

Northwest Workforce Council Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2026

Action Taken:

- Approval of the Consent Agenda:
 - Approval of the March 18, 2026 Full Council Meeting Minutes
 - Executive Committee Action on behalf of the Full Council
 - Selection of the One Stop System Operator
 - 2026-2029 Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement
- Approval of NWC's PY 2026 Preliminary Operating Budget

Note: All approved Council and Committee minutes can be found on the Council's website: www.nwboard.org.

I. Call to Order

Chair Mark Vorobik called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

II. Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes of March 18, 2026, Full Council Meeting
- B. Executive Committee Action on behalf of the Full Council
 - Selection of the One Stop System Operator
 - 2026-2029 Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement

The Consent Agenda included the March 18, 2026 Full Council Meeting Minutes and actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Full Council at its June 10, 2026 meeting.

The Executive Committee actions included selection of Baldoz Professional Services as the Northwest Workforce Council's One-Stop System Operator following review of two proposals received through the competitive procurement process, and approval/recommendation of the 2026–2029 Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (MOU/IFA).

Lori Province moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, Jessica Barr seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. NWC Committee Reports

Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Report (05/20/26)

Ensures quality program operations and the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system of the WDC. The committee evaluates program goals, performance measures, the extent to which the Centers and programs meet quality standards, and the implementation of new program components.

Lori Province reported that the Quality Assurance Committee met May 20, 2026. The Committee reviewed the One-Stop System Operator procurement process and recommendation, recent state monitoring activities,

infrastructure funding methodology, customer satisfaction, compliance, and performance monitoring activities.

Workforce Solutions Committee Meeting Report (05/20/26)

Convenes leaders of business and industry across the region to organize and drive economic and workforce development. Directs and manages activities that provide and expand services to youth and other individuals with barriers to employment as defined in WIOA Section 3(24).

Scott Iddings shared highlights from the most recent Workforce Solutions Committee meeting.

Scott Iddings reported that the Workforce Solutions Committee met May 20, 2026 and focused on employer engagement, labor market intelligence, business services coordination, and workforce development strategies. Members also received updates regarding Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant activities, Rapid Response and layoff aversion efforts, YouthWorx training cohorts, and apprenticeship and career pathway development.

- **YouthWorx: NWC 6-week Enhanced Work Skills Training**

Scott highlighted YouthWorx as a key workforce development initiative developed in response to recommendations from the Business Engagement Strategy Task Force and WorkSource Business Focus Group, both of which identified a need for stronger essential and workplace skills training for young adults.

Lucy Mueller, Workforce Coordinator, presented an overview of the six-week hybrid workforce readiness program, which combines classroom instruction, online learning, and paid work experience internships to strengthen professionalism, communication, career readiness, and other employability skills.

Lucy reported that the first YouthWorx cohort graduated six participants, all of whom secured internships and received positive feedback from supervisors. A second cohort at Ferndale High School graduated ten participants who were interviewing for internship placements. Additional cohorts had recently launched in Skagit and Island counties, demonstrating continued expansion of the program throughout the region.

IV. Board Business

- A. PY 2025 Q3 Community Success Stories**

Scott highlighted the PY2025 Q2 Community Success Stories included in the meeting packet. The quarter's theme, "Building Foundations for Successful Workplaces," highlighted the impact of workforce investments on individuals, employers, and communities throughout the four-county region, including participants from the YouthWorx initiative.

- B. WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) Project Launch**

Marissa Cahill reported that the statewide WorkSource Integrated Technology project went live June 9, 2026, following more than a year of planning, development, and change-management activities. She noted her participation on the statewide steering committee and Scott Iddings' participation on the statewide advisory committee. Local super users were also identified and trained to assist staff with implementation.

Scott provided an operational update on the transition to WA Works, the new Salesforce-based workforce case management system. Initial implementation had proceeded relatively well, with technical issues being addressed by Employment Security Department deployment teams and relatively few operational workarounds required at launch. Staff were continuing to learn the new system while maintaining customer services.

The Council also received an update regarding the redesigned customer-facing WorkSourceWA.com website, which launched in conjunction with the new system.

C. Northwest Regional Labor Market – Pulse Check

Mark shared that one of the priorities identified through the strategic planning process was to periodically review whether the Council's industry focus continues to align with current labor market conditions across the region. He introduced Hart Hodges to provide a regional labor market presentation highlighting current trends, sector dynamics, and emerging opportunities and challenges across Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties.

Hart presented regional employment, wage, industry composition, and cost-of-living data to support future discussions regarding the Council's industry focus and strategic workforce priorities. He encouraged the Council to consider how key sectors are defined and whether decisions should be informed by job growth, wages, employer demand, turnover, workforce shortages, future economic trends, or a combination of factors. He also encouraged consideration of occupations and transferable skill sets that span traditional industry categories.

Discussion recognized that regional workforce challenges extend beyond training and include housing affordability, wage competitiveness, and the region's ability to attract and retain workers.

Polly Carpenter, NWC Data & Accounting Specialist, supplemented the presentation with Lightcast industry and occupational reports. She highlighted significant differences among the four counties in areas such as industry concentration, wages, employment growth, occupational concentration, competitive effects, and commuting patterns. Polly noted that some occupations, including computer and mathematical occupations, demonstrate strong wages and growth while also experiencing significant out-commuting.

Council members were encouraged to use the information as a resource for continued discussion regarding industry priorities, workforce needs, and regional economic trends. The labor market review was intended to inform, rather than conclude, future strategic discussions regarding NWC's industry and workforce priorities.

V. Chair's/Executive Committee Report

A. 2024 – 2028 NWC Strategic Plan / LWDB Certification

Marissa provided an update regarding Washington State's new Local Workforce Development Board certification requirements. The new certification policy was adopted in April 2026, and NWC completed and submitted the required certification tool to the State Workforce Board.

The State Workforce Board was scheduled to consider certification of Washington's 12 Local Workforce Development Boards at its June 26 meeting. Marissa noted that the process will be repeated in conjunction with the Council's mid-cycle strategic plan update to establish the new odd-year cadence for local strategic planning and certification activities.

B. DOL Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant - Update

Scott provided an update on Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant activities associated with the December flooding. NWC was administering approximately \$308,000 in initial Disaster Recovery funding and had established partnerships with Community Action of Skagit County, Western Washington University Small Business Development Center, the Whatcom Long Term Recovery Group, and flood-affected small businesses.

NWC had successfully begun enrolling dislocated workers under the grant and was the first of the three participating workforce areas to do so. A request for additional federal Disaster Recovery funding remained pending.

C. WIOA PY 2026: Washington State's IB Annual Allocations for 1) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Young Adult), and 2) Wagner Peyser (ESD) Programs, NWC Budget Funding Distribution, and PY 2026 Preliminary Operating Budget

Mark Vorobik referred members to the PY2026 Preliminary Operating Budget and supporting materials included in the meeting packet. He noted that the proposed budget had been reviewed by the Executive Committee, which recommended approval by the Full Council.

Marissa Cahill presented an overview of the proposed budget, including statewide and local WIOA funding allocations. She reported that Washington experienced reductions across all three WIOA Title I-B formula funding streams. NWC's combined Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula allocation is approximately \$3.07 million, representing an overall decrease from the prior program year.

Marissa also reviewed the allocation methodology, proposed expenditures, and additional funding sources supporting NWC programs and services. The PY2026 budget includes approximately \$4.62 million in planned expenditures, supported by WIOA formula funding, Economic Security for All, Community Reinvestment Program, Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant, and available carry-in funding. She highlighted continued investments in direct participant services, training, work-based learning, and supportive services, as well as planned carryover to support continuity of services. The proposed budget remains within applicable WIOA administrative and program expenditure requirements.

Lori Province moved to approve the NWC PY2026 Budget Funding Distribution and PY2026 Preliminary Operating Budget as presented. Adele Skinner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. System Oversight – Informational Items/Attachments

A. WIOA Northwest Workforce Performance Reports

As the operator for WIOA IB Programs: Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker, the NWC provides quarterly data on performance as part of system oversight.

WIOA IB Programs (Operated by NWC)

- WIOA Grant Summary YTD
- Non-WIOA Grant Summary YTD

B. Letter from the State Workforce Board: Program Year 2024 WIOA Title I-B Performance Assessment – Northwest Workforce Council

C. Monitoring Activities

1. Annual WIOA IB PY25 State Monitoring April. 6-15, 2026; Exit Meeting conducted April 22, 2026
2. WIOA IB Internal PY25 Q3 Program monitoring was conducted 5/25/26 - 5/29/2026
3. Annual PY24 Equal Opportunity Monitoring conducted August 19-20, 2024 Report

Mark directed members to the informational materials included in the meeting packet in support of the Council's ongoing program, fiscal, and system oversight responsibilities.

The Council received WIOA performance reports, WIOA and non-WIOA grant summaries, monitoring updates, the One-Stop System Operator performance review, and the State Workforce Board's PY2024 WIOA Title I-B Performance Assessment.

Mark specifically highlighted the return of the State Workforce Board's formal annual performance assessment letter after several years without one. The assessment recognized Northwest Workforce Council as one of the state's highest-performing workforce development boards. Mark acknowledged NWC staff, partners, committees, and Council members for their contributions to the region's strong performance.

Monitoring updates included the PY2025 State WIOA Title I-B monitoring conducted in April 2026, PY2025 Q3 internal program monitoring conducted May 25–29, 2026, and the final PY2024 Equal Opportunity monitoring report. The Council also received the annual One-Stop System Operator performance/monitoring review.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

Public Comment – None

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned by Chair, Mark Vorobik at 3:15 PM.

Attendance:

Board Members:

Mark Vorobik, *Business Sector, Skagit*
Adele Skinner, *Business Sector, Skagit*
Lynette Brower, *Higher Education, Skagit*
Kevin Corrigan, *Business Sector, Island*
Hart Hodges, *Business Sector, Whatcom*
Dr. James Lemerond, *Higher Education, Whatcom*
Christina Adams, *Business Sector, Whatcom*
Jessica Barr, *Public Employment, Regional*
Dave Paul, *Higher Education, Skagit*
Lori Province, *Labor, Whatcom*
Gabe Schoenfelder, *Labor, Skagit*
AJ Tokunaga, *Business Sector, San Juan*
Victoria Compton, *Econ Development, San Juan*

Local Elected Officials:

NWC Staff:

Marissa Cahill, *Executive Director*
Scott Iddings, *Workforce Programs Manager*
Polly Carpenter, *Data & Accounting Specialist*
Elena VanVoorhees, *Financial Manager*
Liz Vaughn, *Executive Administrator*
Lucy Mueller, *Workforce Coordinator*
Patrick Baldoz, *One Stop System Operator*

Guests:

Guy Ochiogrosso, *Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce*
Michael Reese, *Higher Education, Skagit County*
Jackie Rickman, *DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*