

- We are pleased to announce the February 2025 launch of the **Matched Investment Savings Accounts (MISA)** program, a state-funded initiative supported by the Community Reinvestment Project from the Department of Commerce. Designed to build wealth and promote self-sufficiency, MISA matches participant savings at a rate of \$2 for every \$1 saved. Outreach efforts are underway to engage existing EcSA (Economic Security for All) partners and establish new relationships with organizations serving BIPOC communities, ensuring the program reaches those most in need. This initiative aligns with our mission to advance economic equity and create sustainable pathways to financial independence. Program contact: Shannon Hassan, shannon@pacmtn.org.
- The Washington Workforce Association, in partnership with the Association of Washington Business, will host its annual **Hill Climb on February 5th**, a key event for advancing workforce and economic development priorities. This year's legislative agenda includes securing and protecting funding for the Economic Security for All (EcSA) and Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) programs for the biennium, as well as addressing the benefits cliff to support participants on their path to self-sufficiency. Other priorities include increasing resources for Associate Development Organizations (ADOs), supporting critical economic development initiatives, and advancing digital equity. Board members and partners interested in participating are encouraged to contact William Westmoreland at william@pacmtn.org for more information. Additional details are available at washingtonworkforce.org/advocacy.
- The **National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) Forum 2025** is scheduled for March 29–April 1 in Washington, D.C. This annual event offers an excellent opportunity for PacMtn board members to network with peers from across the country, gain insights into the role of a workforce board member, and connect with other board members from Washington State. As always, PacMtn extends an open invitation to interested board members who would like to attend. If you are interested, please contact Arissa De Lima at arissa@pacmtn.org. For more details about the event, visit forum.nawb.org.

- We are excited to announce several **Staff updates at PacMtn** that reflect our commitment to strengthening partnerships and delivering exceptional service to our region.
 - **Shannon Hassan** has joined the team as our new Community Engagement Director. Shannon brings a wealth of experience and a strong background in public service, demonstrating self-driven leadership and a passion for building meaningful connections. In her role, she will focus on fostering robust relationships with our partners, ensuring alignment and collaboration across our initiatives.
 - **Luis Alvarez** has also joined PacMtn as our new Quality Assurance Specialist. Luis recently transitioned from serving in the Army and brings a disciplined, mission-driven approach to his work. He comes to us through PacMtn's WorkEx program, and we're thrilled to see his skills and dedication applied to ensuring the highest standards in our operations.
 - Additionally, **Orinda Goddard** has been promoted to Tribal Liaison. In this vital role, Orinda will focus on building strong, lasting partnerships with the six tribal nations in our region, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion and collaboration with tribal communities.

These staff changes strengthen our capacity to serve our partners and participants, and we are excited about the expertise and energy Shannon, Luis, and Orinda bring to their roles.

- PacMtn has several exciting **funding opportunities** launching in the coming weeks to strengthen workforce services across the region. For **Youth Services**, an additional round of funding will soon open to further decentralize services targeting Program Year 2025. These funds are available to qualifying organizations serving specific populations, communities, or the broader region. Awards are for one year and can be renewed annually for up to four additional years.

- Additionally, procurement will open for **Adult, Dislocated Worker, EcSA, and Community Reinvestment Project (CRP)** services to identify providers capable of delivering comprehensive career services, wealth-building initiatives, and employer-focused services across the five-county region or multi-community areas. Awards for these services will also follow a one-year term with annual renewal options for up to four years.
- Finally, the RFP for the **One-Stop Operator** will launch in late January. The contracts are for one year with three renewals available. Qualifying organizations that currently provide career services in the region must include a firewall plan as part of their application. For more information about these funding opportunities, including RFPs, related policies, and system information, please visit [PacMtn Service Provider Opportunities](#).

Stories of Hope and Impact

Shared from our valued partners:

Hello! I want to express my experience with the CRF program and how it has helped change my life and career goals.

First, let me give a bit of background about myself. I had gotten laid off from my job during covid where I then after spent a couple years being a stay-at-home mom to three teens while they did their online schooling. Unfortunately, the relationship wasn't healthy, and I had to get away. July of 2022, I moved in with family. I had spent that year doing any work that I could find including temp work and delivery services. I have a background as a dental laboratory technician and was actively looking to get back into the field but did not find anything until early 2023, where I found a job as a DLT that I loved. I was slowly saving to get a place of my own. Then in April, I was laid off, told that they couldn't afford to pay my wages anymore (I

worked for a small business). So, I went on unemployment and started searching for work again. It was stressful, and unemployment didn't pay enough to cover bills, and I drained all my savings trying to keep up.

I was told about the program in June 2024, and I decided to head up to my local WorkSource center and ask about it. They got me qualified for retraining as a Certified Registered Dental Assistant, helped pay for my schooling and gave me incentives for passing milestones every month that helped me keep up with bills and gas. School was 12 weeks long and I spent the summer studying, I only had one Lab Class a week and the rest was online, which was super flexible for my life, and I personally enjoyed it. I had great support from my case manager Krystyn along with many other people both at WorkSource and my school.

As of today, I have a great new career that kept me in the same field of work I have enjoyed for years before covid, and with the help of the CRF program am saving money rapidly to be able to enjoy a new home of my own soon. I have a job that I love with co-workers I adore, and great pay. I highly encourage anyone who could use this program to participate. The times might be tight and frustrating, but with a little help and steady perseverance, it will be totally worth it in the end. Just make sure you communicate your needs to your support system in the program and your case manager. They will absolutely help in any way they can. This program gave me skills and help that I know will be with me all the rest of my working career and I am inspired to continue to grow and expand on the foundation that this program has helped me set for myself.

I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in the CRF program and I hope others will find out and join to get the help they need to get to their goals too.