

REGIONAL WORKFORCE GAP ANALYSIS INTRODUCTION

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Presenter(s), (if applicable): David Tetrick (he/him), Senior Economic Development Planner
Length: 60 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro is committed to supporting a region where all residents have access to quality jobs that support their families and help them thrive. Helping residents to develop the skills needed to thrive in today's economy is crucial for supporting the growth of businesses in our region. To that end, Metro is undertaking a Regional Workforce Gap Analysis to better understand the barriers to workers and businesses, and to understand the opportunities for additional support for our region's workers and businesses.

ACTION REQUESTED

No action is requested at this time.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The goal of this work session is to discuss the planned scope of the Regional Workforce Gap Analysis with Metro Council and solicit feedback. Staff are also hoping to learn how this project could address regional questions and priorities and support other Metro and regional projects like the Future Vision and the update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

1. What are the current and likely future gaps in our workforce development system that are preventing residents from accessing training to advance into higher wage jobs?
2. What are the current and likely future gaps in our workforce development system that are preventing our local businesses from finding the workers they need to grow and expand?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Not applicable at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable at this time.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Regional Workforce Gap Analysis will consider how to provide better access to higher paying jobs to communities that have traditionally lacked that access. This work will build on several efforts that are currently underway.

First, the economic disparities faced by East Multnomah County residents and other historically disinvested communities compared to the rest of the region have long been evident, and many efforts to address these disparities are currently underway. The Port of Portland, in coordination with local partners, has recently completed the East Multnomah County Economic Development Strategy focused on leveraging Port assets in the region to deliver greater benefits to residents of those communities. One of the main concerns highlighted by their Stakeholder Advisory Committee is to marshal additional workforce development resources to provide greater opportunities for area residents. Metro is supportive of this work and may have a role to play in its implementation.

Second, Metro's existing work with community coalitions in developing and implementing Equitable Development Strategies offers an additional opportunity to pilot corridor- and neighborhood-specific workforce development strategies to improve job access and support growing businesses. Current work on 82nd Avenue will support and inform this project and help identify strategies to address disparate access to job opportunities for residents in our region.

Third, the Regional Workforce Gap Analysis should inform short and long-term strategies, including the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Metro's update to the region's 50-year Future Vision. The current CEDS rallies partners to focus on three goals: fostering economic mobility, supporting a competitive economy and building a resilient region. The next CEDS update can build on these themes and address the current context of our region and how we maintain and build on our competitive advantages. Workforce development will be a crucial part of this conversation--creating opportunities for residents to skill up in quality jobs is vital to the continued economic growth of the Greater Portland region.

Lastly, the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) award to Metro requires an analysis of the region's workforce capacity to implement the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) and will be included in this work.

Our current project scope has been reviewed by regional partners, including Worksystems Inc and the Port of Portland, and we are in the process of procuring a consultant to support the work. This project is funded within the Planning, Development & Research Department's budget along with a contribution from the Port of Portland.

BACKGROUND

Metro is committed to helping all residents of the region have access to quality jobs that support their families and help them thrive. The EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) and the development of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) require an analysis of the current and future workforce development gaps that could negatively impact the implementation of the CCAP in our region. Metro staff saw an opportunity in this analysis of workforce gaps to address persistent poverty in certain areas of our region--and the ways in which certain populations have been excluded from education, job training and career opportunities--by looking across additional industries and career pathways beyond those included in the CCAP and holistically address the workforce development needs of the region.

ATTACHMENTS

None.