

- PacMtn, in partnership with 11 colleges across Washington State (including Grays Harbor College and Centralia College) and the United Way of the Pacific Northwest (UWPNW), has applied for the **EPA Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant Program (CCGP)**. This collaboration aims to modernize CDL programs by integrating electric vehicle (EV) technology, including purchasing EV heavy truck equipment, expanding diesel mechanic programs, and developing EV-focused curriculum. PacMtn serves as the fiscal lead for the project, UWPNW oversees strategic outreach to disadvantaged communities, and the participating colleges focus on implementing curriculum enhancements to serve communities meeting EPA's environmental justice criteria. The anticipated award date is February 2025, marking a significant opportunity to advance workforce development in the transportation sector while addressing climate justice and equity.
- On November 21, 2024, the **Washington Workforce Association celebrated the Governor's Award for Economic Security for All (EcSA)**, recognizing Governor Inslee's visionary efforts to reduce poverty across the state. A key highlight of the award was the partnership between the Nisqually Indian Tribe and PacMtn to support occupational skill development for tribal members participating in the tribe's STEP program. This collaboration, fueled by co-investment from PacMtn and the tribe, has successfully enhanced workforce opportunities for tribal members. During the awards event, two program participants shared inspiring stories of their success within the STEP program, underscoring the transformative impact of this initiative on individuals and communities alike. This recognition reflects the strength of partnerships and innovative programs in driving equitable workforce solutions.
- In November, PacMtn hosted a **Sensory Tool House** training session open to all WorkSource system partners, focusing on professional development aligned with supporting **ADA-impacted participants**, particularly those with non-visible disabilities. This well-attended training emphasized the often overlooked and misunderstood challenges faced by individuals with neurodiverse needs. By exploring sensory systems and providing practical strategies, this training equipped practitioners to better understand and support clients in self-regulation and workplace success. This effort reflects PacMtn's commitment to fostering inclusivity and preparing core partners to address the unique needs of all clients effectively.

- PacMtn is advancing its efforts to **decentralize Youth services** by hosting pre-RFP convenings aimed at gathering input for the upcoming RFP design. These sessions provide a platform for partners across the region to learn about Title 1b Youth services, PacMtn’s vision for this work, and opportunities for collaboration in responding to the RFP. The RFP is set to be released on January 8, 2025, with bidders’ conferences scheduled for January 17 and January 22, 2025, allowing potential applicants to gain clarity and guidance on the process. Initial screening of proposals will begin on February 6, 2025, with evaluations completed by February 10, 2025, and selected bidders notified by February 24, 2025. This process ensures transparency and inclusivity, enabling bidders to align their proposals with PacMtn’s strategic objectives and the unique needs of local youth. More details on the next convening can be found [here](#).
- PacMtn’s full team participated in the **Washington Workforce Association (WWA) Fall Conference**, which offered valuable insights into critical topics such as GASB compliance, poverty reduction initiatives, the Community Reinvestment Program (CRP), and best practices in employer engagement and vocational rehabilitation. The event provided an opportunity for team members to deepen their understanding and apply innovative strategies in their work. PacMtn’s WorkEx program was a proud sponsor of the conference, and the WorkEx team delivered a highly engaging session focused on transitioning military personnel from Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) into the civilian workforce. This presentation highlighted the program’s impactful approaches to supporting service members in developing career pathways, further cementing PacMtn’s role as a leader in workforce development.
- PacMtn proudly sponsored the **3rd Annual Future of Work Summit & Expo** on October 9, 2024, at Great Wolf Lodge. This event, organized by the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce, brought together business leaders, educators, and HR professionals to explore innovative workforce strategies. Key topics included second-chance employment, partnerships with local schools to cultivate new talent, and the development of inclusive workplace cultures. The summit featured breakout sessions such as “School’s Out, Talent’s In: Team Up with Local Schools to Find Your Future All-Stars” and “Everyone Deserves a Reboot: Building a Stronger Workforce with Second

Chance Employment,” providing attendees with actionable insights to address current labor market challenges. PacMtn’s sponsorship underscores our commitment to fostering collaborative solutions that drive workforce development and economic prosperity in our region.

Stories of Hope and Impact

Dimitri Hicks exemplifies the transformative impact of the **Nisqually Indian Tribe’s Strengthening Tribal Education Program (STEP)**. Through this initiative, Dimitri overcame significant personal challenges, including earning his GED within four months, a milestone made possible by STEP’s financial support and tutoring resources. Over his two years in the program, Dimitri advanced professionally, holding roles such as Call Operator, Club Red Ambassador and Marketing Administration Assistant, each of which built his skills and confidence. In his current position as Club Red Lead Ambassador, Dimitri continues to thrive, leveraging the training and certifications provided by STEP, including a Tribal Supervision and Management Certification.

Dimitri’s journey also highlights the broader cultural and community benefits of the program. He played an integral role in enhancing team dynamics within his department, contributed to culturally significant projects such as murals depicting the Medicine Creek Treaty, and actively participated in diversity and inclusion initiatives. STEP not only equipped Dimitri with professional skills but also empowered him to connect deeply with his heritage and community, fostering a brighter future for both him and those around him. His story underscores the power of STEP in driving individual growth and strengthening tribal sovereignty.

