

## Executive Finance Committee

**Governor Vaccination Mandate...**PacMtn is closely following the implications of the vaccination mandate that all state agency employees, on-site contractors and volunteers be fully vaccinated by October 18. While not subject to the requirement as "employees" PacMtn is working with ESD to understand the implications on the State workers located in WorkSource, how the term "contractor" is being interpreted i.e. ESD is the fiscal administrative entity for all WIOA contracts and we lease space from Dept. of Enterprise Services. We know our contracts with JR-My Journey Out Beyond, Commerce and Dept. Voc. Rehab **will be** subject to the requirement. Nearly 100% of PacMtn employees are already vaccinated or are willing to do so before the deadline.

**Proposed Changes to Employee Benefits...WA State Long Term Care employee tax will be effective as of January 1, 2022.** The Long Term Care Tax will cover up to \$36,000 in services and is calculated based on your wages (0.0058 x your wages including bonus, commission, OT, and PTO). Thurston County Chamber hosted a useful webinar on Long Term Care tax. <https://youtu.be/psYbKGE3CTc> PacMtn administration is continuing to review options for employees, including possible inclusion of this minimal fiscal impact as part of an employer sponsored support. Additionally, because of proposed changes to **medical coverage currently provided by WA County Insurance Fund** we are reviewing medical plan options. We are particularly attentive any significant budgetary or employee impacts and will keep the Board informed.

**CEO Fambles presents at upcoming Thurston Chamber and Greater Grays Harbor Luncheons...**"*where are the workers*" is what's on the minds of businesses. *Workforce Cliffs-Paradigm Shifts* will address the circumstances of the labor force and offer perspective, ideas and suggestions for mitigating the challenges employers are having.

**Unemployment Insurance Reinstated Job Search Requirement** intensified the need for in-person services at WorkSource. Strong pandemic protocols are in place for in-person services and while traffic has picked up it is manageable in tandem with virtual service delivery. Increased virtual traffic is showing with reviews to WorkSource resource pages and participation in virtual workshops across the State--an indication that the populace is aware of the need for job search. Once pandemic employment supports go away in September we expect another spike in numbers as some people may feel compelled into a return to the labor force.

**Data:** In the PacMtn region, about 35% of the population and 20% of the employed workforce is age 55 or older. In Pacific County, nearly half the population is 55 or older. Compare that to 1990, when only 9% of the regional workforce was 55 or older.

Further, about 15% of the PacMtn working age population reports a disability but less than 6% of the workforce. For this population labor force participation is low and pre-pandemic unemployment ranges between 20%-25% in the region. The pandemic has only exacerbated an already tough set of choices for workers who must still rely upon a paycheck, but are wondering what they can risk to get that paycheck.

**Farewell, Good Luck and Thank you AmeriCorps Members!** This year, PacMtn again had the opportunity to have four AmeriCorps Members serve with us providing services. **Elizabeth Mai** worked with the Community Jobs Program within our Poverty Reduction Team to provide Life Skills classes, job opportunities, and workplace readiness to TANF recipients who chose to engage in job activities to obtain employment. **Lanna Keltner** worked with the Youth Team to provide some of our UpLift! Job Readiness classes to our Gainful and Dependable Goal-oriented Employment and Training (GADGET) participants as well as being a connector for the GRAVITY students. **Pamela Ward** worked with the My Journey Out Beyond (MyJOB) Workforce Development Specialists to ensure that services were in place for those in the Juvenile Justice Facilities located throughout the State. **Sara Smith** was an integral piece of the WorkSource Thurston Pilot and re-opening strategy that went live at the end of June, providing key walk-up services to those who needed the assistance. We are happy to announce that Pamela has decided to stay for a second year of service and we are in process of recruiting three additional members to get our team back up to four. This October, our new AmeriCorps Team will be providing assistance to our Community Development Block Grant, the Poverty Reduction Team, the MyJOB Team, and the Thurston Job Champion Network.

**PacMtn staff focus on healthy eating.** We continue to promote Health and Wellness through various aspects i.e. weekly walks, Wellness Wednesdays, and quarterly activities. This past week **Garden Salad Bar** was offered at lunch. The Wellness Team and two primary staff- Jeannie and Lauren, organized the Salad Bar using the bounty from their gardens. Later in August we will install a **self-serve Micro Market** in our break room. The market will provide a wider variety of snacks and other healthier options.

## Stories of Hope and Impact

**We received this story from our ESD partner...the power of partnerships to benefit participants.** *"Lewis County Employment Practitioner was working with an individual who had been referred by another participant who previously used WIOA services. The new customer had been incarcerated for 35 years and was struggling to find employment.. DVR assisted him with getting CDL training, but he was having difficulty breaking into the field with no recent or relevant work experience. Employment Practitioner provided career guidance, coaching, and resource navigation to help with meeting basic needs as participant diligently looked for work.*

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*Participant was also connected to the Work Ready Navigator, who established a work-based learning (WBL) experience at The Moore Wright Group. This gave him important work experience to add to his resume. The WIOA Adult program provided transportation assistance to ensure participant was able to get to and from the worksite each day. We hoped the WBL would turn into employment, whereby the employer could use On the Job Training (OJT), but that did not work out. However, the experience he obtained helped him secure another position at ADS as a Maintenance Worker. This position is expected to lead into a truck driving position as he familiarizes himself with the business. He is earning \$20/hour and is now able to support himself free of any public assistance. He is so grateful for the support, guidance, and encouragement he received while enrolled in the WIOA Adult program."*

**Success story from our WorkSource Youth Partner...** *"Participant, KS passed her final test and obtained her GED! Youth Talent Advisor indicates great pride in KS progress. When they first met she was in the process of dropping out of traditional high school. On her 17th birthday she was introduced to GRAVITY (GED+ Re-engagement, Alternative Vocational Individualized, Training for Youth.) and she completed her GED in less than 4 months. Next steps for KS include filling out the FAFSA next week and then enrolling at Centralia Beauty College so she can earn some money and eventually enrolling in traditional college. Congrats to KS--another very capable young woman who will do many great things!"*