION:

- Vocational training schools success at placements suggests these programs could be expanded to meet need. More information also needed about these various schools, costs, etc.
- Create more linkages between employers and job trainers—so that programs are most effective to meet employer needs.
- K-12 education needs to promote trades as well as college path. Create career pathways around trades in schools: ensure curriculum is available in high school to support learning about trades, developing necessary basic skills.
- Promote internships in trades.

- Expand social support networks to allow people to remain employed when “life happens” - transportation, child care, etc.
- Better hand-off between trainers and employers; apprenticeship coordinators.
- Train the trainers: engage teachers in understanding trades careers, job needs.
- Employ technology to increase interest in careers in the trades.

PANEL 3: JOB CONNECTORS

Panelists: Lucienne Banning, Workforce Development Manager, DOC Correctional Industries
 Ashley Evans, Job Developer, Career Path Services
 Deborah Howell, Chief Operating Officer, Workforce Central
 Corey Mosesly, Family Stability Initiatives Manager, United Way of Pierce County

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY THE PANEL:

- What are the biggest barriers your clients or members face to securing employment?
- Which industries do your clients or members have the most interest in pursuing?
- From your experience or from what you hear from the people you serve, what are the jobs with the least amount of interest, and why?

THEMES FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWING THE PANEL PRESENTATION:

- Explore Community Workforce Agreements and ways that Public Labor Agreements can provide apprenticeship opportunities, more local entry points into trades.
- Create pathways in trades careers and promote them.
- Important to address life challenges to keep people employed—provide support services around transportation, child care, affordable housing, driver’s license reinstatements, etc.
- Focus on finding ways to help the underemployed transition to full, living wage employment—communicate training opportunities, use creative outreach approaches.
- Think in terms of “circumstances” rather than “barriers” – Talk to people about why they are making decisions that hold them back.
- Issues around formerly incarcerated individuals—“ban the box,” more skills training by DOC, reduce administrative burdens, increased access to technology could all be helpful.
- Targeted and creative outreach/strategies to encourage people to go into trades, such as pre-apprenticeship training, mentoring, zip code-based outreach.
- Increase awareness about where people can secure basic skills training.



PART 3: TABLE FACILITATORS' REPORT OUT OF MAJOR POINTS OF CONSENSUS, ACTION IDEAS

- Bring back basic skills training to public schools (e.g. driver's education, wood shop) (multiple mentions)
- Create career pathways for the underemployed (multiple mentions)
- Streamline administrative burdens for employers and employees—particularly around internship rules (multiple mentions)
- Improve and expand existing pre-apprenticeship programs (multiple mentions)
- Increase case management resources, more soft skills training (multiple mentions)
- Mentoring programs--older skilled workers to help recruit and help younger employees understand what to expect as they enter the workforce (multiple mentions)
- Educate staff on better understanding employees' family needs
- Hire from local communities and follow-up with employees once hired to help with retention
- For the aging workforce, create an employee benefit for those who will mentor younger employees
- Focused outreach, grassroots strategies, marketing trades careers geared towards youth
- Address information gaps -- more communication amongst the different stakeholder groups present at this summit
- Create partnerships—share employee resources and networks
- Identify/create pathways to resources to help address life circumstances issues (lack of driver's license, child care, lack of reliable transportation)
- Be mindful of economic cycles—plan and prepare workforce for the ups and downs
- Address the construction trades image problem
- Older workforce may be perceived as an uninviting environment for younger workers
- “Boot camp” for new employees when they start
- More support for new hires
- Recruiting young people before high school and the pre-apprenticeship level; utilize after school and summer programs, job shadowing opportunities



PART 4: GROUP COMMENTS

- Change the discussion from talking about “barriers” to employment to the life “circumstances” that prevent people from obtaining or keeping a job
- Tacoma Training and Employment Program (TTEP) is available
- Change attitude on how to help people with driver's license issues
- Apprenticeship information needs to get to contractors so people can get hired
- The Construction Center for Excellence's Energy and Construction Summit is scheduled for June 1-2 at Centralia College
- Worksource Pierce has an email distribution list of job seekers that can help with communications issues identified today
- Ironworkers Union has funding available to teach how to bid and put programs together
- Reach back to organizations—do case management and engage non-profits to help people succeed
- Successful marketing of trades careers requires we look at things from the customer perspective.

- Financial literacy is important—partnerships with organizations that are doing it, teach people how to manage their income
- Understand that apprenticeships start with a job. Those jobs are dependent upon demand
- Labor unions are looking for pipe layers, they can get hired today
- Need to connect unfilled jobs with job seekers. There are conversations on this issue occurring in King County and groups like the Earnability Task Force
- Conduct job fairs to connect people to trades jobs
- Use the Worksource email distribution list to reach out to veterans
- Summer Jobs 253 is a great way to get young people into the workforce and the TTEP is currently recruiting for advisory committee members
- Put an apprenticeship labor requirement in bid contracts

PART 5: CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

Mayor Strickland closed the summit calling out the importance of addressing childcare, transportation, improving how we talk about trades careers, and promoting financial literacy. She said Tacoma can act quickly to address the issues discussed today—we have the skills and capacity to engage and advance these issues.

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

- TacomaWorks.org website to serve as a resource for companies and job seekers and a valuable tool to spread positive messaging about trades careers. The City of Tacoma will launch this project in Spring, 2017.
- Implement an apprenticeship requirement for City of Tacoma contracts
- Explore potential for a Tacoma Construction Academy that would help high school students get an introduction to skills needed in the construction industry.
- Explore potential for a Community Workforce Agreement that would not disadvantage minority-owned firms that do not have the capacity for a 100% union-represented workforce.
- Open discussion with Pierce Transit and other partners to develop ideas for helping workers who lack reliable transportation. This could include vanpools, Uber, microloans, and fleet to work sites.

