

## **SPOKANE AREA STRATEGIC PLAN FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

*(Cut from 2007-2009 plan)*

### ***Youth Services***

These descriptions represent current efforts to provide services for youth. Some of them are ongoing; others are newly initiated.

#### Education

##### *K-12 System*

Washington State curriculum standards require that teachers give attention to application of knowledge. This has resulted in some K-12 teachers being trained in and implementing contextual education in the classroom.

School reform has affected curriculum development at all grade levels. In all grades, students are learning and applying information in a more deliberate and intentional fashion. The certificate of mastery in 10<sup>th</sup> grade leaves 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades open for exploration and specialization. The K-12 curriculum is being reformed to meet standards-based requirements. One potential issue is that the federal law, No Child Left Behind, will require annual testing in math and reading starting in third grade. A principle test being used is the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The change may require schools to shift emphasis to additional testing from other areas.

Statewide initiatives, including Washington Learns and Next Washington are also influencing K-12 education. Washington Learns is Governor Christine Gregoire's initiative to examine our state's education system—from early learning to K–12 to higher education—and find ways to improve it. Next Washington is the Governor's plan for maintaining and improving the state's ability to compete globally.

Advanced Placement courses and Running Start continue to be a resource for youth wanting to get college credit while in high school. Running Start for the Trades, implemented by Governor Gregoire last year, expand post-graduation apprenticeship opportunities for high school students.

The Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS) continues to develop ongoing articulation agreements with K-12 schools. At schools where these articulations are in place, students may earn college credit for the competency-based coursework they have completed in high school. This is usually a non-transferable credit. The implementation of direct transcription will make this a more seamless process.

School systems accommodate students with cognitive and physical disabilities both through special education classes and in the regular classroom; programs such as the Skills Center and Special Education Training Resources in Vocational Exploration (STRIVE) operated by

Spokane Public Schools focus on vocational training and community experience. Many special education students remain in school until age 21; some opt to leave earlier. Thus, workforce development for young people with disabilities is almost entirely focused around schools. The Department of Social and Health Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation also maintains a liaison relationship with local educational institutions.

Educational Service District 101 (ESD 101), in addition to other organizations, provides career counseling, preventive/ intervention services for at-risk youth; basic/remedial education; employment and training opportunities including paid work experiences in public settings and private sector; and non- traditional careers for women. ESD 101 also supports the K-12 system by providing staff development for new and existing teachers, educators, and parents. Through satellite broadcasts, ESD 101 provides GED, high school re-entry, ESL and citizenship services.

Out of school youth who (1) have graduated from high school and are desirous of immediate entrance to the workforce without further technical or higher education; or (2) have dropped out of secondary education without necessary credits to graduate follow self-directed job search or engage in programs sponsored by WorkSource or its affiliates. Career Path Services provides a combination of remedial education (GED), with job training and job placement activities for individuals who are 16 through 21 years of age, who have dropped out of school. This program is funded under WIA Title I-B. High School re-entry services are available to help a young person behind in graduation credits go back to their high school after completing a re-entry program. ESD 101 and the Community Colleges of Spokane's Institute for Extended Learning also serve dropouts wanting to complete their GED.

Goodwill Industries offers the Planning Action for Youth Success (PAYS), young adult employment program. PAYS is a unique program that helps young adults ages 17-21 prepare for and attain employment in Spokane County. PAYS offers the tools to achieve higher education, progress in the workplace, gain valuable skills, and develop a career plan. In addition, PAYS provides opportunities for job seeking skills, assessments, goal setting, education assistance, paid work experience, skills training, and support services. Young adults with disabilities and/or a criminal record are encouraged to apply.

All area high schools offer career guidance. Many have a local career center which help with career and post-secondary education options for students.

### *Career and Technical Education*

The Spokane Area Professional-Technical Advisory Consortium (SAPTAC) has elected to use the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council as its General Advisory Counsel and approve the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act plans for District Career and Technical Education Directors.

School districts throughout Spokane County provide a number of Career and Technical Education Courses of study. Comprehensive high schools offer a variety of programs in the following Pathways:

**Business, Management and Operations**

Digitools  
 Business Computers/Applications  
 Finance and Accounting  
 Business Communications  
 Business Law  
 Marketing  
 Introduction to Business

**Family and Human Services**

Early Childhood Education  
 Fitness and Foods  
 Culinary Arts  
 Independent Living  
 Teaching Academy  
 Textiles and Apparel

**Manufacturing and Technology**

Auto  
 Drafting  
 Metals  
 Materials Processing  
 Photography  
 Exploring Technology  
 Sports Medicine

**Environmental Science and Natural Resources**

Horticulture  
 Natural Resources Health

The Spokane Skills Center offers programs in automotive and collision repair technology, broadcast media production, clinical and scientific investigation/medical laboratory technology, computer information technology, computer programming, construction (pre-apprenticeship), dental occupations, hospitality and culinary arts, medical and nursing.

Qualified students from the Spokane Skills Center participate in an internship program at area businesses as part of their training, and receive community college credit through the "Tech-Prep" program.

Most of the Career and Technical Education programs in the area are associated with SAPTAC which is operated in partnership with several local businesses and institutions.

Through its Center for School to Work, ESD 101's Spokane Service Team trains at-risk youth for construction careers through affordable housing renovation and construction. The housing is then made available to low-income individuals. ESD 101's Washington Reading Corps recruits college education majors as AmeriCorps members to provide reading tutoring services to students from K-6<sup>th</sup> grade, an opportunity that provides on-the-job training to future educators.

Alternative based education schools are recognizing the value of making education relevant and are matching students with mentors, career training and other experimental programs.

**Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships cut across segments of the workforce. The Spokane area has over 15 apprenticeship programs. Most apprenticeship programs locally are a voluntary labor and management effort. The apprenticeship programs provide on-the-job training, and some provide placement. Apprenticeship programs that also lead to an A.A.S. degree are run through a contracted program with Spokane Community College. Other recognized

certifications are also available. Students get classroom training, but also work in a supervised setting where they are paid for their labor.

Partnerships with local apprenticeship training coordinators and career and technical education representatives have resulted in a renewed focus on apprenticeships in the Spokane area. Pre-apprenticeship training is available at area high schools through articulated pathways.

Additionally, the Construction Industry Skill Panel hosted by the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council is working to more effectively promote apprenticeships as a viable career pathway for youth.

### Youth Council

The WDC Youth Council is moving ahead with initiatives to better connect youth, businesses, and service providers in our community, deliver quality career-related events, and improve marketing of services to our youth customers. The Youth Council is focusing efforts on more effectively disseminating information to youth, parents, counselors and teachers to present opportunities for workforce education.

The addition of a Youth Involvement Coordinator to the staff of the WDC will facilitate an improved ability to develop and implement initiatives and projects for the Youth Council and its committees. This position will also act as liaison with career and technical education in the K-12 system, and provide more effective guidance and monitoring of program planning and service delivery for its United States Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act Title I-B funded youth programs.

### Mentoring Programs

Many organizations facilitate mentoring programs in Spokane County. These efforts enhance youth services and facilitate school-to-work activities in support of workforce development. Mentoring programs include the Spokane Regional Chase Youth Commission, Liberty Lake Youth Commission, Cheney Youth Commission, Project MOVE, America's Promise, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Mentoring Children of Promise and the Northeast Washington State Rural Mentoring Partnership.

The Spokane Regional Chase Youth Commission empowers youth as leaders and develops resources to improve the health and vitality of families, schools, neighborhoods, and the economy. The Commission also advises the Spokane City Council and Board of County Commissioners on youth issues while pursuing its own agenda of programs and community activities. Since its inception more than 20 years ago, the Commission has developed infrastructures for both youth involvement in local government and community service. Among the most important initiatives of the Commission is its Teen Advisory Council (TAC). TAC provides an opportunity for high-school aged citizens to get involved in community projects and commission initiatives and serves as a conduit for the Commission to interact with local schools and community organizations at a peer-to-peer level.

The Liberty Lake Youth Commission began in December 2006 and is dedicated to providing, improving, and promoting services and programs for young people in the Liberty Lake and surrounding communities. Currently, there are 30 members representing grades 8 through 12, including a nine-member executive board. The Commission provides a vehicle for kids to learn about government, participate in the process, and represent and communicate the needs, issues, and activities affecting youth.

The Cheney Youth Commission is a 17-member group of teenagers in grades 8 through 12 who sponsors activities to create ways for youth to express themselves while benefiting the community. Activities include initiatives aimed at enhancing the general health and welfare of area youth, promoting open channels of communication between youth and adults and uniting community spirit.

A collaborative effort engaging four partners, Project MOVE is a mentoring program that supports youth with disabilities as they *move* into the workplace and/or post-secondary education after high school. Youth are matched with community mentors in Spokane County who listen and share experiences of achieving employment and educational goals. The youth-mentor relationship is a place for youth to discover their unique desires and skills while receiving help accessing various community resources. Partners include Washington Initiative for Supported Employment, University of Washington Center for Disability Policy and Research, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Inland Northwest and Community-Minded Enterprises.

America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth grew out of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in 1997 when Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter and Ford, with Nancy Reagan representing President Reagan, challenged America to make children and youth a national priority by keeping five promises correlated with success to 15 million underserved youth. The promises include access to caring adults, safe places and constructive use of time, a healthy start and healthy development, effective education for marketable skills and lifelong learning, and opportunities to make a difference through helping others. Spokane County is one of five communities in Washington State and 100 communities selected nationwide as a "Best Community for Young People". The 100 Best Communities for Young People competition honors outstanding efforts on behalf of young people by multiple sectors of communities. The annual competition sponsored by America's Promise is leading communities to assess their efforts, work more effectively together for young people and share best practices.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Inland Northwest matches school age children in the Inland Northwest area with quality volunteers committed to being positive role models, mentors, and friends. Their mission is to help children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships.

Operated by ESD 101, Mentoring Children of Promise provides services to young people who reside in Spokane County whose parents are or have ever been incarcerated. It also supports mentoring services to young people who reside outside of Spokane County, including the Tri-County region of Eastern Washington, and select areas in Central and Western Washington. Key partners include the Washington State Department of Corrections and Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest. The Department of Corrections East Region Section I provides access to offenders who can identify the target population at four local institutions: Airway Heights Correctional Center, Brownstone Work Release Center, Pine Lodge Correction Center for

Women, and Eleanor Chase Work Training Release. They also provide the capacity to link children, who reside outside of this area, with other mentoring programs. Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest provides the infrastructure to support one-on-one mentoring relationships. Boys and Girls Club of Spokane County is also a key partner in this program.

Also operated by ESD 101, the Northeast Washington State Rural Mentoring Partnership consists of a consortium of 13 school districts that receive school-based mentoring in the rural/frontier northeastern corner of Washington State to as many as 255 youth annually in grades four through eight. Project activities consist of creating mentoring programs in each school district; improving student outcomes for students receiving mentoring for 12 months or more; and increasing the capacity of school districts to sustain the mentoring program.

## **STRATEGIES**

**Youth** continue to be a priority focus of the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council. The change in the service delivery system to bring all service providers into one center gives the SAWDC and its partners the opportunity to create a structure that is more responsive to the needs of youth in our community. A revitalized Youth Council is actively participating in center and event planning and coordination, outreach efforts, and the development of tools (including web-based and multi-media) designed to deliver career information more effectively to youth, parents, teachers, youth serving organizations, and business. Increased capacity at the SAWDC will also enhance relationships with the business community and provide consistent coordination of various initiatives.

In 2007, the SAWDC has become the endorsing body for Carl Perkins Act plans submitted by area Career and Technical Education directors. This will greatly improve the linkages between the SAWDC and CTE and give both the opportunity to better understand and influence community-wide strategies and more effectively articulate available career pathways. The Dropout Prevention and Retrieval program piloted by the Educational Service District 101 continues to successfully serve youth in need of additional services to remain in school or rejoin their classmates. This program will serve as a model for expansion as more funds become available. The SAWDC will continued to use ESD101's program delivery capability and the role it plays for area school districts as an avenue to develop specific partnerships.

The Construction Industry Skill Panel hosted by the SAWDC in 2007 focuses upon connecting youth to career opportunities through apprenticeships in the construction industry trades. Materials are being developed to promote these careers and are part of a larger branding strategy in coordination with Greater Spokane Incorporated and other Skill Panels. Events such as Pizza, Pop, and Power Tools, which focuses upon middle school age girls, and Construction Career Day, which focuses upon high school students, help to inform youth about career options and demonstrate the relevance of coursework in order to succeed in these pathways.

The Work Readiness Credential is being piloted in the Spokane WDA by Greater Spokane Incorporated and Spokane Community College. Several target populations which may benefit from the use of this assessment have been identified, including youth that are WIA program participants, both in-school and out-of-school.

The SAWDC is also working to find flexible vocational training that fits both the workforce needs of regional businesses and the availability of youth. One persistent issue is that of disadvantaged youth needing to quickly connect to gainful employment or risk not completing training. Education leading to high demand jobs needs to be delivered to youth at times when they are free and in as short a time as possible. More options are needed to ensure that youth can successfully begin their careers in pathways that lead to self-sufficiency. Wrap around services are also being provided so that youth are supported during their education and starting work.