



## A Request of the Governor

Date: May 26, 2021

To: Dr. Karen Johnson, WA Chief Equity Officer  
Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director State Workforce Board  
John Aultman, Senior Policy Advisor, Higher Education & Workforce Development

Re: **Proposed Language for Governor's Inclusion of Black, Asian, Latinx, and other Communities of Color as WIOA Priority Populations**

Washington Workforce Association members are proud to work in a state where the Governor has the courage to speak truth about the challenging societal realities faced by Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and other Communities of Color. In December, our Governor's stated commitment to equity was evidenced in his Legislative policy package and his direction to state agencies to center equity in the development of any legislation and budget proposals. We have an additional suggestion about an action Governor Inslee can take immediately to assist Black, Asian, Latinx, and other Communities of Color.

The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) governs local workforce services and policies. It ties us to our local communities and economies. As such, our local boards have long recognized and worked to change the systemic and structural ways Black, Asian, Latinx, and other Communities of Color are limited in access and opportunity. We are dedicated to finding solutions and working with our partners to make necessary improvements. This is why we are pleased that state agencies are increasing their efforts to address the racial inequities and structures that perpetuate the counter productivity of racism. We look forward to hearing more about the Governor's work and seeing positive outcomes from state agencies.

Local Workforce Board Leadership knows there would be significant impact if the Governor were to recognize and prioritize Black, Asian, Latinx, and other Communities of Color in the delivery and design of our employment services, education, and training programs. In the federal legislation, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act section 3(24)*, WIOA defines the term "individual with a barrier to employment" as members of one or more of the following populations:


- 1) Displaced homemakers
- 2) Low-income individuals
- 3) Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, as such terms are defined
- 4) Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities

- 5) Older individuals
- 6) Ex-offenders
- 7) Homeless individuals (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. § 14043e-2(6) or homeless children and youths (as defined in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)
- 8) Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
- 9) Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- 10) Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, as defined in section 167(i)
- 11) Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 601 et seq.)
- 12) Single parents (including single pregnant women)
- 13) Long-term unemployed individuals
- 14) Such other groups as the Governor involved determines to have barriers to employment

Black, Asian, Latinx, and other Communities of Color should be specifically mentioned as facing challenges. As the Governor is aware, under existing Federal Law, American Indian, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians are already clearly identified in WIOA section 3(24)(2) above. Taking this action can propel the workforce system's efforts in equity, diversity, and inclusion; accelerate our equi-recovery efforts; build momentum in our local workforce areas; and inspire a deepened commitment in state and local workforce development planning. It allows all agencies to more fully champion the issues surrounding equitable access, eliminating racist structural barriers, and prioritizing the needs of all Communities of Color across our state.

We would be honored to assist the Office of Governor Inslee in the creation of appropriate language or in following established protocol for such actions. Please call upon us to let us know how we may help.

Highest regards,



Kevin Perkey, WWA Chair  
Workforce Southwest, CEO

Cc: Perry England, Chair State Workforce Board  
Caitlyn Jekel, Senior Policy Advisor, Labor

## 2021 Board of Directors



Elizabeth Court, Director  
Olympic Workforce Development Council



Cheryl Fambles, Chief Executive Officer  
Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council



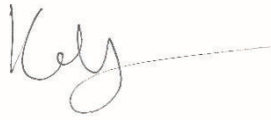
Joy Emory, President & CEO  
Workforce Snohomish



Marie Kurose, Chief Executive Officer  
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council



Katie Condit, Chief Executive Officer  
Workforce Central



Kevin Perkey, Chief Executive Officer  
Workforce Southwest Washington



Dave Petersen, Director  
SkillSource



Amy Martinez, Chief Executive Officer  
South Central Workforce Development Council



Rod Van Alyne, Director  
Eastern Washington Partnership Workforce Dev. Council



Tiffany Scott, Chief Executive Officer  
Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council



Mark Mattke, Chief Executive Officer  
Spokane Workforce Council