



Workforce Development Council Honored Today at White House

Collaborative plan to integrate youth services into WorkSource earns national recognition

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Seattle, Wash. – The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) is honored to be a nationally recognized finalist in the U.S Department of Labor’s Customer-Centered Design Challenge for its innovative solution to integrating youth services into WorkSource. Eighty teams entered the contest, hosted in partnership with IDEO, and the recognition places the WDC’s plan among the top ten in the country, earning staff an invitation to the White House today for the Learning Exchange and Celebration at the White House in Washington, D.C.

“Young people continue to be a marginalized and under-utilized population within our local workforce,” says Marléna Sessions, chief executive officer of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. “The plan we’ve created aims to make our workforce system even stronger and more accessible to all job seekers –specifically reaching young people where they are and giving them a voice in the process.”

The WDC’s proposal outlines ways in which the WorkSource network will offer youth access to job-seeker services at their one-stop American Job Centers in Seattle-King County. The phases of work outlined in the plan include: forming a youth advisory committee to oversee the integration of services, developing a marketing plan that will inform youth of age-specific events and services taking place at WorkSource sites, developing youth-focused events and services at WorkSource locations, as well as developing focus groups of youth who access services at WorkSource to inform the integration and enhance services with a continuous feedback loop.

"The WDC’s work in applying customer-centered design processes with their youth program is a great example of the improved customer experience and outcomes that emerge from ensuring that government organizations deeply understand the needs of their customers by using design thinking," says Virginia Hamilton, regional administrator for Region 6 Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.

In order to facilitate this work and implement the solution, the WDC has been convening partners to develop a more comprehensive regional youth employment system.

“We are collaborating and mapping all of the youth employment resources provided by partners in the community in addition to our youth-integration WorkSource plan,” says Sarah Chavez, director of youth initiatives for the WDC. “We know there are barriers and gaps for young people that we must identify and address together as the entire system works to become more accessible in helping youth take their next step along a career path toward self-sufficiency.”

This award follows at the heels of another national innovation award for WDC—Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Trailblazer Award from the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB). The WDC will be recognized

at NWAB's Annual Forum this spring, also in Washington D.C., as the local board that has made the most progress throughout the country in adopting the changes envisioned in WIOA and expanding its ability to develop comprehensive workforce solutions for its community.

For more about WorkSource and the WDC's job seeker programs visit www.worksourceskc.org. More about the Workforce Development Council and its workforce initiatives can be found at www.seakingwdc.org or by calling (206) 448-0474.

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County 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.

Media Contact

Colleen McDevitt, Communications Manager
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County
cmcdevitt@seakingwdc.org
206-448-0474 x 3015

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