

Our mission is to develop a highly skilled workforce that creates sustained economic prosperity in Clackamas County.

Newsletter | Spring 2015



Workforce Investment Council Board Retreat

In March the Workforce Investment Council held a Board Retreat and Strategic Planning Session at the Gregory Forum at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City. Board members and council staff gathered under the direction of Executive Director, Bridget Dazey as well as contracted facilitators Lucy Houchin and Kristen Barry of Thomas P. Miller & Associates.

Board members and staff participated in working sessions which included a review of the Workforce Investment Council's existing [Strategic Plan](#) and an interactive exercise for small group discussion to further redefine the current Board Mission and Vision statements. Additionally, regional economist from the Oregon Employment Department, Dallas Fridley, provided an update on labor markets and how data can be effectively used to guide Board investments.

All items discussed throughout the retreat will be compiled by the facilitators and made available. This important information will be used in the next phase of the process in developing and writing the new Workforce Investment Council Strategic Plan under the new Workforce Investment & Opportunities Act (WIOA) which goes into effect June of 2015. The staff at Workforce Investment Council thank all Board members who were able to participate in the Board retreat for providing valuable feedback and insights. A special thanks is also offered to Joanne Truesdell at Clackamas Community College for offering the use of the Gregory Forum for the retreat.



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Success Story - Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization's Clackamas Works Program

Martin Salinas sought help from Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Clackamas Works Program located at WorkSource Clackamas in Spring of 2014. Since being laid off in 2009, Martin struggled to find

Message from the Executive Director

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."

-Alan Watts

The Workforce Investment Council is entering into the final quarter of Program Year 2014, and at the same time we are nearing the end of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). This is more than an end to a 17-year-old law that has been guiding our work since the turn of the century. It is also an opportunity to review what we have accomplished and reflect on what could be. By 2016, we will be well on our way to putting in place our new marching orders brought forth in the recently approved Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA). In addition to legislative changes, since January we have released two RFP's to serve barriered populations and workshop facilitation; attended numerous conferences and webinars; hosted the annual Board retreat; and adopted new WorkSource Oregon standards. Administratively, both our staff and Board have grown which is exciting and brings new energy and vitality to the work we do. My priority is to take full advantage of this season of change as we continue our collaborative efforts while adding new efficiencies and structures slated to strengthen workforce development in our county, region and state. Join me in a spirit of welcome anticipation as we embrace these changes and embark on this next big chapter.



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Certified Work Ready Communities Update

Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County and our partners are working together to achieve our goal of becoming a Certified Work Ready Community (CWRC.) Becoming a CWRC involves county residents demonstrating employment related skills in applied math, reading for information, and locating information by earning National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRCs.) CWRC status also depends on employers signing Letters of Support recognizing the certificate as a credential that demonstrates work-ready skills.



a decent wage and held down two jobs working part-time as a mall janitor and full-time job at an electronics recycler in order to support his family. Upon enrolling in IRCO's Clackamas Works Program, staff developed an Individual Employment Plan for him. In this plan, Martin expressed that he wanted to work at a specific well known Clackamas County manufacturing business. He knew he had the skills needed to work there due to his past grinding experience. However, Martin had difficulty with the application process.



Originally from Mexico City, Martin finished high school in Mexico and learned to speak English mostly through his first jobs in the US. Although his English speaking skills were fairly good, his writing skills, computer skills, and knowledge of the application process were not up to par with today's workforce. He did not have a resume, was not familiar with cover letter writing, and did not know how to complete online applications. With the help of his IRCO Workforce Specialist, a resume was created for Martin, as well as a cover letter detailing all of his skills. IRCO searched through images on the internet to assure the machinery that he knew how to operate was the same machinery required in the job postings he was interested in. IRCO Workforce Specialist helped him create a profile and submitted several applications for grinding and rework positions at the well know Clackamas County manufacturing business he had earlier targeted as most desirable in his job search.

In less than a month Martin was called for an interview. He passed the first interview and went to a second interview where he was offered a full-time Hand Grinder position starting at \$13.75/hr. After his offer of employment, Martin came back to IRCO in order to complete all of the new hire paperwork which was also online. IRCO guided him through the process and showed him how to complete all of the forms electronically. Eleven months later, Martin is now a Level 3 Employee. He has received three raises since employment and is making \$17.40/hr. + full benefits. In addition to Martin's success in the IRCO Clackamas Works Program, his wife, and two of his sister-in laws also became employed full-time through participation in the IRCO program.



For more information about IRCO, visit www.irco.org

We are increasing the numbers of youth and adults earning NCRCs through expansion of testing opportunities and streamlining communication and referral processes between partners. Successful outreach by Youth Program Manager, Gabby Nunley, has resulted five additional high schools beginning NCRC testing by the end of the current school year. Also, this quarter, a new testing realm for adults was established at the WorkSource Annex serving individuals who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and/or experience other barriers to employment such as legal histories. 165 employers in our county have signed letters of support for the NCRC and outreach continues to bring additional employers on board with this important initiative. We are excited about our progress and committed to achieving our goal of becoming a Certified Work-Ready Community!



For more information about the National Career Readiness Certificate and the Certified Work-Ready Community program, see workreadycommunities.org or contact Amy Black at amy.black@wicco.org.

Community Solutions Success Story

Candice was a resident of the Clackamas County Community Corrections Work Release substance abuse treatment program when she was referred to Community Solutions for Clackamas County to find employment February 2013. After updating her iMatchSkills profile with Worksource Oregon, signing up for Community Solutions' job readiness workshops, and obtaining her National Career Readiness Certificate, her short term employment goal was to work as a receptionist in a customer service role in an office. Her lifestyle goal was to graduate from her treatment program and move into transitional housing in an Oxford House, which she did in May 2013.

Candice's Community Solutions' Workforce Specialist identified a potential office job opportunity at Clackamas Compost.



Board Member Business Highlight - Garron Grounds

Ken Bartus, General Manager for Garron Grounds, has been an active Board member for Workforce Investment Council since 2001. He has played a vital role in the leadership and vision of the Board over his tenure. The Workforce Investment Council is grateful for his service to our Board and the community.

Garron Grounds Management is a locally-owned business that has been providing high quality landscape design, installation and maintenance to the Portland/ Metro area since 1983. Their mission is to provide quality customer service and care in consistent, safe, and timely manner. For more information about Garron Grounds, visit www.garrongrounds.com.



Workforce Investment Council Volunteers for Telethon Fundraiser at Oregon Public Broadcasting



Workforce Investment Council staff and partners volunteered for the fundraising drive at Oregon Public Broadcasting network. They appeared live on the air on March 5, 2015. Thank you for your service to our community!

Candice started a month long paid work experience tryout as an Office Assistant in April. She received short-term transportation, clothing and housing assistance from Community Solutions. After successfully completing assigned tasks, Candice was hired as a full-time employee in June and began learning the company's office procedures. She received a wage increase of \$2.00/hr. and received employer-paid benefits after successfully completing the new employee probationary period. Candice was promoted and given another raise two months later to oversee all office operations.

During a recent visit to the job site in March 2015, Candice expressed her appreciation for the support and encouragement she received from Community Solutions staff. She remains in charge of the office and reported that the company recently had its most profitable month. She is proud of what she has accomplished and the obstacles she has overcome. She lives independently in rural Clackamas County with her two children.

For more information on Community Solutions for Clackamas County, visit

<http://www.clackamas.us/communitysolutions/>

Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County
365 Warner Milne Road, Suite 202, Oregon City, OR 97045
Phone: (503) 657-6644
www.wicco.org