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## Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2026

### Actions Taken:

- Approval of November 5, 2025 Quality Assurance Committee meeting minutes
- Approval of RFP materials to be utilized for One Stop System Operator procurement

### I. Call to Order:

The meeting was brought to order at 9:37 am by Lori Province.

### II. Minutes:

Review and Approval of November 5, 2025 Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Minutes. **Mark Vorobik moved to approve, Jessica seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.** Approved NWC committee and board minutes are available on the Council's website [www.nwboard.org](http://www.nwboard.org).

### III. Board Business

#### A. Oversight of System Quality

##### a. Northwest Workforce Council Performance Reporting PY25 Q2

Polly Carpenter, NWC staff, provided an update on performance metrics, program enrollments and expenditures. She explained that Youth enrollment numbers continue to reflect a high carryover from the previous program year and noted that the figures are expected to level out by the end of the current program year. She then reviewed expenditures across all three funding streams and shared that Youth spending trends mirror the enrollment carryover.

During discussion of Measurable Skill Gains, Jessica Barr inquired about maintaining required performance levels. Scott explained that first quarter reporting can be challenging, as schools are just returning from summer break and progress reports are typically not issued until later in the year. He noted that attainment of a high school diploma contributes positively to the measure and stated that he actively follows up with education partners to obtain needed documentation. As this is a cumulative metric, it is expected to increase of the course of the year and meet target by program year end. Polly concluded that the team is being deliberate with enrollments and spending, and that program operations are progressing as planned.

##### b. One Stop System Operator PY25 Q2 Report

Lori referred members to the report included in their meeting materials and provided a second-quarter update on One-Stop system operations. She highlighted ongoing coordination efforts supporting workforce services across the region under the guidance and oversight of the Northwest Workforce Council. She summarized continued employer engagement in training and hiring support programs, along with feedback highlighting the need for streamlined system navigation and strengthened outreach. Lori also reviewed progress on workplan actions in response to certification, which focused on

improving service delivery, partnership alignment, and customer experience, and noted preparation for upcoming revisions to required partner agreements to support continued coordination and funding alignment. Overall, the update reflected ongoing collaboration across the NW region's WorkSource Centers through hiring events, targeted outreach, and expanded services for employers and job seekers.

**c. Business Focus Group**

Lori referred members to the 2025 Business Focus Group report included in their meeting materials and provided a brief summary of key findings. The report highlighted employer feedback on the value of workforce services, while also identifying ongoing challenges related to system navigation and program awareness. Employers expressed appreciation for training and wage reimbursement programs but noted concerns regarding program complexity, unclear roles among partners, and the need for updated job-matching tools.

Lori reviewed comparisons between current and prior feedback to demonstrate measurable progress in employer engagement and responsiveness. She also outlined continued opportunities to strengthen training alignment and talent pipeline development, and referenced the report's actionable recommendations aimed at improving employer access, communication, and overall workforce program effectiveness across the region.

**d. Customer Satisfaction Metrics (PY25 Q2)**

Lori shared that one method the Northwest utilizes to gather feedback from job seekers is through its customer satisfaction survey. The survey is available in both hard copy and electronic formats in all WorkSource Centers, and links are included in direct service staff's outgoing email communications to ensure broad accessibility.

She noted that response rates remain steady, and feedback continues to reflect positive customer experiences across the region, particularly in areas such as staff professionalism, responsiveness, and helpfulness. Lori emphasized that survey results are reviewed regularly by staff and leadership to identify trends, address concerns, and inform continuous improvement efforts. Feedback is used to refine customer flow processes, enhance communication strategies, and support training and professional development to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery throughout the system.

**e. DOL Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant**

Scott provided an overview of the Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant awarded to the Northwest Workforce Council in response to the December 2025 flooding in Whatcom and Skagit counties. He described the ongoing long-term recovery needs in both counties and noted that local governments and community partners continue to experience capacity challenges as recovery efforts transition beyond the immediate emergency phase. Funding under this grant is specifically available to support recovery efforts in Whatcom and Skagit counties, and Northwest was one of only three Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) statewide to receive funding through this initiative.

The Council received just over \$300,000 in initial Emergency Disaster Recovery Employment funding as part of a statewide federal response, with the potential for

additional funding in a second phase that could position Northwest for up to approximately \$2 million more, depending on demonstrated need and performance.

Scott then summarized the proposed scope of work, which will provide temporary employment opportunities for dislocated and long-term unemployed workers while delivering surge staffing support to recovery efforts. Priority activities will include coordination support, follow-up on damage assessments, stabilization and infrastructure assistance, rebuilding support for public and nonprofit facilities, and outreach to support local business recovery. Implementation will align with federal Dislocated Worker Grant requirements and applicable guidance to ensure coordination, oversight, and compliance.

Scott concluded by outlining the Council's implementation strategy, including collaboration with emergency management agencies, recovery task forces, municipalities, tribes, and community partners; targeted recruitment of eligible participants; establishment of compliant worksites with clear supervision and safety protocols; adaptive deployment based on evolving recovery needs; and ongoing monitoring and reporting. He emphasized that the grant both supports regional recovery efforts and advances the Council's mission to serve workers and communities.

## **B. Accessibility & Compliance**

### **a. Annual Accessibility Assessment**

#### **i. Updates on ADA compliance and improvement**

Liz provided an update on the Island Center lease renewal, noting that revised language will be included in the agreement to ensure continued compliance with federal Equal Opportunity (EO) and accessibility requirements. She explained that should the landlord undertake any restroom remodeling, the facilities would be required to be brought into full compliance with EO and ADA accessibility standards, including any necessary fixture relocations and related modifications. This update reflects guidance from the State EO team and reinforces the Council's commitment to maintaining accessible and compliant facilities for all individuals.

### **b. YouthWorx: NWC 6-week Enhanced Work Skills Training**

Scott highlighted information included in the meeting materials regarding the YouthWorx enhanced work skills training program. He explained that the curriculum was developed by Council staff with guidance from NWC's Business Engagement Strategies Task Force, a Board task force formed by the Workforce Solutions Committee. The six-week program was generated in direct response to employer feedback, which consistently indicated that many new employees lack the foundational soft skills necessary to be successful in today's work environments. As a result, YouthWorx focuses intentionally on strengthening essential workplace skills for young adults who may need additional preparation for employment.

YouthWorx is designed to build work readiness skills such as teamwork, problem solving, communication, professionalism, and financial literacy, and will serve as a pre-requisite or co-requisite for young adults participating in WIOA Title I-B funded work experiences, paid internships, or pre-apprenticeships.

Scott noted that weekly in-person sessions will be delivered at WorkSource Centers by trained Council staff, including former educators involved in curriculum development, and that the program will also include an online component using Pathful Explore to support career exploration and labor market awareness. He stated that the goal of YouthWorx is to help young adults develop the skills needed not only to obtain employment, but to thrive in the workplace, with successful completion and paid work experience expected to improve participant outcomes and support positive program exits.

### **C. Monitoring & Evaluation**

#### **a. Internal PY25 Q2 Program Monitoring**

Lori shared that the Internal PY25 Q2 program monitoring is scheduled to occur in early March. She noted that a report will be provided at the conclusion of the review to summarize findings and any resulting recommendations.

#### **b. Annual PY24 Equal Opportunity Monitoring conducted August 19-20, 2024**

Liz shared an update on the State-Level Equal Opportunity Office's annual WIOA compliance review of the Northwest Workforce Council, conducted in 2024, which included document audits, interviews, and facility walkthroughs at WorkSource Island and the San Juan Career Center. The review identified minor updates related to contract assurance language and policy links, which have since been corrected, and recognized the Council's outreach and partnerships, including work with local tribes and services for the Latine community, along with strong customer engagement for the EcSA program, as examples of effective ongoing EO compliance. All recommended updates for the San Juan location have been completed, and physical accessibility updates at the Island facility are being addressed through the current lease renewal; the state's monitoring report remains in draft form, with a final report to be provided once remaining items are confirmed.

#### **c. Annual PY24 Equal Opportunity Monitoring Conducted onsite October 14-16, 2025**

Liz shared an update on the annual State Equal Opportunity (EO) visit conducted October 14–16, 2025, during which the review team commended the Council's commitment to ensuring equal access to WorkSource services. The visit included completion of required EO Officer training, hands-on monitoring at WorkSource Whatcom, an ADA accessibility walkthrough, staff and customer interviews, and a service delivery review with NWC's program manager.

She noted that the 2025 internal EO monitoring currently underway at all local Centers will address any outstanding compliance matters, including planned accessibility updates at the Island facility through the lease renewal process. Liz emphasized that the State's letter reflects the Council's proactive and continuous approach to EO compliance, as well as its strong and collaborative partnership with the State EO office.

### **D. Procurement & Provider Oversight**

#### **a. One Stop System Operator RFP Material Review**

As discussed last year, under WIOA and 20 CFR 678.605, the Council is required to competitively procure the One-Stop System Operator at least every four years. To meet this requirement, a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released in late March

2026. Staff previously reviewed the statutory requirements and outlined how compliance has been maintained through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Regional Strategic Plan, and the current OSSO contract. A draft RFP has now been prepared for Committee review prior to release.

Committee members received the materials in the meeting mailout, and staff encouraged feedback or questions at this stage to ensure scope alignment and clarity before the procurement process formally begins.

**Tammie O’Dell motioned to approve the RFP materials for the One Stop System Operator procurement process, and recommended Executive Committee approval, Mark Vorobik seconded, the motion passed unanimously.**

**E. Strategic Alignment & Planning**

**a. 2024-2028 Regional Strategic Plan – 2026 Update**

**i. WIN 0160: One-Year Extension of Local Plan Modification**

**ii. Due date June 30, 2027**

Marissa shared updates regarding state guidance and Direct Service Provider (DSP) authority. She noted that the state released Workforce Information Notice (WIN) 0160, extending the deadline for the 2024–2028 Regional Strategic Plan Update by one year, moving the submission date from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027, to allow time for updated state guidance and alignment with the TAP plan. She also reported that the State Workforce Board formally acknowledged the Council’s December 8, 2025 request to extend its DSP authority through June 30, 2028 (as originally requested, through the length of NWC’s local strategic plan). The request is scheduled for consideration at the April 3, 2026 State Workforce Board meeting. State staff intend to provide context and a recommendation to approve, with no expected additional administrative requirements at this time based on the Council’s recent performance review.

Marissa further shared that, based on recent discussions in the joint ESD/WWA Procurement Policy Workgroup, the state is exploring a broader extension framework for DSP authority, potentially aligning approvals with revised local planning cycles and transitioning toward a performance-based model for high-performing boards. She noted that, if adopted, this approach could provide greater stability, reinforce local control, reduce administrative duplication, and address prior concerns regarding procurement requirements. Marissa indicated she will attend the April State Workforce Board meeting to receive additional information and policy direction firsthand.

**Old Business** – None

**New Business** – None

**Public Comment** – None

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned Lori Province, at 10:29 AM.

**Attendance:**

**Board Members:** Lori Province, Mark Vorobik, Tammie O’Dell, Jessica Barr

**Staff:** Marissa Cahill, Scott Iddings, Liz Vaughn, Polly Carpenter