

March is the season for **The Forum** presented by the **National Association of Workforce Boards**, which is held annually in Washington DC. Tennille Johnson (ESD, PacMtn Board Member and Treasurer/Secretary), Christina Chestnut (Thurston County Chamber), Andrew Garate (JBLM programs/WorkEx), and PacMtn staff Korbett Moseley, Megan Fiess, Naomi Sky, Kendra Moore, and William Westmoreland made up the local team. The Forum is a great opportunity for board members, contractors, and staff to learn firsthand from their peers across the country. It is also an excellent opportunity to network with other LWDB from around state, Federal program staff, and vendors that provide key services and solutions. The group had the opportunity to participate in an evening monument tour on the last night of the Forum. Prior to departing on the final day, the CEOs and business board members from across the state met with Sen. Murray's staff and Sen. Cantwell to discuss key issues that employers are facing with the force shortage.

The **State Budget** has been released, as well as versions from the Senate and House. The Governor's budget includes funding the expansion of the Economic Security for All (EcSA) to include individuals and families that are above the federal poverty level, but below their family's self-sufficiency requirements - AKA "Working Poor" or Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed or ALICE population. This funding will come directly to LWDBs, including PacMtn, and fund locally designed solutions for service strategies that move individuals and families into self-sufficiency. Also included in two of the three budgets is funding for "Business Navigators". These resources are intended to expand the capacity of the LWDB to service employers. In the PacMtn region, it will sustain the recent added business engagement staff. The funding levels vary by branch and are currently being reconciled. The final budget should be release for vote in late April or early May.

The April 27th, 2023, **Board and Consortium Meeting and Budget Workshop** will include PacMtn's annual budget planning workshop. It is an opportunity to provide input on the PY23 budget. The WIOA Formula funding forecast has not been released, however PacMtn anticipates that funding levels will remain flat based upon early estimates. This is good news as the region has had 2 consecutive years of significant formula funding reductions - which provides 35-50% of the regions base funding. PacMtn was able to secure several new funding resources to backfill and surpass the formula funding cuts for PY22 and continues to identify resource opportunities for the region.

William Westmoreland was invited to participate in a Recompete round table with the **US Assistant Secretary of Commerce**. The US Economic Development Administration (EDA) recently issued a Request for Information (RFI) for the Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program (Recompete Pilot Program). This roundtable focused on input from rural communities and how EDA could construct the funding opportunity to better position these communities. The convened group included workforce and economic development, county and city officials, and Rep. Kilmer. The feedback largely focused on the capacity to develop grant materials, access to data, and the fiscal limitations of small rural organizations related to managing federal grants. The grant should be released later this year.

Stories of Hope and Impact

From our Partners at Equus Workforce Solutions:

Participant came to TST through Olympia Community Court. Since working with TST participant has renewed their Life Guard Certificate and looked into future career plans in health care. Participant was having difficult time finding current work and expressed how he felt his background affected his ability to be hired. As a result, Julia worked with him on interview skills and participant gained employment in food service, fulfilling his court requirement. Participant is continuing to cultivate solid education goals to support a self-sustaining career.

Participant came to TST right out of PREP. While using PREP skills and TST support to gain I9 documentation, participant found work as a server while continuing to phase up in Drug Court. Participant has continued to use Leon and Julia as a support and has been studying for their GED. TST has helped guide on-going career advancement and participant has goals of getting a welding certification for a self-sustaining career path.