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Workforce Development Council names new CEO

SEATTLE—Marléna Sessions will take the helm of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County in a time of great change and opportunity for the organization.

The board of the WDC, a nonprofit workforce “think tank” and grant-making organization charged with overseeing a large system of employment and training in Seattle and King County, named Ms. Sessions this week to replace outgoing Chief Executive Officer Kris Stadelman.



Ms. Sessions has served as Chief Operations Officer since the WDC was created in 2000, and with the council’s previous incarnation, the Private Industry Council, beginning in 1996.

“I am delighted to be leading this organization, especially in this momentous time for our economy and our field of workforce development,” said Ms. Sessions. “We have an opportunity to make a bigger impact than ever in our community.”

She will oversee an annual budget that was almost \$14 million in 2008, the majority of which federal funding from the Department of Labor. In 2009, the WDC’s budget will greatly increase to include federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funding intended to get Americans back to work and to provide youth with summer job opportunities.

As CEO of the WDC, Ms. Sessions will answer to a board made up of private sector, labor, education and community-based leaders. The WDC’s mission is to ensure a strong economy as well as a path to self-sufficiency for every resident.

Ms. Sessions has considerable expertise in the areas of organizational development and designing and implementing top-quality employment and training programs. Before joining the WDC in 1996, she coordinated and managed the highly successful education, employment and training programs of Career Path Services in Spokane. Her professional service includes being a mentor on the Department of Labor’s *People Inspiring Transformation* team.

Ms. Sessions is a member of the Leadership Council of The Workforce Alliance and serves on the board of Career Path Services. She holds a master’s degree in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University and a bachelor of arts in political science from Whitworth College. She lives in Issaquah with her husband Paul Ringo and her children Isabel and Isak.

Outgoing CEO Kris Stadelman is leaving the WDC to head up the North Valley Job Training Consortium (NOVA), a workforce board serving seven cities in California’s Silicon Valley. Her leadership in Seattle-King County has built an award-winning organization and employment and training system. Her last day with the WDC will be April 10.

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The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (www.seakingwdc.org) is a private, nonprofit organization that oversees employment-related programs for youth, the adult workforce and employers in King County, with the goal of a strong economy and self-sufficiency for every resident.