

STEM Opportunities in the Workforce System Initiative

Northern Willamette Valley STEM Initiative

Grantee: Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council

Industry Focus: Bioscience, metals, solar and alternative energy, and information technology

Key Partners: Regional Workforce Council and Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council; Acumed; Genentech; Boeing; Warn Industries; Solar World; xSunx Inc.; Bioscience Industry Forum; Clark County (WA) High Technology Council; Mid-Willamette Metals Consortium; Mid-Willamette High Performance Consortium; Portland YouthBuilders; New Avenues for Youth; Outside In; SE Works; Chemeketa Community College; Clark College; Lower Columbia College; Mount Hood Community College; Portland Community College; and Oregon Health Sciences University.

Grant Amount: \$2,000,000

Leveraged Amount: \$3,100,000

Location of Grant Activities: Northern Willamette Valley of Oregon and Washington

Challenge: The Northern Willamette Valley is confronting multiple challenges: unacceptably high unemployment; lagging educational attainment; and regional employers who rank pipeline issues as a primary concern, especially in occupations requiring math and science. In contrast, there are workforce opportunities available due to a strong semiconductor and technology sector, as well through green-energy firms. It is projected that during the next decade there will be over 1,600 STEM job openings each year.

Addressing the Challenge: Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council and its partners will work to meet and overcome the challenges faced by the nine-county region of the Northern Willamette Valley by: 1) increasing agreements to further engage high schools and the 15+ alternative schools in implementing STEM career pathways so as to help students take advantage of existing STEM-related courses; 2) increasing participation of STEM employers with the workforce system to address current and future regional needs; 3) introducing the use of STEM Scan, which will allow training providers to work together, increase efficiency of enrolling and supporting participants in training, and identifying gaps that need to be addressed; and 4) advancing workforce system knowledge of and activities in STEM education and training.

Projected Outcomes:

- A total of 850 individuals, including 500 disadvantaged youth who will receive a full range of services from assessment to mentoring, remediation, training, job search assistance, and on-the-job support
- 62% of the disadvantaged youth will enter post-secondary training or employment
- 85% of dislocated workers will enter post secondary training
- 236 will enter STEM-related employment

