



Because Work Matters

2020–2021
Annual Report

work.
s y s t e m s

The Portland Metro Workforce Development Board

***Supporting the Economy
through Skills and Work***

THE PORTLAND METRO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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
Anna Thames, ESCO
Bob Gravely, PacifiCorp
Cara Turano, Technology Assoc. of Oregon
Carl Moyer, Parr Lumber
Caryn Lilley, KGW Media Group
Dave Nielsen, Home Builders Assoc.
David Fortney, PGE
Deanna Palm, Hillsboro Chamber
Debi Mollahan, Tigard Chamber
James Posey, Workhorse Construction
Jane Leo, Portland Metro Realtors
Association
Keith Mays, Electronic Wood Systems
Maurice Rahming, O'Neill Electric
Norm Eder, CFM

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

Tyna Moreschi, 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 Kalevor, Housing Authority of
Washington County

*Our strongest asset is our network
of community partners.
By working together, our economy
grows, our pools of homegrown
talent grows, and our competitive
edge grows.*

A message to the community...

2020 was an unprecedented and difficult year. Like everyone, we watched in disbelief as businesses closed, people lost jobs, and the world took a pause. In April 2020, we developed a Crisis **Response and Recovery Framework** to help guide our thinking and activities as we looked for ways to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Our Framework relied on the following principles:

- Prioritize support to the most vulnerable, applying a racial equity lens
- Prioritize support to community-based partners
- Leverage and build on existing networks and assets
- Engage, listen and act quickly

As a result, we expanded our definition of workforce development to address the needs of the moment, including loans to help our community partners maintain staff, computers and connectivity to support remote learning, rental and cash assistance to keep people housed and prevent them from going hungry.

As the pandemic continued, we built a multi-lingual call center to help limited English speakers access services, expanded our virtual service offerings, and redesigned available trainings to comply with health and social distancing protocols. We pursued funding for the system at every turn and engaged in several policy discussions to ensure the needs of our customers and community were not overlooked.

As we begin to see light at the end of the COVID tunnel, these principles will continue to guide our work. Black Indigenous and People of Color, women, immigrants, disabled individuals, less educated, and lower-income workers have disproportionately suffered from the health and economic devastation caused by the pandemic. To return from the COVID-19 crisis as a stronger region, we must strengthen our commitment to those residents most impacted by the COVID crisis. We can't go back to the way things were. The inequities highlighted by the crisis cannot be allowed to continue. Success will require us to continue building partnerships with community-based organizations and especially those offering culturally and population specific services. Our efforts must put racial equity and front-line workers at the center and bring decision making and solution building as close to the community as possible - allowing local voices to respond to local economic circumstances, priorities and needs. We need to continue to build connections beyond skills and address other barriers such as childcare, transportation and housing. We must support equitable economic recovery that is strategically responsive to the current economic context and promotes the creation of high-quality regional jobs.

We look forward to better days ahead and doing what we can to ensure a robust and equitable economic recovery.




Andrew McGough

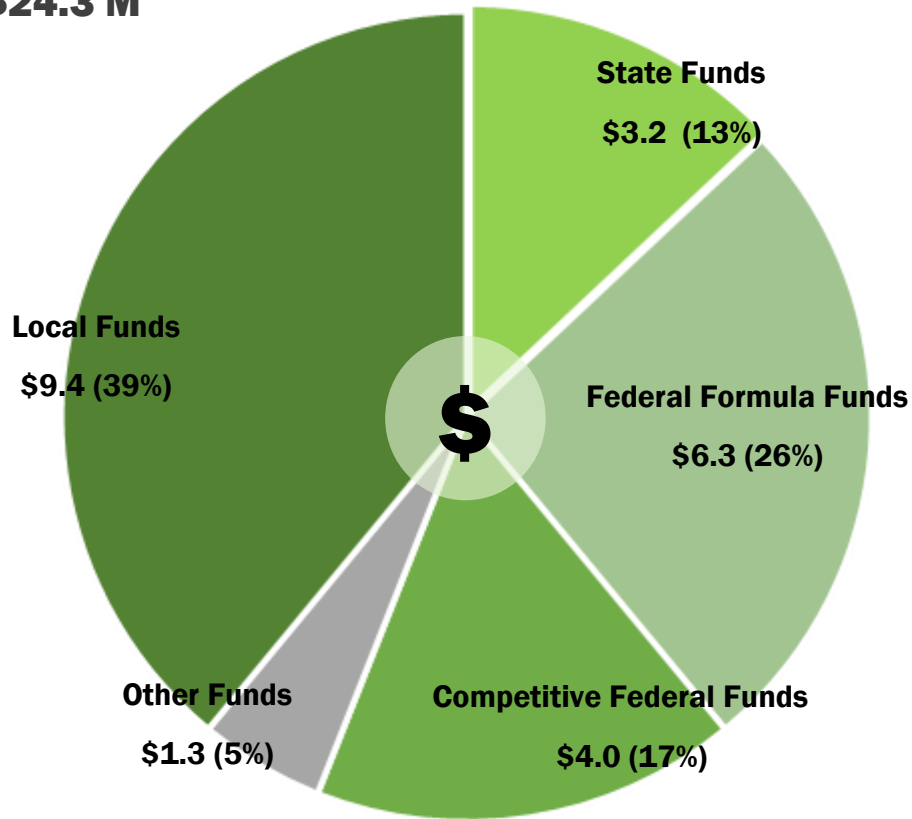



James Paulson

Worksystems is a non-profit agency that supports economic growth in the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington counties by pursuing and investing resources to improve the quality of the workforce. We design and coordinate workforce development programs and services delivered through a network of local partners to help people get the skills, training and education they need to go to work or to advance in their careers. Our partners include employers, labor groups, government, community colleges, high schools, community-based and economic development organizations.

REVENUE

***Total: \$24.3 M**



Funders:

ABT Associates Inc.
 Applied Materials
 Bank of America
 Bank of the West
 City of Beaverton
 City of Portland
 Coast to Coast Event Services
 Columbia Bank
 Community Action Organization
 FedEx
 Fidelity Charitable
 Fred Meyer
 Fresenius Kidney Care
 Hillsboro School District
 Home Forward
 Jobs for the Future, Inc.
 JP Morgan Chase Foundation
 Key Bank

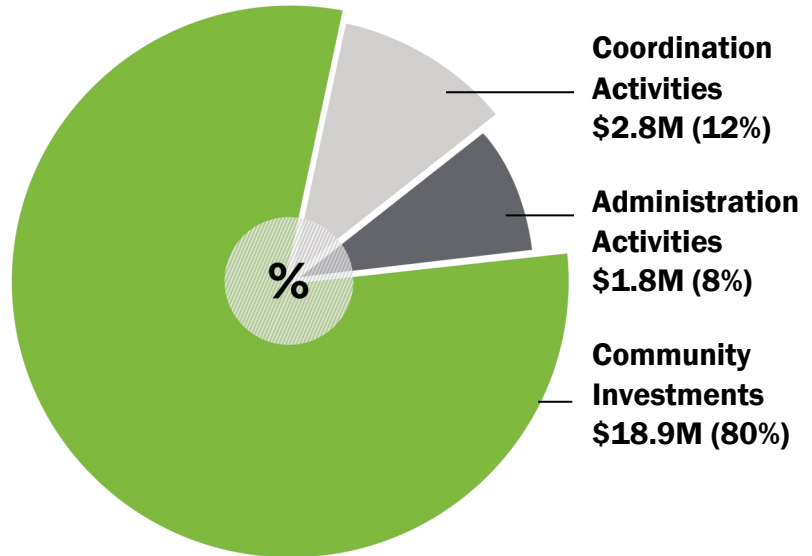
Mt Hood Community College
 Multnomah County
 Neil Jones Food Company
 NW Youth Corps
 Oregon Community College Library
 Assoc.
 Orange County Community
 Foundation/TK Foundation
 Oregon Bankers Assoc. Education
 Foundation
 Oregon Refuse & Recycling Assoc.
 Outgrowing Hunger
 Portland OIC
 Pacific NW Regional Council of
 Carpenters
 Portland Diamond Project, LLC
 Portland General Electric
 Portland Public Schools

Premier Bank
 Prosper Portland
 SAIF
 State of Oregon
 Talent Solutions
 Timberlab
 TriMet
 U.S. Department of Labor—
 Employment & Training
 Administration
 U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services
 Umpqua Bank
 Unitus Community Credit Union
 US Bank
 Washington County
 Washington Federal
 Wells Fargo

EXPENSES

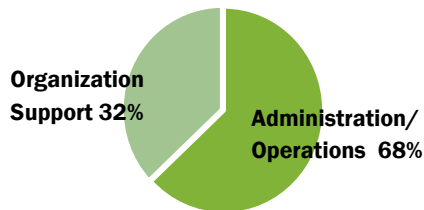
***Total: \$23.5M**

Worksystems groups its investments into three categories: Administration, Coordination and Community



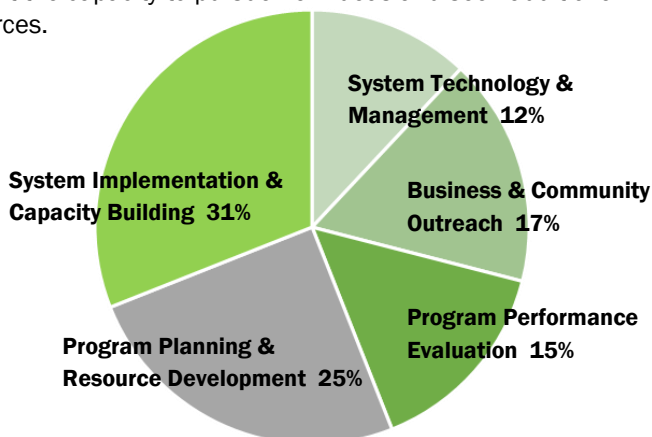
Administrative Activities - \$1.8M (8%)

Administrative activities account for approximately 7% of total expenditures and include compliance, financial management, human resources, procurement, and support of the region's Workforce Development Board.



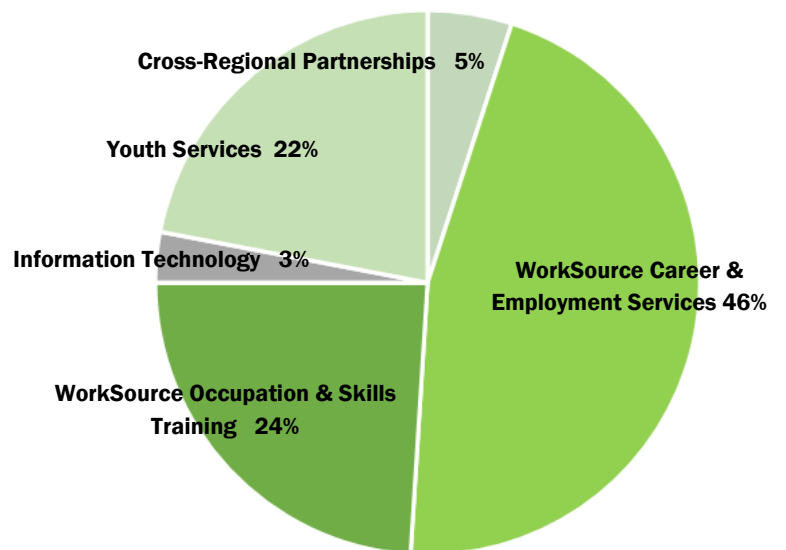
Coordination Activities - \$2.8M (12%)

Coordination costs represent the bulk of activities carried out by Worksystems' staff. Coordination activities are essential to ensuring our community investments are achieving the intended goals and outcomes established by the Workforce Development Board and our various funding streams. In addition, coordination activities support the development of community and business relationships necessary to align resources, build partnerships and develop a more effective workforce development system. Coordination investments help us understand what does and does not work, and support the capacity to pursue new ideas and seek additional resources.



Community Investments - \$18.9M (80%)

Community investments comprise the largest portion of our activities and represent resources delivered through a network of partners to provide direct training and employment services to targeted industry workers, adult job seekers, dislocated workers and youth. (See the back page for a list of our 2020-21 organizational investments.)



Economic Impacts — What We Know...

The impacts of COVID-19 on the economy were swifter and more devastating to the labor force than the great recession. In December 2007, employment in Portland Metro reached a pre-recession peak of 719,100. At its low point in January 2010, employment was 649,900, a decrease of 9.6 percent. During the first six weeks of the COVID-19 economic crisis, employment decreased from 831,700 in March 2020 to 746,700, a decrease of fourteen percent. In one month, employment decreased more than it did during the more than two years during the great recession. ¹

The recovery also appeared to be swifter, at least initially. Between month three and month four of the current economic crisis, employment recovered from negative 13% to negative 10%. There was no point during the Great Recession where we saw such a dramatic increase.

Unemployment

Prior to the pandemic, the unemployment rate in Portland Metro was at an all-time low. The good news is that we are getting back to where we were. Despite a new wave of COVID cases during the summer of 2021, the unemployment rate has been decreasing steadily for the past few months. While employment has not reached the pre-pandemic peak, Portland Metro added 16,400 jobs between June 2020 and June 2021. The August 2021 unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in the past sixteen months.



Job Gains and Losses

In February 2020, there were nearly 840,000 jobs in Portland Metro. At the economic low point in April 2020, there were just 722,000 jobs. A decrease of more than 100,000 jobs. Since then, job growth has been mainly steady, except for a dip during winter 2020. By August 2021, more than half of the lost jobs had been regained.

Jobs losses were unevenly distributed across industries. The largest job losses by industry in Portland Metro from July 2019 to July 2021 are:

- Leisure and hospitality -27,000
- Education and health services -7,800
- Professional and business services -7,800
- Local government -900

Impact on Workers

The COVID-19 economic crisis is disproportionately impacting young adult workers. Young workers, age 16 to 34 are more likely to work in industries that have suffered large losses, more likely to lose their jobs, and more likely to remain on unemployment. These systematic setbacks, including loss of work experience and wage growth, can have long-term effects on their careers.

Workers who have a high school diploma or no formal educational credential are also overrepresented (28% of the labor force v. 58% of initial unemployment claim filers).

Economic Impacts — What We Know...

Childcare

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an already challenging childcare situation. Childcare is difficult to find. Spaces in childcare centers and in home daycares are limited and for many families, the cost is prohibitively expensive.

In 2020, every county in Oregon contained childcare deserts for infants and toddlers (up to age 2). This means the community could accommodate less than 33% of children that age. Nearly 70% of Oregon counties were considered childcare deserts for pre-school age children.²

In Multnomah County only 30% of children aged 5 and younger had access to state-regulated childcare programs in March 2020.³

Childcare is tightly regulated. During the pandemic, both centers and in home childcare were faced with new safety regulations, including new limits on the number of children who could interact with each adult during a given day. Childcare is a low wage industry and the returns for business owners is low. Multnomah County estimates it lost one third of all childcare spots during the pandemic.

Many childcare centers closed during the pandemic. Others are struggling to find workers. The low wages, increased regulations and risk of exposure to COVID, and increasing opportunities in other sectors, are causing many workers to leave the industry. In 2021, there were thirty-seven percent fewer childcare workers in Portland Metro.

Childcare and the Labor Force

During the pandemic, the lack of affordable and available childcare reduced the number of people in the labor force. Nationally, nearly 3 million women left the labor force in 2020. In spring 2020, the labor force participation rate for women was at a thirty-year low.⁴ A full reopening of school in the fall will allow some of these workers to return. As the economy has reopened, some employers are struggling to find workers. The balance of power in the labor force has shifted. Workers are holding out for jobs with better benefits, higher pay, and more flexibility. An amenity like childcare could prove beneficial to employers competing for quality talent.

Future Outlook

The pandemic will permanently alter the way we do some things by accelerating existing economic trends. One change is how we shop. The pandemic accelerated the shift to online shopping and created a massive disruption in the supply chain and distribution system. The most in demand job is heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers. The demand for this job increased 67% during that year. The most in demand jobs also include light truck drivers, stockers, and order fillers. All jobs that are seeing increased demand due to an increase in direct-to-consumer shopping.

A national workers shortage is impacting large and small business alike. Healthcare jobs are also in high demand. A national shortage of registered nurses, medical assistants, and nursing assistants is resulting in a shortage of care. The restaurant industry is also facing labor shortages as many workers reevaluate the industry. Many workers are choosing to leave their professions. For some, this means retraining and further education.

As the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 continue to filter through our region we can expect to see more shifts in where and how people work.

¹Oregon Employment Department, Current Employment Statistics

²2020 Oregon Child Care Market Study, Oregon Department of Human Services and Oregon Early Learning Division

³2020 Oregon Child Care Market Study, Oregon Department of Human Services and Oregon Early Learning Division

⁴www.bls.gov

OUR RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC – PROGRAM SERVICES

A look back: Workforce System COVID Response

- Shift to remote services
- Safety net focus
- Facilitated access to services

COVID Response Line

- In April 2020, Worksystems launched emergency response lines for Multnomah and Washington Counties
- Over 60 system staff supported the hotlines which included:
 - Unemployment Insurance information (over 85% of calls)
 - Connection to SNAP and DHS support
 - TriMet Low Income Fare eligibility
 - Language Services
 - Job leads and referral
- Communities of practice
- Evolved into a Statewide project funded by the Oregon Employment Department (OED) for bilingual
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) support

CARES Act Funding

- ~\$3 Million received between Washington County, Portland Housing Bureau - Multnomah County, and the Oregon Health Authority
- Funding period September through December 2020 – Equivalent of a \$12 million annual grant
- Funds supported rent assistance, household assistance visa cards, cohort trainings (IT and Truck Driving), and expanded overall workforce system capacity

Technology Access

- Over 500 laptops distributed to customers
- Partnership with Comcast Xfinity Internet Essentials to sponsor 6 months of free internet
- Placed eight computer workstations in homeless shelters throughout the region
- Supported Wi-Fi hotspot installation at two housing properties managed by Reach CDC giving residents free internet access

Rent Assistance & Household Assistance Cards

- Rent assistance and \$1,000 household assistance cards were provided through our network of service providers:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| IRCO | MHCC | POIC |
| PCC | Centro Cultural | PYB |
| Urban League | Latino Network | Constructing Hope |
| Human Solutions | OHDC | SE Works |
| Central City Concern | Home Forward | Oregon Tradeswomen |
| Hillsboro SD | NAFY | Community Action |
| Washington County Housing | | |

- 305 customers received rent assistance with 67% identifying as people of color
- 571 customers received household assistance cards with 62% identifying as people of color

Youth Work Experience

- Added Learn and Earn opportunities that provided stipends for milestone completion as youth learned new workplace skills.
- Partnered with County Library systems to access LinkedIn Learning at no cost to participants.
- Purchased and distributed 50 laptops/Chromebook to facilitate access to the Learn and Earn option or continue training when classes went on-line

LOOKING FORWARD

Remote Service Delivery

The transition to virtual service delivery has created major efficiencies, as well as an expectation on the part of the public not to be required to travel needlessly. As offices and schools reopen, we'll need to reorganize how we provide services into a hybrid model in which the efficiencies of remote service delivery are preserved and customers have choice about whether they are helped in-person or remotely. Emergency measures to "pivot to virtual services" will need to be redeveloped more thoughtfully and hybridized with in-person services.



Expansion of Earn & Learn

Pursuing a middle-skill, middle income career can be a **challenge** for people in poverty because they lack the resources to support their basic needs while participating in trainings that take months or longer. This can cause people to drop out in order take "survival" jobs or not to enter training programs at all. Providing opportunities for people to earn while they learn, such as paid internships or stipends, removes this barrier and helps open the pathway for people in poverty to enter middle income careers.

Workforce & Childcare Alignment

Lack of access to childcare is a barrier keeping low-income parents from entering occupational training programs for middle income careers and from going to work. New programs providing preschool for children aged 3 and 4, including Preschool Promise and Preschool for All, are a foundation and starting point that the workforce system can build on to address the workforce-childcare barrier. These new programs leave gaps that must be addressed for families with children younger than 3 and after school care for children older than 4, but they're a huge start toward universalizing childcare that works for workers.



Jobs Driven by Public Investments

Massive new public investments will create employment growth in middle income jobs that can be part of our region's strategy to address poverty and grow a more equitable economy. For example, the Clean Energy Fund, passed in 2018, is projected to generate \$50M per year to be invested into clean energy projects that generate middle-income jobs. Childcare slots funded by Preschool Promise and Preschool for All will drive an enormous expansion in childcare industry jobs and come with the requirement of paying a living wage. And the Metro Housing Bond will generate approximately \$200M per year to be invested in housing and services in Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties. Looking forward, creating career pathways into these emergent areas will be an important part of our sector work and strategy for an equitable economy.

Success Stories

Training Creates Pathways for Women and People of Color



To support an equitable economic recovery and access to middle income careers, Worksystems has been working with the Portland Hauler Association (PHA), companies that collect recycling and garbage for

the City of Portland, SE Works, and Interstate Trucking Academy to launch a first-of-its-kind training to help women and people of color access good-paying jobs in recycling/waste management and start careers as drivers serving city neighborhoods and businesses.

The new 12 week training program places women and people of color in middle-wage jobs with benefits. Participants in the inaugural cohort included 82% Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), 29% female, and 6% non-binary.

The hands-on driver training program includes:

- CDL Training
- Container Moving
- Customer Service Skills
- Safety Training
- Truck Cleaning
- Hauler Specific Inspections
- Route Sheet Reading
- Using Hydraulic Hand Controls

Worksystems worked with PHA and Interstate Trucking Academy on driver curriculum, and Worksystems is leading recruitment through its WorkSource Portland Metro

Centers and a network of more than 20 community-based organizations with strong connections and a history of workforce development with women and people of color. Worksystems is providing funding for this program and PHA companies contributed funding and donated automated garbage trucks to use for training.

“Our communities should see themselves in their government and the contractors we employ,” said Commissioner Carmen Rubio, who oversees the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. “This is especially true for highly-visible services like garbage and recycling. I applaud PHA’s commitment to accessibility and inclusion for the benefits it will provide both the future employees and Portland’s diverse communities.”

For Portland Haulers Association members, the program provides access to work-ready, committed candidates who have their CDLs and a basic understanding of the industry. Our graduating classes of trainees have immediate access to middle-wage jobs within the 10 Portland Hauler Association member companies and other opportunities in the Portland area.

For participants, the program provides CDL orientation and certification, industry-specific training, and introductions to the 10 local recycling and garbage PHA companies that are hiring drivers to serve Portland. A hiring event follows successful completion of the training program. For those who qualify the training program and childcare is provided at no-cost.

Health Careers Northwest: Audrey’s Story

As a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipient, Audrey qualified to enroll in our Health Careers NW program. Health Careers NW prepares participants for training in healthcare career pathways, supports them through training completion, and helps them find careers that offer family’s sustaining employment. While working at the Portland Airport to make ends meet, Audrey began her journey to becoming a medical assistant (MA) in 2018.

The medical assistant program is not easy and is highly competitive. After completing the prerequisite courses, Audrey started the Health Careers NW MA program full time in 2019. During the program’s second term, Audrey and her family of five survived an apartment fire.

They lost their home and everything they owned. As a single mom, this unexpected disaster strained her finances. Thanks to the assistance of a Health Careers NW career coach, Audrey received housing assistance from the A Home for Everyone Program. They helped her find a new apartment and provided rent support during most of the training program.

Despite the significant setback and hardship, Audrey never missed a single class. She graduated from the Medical Assistant program and was hired at the Central City Concern treatment facility in March 2020. In two years, Audrey went from losing her housing to making over \$18.00 an hour as a certified medical assistant.



Worksystems invested in the following organizations during 2020–2021

All Hands Raised
Black Parent Initiative
Central City Concern
Centro Cultural de Washington County
Community Action Organization
Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce
Hillsboro School District
Home Forward
Human Solutions
IRCO
ITBOM, LLC
Labor's Community Service Agency, Inc.
Latino Network
Mt Hood Community College

NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center
Interstate Trucking Academy
New Avenues for Youth
Oregon Human Development Corp
Oregon Center for Nursing
Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.
Portland OIC
Portland Community College
Portland Youth Builders
Reach CDC
SE Works
The Contingent
Urban League of Portland
Washington County Dept. of Housing Services

Thank you to all of our great partners!

Worksystems

1618 SW First Avenue,
Suite 450
Portland OR 97201
503.478.7300
www.worksystems.org

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

These programs financed in whole or in part with funds provided through Worksystems from the U.S. Department of Labor. Worksystems is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

To place a free relay call in Oregon dial 711.