

- On September 4, 2024, PacMtn participated in a visit from Senator Maria Cantwell at Grays Harbor College, highlighting the recent award of approximately \$500,000 to Greater Grays Harbor, Inc. (GGHI) by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program ([Recompete](#)). This funding aims to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the region’s low labor force participation rates among prime working-age individuals (ages 25-54) in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties. [GGHI’s proposal](#), titled “Recompete Washington State Coastal Counties Initiative,” is focused on improving workforce engagement in these areas. Core partners in this initiative include PacMtn, Grays Harbor College and its foundation, GGHI, and a dedicated facilitator, all working towards Recompete’s primary goals. During her visit, Senator Cantwell met with the Recompete team and key community partners to discuss regional challenges, explore how her office can support local efforts, and assess the progress of the initiative. Though the project is still in its early stages, the core team is actively developing an approach to meet these challenges, with PacMtn also serving as a fiscal consultant to assist GGHI in meeting grant-related financial requirements.
- On September 26, 2024, PacMtn held a **Board Member Onboarding** session, welcoming new board members Stacie Vaughan from Vaughan Pump (Grays Harbor), Kevin Shutty from Choose Mason (Mason County), and Joe Vansyckle from Employment Security. Additional attendees included Commissioner Kevin Pine (Grays Harbor), Commissioner Sharon Trask, who serves as Consortium Chair and Chief Elected Official (Mason County), Jeanne Brooks from Azure Strategy representing the private sector (Pacific County), Dr. Carli Schiffner, and Tricia Wiltse from Vocational Rehabilitation (Regional). The orientation covered key topics, including a budget overview by PacMtn CFO Wil Yeager, the Building Blocks of Prosperity presented by Chief Program Officer, Dan Cooling, and an overview of board functions by PacMtn CEO William Westmoreland. Dr. Schiffner also led a tour of the Tulal Student Center, showcasing student-focused services such as Student Life and Government, the DEI center, bookstore, and workforce funding office. The tour further highlighted the

Culinary Arts Program, which is launching a new Chef Program in fall 2024, as well as the Welding and Automotive programs.

- On September 26, 2024, over 60 partners from the WorkSource system, along with board and staff members, participated in a **Community Action Poverty Simulation** event hosted by the Thurston County Chamber Foundation, under the guidance of Leadership Thurston County Director, Alisha Blain-Warner. During this immersive experience, participants were assigned roles within fictitious families, representing individuals across various ages, from young children to adults. The simulation provided a hands-on understanding of the complexities and challenges associated with poverty, including struggles with housing, transportation, childcare, education, and employment—all under the constraints of limited resources. Many participants reported gaining a deeper empathy and insight into the difficulties faced by clients experiencing poverty, with some even revisiting personal traumas related to poverty. This experience has fostered a stronger commitment among participants to support clients more effectively.
- From October 1-4, 2024, PacMtn attended the **Washington Workforce Association** (WWA) annual retreat in Leavenworth, WA, where participants focused on refining the association’s core purpose and strategic framework. Key topics included updates on WWA’s budget, the upcoming “Our Future Workforce” conference scheduled for November 12-14, and the roles within WWA’s organizational structure. The retreat also provided updates on the NTIA Digital Equity Grant application and discussions about the Economic Security for All (EcSA) and Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF) initiatives. PacMtn continues to excel in performance metrics for both programs, particularly with aligning the programs participant focus. Legislative priorities were a prominent focus, including preparations for the legislative hill climb in February 2025, which PacMtn will host. Key legislative goals include sustained funding for EcSA and CRF, along with initiatives addressing childcare and housing. Additionally, the retreat involved reviewing agendas from critical partners such as Washington’s Commerce and Employment Security departments, the Washington Economic Development

Association, the Association of WA Business, SBCTC, and the state's Workforce Board. Notably, PacMtn CEO William Westmoreland was announced as the incoming chair for the association, set to lead in 2025.

- PacMtn is collaborating with 10 colleges across Washington, alongside the United Way of the Pacific Northwest (UWPNW) and the Global Trade & Supply Chain Management Center Excellence, to apply for the EPA's Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant Program (CCGP). This partnership includes 10 colleges, including Grays Harbor College and Centralia College, all working to update their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) programs statewide. Key initiatives involve purchasing electric vehicle (EV) heavy truck equipment, expanding diesel mechanic programs to incorporate EV technology, and developing EV-focused curriculum. Outreach efforts are strategically directed at communities eligible for the EPA's Disadvantaged Community Environmental and Climate Justice Program, which all participating colleges serve. In this collaborative effort, PacMtn serves as the fiscal lead, UWPNW is the statutory partner responsible for outreach, and the Center of Excellence (COE) is aligning industry needs with the program. The colleges will focus on curriculum development, integrating new EV equipment into their training. With the application deadline in late November, this promising opportunity aims to make a significant impact on workforce readiness and environmental justice.
- The **Annual Report for Program Year 2023** has been released, offering a comprehensive review of PacMtn's fiscal and programmatic achievements. The full report is available at <https://pacmtn.org/about/reports-resources/>. Key highlights include a fiscal update, a summary of Business Solutions activities, and an impact overview of various programs. Notably, the Business Solutions team served 2,476 businesses, helped participants gain 335 skills and credentials, and achieved an average placement wage of \$27.01. Program highlights include successes in WIOA Formula initiatives, poverty reduction, food security, and reentry support. A standout achievement was the Journey to Jobs program, which supported unhoused residents in Olympia. Through this initiative, 93 individuals were served, 65 gained employment

with the HIRE Crew, and 22 participants transitioned into full-time roles, significantly surpassing program targets.

Stories of Hope and Impact

Shared from our partners at Equus:

“Participant came to WorkSource/EQUUS with a goal of getting trained in social work, wanting to become a social services case manager. He got enrolled as an Out of School Youth, Adult and EcSA. Participant attended the Certified Peer Counselor training by Peer Olympia and Department of Health. Part of his training experience was participating in a paid work experience at the YWCA. He successfully completed his internship and gained his Certified Peer Counselor credential. Participant was hired by YWCA, learning graphic design and social media management, and hoping to take over their newsletter and doing more marketing work. He will work part time for YWCA while attending college this fall, in a program called "Bodies Speaking Out" critical studies of health, disability and community advocacy.”

Shared from our partners at the Thurston Chamber:

“As a new partner, Enlightenment Home Care has embraced collaboration with workforce programs through reverse referrals to fill their open positions. Their second chance-friendly approach makes this partnership particularly valuable, offering opportunities to candidates from diverse backgrounds and those with prior challenges. By integrating these individuals through on-the-job training, Enlightenment Home Care supports workforce development while addressing their staffing needs, ensuring both high-quality care and inclusive employment opportunities.”