



The Portland  
Metro Workforce  
Development Board

2022-2023 Annual Report

Because Work Matters



# The Portland Metro Workforce Development Board

## Local Elected Officials (Governing Board)

Roy Rogers – Washington County Commissioner\*

Lori Stegmann – Multnomah County Commissioner\*

Carmen Rubio – Portland City Commissioner\*

## City of Portland:

### Local Business Representatives

Anna Thames – ESCO

Bob Gravely – PacifiCorp

Caryn Lilley – KGW Media Group\*

David Fortney – PGE\*

James Paulson – JMPDX LLC\* (Chair)

James Posey – JLP Business Group

## Multnomah County:

### Local Business Representatives

Maurice Rahming – O’Neill Construction Group

Travis Stovall – eRep\* (Vice Chair)

## Washington County:

### Local Business Representatives

Anneleah Jaxon – Tualatin Chamber of Commerce

Dave Nielsen – Home Builders Association

Deanna Palm – Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Keith Mays – Electronic Wood Systems

Nina Carlson – NW Natural Gas

Paul Brown – Cinder\*

## Education Representatives

Lisa Skari – Mt. Hood Community College

Pam Hester – Portland Community College

## Economic Development Representatives

Kimberly Branam – Prosper Portland

Lynn Peterson – Metro

## Labor Representatives

Josh Hall – OR AFLCIO\*

Kate Baker – AFSCME Council 75

## Partner Representatives

Biljana Jesic – Home Forward

Danell Butler – Oregon Employment Department

Joe McFerrin – POIC

Kadie Ross – Vocational Rehabilitation

TBA – Housing Authority of Washington County

Rolanda Garcia – Dept of Human Services

Tom Pillar – Springdale Job Corps

\* Worksystems Executive Board Member

# A Message to the Community



Andrew McGough  
Executive Director



James Paulson  
Board Chair

Even as the age of COVID retreats further into the past, the regional labor market, and the broader economy, continue to be anything but normal. We’re still feeling the aftereffects from the unprecedented conditions and volatility of the pandemic, and the rhythms of everyday work and commerce in our region, while familiar, are fundamentally different than they were before. We’re headed for a new normal, but we aren’t there yet.

The broad economic news, however, is largely good. Despite gloomy predictions, we have avoided a recession, inflation is coming down, and unemployment has remained low. But the local labor market can be best characterized by its contradictions.

Jobs are plentiful. In a tight labor market like the one we’re experiencing, this means that many people aren’t turning to the workforce training and education programs in which Worksystems invests. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that many of our community partner organizations – who deliver our programs’ training and support services – are themselves struggling to attract and retain workers.

At the same time, though, we’re also living in a time of generational investments in workforce development, economic recovery, clean energy, and public

infrastructure. Despite the tight labor market, these investments are driving – and will continue to drive – people toward the programs Worksystems creates and invests in. And this isn’t just good news for us.

Targeted investment in advanced manufacturing from the federal CHIPS Act – supported by similar investment at the state level -- will enable the metro area to grow this critical sector, add thousands of family-wage jobs, and extend our region’s advantage in this sector over other metropolitan areas. Existing Worksystems programs like Quick Start to Semiconductor (see Page 7) are already helping to meet this demand, and to bring needed diversity to the high-tech manufacturing workforce.

Similar investment in clean energy from the federal Inflation Reduction Act and the Portland Clean Energy Fund will help us grow this emerging industry in our area and, hopefully, enable the region to establish a clean-energy leadership position similar to the one we enjoy in advanced manufacturing. A solar training grant from the U.S. Dept. of Energy (see Page 10) is putting our unique career coaching network to work to help produce a new generation of clean-energy workers.

**The key to maximizing the impact of our investments is to be proactive, build capacity, and prepare to meet demand before it materializes; remain nimble enough to adapt to changing conditions; and persist in our commitment to ensure that all people in the region can share equitably in our prosperity. If we continue to move forward with all these things in mind, our new normal can be one that lifts up our entire region.**

## About Worksystems

Worksystems is a nonprofit agency that supports economic growth in the City of Portland, and 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. Worksystems is committed to promoting and supporting Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in all aspects of our internal and external work.

# Labor Market – Current Conditions

Today, despite a swift recovery from the COVID-19 recession, the Portland Metro-area economy is facing complex challenges. Job growth is slowing as the regional population decreases for the first time in decades. Over the past year, employment growth in the metro area fell short of statewide rates. Together, Washington and Multnomah counties added 8,600 new jobs between July 2022 and July 2023, an increase of 1 percent. Oregon's statewide employment growth during the same period was 1.8 percent.

During the same period, the Portland Metro area experienced a slight population decrease. Population losses in Multnomah County offset modest gains in Washington County, leading to an overall regional decline. While deaths in the region have returned to pre-pandemic levels, the birth rate continues to decline. Combined with an aging population, this likely means that for the foreseeable future, regional population growth will rely on domestic and international migration.

For decades, a high quality of life, combined with a robust entrepreneurial culture that promotes small-business growth, has attracted young, creative talent from across the globe to the Portland Metro region. Today, however, the region is facing challenges that threaten to negatively impact economic growth. A shortage of housing, uneven recovery from the COVID-19 recession, and a perception of rising crime rates and poor public schools are causing some families to find homes in other parts of the region.

At the same time, there are reasons to be optimistic. Our region is poised to take advantage of federal investment in semiconductor manufacturing, a sector which is already a linchpin in the regional economy. The Childcare for All initiative is improving the financial conditions of early childhood educators while allowing more parents to participate in the labor force. A coordinated public and private investment in mental health, substance abuse, and social service workers is providing support for those most in need while providing employment pathways for people whose lived experience might otherwise be a barrier to sustainable employment.

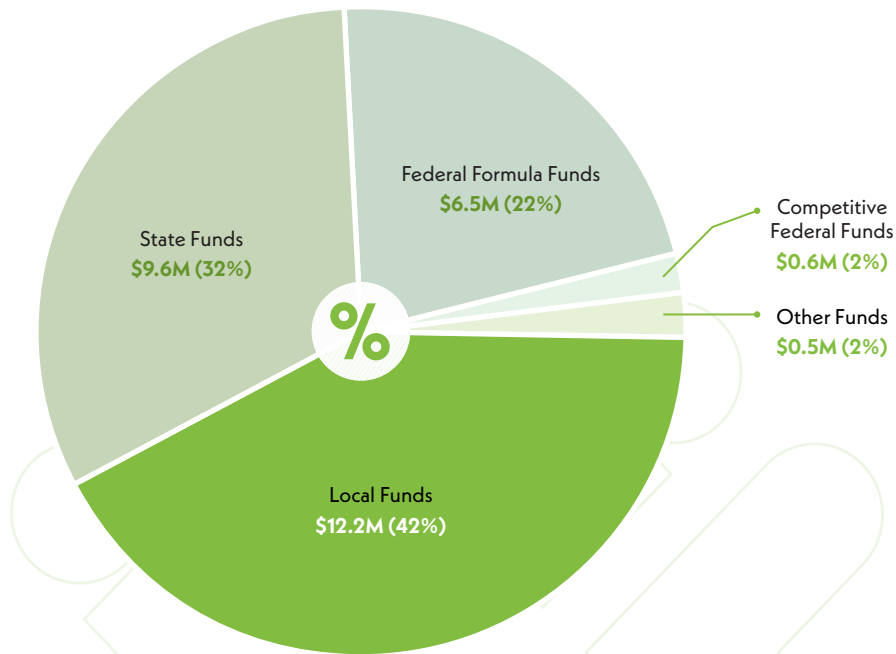
Worksystems uses key "Target Sectors" of industry to harness regional growth to improve the lives of jobseekers; these sectors are Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Healthcare, and High Tech. We are currently reviewing and reaffirming the sectors where we focus our resources, and – given their current and projected importance to the regional labor market – considering adding Early Learning and Clean Energy to the list.

**Focusing on target sectors that not only have a strong presence but will continue into the projected future; providing integrated services to efficiently use resources; improving connections between industry and training; and growing the budding awareness among businesses about the public workforce system will help provide a path to ensuring that the region's workforce meets the needs of an ever-evolving economy.**



# Fiscal – Revenue

Total: \$29.5M



## List of Funders

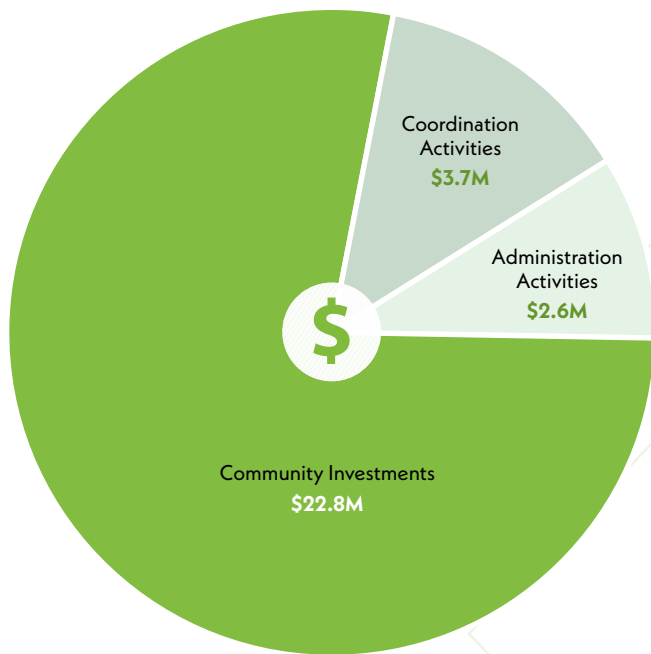
- Alaska Airlines
- Applied Materials
- CareerWorks, Inc
- Central City Concern
- Centro Cultural de Washington County
- Christenson Electric
- City of Hillsboro
- City of Portland
- Clackamas Education Service District
- Community Action Organization
- ECONorthwest
- GSI Water Solutions
- Home Forward
- International Paper
- Legacy Health
- Madden Industrial Craftsmen Inc.
- Metro
- MSR-FSL LLC
- Multnomah County
- Oregon Metro Sponsorship Program
- P.O.I.C.
- Port of Portland
- Portland General Electric
- Portland Public Schools
- Prosper Portland
- Satys Sealing & Painting USA
- Springdale/PIVOT Job Corps
- Starbucks
- State of Oregon
- Trimet
- U.S Department of Labor - Employment & Training Administration
- Warn Automotive
- Washington County
- Willamette Dental Group

# Fiscal – Expenses

Total: \$29.1M

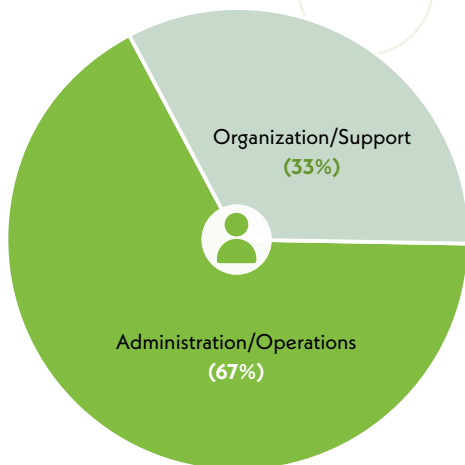
Worksystems groups its investments into three categories:

Administration, Coordination, and Community



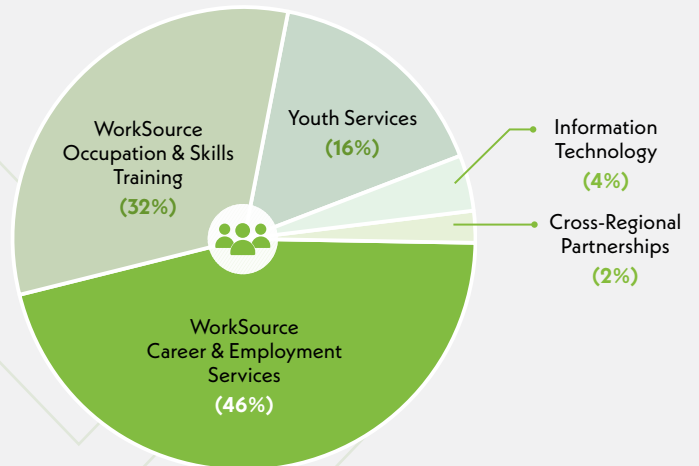
## Administrative Activities \$2.6M

Administrative activities account for approximately 9% of total expenditures and include compliance, financial management, human resources, procurement, and support of the region’s Workforce Development Board.



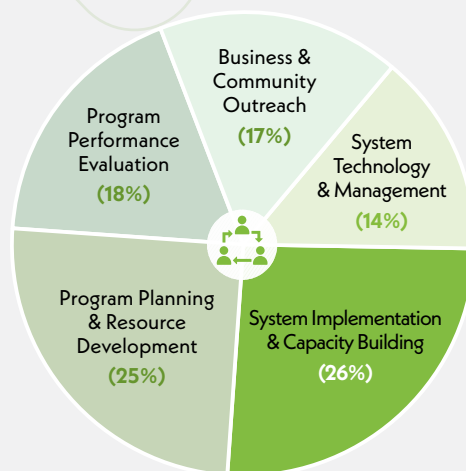
## Community Investments \$22.8M

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 back page for a list of our 2022-23 organizational investments.)



## Coordination Activities \$3.7M

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.





# Adult & Community Services Highlights

## By the numbers

- 29,088 people engaged with the public workforce system in PY 22, a significant increase from the previous year. There were 21,610 walk-in visits for in-person services across the Workforce Portland Metro locations.
- 9,010 logins were made to MyWorkSource to access career & employment tools.
- 4,507 workshop enrollments
- 52,140 personalized career-counseling sessions
- 1,344 people received a National Career Readiness Certificate

- 1,373 occupational skills trainings:

**30%** were low-income or public-assistance recipients

**35%** were people of color; **6%** were homeless or housing insecure

**8%** had prior justice-system involvement

- 11,785 people were placed in employment in the quarter after completing WorkSource services
- 1,541 highly barriered residents received case-management support from partner agencies through the Economic Opportunity Programs to help them succeed in training programs and job searches. The four Economic Opportunity Programs (EOP) serve low-income resident of the City of Portland (Portland EOP), Washington County (Wash Co EOP), residents that are at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County (A Home For Everyone – AHFE EOP), and customers with justice involvement (Department of Community Justice – DCJ EOP):

**62%** of served identified as People of Color

**40%** of served have prior justice involvement

**24%** of participants were employed when joining the program

**77%** of participants were employed when leaving the program

**\$19.89/**per hour = average wage at the end of the program



## Occupational Training & Child Care Program

Families in poverty with young children often cannot participate in career training because of the cost of child care. In 2018, Worksystems started the Occupational Training and Child Care (OTCC) program to help cover the costs of child care while participants are attending training. In addition to offering support service payments, Worksystems funds a Family Navigator position in our local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies to work with families to find quality child care that fits their needs.

In Program Year 22, OTCC was primarily grant-funded. The program enrolled 49 participants in PY 22; 33 of those participants started occupational skills training during the program year, with the others scheduled to start in the fall of PY 23. Twenty-nine families received child care assistance in PY 22, with a total of \$199,713 paid to approved child care providers in the Portland Metro region.

Despite these investments, the child care system in our region still poses difficulties for low-income families. Some are not able to find care that enables them to attend training or go to work, and families are often not sure how to afford child care once OTCC support ends. Worksystems expanded efforts systemwide in PY 22 to not only help families with costs, but to work with government agencies and care providers to expand the child care workforce.

## Inverness Jail Express Center

Through a partnership with the Multnomah County Sheriff's office, SE Works, the Oregon Employment Dept., and Worksystems, a new WorkSource Express Center was established in the Inverness Jail. WorkSource staff are onsite at the jail several days a week providing pre-release workforce development services. During PY 22, 88 adults were enrolled in WorkSource and received services while in custody.

# Adult & Community Services Highlights



The Driving Diversity program graduated its first Washington Co. cohort this summer.

## Rapid Re-Careering Programs

Worksystems continued to coordinate and expand several rapid re-careering programs during PY 22. These programs were developed in partnership with employers to quickly move customers into post-training employment. Programs include Driving Diversity, for waste and recycling driver training; BankWork\$ training for careers in banking; CareerWork\$ Medical training for medical office careers; and CompTIA A+ Certification for entry-level IT support specialists.

Driving Diversity is helping to diversify the ranks of garbage and recycling drivers in the metro area. Started in Multnomah County, the program held its inaugural Washington County course in the spring of 2023, and graduated its first Washington County cohort in the summer.



The first all-woman cohort to finish the Quick Start program is helping to add much-needed gender diversity to the region's semiconductor workforce.

## Success Story – Driving Diversity

This customer worked many years at Safeway as a lead and spent a few years being a technician at Jiffy Lube. He was tired of living paycheck-to-paycheck and heard about the Driving Diversity program through Easter Seals. He learned that the garbage and recycling industry is a career that offers a lot of career growth, which he was seeking. After completing the Driving Diversity program and becoming job ready in 12 weeks, he found employment with the company that was his top choice. He couldn't be more thrilled at this opportunity, and is grateful to have come upon the Driving Diversity program.

- Prosperity 10,000 (P10K) characteristics – Homeless/housing insecure, low income, over 55 years of age
- Employment Outcome – Pride Disposal, Truck Driver, \$27.47/hr, FT, full benefits

Quick Start to Semiconductor is a new program that launched in October 2022. Developed in partnership with Intel, Portland Community College, WorkSource Portland Metro, and the City of Hillsboro, the program prepares trainees for careers in the semiconductor industry. Since its inception, the program has trained over 150 students, with 86 graduates finding employment with Intel or other semiconductor manufacturers. Twelve courses will be held in Program Year 2023, serving 180 workers. Quick Start marked a milestone this spring with the graduation of its first all-woman cohort.

## Success Story – Quick Start

“JH” had planned on going into education as an elementary teacher but realized that wasn't going to be the best fit. A friend recommended the Quick Start training. JH brushed off the program, thinking it would be too difficult because it was going to be too technical and too far out of their area of experience. JH worked in retail and in the food service industry and was desperate to find a sustainable career path that was also enjoyable, so they joined the May 2023 training cohort. They shared that the program was beautifully designed and the program's leaders make constant improvements to materials, supplies, and exposure to the industry.

This program has opened a whole new world of opportunity for JH and for their family. JH feels the program is an excellent way to get more women into fabrication positions.

- P10K characteristics – Female, Unemployed, SNAP recipient
- Employment Outcome – Intel, Semiconductor Processor, FT, \$21/hr, full benefits

# Future Ready Oregon/Prosperity 10,000 Overview

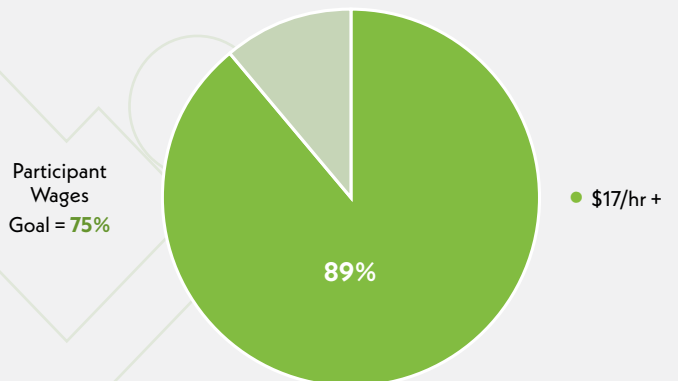
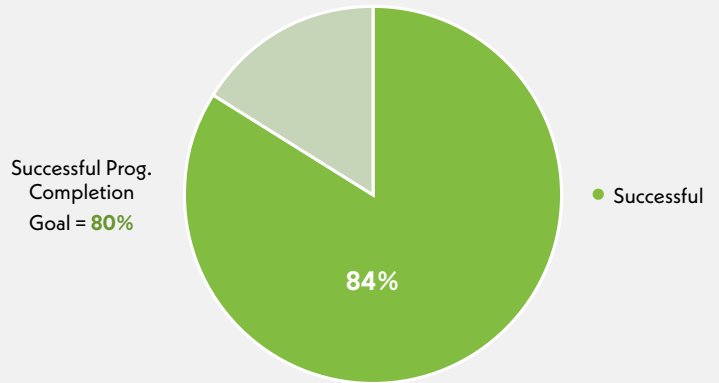
When the Future Ready Oregon (FRO) initiative was passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2022, it represented a game-changing, generational investment in workforce development, training, and education. FRO pledged more than \$200 million to help Oregonians access and receive the training, education, and support they need to transition into living-wage careers – including strategic, targeted investments to advance opportunities for people from historically underserved communities: people of color, LGBTQIA+ Oregonians, and rural Oregonians.

At the close of Program Year 21, Worksystems was the recipient of approximately \$10.1 million in support from the first tranche of FRO’s “Prosperity 10,000” (P10K) funding, allocated to expand access to registered pre-apprenticeship programs, rapid re-careering programs, subsidized work experience, community-based career coaching services, and more. Worksystems spent PY 22 putting these funds to work, bolstering existing programs with a proven track record of success in order to help maximize the impact of FRO/P10K dollars. Participants completed their training at a rate of 91 percent. (For examples of how our FRO/P10K investments are helping people in the community, see “Driving Diversity” and “Quick Start” on Page 7).

Looking ahead, Worksystems will continue to use FRO/P10K funds to build capacity in these proven investments, as well as explore ways to leverage recent historic public investments in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and public infrastructure. By the time FRO sunsets at the end of 2026, we will have served approximately 2,500 Oregonians.

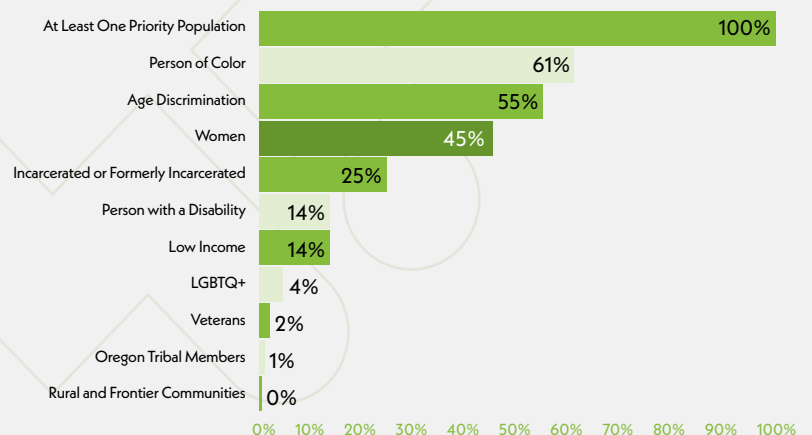
This section contains a snapshot of how we put FRO/P10K funds to work in our community during PY 22.

## Portland Metro Performance Outcomes



\* Employment rate of those not employed at the time of P10k Registration.

## Priority Populations Served (All Providers)



## Total Participants Employed

<b>Total Participants Employed</b>	299
<b>Full Time Employed</b>	228
<b>Average Hourly Wage</b>	\$22.80





## JEDI Overview

Program Year 22 saw Worksystems take significant strides forward in our commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), with the hiring of our first full-time JEDI & Human Resources Manager, and the publication of our first comprehensive JEDI Strategic Plan. As an organization, we are transitioning from our initial, exploratory steps toward embracing JEDI values to a more tangible state where we are embedding these values throughout our work, internalizing them into how we interact with ourselves and our community, and laying out a strategic path forward.



Cynthia Chand-Hopkins,  
Worksystems' first JEDI/HR Manager!

**Worksystems has progressed in three key areas in our JEDI journey this year:**

### Program Design

- Our JEDI Strategic Plan was approved by our Board in July 2023. This collective effort outlines our commitment to JEDI and our strategic approach for ensuring that the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded across all internal and external initiatives. The plan was drafted by our internal JEDI Council with guidance from Diamond Strategies, LLC.
- The JEDI Council identified key internal priorities related to JEDI, and through three committees -- Employee Life Cycle, Culture, and Communications -- will continue to act in an advisory capacity to ensure that internal processes are updated and materials for tracking JEDI progress are created.

### Company-Wide Education

- Worksystems continued our partnership with Diamond Strategies, LLC for a curated curriculum that helped our staff gain deeper understanding on the history of topics such as the labor movement, white supremacy, and the history of racism in Portland and beyond. The company also gained practical skills and tools through related training sessions on Implicit Bias, Community Building, and De-escalation.

### Program Implementation

- We hired a full-time JEDI & HR Manager to oversee the implementation of our JEDI Strategic Plan. The implementation of internal JEDI initiatives began in June 2023 with the creation of our first Culture Strategy, as well as updates to personnel policies related to recruitment and offboarding. Internal work will continue in this upcoming plan year with the application of equity-centered approaches to other aspects of our HR policies. The launch of our external JEDI strategy is also slotted for Program Year 2023.

We would like to emphasize that our JEDI work doesn't end; it is an ongoing process of shedding the habits and legacies of history and moving toward becoming a truly warm, welcoming, and inclusive agency. We undertake this work joyously, and in the hope that we can help manifest JEDI values not just within our organization, but in the communities we serve.



# Business Services Highlights



## NextGen Sector Partnership in Advanced Manufacturing

As a member of the Columbia Willamette Workforce Collaborative (CWWC) – along with our counterpart workforce development boards in the region, Clackamas Workforce Partnership and Workforce Southwest Washington -- Worksystems is working to implement the nationally recognized NextGen Partnership model in our target sector of Advanced Manufacturing. The model is an approach proven to break down silos and develop an inclusive table of voices and important priorities.

The foundation of a business-led NextGen Sector Partnership was laid this past year, and the steering committee is planning a fall 2023 launch for the new initiative. Participating businesses are enthusiastic about the partnership, and hopes are high that it will grow to become a successful means to rally local workforce resources in a manner more aligned and synchronous to the needs of businesses.

The team assembled to launch the partnership includes a broad cross-section of partners from both the public and private sectors, including academia, chambers of commerce, port authorities, industry associations, economic development agencies, state government, public-private partnerships, and privately held businesses. We are excited to be shepherding this process with our partners.

## Solar Training Grant

Worksystems' Clean Energy initiatives received a big boost in PY 22. In partnership with the National Electrical Contractors Association – Oregon-Columbia Chapter/International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48 (NECA-IBEW) Training Center and the Oregon Solar Energy Education Fund (OSEEF), Worksystems was awarded \$1 million in funding from the [U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office \(SETO\)](#) to help train and educate people for jobs in the emerging solar installation industry. This award will create training and placement resources for diverse jobseekers to enter quality jobs in solar installation and related occupations, including union electrical careers, across the Portland metro region.

The funds will leverage NECA-IBEW's technical expertise, training capacity, and state-of-the-art facilities and OSEEF's solar apprenticeship program to offer a variety of accessible onramps to high-quality careers, such as pre-apprenticeship programs, registered apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities. Combined with Worksystems' culturally specific career coaching network, these funds will help to equitably engage and prepare diverse local jobseekers for living-wage careers in an industry that is essential to ushering in a green-energy revolution, and which is [expected to grow significantly](#) over the next decade.







## Construction Career Pathways Funder Collaborative

Program Year 22 saw the Construction Career Pathways Funder Collaborative make significant progress toward breaking down the historic barriers that have prevented members of underrepresented communities from finding employment in the construction sector. The Collaborative invests in activities that directly support increasing the racial and gender diversity of the regional construction trades workforce.

With an unprecedented building schedule in the public capital projects pipeline, now is the time to address these barriers, increase the labor supply at the regional level, and transform the industry to advance equitable prosperity.

Through a collective impact model, the Construction Career Pathways Funder Collaborative coordinates workforce investments and includes large public agencies and relevant industry stakeholders to address the ongoing barriers to diversity and increasing the labor supply in the regional construction workforce. In addition to Worksystems, current investors include Multnomah County, the City of Portland, Washington County, Metro, the U.S. Dept. of Labor, and TriMet. Other members include Portland Community College, the state Bureau of Labor and Industries, and Prosper Portland.



### The Collaborative is committed to:

- Increasing the racial, cultural, and gender diversity of the construction workforce
- Helping the construction workforce to be skilled, sustainable, and sufficient to meet the needs of the community
- Growing opportunities to access high-paying high-quality jobs
- Serving as a community of practice to help inform regional efforts

This year the Collaborative has committed more than \$3.5 million to these efforts, which will help to reach out to, train, and retain more than 500 diverse jobseekers in the region. The Collaborative is a part of Metro's [Construction Career Pathways policy framework](#) and toolkit, which outlines seven critical strategies to provide reliable career pathways for women and BIPOC people.



## Youth Programs By the Numbers

Total Youth Served	1,378
Latino a/x	22.5%
Alaska Native or American Indian	2%
Asian	10.2%
Black or African American	28.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%
White	32.4%
More than 1 Race	11.3%
Not Disclosed	14.8%

## Youth Job Fair

The 5th Annual Portland Youth Job Fair was held at the Oregon Convention Center in April 2023. More than 45 local and regional employers turned out to interact with the nearly 750 youth in attendance. In addition to learning about job opportunities, youth were able to get information about community resources like records expungement or high school completion, leave with a new and improved resume, and practice interviewing with Job Fair volunteers. It was a great event, with over 85 percent of employers saying would return for next year's fair.

## Success Story – PDX Youth@Work Participant

Participant "SE" completed both a Learning Opportunity and a work experience this year. She came to the program while she was living on the streets after fleeing domestic violence. She opted for a Learning Opportunity to explore her interests through online material. She found her own trainings on advanced computing languages and delved into them, hoping to build on her previous knowledge from school and to prepare for going back to complete her degree.

During this time, SE connected with a college counselor at our community partner, New Avenues for Youth, who was able to guide her through the financial aid and application process for Portland Community College. She progressed to a work experience with the City of Portland working as a mechanic for their fleet vehicles. She shared that the knowledge she gained during her internship directly helped her complete her final project at PCC, where she is now enrolled and maintaining an A average. She also secured housing through New Avenues for Youth.





## Youth Programs Highlights

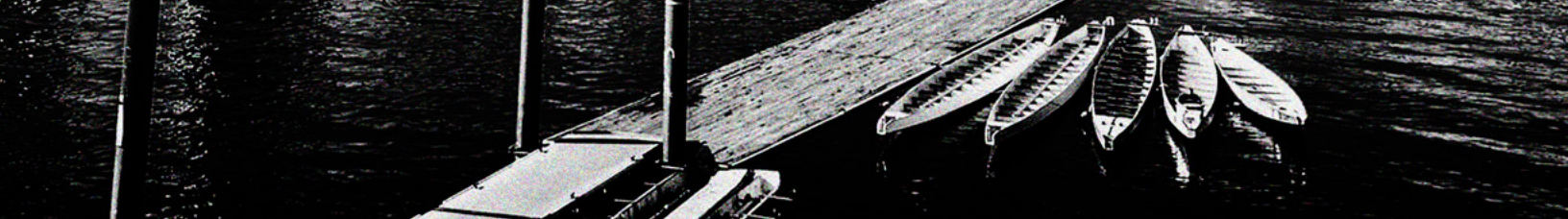
Worksystems funds a variety of youth- and young adult-focused programming, the goal of which is to prepare youth for a lifetime of success in the workforce. The investments include NextGen, a comprehensive career coaching program oriented toward 16- to 24-year-olds who are disengaged from both school and work; as well as those youth who have re-engaged in their secondary education but are at high risk of dropping out. Coaching services -- in areas such as career planning, leadership development, financial literacy, job-search placement assistance, and more -- are delivered by five community-based organizations. NextGen is co-funded in the City of Portland through Prosper Portland.

NextGen PY 22 Performance	Goal	Actual
Placement 2nd Quarter after Exit	60.9%	70.71%
Placement 4th Quarter after Exit	64.6%	62.45%
Measurable Skills Gains	78.7%	71.62%
Credential Attainment	60.1%	87.68%

### Success Story – NextGen Participant

*“EF” was fleeing a relationship fraught with domestic violence, and wanted to get back into school. She is a first-time mom trying to push herself to make better decisions. EH heard about NextGen through Portland Community College’s STEPS for Success program. After entering NextGen, she joined a construction apprenticeship. In her words, “NextGen helped me so much in getting out of my head and not rushing or wanting instant gratification all the time. I learned that everything is a process and takes time. And I learned to advocate for myself better and set boundaries. Now I’m in training and I love it. ... I am holding myself accountable and know that no one else is going to do this for me, that I have to do it for myself.”*

Other areas of youth investment include PDX Youth@Work, a work-experience program that runs during the school year; SummerWorks, its summertime equivalent; and Learn & Earn, a year-round skill-building and learning option for younger participants. All three programs help young people to earn a paycheck while they learn about workplace expectations and dynamics, build their skills, and get an up-close look at a range of industry sectors.



# Quality Jobs Initiative

Quality Jobs serve as the foundation for an equitable economy. In 2021, Worksystems, Clackamas Workforce Partnership, and Workforce Southwest Washington – the three local workforce development boards that make up the Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative (CWWC) -- launched the Quality Jobs (QJ) Initiative and created the Quality Jobs Framework, which includes strategies and metrics that businesses, workforce boards, and other actors can adopt to advance QJ across our region. Worksystems' Board adopted the framework in July 2022.

**The Framework identifies six Quality Jobs Standards, each of which helps contribute to a healthy and equitable conditions and a rewarding and satisfying job experience:**

In Program Year 22, Worksystems formed an internal team to operationalize the Framework into our current practices and policies. The team worked to execute current-year priorities and develop a one-year work plan for PY 23. Here are some of the QJ team's notable accomplishments in PY 22:

- The QJ team developed a multi-year strategy to incorporate the goals and objectives of the initiative into our contracts and policies.
- In partnership with the Workforce Talent Development Board (WTDB), Worksystems participated in the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Job Quality Academy. Staff attended the first of two summits and identified statewide objectives including adopting the QJ Initiative across the state.
- The Business Services team developed a workplan to achieve QJ's annual objectives of 1) Integrating the QJ Framework into all work; and 2) Aligning program supply and industry demand. In PY 22, Worksystems invested in a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) that would allow us to track employer engagement and progress in QJ strategies.
- We updated our on-the-job training program with relevant QJ characteristics and requirements to better direct public investments to employers who are advancing QJ in our region.

## The Quality Jobs Framework

	<p><b>Self-Sufficiency Wages</b></p>	<p>A quality job provides sufficient income to afford a decent standard of living. For example, jobs that offer pay consistent with established published self-sufficiency standards that consider family composition and cost of living.</p>
	<p><b>Safe Working Conditions/ Worker Engagement</b></p>	<p>A quality job offers employees dignity and respect and welcomes engagement in workplace operations. For example, jobs that are subject to anti-discrimination and anti-discrimination policies and provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.</p>
	<p><b>Predictable Hours</b></p>	<p>A quality job offers employees predictability on the number of hours they are offered per week to minimize hardship on employees and their families.</p>
	<p><b>Comprehensive Benefits</b></p>	<p>A quality job provides basic benefits that increase economic security, improve health and overall well-being. Quality jobs include healthcare, childcare, transportation, wellness programs, and access to retirement savings programs, among other supports.</p>
	<p><b>Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices</b></p>	<p>A quality job offers transparent and accessible hiring and onboarding practices to ensure that employer and employee are set for success.</p>
	<p><b>Training and Advancement Opportunities</b></p>	<p>A quality job provides opportunities to build skills and access new roles and responsibilities in a workplace. For example, quality jobs offer internal pathways to support career progression, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities.</p>





## Looking Forward

Oregon's unemployment rate has dropped to 3.4 percent, exacerbating the labor market shortages affecting our region. This means ongoing challenges and opportunities in the arena of workforce development.

Worker shortages translate to shortages of people pursuing training and employment services. As a result, our programs are struggling to recruit job seekers and are operating at low levels of enrollment. But with employers more willing than ever to hire non-traditional populations into great careers, participating in our programs in these times of record-low unemployment can be life-changing. We'll need innovative and intensive strategies to recruit people into our programs.

The historically low rate of unemployment is also affecting the workforces at our service delivery partners, resulting in impacts on our programs where unfilled jobs and high turnover can result in setbacks in program implementation. Though it's not a traditional area of focus for us, program staffing is a workforce issue that impacts the job seekers we serve, and we'll need to collaborate with our service-providing partners to help them address this challenge.

In the upcoming year we're launching programming in new and different industry sectors where quality jobs are being created by federal, state, and local public investments.

At the federal level, the CHIPS Act seeks to rebuild our domestic semiconductor manufacturing industry through multi-billion-dollar investments in infrastructure, research and development, and workforce training. This will generate great careers and high employment growth in semiconductor manufacturing for the foreseeable future.

At the state and local levels, too, new public investments are driving employment growth that will persist for the foreseeable future and

are of great importance to our community. Worker shortages in behavioral health and addiction recovery are resulting in a lack of treatment services during our community's time of greatest need of those services.

These occupations have proven to be a good match for people in our anti-poverty workforce programs who have overcome joblessness, homelessness, incarceration, and other comorbidities of addiction and want to help others on the path to recovery. Oregon Measure 110 – the Drug Addiction Treatment and Recovery Act -- establishes a system of recovery networks that will drive employment in this area for many years to come.

Outside of our traditional target sectors, we are currently launching partnerships and programming to respond to employment driven by major public initiatives in the areas of clean energy through the Portland Clean Energy Fund; childcare and early learning careers through Preschool for All; and homeless and housing services through the Metro Supportive Housing Services Bond.

In addition to these changes in industry sectors, we need to acknowledge that the way in which people work is changing. A third of Americans are now working remotely for some portion of their workweek and policymakers and industry leaders are proactively managing this change.

However, lower-skilled workers, who comprise a majority of the people in our programs, are experiencing changes that are equally impactful but don't garner the same attention. More than a third of lower-skilled adults are working in the growing "gig economy" rather than having a regular job. Proactively managing this change will enable policymakers, employers, and workforce development partners to improve conditions for workers in this growing sector. It will also enable us to direct work opportunities driven by public investments to support priorities such as those for people within the homeless continuum of care and people recovering from addiction.

These are unprecedented times for the labor market in our region. With the generational investments in infrastructure and workforce training mentioned above, the upcoming year brings abundant opportunities to strive for a workforce development system that is both proactive and responsive to changing conditions.



# Worksystems invested in the following organizations during 2022-2023

- Friends of Noise
- Bricks Need Mortar
- Central City Concern
- Centro Cultural de Washington County
- Community Action Organization
- Constructing Hope
- The Contingent
- Our Just Future
- Impact NW
- Interstate Trucking Academy, Inc.
- IRCO
- Labor's Community Service Agency, Inc.
- Latino Network
- Mt. Hood Community College
- Native American Youth & Family Center
- NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center
- New Avenues for Youth, Inc.
- OMEP, Inc.
- Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.
- P.O.I.C.
- Portland Community College
- Portland YouthBuilders
- SE Works
- Urban League of Portland

Thanks to all of our great partners!



## Worksystems

1618 SW First Avenue, Suite 450

Portland OR 97201

503.478.7300

[www.worksystems.org](http://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.