

Community-Based Job Training Grants

Whatcom Community College & Bellingham Technical College

Grantee: Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College

Industry Focus: Healthcare

Key Partners: The Northwest Alliance for Healthcare Skills, Workforce Development Council, and Whatcom County Tech Prep

Grant Amount: \$2,145,400

Leveraged Amount: \$1,650,000

Location of Grant Activities: Washington State

Challenge: Whatcom County, located in the northwest corner of Washington State, is the state's ninth most populated and third fastest growing county. Healthcare is essential for the region's growth and economic prosperity. New and emerging businesses and industries consider the region's ability to provide adequate healthcare services for their employees important. As the largest growing sector in the region, healthcare fuels Northwest Washington's economy.

Addressing the Challenge: *Pathways to Health Careers* is an industry cluster approach to increase the capacity in the colleges' healthcare programs through expanded access for low-income and underrepresented populations. Targeted high growth/ high demand healthcare occupations include dental assisting and hygiene; nursing; physical therapist assisting; medical assisting; medical reception, billing and coding; radiology technology; and surgical technology. *Pathways to Health Careers* is a four-pronged strategy to increase healthcare workers: 1) innovative recruitment efforts emphasizing outreach to underrepresented populations; 2) solid retention and support plans; 3) development of effective and inventive uses of instructional technology and delivery; and 4) support of healthcare educational training programs.

Projected Outcomes:

- Over the three year project, 378 students will benefit from this program
- 25 percent increase of students in health career training programs
- 25 percent increase of underrepresented students in health career training programs
- 30 percent increase in the success rate (retention/graduation/employment) of under-represented targeted populations
- Development of distance learning core health courses for shared use
- Implementation of multiple instructional delivery strategies

