



For Immediate Release:
August 3, 2009

Contact:

Margret Graham, WDC
(206) 448-0474, ext. 3029
mgraham@seakingwdc.org

Older workers to benefit from new job training grant

SEATTLE—Hundreds of workers over age 55 will be assisted with computer training, starting a new business and entering high-demand career fields, thanks to a \$1 million grant to the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County.

The grant, announced July 30, is one of just ten awarded nationwide by the U.S. Department of Labor.

“In a time when the Recovery Act and ‘green jobs’ are the focus of most employment discussion, it is so important to us that we don’t forget certain groups of citizens in our city and county who need us now more than ever,” said Marléna Sessions, CEO of the Workforce Development Council.

Over three years, the \$1 million will target three groups of older workers in King and Snohomish counties: those with limited English ability, previous convictions or disabilities. The funds provide staff who will work one-on-one with participants to help them get short-term training with regional college partners, followed by jobs in health care, information technology and “green” jobs.

The grant will also build the capacity of local community and technical colleges and the WorkSource system by developing courses tailored to serve these vulnerable older workers in training related to computers, entrepreneurship and “bridging” to green jobs.

In all, about 600 older workers will receive training in one of these areas.

The project—called Reinvesting in Older Workers—builds on the WDC’s work over the past few years to identify and meet the needs of older workers, including hosting the [Mature Workers Alliance](#) and deploying the [Employ Experience](#) website.

Economic development and workforce development agencies, private companies, foundations, government agencies and colleges from both King and Snohomish counties are among the grant partners. The partners are contributing almost \$3 million in public and private resources to support the project.

“All of our partners recognize the need to address both the needs of older workers and the needs of our economy in light of the aging of our workforce,” said Ms. Sessions. “This project will have a positive impact in both areas.”

The Department of Labor funded the ten grants nationwide as part of its Aging Workforce Initiative. By 2016, the number of 55+ workers is projected to increase by 36.5%.

Please see QUICK FACTS sheet for further details.

###

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (www.seakingwdc.org) is a nonprofit workforce “think tank” and grant-making 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.

REINVESTING IN OLDER WORKERS

QUICK FACTS

Award Amount and Source:

\$1 million over 3 years from the Department of Labor [Aging Workforce Initiative](#)

Leveraged Funds:

\$2,990,395 in public and private workforce and economic development resources

Location of Grant Activities:

City of Seattle, King County and Snohomish County

Key Partners:

- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Snohomish County Economic Development Commission
- Regional community/technical colleges
- Health Work Force Institute
- Microsoft Corporation
- King County Work Training Program
- National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
- State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- enterpriseSeattle
- Snohomish County Workforce Development Council
- Small Business Administration
- McKinstry Company
- AARP Foundation
- King County Labor Council
- Seattle Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens
- Department of Services for the Blind

Targeted population:

Workers over age 55 who have one or more of the following barriers:

1. Limited English proficiency
2. Prior conviction/ex-offender
3. A disability

Numbers to be served:

- 148 older workers will begin occupational education/training activities.
- 300 older workers will receive information and communications technology training.
- 112 older workers will receive entrepreneurial training.
- 90 older workers will receive limited English proficiency "bridge" training in green jobs.

#

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (www.seakingwdc.org) is a nonprofit workforce "think tank" and grant-making 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.