

## WDC Announces Award for Health Workforce for the Future

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**The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) announces a \$9.4 Million Five Year Award**– The WDC is thrilled to announce a \$9.4 million five-year award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Health Profession Opportunity Grant* for the WDC’s *Health Workforce for the Future* (HWF) project.

The mission of the WDC is to support a strong economy and the ability of each person to achieve self-sufficiency. Under the direction of the WDC, HWF will help to build the healthcare workforce needed as healthcare workers near retirement age and King County’s population becomes increasingly more diverse. Leveraging the strong partnerships with Washington State Employment Security Department, Department of Social and Health Services, regional healthcare employers, local colleges, housing authorities, and community partners, HWF is poised to transform King County’s healthcare system.

Using system-changing lessons learned from the WDC’s *Health Careers for All* five-year project, HWF will leverage, redesign, and enhance existing training program strategies. This project will target outreach to (1) individuals who remain unemployed, or have tenuous connections to the workforce, despite the improving regional economy. In order to ensure true momentum on a career path is possible, this project will also focus on (2) incumbent workers in need of support for wage and career progression. Finally, the project will target (3) low-income youth who are critical to the future workforce but remain even more disconnected from the labor force.

Industry partners report that the push of healthcare reform toward a more prevention-oriented focus, changes in the economic model of healthcare, and demographic shifts in the patient population put new demands on the health workforce. Accordingly, local employers have emerging priorities around increasing workforce diversity, and expect growth beyond what labor market data alone might predict in many areas. HWF is designed to respond to these needs with an emphasis on occupational pathways and an explicit focus on engaging a diverse customer population.

“Despite King County’s incredible economic growth, many jobseekers have been left behind,” Marléna Sessions, CEO of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. “Health Workforce for the Future draws upon industry-driven workforce solution to support King County jobseekers and workers. Our innovative work and strong employer partnerships in this field are unparalleled, and we are excited to build upon this foundation.”

“Group Health Cooperative has a long history of working collaboratively with WDC of Seattle-King County to support workforce needs for the changing health care environment and has enjoyed many successes as a result of our partnership,” says Barbara Trehearne, Vice President of Clinical Excellence, Quality, and Nursing Practice at Group Health Cooperative. “We are pleased to continue partnering on this exciting project.”

“Health Workforce for the Future is a fantastic opportunity to offer TANF jobseekers access to health care careers in King County, and we are thrilled to be a part of this project,” says Melanie d’Almada

Remedios, Region 2 WorkFirst Coordinator at the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

“The Employment Security Department values its partnership with the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County and looks forward to working together to connect job seekers with high-quality jobs in the health care field,” said Greta Kaas-Lent, Northwest Regional Director for ESD’s Workforce and Career Development Division. “As this sector evolves, we will continue to work together to arm job seekers across the spectrum with training and development opportunities to prepare them for jobs in our state’s health care industry.”

### **About the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County**

The **Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County** ([www.seakingwdc.org](http://www.seakingwdc.org), @SeattleKingWDC) is a nonprofit workforce think-tank and grant-making organization that oversees employment-related programs for youth, the adult workforce, and employers in King County, with the goal of a strong economy and self-sufficiency for every resident.

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The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provider of employment and training services.

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