

Biennium Report

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2025

Southwestern Oregon
SO²WIB
Workforce Investment Board

Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board

Coos | Curry | Douglas

A collaborative network of education, business, labor, and government partners. Together we design and implement innovative strategies that build a strong, highly competent and adaptable workforce. We create and invest in regional workforce development strategies. SOWIB seeks to build a workforce ready to adapt as new opportunities arise.



A letter from our Executive Director

This year, our progress reflects the power of partnership. None of our success would be possible without the dedication of our hardworking staff, the commitment of our partners, and the leadership of our Board of Directors. Together, we are advancing our mission through innovative strategies, some we've pioneered to strengthen Oregon's workforce.

From tailoring training to meet emerging industry needs to expanding access to certificates and apprenticeships, our work ensures that career pathways are open to everyone. Through our diverse network, we identify and remove barriers that limit access to opportunity.

With this collaborative approach and the flexibility provided by grants and private investments, we're able to respond quickly, effectively, and with measurable impact. The results are clear: more people employed, more communities thriving, and a stronger regional economy built on shared effort and innovation.

Sara Stephens, Executive Director

Program Year 2023-2025 Board of Directors

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WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)



Through WIOA funding, SOWIB Service Providers offer essential support and training services to both individuals and employers. These services cater to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, particularly those encountering barriers to employment. Available in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties, these programs work in close partnership with WorkSource Oregon and a network of community collaborators to align services with regional workforce demands.

Key area of Impacts:

Job Seeking Services: Individuals received career counseling, job placement assistance, and access to training programs aligned with in-demand industries.

Workforce Training: Individuals earned industry-recognized credentials, increasing their employability and earning potential. Many participants complete training in high-demand fields such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and skilled trades.

Youth Programs: Young adults (ages 14–24) are supported through education, mentorship, work experience, and career pathway development, with a focus on out-of-school and underserved populations.

Employer Engagement: Businesses benefited from talent pipeline support, customized training, and partnerships that addressed local workforce needs and helped fill critical job vacancies.

Collaborative Partnerships: WIOA strengthened coordination among workforce boards, community colleges, adult education providers, economic development agencies, and social services, creating a more integrated workforce system.

Rapid Response: Teams coordinated with employers to offer timely on-site services that assisted affected workers in transitioning to new employment. Services included immediate information sessions about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and retraining opportunities. Connections to WIOA-funded services, such as career counseling and skills training, were also provided, along with support for employers to manage downsizing in a way that minimized impact and promoted rehiring or retooling when possible.

WIOA Service Providers

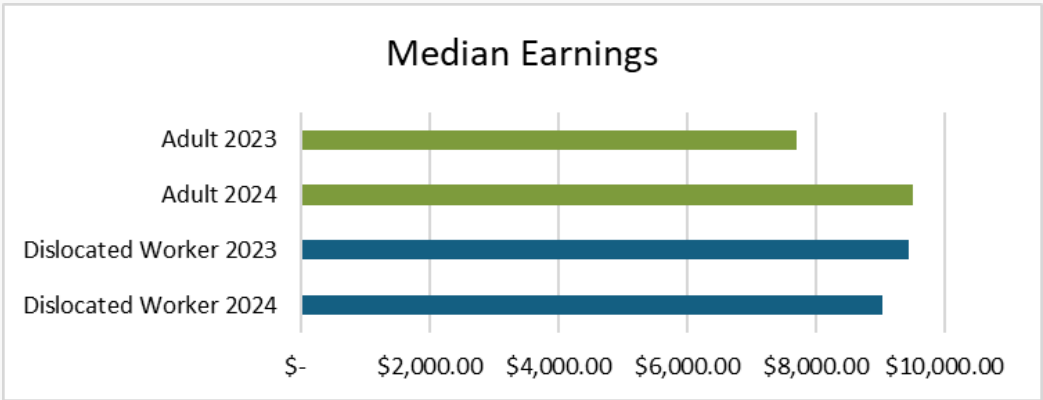
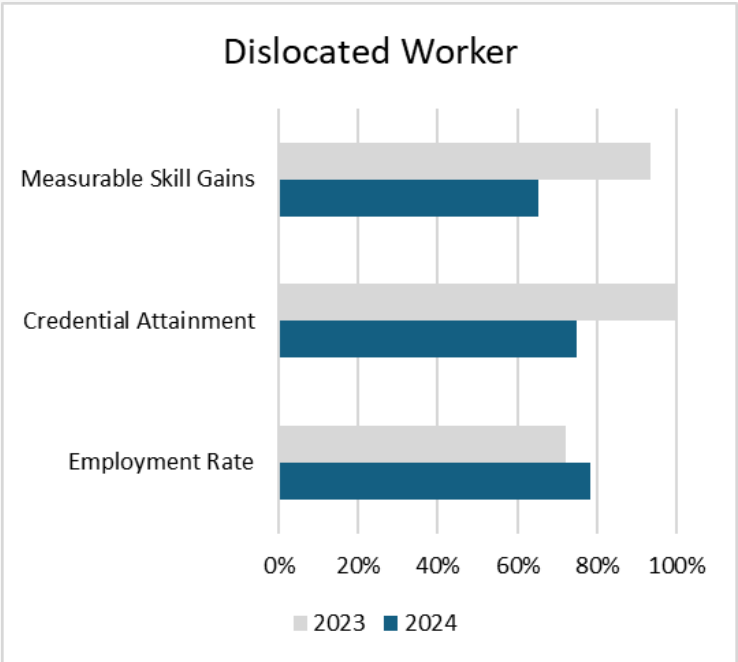
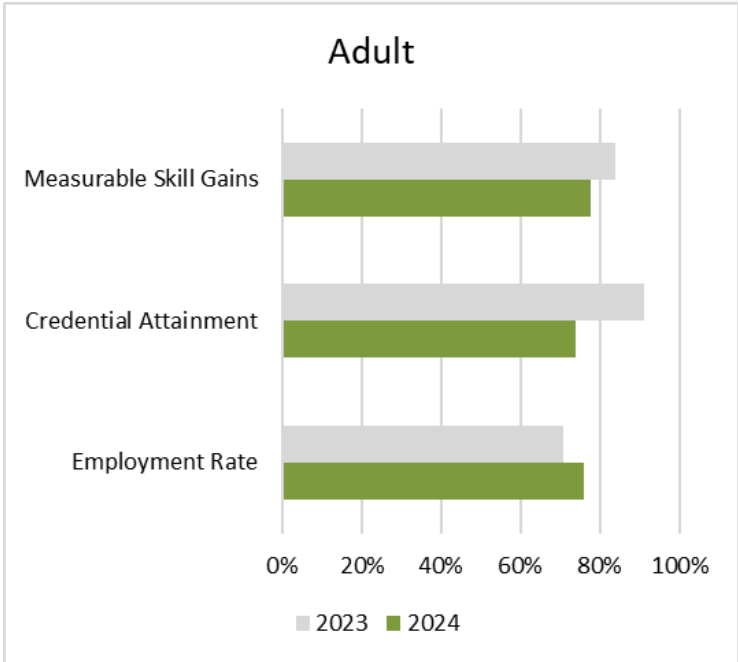


SOUTHWESTERN
AN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE



WIOA Program Highlights

WIOA’s impact is only possible through collaboration. Together, we are creating pathways to employment, strengthening families, and supporting a more inclusive, skilled workforce for our regions future. WIOA-funded programs empower individuals across our community by providing access to job training, career counseling, and employment support services.

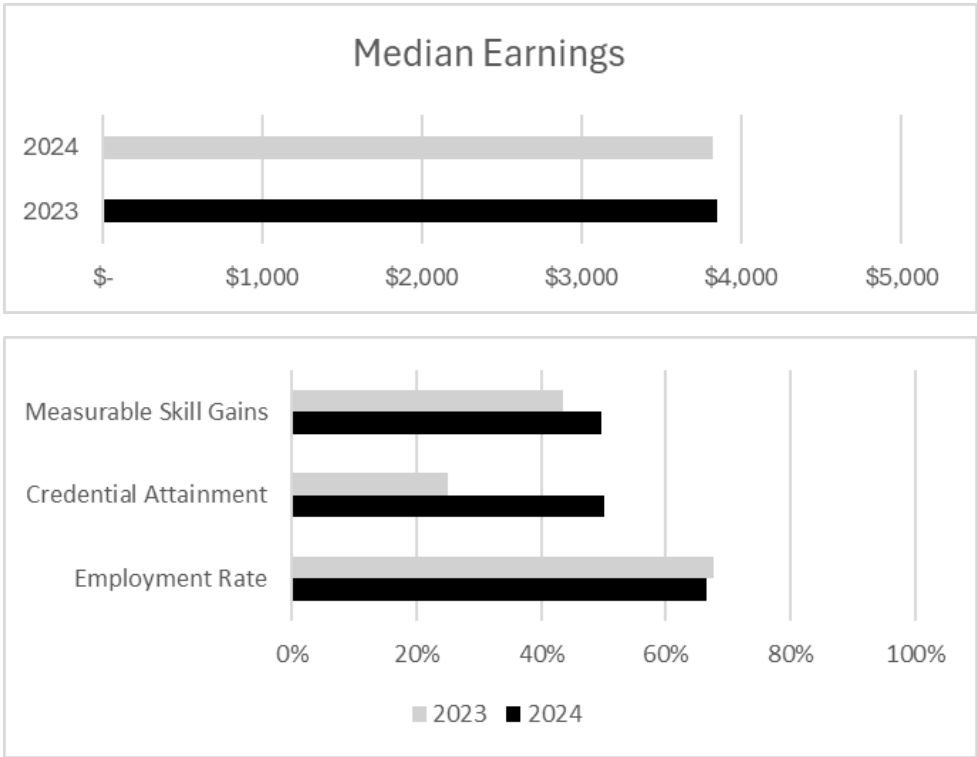


The federal government provides the formula funding, SOWIB invests this funding to meet regional workforce needs.

WIOA Customer Engagements:
Job Seeking Services: 816
Workforce Training: 298
Youth Programs: 282

WIOA Program Highlights

Youth: Ages 14-24



WIOA Youth participants develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), personalized plans developed with each young person to outline career goals, education objectives, and the specific services they'll receive to achieve them.

A minimum of 20% of funds must be dedicated to work experience opportunities, which can include internships, summer jobs, and on-the-job training.

A minimum of 75% of youth funds must be spent on out-of-school youth.

Prosperity 10,000

Prosperity 10,000 Future Ready Oregon was a \$35 million investment from the state in Oregon's 9 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). SOWIB was awarded \$1.9M of that to support training and wrap around services.

Occupational Skills Training

Tuition assistance has been provided to 176 individuals – primary programs include: Registered Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, Commercial Truck Driving, Dental Assistants and Community Health Workers. In total to date, 135 individuals have obtained their credentials and over \$700K has been paid out in tuition assistance.

Apprenticeship

SOWIB funding supports three apprenticeship programs: Certified Medical Assistant, Early Childhood Education, and Surgical Technicians. This financial support has benefited 48 individuals by offering essential wraparound services required for participation in the apprenticeship programs, as well as covering certification testing fees. These funds help our clients receive training while they earn, while also aiding businesses in securing a skilled workforce for these in-demand occupations.

SOWIB's Commitment to Community and Workforce Development

SOWIB focuses investments in projects and initiatives that positively impact the community and support our local workforce. Our funding facilitates outreach to businesses and participants throughout the three counties. We allocate resources, including funding, training, and staff capacity toward specific industries that are crucial for economic growth and have a high demand for workers in our region. SOWIB strategically invests in seven targeted workforce sectors.

Competitive Strategies

SOWIB convened diverse stakeholders to tackle workforce challenges. Key activities included regional collaboration summits, data-driven assessments of workforce gaps, and targeted training in high-demand sectors such as healthcare and construction. Notable initiatives featured a Child Care ROI study to inform policy. Collaboration helped launch a surgical technology apprenticeship, expand diesel mechanic training, and develop a construction workforce proposal, addressing workforce shortages. Funds were used for event sponsorships, research, and training expansions to enhance organizational sustainability and address workforce barriers.

Industry Engagement

We support specific industries that are crucial for economic growth and have a strong demand for workers in our area. SOWIB focuses its investments on seven key workforce sectors that include: Transportation, Construction, Healthcare, Hospitality & Leisure, Manufacturing, Maritime, Child Care.

Maritime

SOWIB's maritime funds helped a total of 721 individuals. We have made significant progress across several industry-supported initiatives. These efforts include launching a Maritime Upholstery business and supporting the establishment of a seafood processing market. Additionally, we have provided critical assistance to commercial fishing operators by funding essential tools, licenses, and safety equipment to sustain their operations. To enhance workforce development, we are advancing hands-on work experiences for youth, integrating boat-building classes into local high school shop programs to foster career exploration in this high-demand sector. In partnership with Southwestern Oregon Community College, we have assisted in the development and funding for a Diesel Mechanic training program. Furthering our commitment to workforce accessibility, we are supporting the creation of a Seafood Butchery program to provide low-barrier employment opportunities for individuals transitioning out of homelessness.

WIOA State/Federal Funded Grants

Reentry

40 individuals have engaged with our Community Care Manager

RC "Dawn" worked as a motel housekeeper, working 15 hours per week at \$14.25 per hour. Through enrollment and assistance from the Adult and ARPA programs, Dawn began an OJT with an Optical Clinic and is now working 40 hours per week at \$18 per hour. His new job provides full Medical and Retirement benefits.

NDWG Quest

38 individuals have enrolled into training services

Jason moved from New York to Oregon in November 2024 to be closer to family after a major life change. With limited opportunities in his previous field of news photography, he decided to pursue a new career as a truck driver and obtain his CDL. He connected with SCBEC and stayed committed through weather delays during training. Jason completed his CDL program in February 2025, passed his driving test in March of 2025, earning his Class A CDL.

Within two weeks, he was hired by A&M Transport as an over-the-road driver, starting at \$23.40 per hour

Work Experience

Served 31 individuals

22 received Occupational Skill Training

Patty's Success Story

Patty faced challenges finding work because she was justice-involved and had trouble passing background checks. She learned about the WorkEX program through her SCB Career Consultant, Connie.

Through WorkEX, Patty received training that helped her move from a Certified Nursing Assistant to a Certified Medication Aide. This training gave her new skills, a better understanding of her patients, and a raise in pay.

Patty says WorkEX is a great program that helps people with barriers get training to advance their careers. She recommends it to others and suggests giving more time for the clinical part of the training. Patty plans to continue working as a Medication Aide with her current employer.





The South Coast Early Learning Hub is one of 16 Regional Early Learning Hubs across the state, serving Coos, Curry, and Coastal Douglas Counties.

Our vision is a community where all young children, prenatal to age six, experience an early start that results in positive health, education, and life outcomes regardless of zip code, race, and family income.

The 2023-25 Biennium was a period of change and growth at the South Coast Early Learning Hub. We took on several new initiatives and expanded our work to address needs impacting children, families, and programs on the south coast.

To learn more about our work, visit www.screlhub.org.

Capacity Building and Collaboration



We provide technical assistance and support to community partners to strengthen and align the local Early Learning system.

Community Investments

We invest in innovative local programs.

Focus Areas include:

- Family Support services
- Parent Education and Engagement
- Kindergarten Transition Programs
- Professional Learning Teams
- Early Literacy

Between 2023-25 we invested **\$368,000** in 29 projects and programs.

Prenatal to Grade 3

We focus on strengthening relationships between community partners, and building a strong continuum of support for children from birth through early elementary school.

This biennium we launched the Early Childhood Partnership Meeting, to build connections and increase awareness of programs that serve families and children.

We partnered with Pacific Research and Evaluation to redesign evaluation strategies and measure progress over time. Find the data summary on our website.

Childcare Accelerator

A regional initiative on Oregon's South Coast that supports entrepreneurs in launching and sustaining high-quality child care businesses.

This project is a collaborative partnership between the SCREL Hub, NeighborWorks Umpqua, Care Connections, and the South Coast Equity Coalition.

In 2024-25 we coordinated three cohorts, including one in Spanish. **29 participants** completed the program.

Home Visiting Systems Coordination

Focused on supporting professionals, raising awareness of program options, and increasing participation levels.

This biennium Home Visiting Programs aligned outreach and referral efforts with Early Learning Programs and rolled out the Find Programs Screening tool on the SCREL Hub website.

Additionally, through community partnerships, this biennium marked the return of two vital programs to our region, Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) and the Coastal Families Relief Nursery.

Family Engagement and Empowerment

SCREL has a variety of programs and services to help families find the resources they need to thrive.



Coordinated Enrollment & Referral

In 2024 we launched a screening tool including **33 programs** to help families find services they are eligible for including parenting education, in home support, child care, and preschool. to date we have **supported 613 families** in navigating early learning programs.

Baby & Preschool Promise

We worked with programs from Reedsport to Brookings to **enroll 287 families** into free, high quality childcare and preschool.

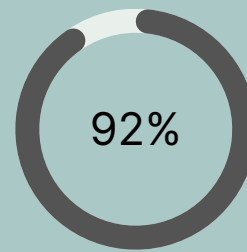
Parent Cafes

We served **569 caregivers** with a total of **1,348 children** through monthly parent education opportunities utilizing, the Be Strong Family Model; promoting protective factors that cultivate healthy relationships, prevent abuse and neglect, and strengthen communities.

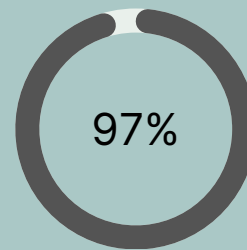
Parent Advisory Council

Regional group of caregivers walking side by side with SCREL staff to foster significant change within our communities, including assisting with a **CCO access gap analysis with Advanced Health and Family Preservation with ODHS.**

Post data from our monthly Parent Cafes show that attendees...



Learned a new way to handle stress or challenges in their life



Now feel more comfortable going to a professional or seeking community resources for help

"I learned so much helpful information... I plan to make changes in how I spend time with my kids."

- Parent Cafe Participant

"They really listen to us and make changes... it changes your community."

- Parent Advisory Council Member

Recruit HIPPO connects education, workforce, business and community partners across Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties to help youth discover their strengths, explore careers, and build pathways to success. What began as a school-based initiative now serves both in-school and out-of-school youth, aligning regional programs under one system to prepare the next generation for success.

Regional Reach & Scale

Recruit HIPPO expanded its team and services to meet rising youth workforce needs, growing into 29 high school and alternative education sites across Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties. As the program scaled, we identified the need for stronger continuity from in-school support to post-graduation pathways. In response, we launched an out-of-school youth program at local WorkSource centers. Together, these efforts created a seamless system that ensures young people remain connected to career readiness, training, and employment as they move into the workforce.

Total Youth Served

1303

Work-Based Learning Placements

270

Events Facilitated

153

Schools & Sites Engaged

32

Employers Partnered

250

Credentials Earned

700+

Average Services per Participant

17



Recruit HIPPO Youth Employment Advisors support young individual to explore, learn, and shape a future anchored in their community.

Recruit HIPPO Highlights 2023-25

In School Youth

Students Served

1284

Placements & Internships

194

Schools Engaged

29

Events and Workshops Facilitated

153

Businesses Engaged

166

Key Activities

- Delivery of Oregon Employability Skills and work readiness workshops
- NCRC, OSHA-10, CPR/First Aid, and Food Handler certifications
- Career fairs, industry tours, and college visits
- Paid internships and for-credit placements in multiple industries.
- Support for alternative, online, and detention youth to expand access and equity

Out of School Youth

Youth Served

55

Work-Based Learning Placements

76

Occupational & Workplace Training

39

Career Coaching & Job Search

Assistance Services

425

High School Diploma & GED Support

28

What This Means

- 17 average touchpoints per youth, ensuring sustained engagement and follow-through.
- 76 work-based learning placements offered valuable real job experience, complete with wages and/or mentorship.
- Education and Employment Pathways: 25 youths received support in earning their high school diploma, while 3 worked towards obtaining a GED.

Recruit HIPPO System Integration & Regional Innovation



Recruit HIPPO created a seamless pipeline from school to workforce, uniting policies, staff training, and data systems under one shared vision.

Seamless Support

A shared tracking system ensures no youth falls through the cracks. Partners can see progress, celebrate achievements, and respond quickly when support is needed.

Shared Investment

Public, private, and community partners pool resources to build a stronger, more sustainable system for youth success.

Meeting Youth Where They Are

Advisors are based in schools and community spaces, working side by side with educators and families to provide hands-on guidance and real-time connection to opportunities

Connected Pathways

Local employers open doors to internships, mentoring, and work experience, helping youth see how their education translates to real careers close to home.

“Before HIPPO, I didn’t know what I wanted to do after graduation. Now I’ve earned my CPR and OSHA certifications and started a hospital internship.”
— Senior, Myrtle Point High School

“The students came prepared, certified, confident, and ready to learn. We’ve hired two interns directly from the program.”
— Coos Bay Employer

Together, these partnerships create a unified system of support that empowers every young person to explore, learn, and build a future rooted in their community.

Traditional Health Worker Integration Project

Building community-based health capacity across Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties.

Overview

Through the Oregon Health Authority’s HOWTO grant, SOWIB and partners are strengthening Oregon’s Traditional Health Worker (THW) system by expanding training, certification, and employment opportunities. The program connects individuals with lived experience to meaningful work in behavioral health, addiction recovery, birth care, and community wellness.



Certified Birth Doula Chaukae Donley helps families across Coos County through pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care.

Quick Stats

Individuals Engaged	154
Trainings Completed	102
THW Certifications	89
Partner Agencies	53
THW Specialties	5
Counties Served	3

Key Outcomes

- ✓ **134%** of original training goal
- ✓ **114%** of expanded training goal
- ✓ **76** unique individuals certified
(some trained in multiple specialties)

Training Achievements and Certification Milestones

We surpassed our training objectives across all five Traditional Health Worker (THW) specialties. Our participants successfully completed more than 100 training sessions, and we supported 76 trainees in obtaining Oregon Health Authority (OHA) certification. Our ongoing collaboration with providers continues to improve regional access to workforce development opportunities.

Traditional Health Worker (THW) Training Program

Three Years of Progress: 2022 – 2025



102
Trainings Completed

76
Certified THWs

134%
Goal Achievement

Traditional Health Worker Specialities

This OHA HowTo grant is concluding in December 2025 it covered all five THW specialties.

- Peer Support Specialist – Mental Health (PSS-MH)**
- Peer Support Specialist – Adult Addictions (PSS-SUD)**
- Peer Support Specialist – Youth (PSS-YSS)**
- Community Health Worker (CHW)**
- Birth Doula**



SOWIB is strengthening Oregon’s community health workforce across Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties.

Community Voices and Real-World Impact

Behind every Traditional Health Worker (THW) certification is a person dedicated to improving the well-being of their community. These stories are the heart of the program, the people whose lived experiences now guide others toward healing, resilience, and stability across Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties.

Skyler Mitchell – Certified Birth Doula, Douglas

Skyler offers personalized care focused on emotional, physical, and informational support before, during, and after birth. Her work helps families feel supported through every stage of their birthing journey

***“Having someone there for me as an advocate and supporter would have been a tremendous help when delivering my daughter...
Now, I get to be that person for others.”***



Tyler Larsen – Certified Youth Support Specialist (YSS), Coos

Tyler completed YSS Paid Work Experience training through SOWIB's THW program and gained hands-on experience with Southern Oregon Coast Pride (SOCP) in a youth-leadership role. Tyler organized meetings, created digital media, and provided one-on-one peer support offering the encouragement once needed while growing up in rural Oregon.

“My time working with SOCP was extraordinary. I was able to take on a leadership role and connect with youth in meaningful ways.”



Sarah Kaplansky – Youth Peer Support Specialist, Curry

Sarah completed Birth Doula training and is working toward OHA certification. She serves her community as a certified Youth Peer Support Specialist (YPSS), supporting youth and families across Curry County.

“Whether at home or in a hospital, I’m here to help families feel empowered and supported.”



Expanding Access

As the HOWTO project concludes, SOWIB remains committed to advancing Oregon's Traditional Health Worker system through innovation, equity, and collaboration. The lessons learned, partnerships built, and lives changed through this grant will continue to strengthen the region's community health infrastructure for years to come.

Collaboration for Long-Term Impact

Traditional Health Workers (THWs) play a vital role in improving access to care and strengthening relationships between community members and health systems. Their shared lived experience and deep cultural understanding help bridge gaps in healthcare delivery while fostering equity, trust, and self-determination across Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties.

With 53 partner agencies and five THW specialties in place, SOWIB continues to build a network of support that bridges healthcare, education, and community organizations. Partnerships with OHA-approved providers, community-based organizations, and local health coalitions will remain essential to sustaining progress and ensuring equitable access to care.



Scan the QR Code or visit:
bycell.co/ddbcy to access
SOWIB's Traditional Health
Worker resources.

Funded through the Oregon Health Authority's Healthcare Workforce Training and Outreach (HOWTO) Grant, \$935,166 (2022–2025).

Workforce Benefits Navigator (WBN)

Innovation in Motion: Connecting People to Opportunity

"Our booth is working! Patrons have a quiet place to make phone calls and take Zoom meetings. We love it!"
— Teresa Lucas, Coquille Library Director

Expanding Access Across Southwestern Oregon

WBN booths are operational in libraries and community centers throughout the region, offering secure, private spaces for residents to engage with technology, workforce programs, and receive personalized guidance.

WBN also integrates with SOWIB's Recruit HIPPO initiative to extend workforce navigation support and career awareness to youth and emerging workers.

These collaborations empower individuals to search for jobs, craft resumes, apply for benefits, or connect virtually with career coaches and local WorkSource Services, all conveniently located within local communities.



SCAN ME



<https://bycell.co/dcrft>

Booth Locations:

Gold Beach | Port Orford
Coquille | North Bend | Drain
Myrtle Creek
Roseburg (Cow Creek Tribes)
Glide | Glendale

Good Jobs Challenge

A “Good Job” is a quality job that exceeds the local prevailing wage for an industry in the region, includes benefits and/or is unionized, and helps the employee develop the skills and experiences necessary to advance along a career path.



The Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB) was awarded the Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Good Jobs Challenge grant in September 2022. A cohort of 32 industry-led workforce training partnerships was chosen from a field of 509 applicants.

SOWIB’s \$3.4 million award helped to develop the Driving Prosperity Program focused on career training and job placement for the trucking industry.

Driving Prosperity, led by the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB), in partnership with a strategic alliance of transportation sector partners, has been committed to ensuring program success. Partners included two regional workforce training organizations, employers, associations, and educational entities. These partners successfully assisted close to 400 individuals in acquiring their commercial driver’s licenses (CDL).

This program has significantly bolstered employment opportunities for Oregon residents by offering free CDL training. As a result, 374 individuals have been successfully trained, and to date, 83% of these individuals have reported securing good jobs in the transportation industry.



“Here in Tyree, for instance, 10 percent of our workforce by this June will be represented through the Good Jobs grant. That’s pretty significant from a CDL driving perspective.”

**-Billy Dover,
Director of
Operations
Lubricant for
Tyree Oil**

Good Jobs Challenge



374 CDL truck drivers were trained across six counties: Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, and Lane. Training providers from across the region united to ensure that classroom seats were filled to capacity.

Training Champions:

- Aisling Truck Academy
- Coast Trucking School
- Knife River Training Center
- Northwest Trucking Academy
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Rogue Community College
- Umpqua Community College

By combining and utilizing financial resources with partners, we were able to provide additional tuition support, wraparound services, and valuable resources.

Partners included:

- Oregon Employment Department
- Veterans Administration
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- SNAP Training and Employment Program
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act service providers
- Alternative state resources (P10K)
- Salvation Army
- Goodwill-Job Connection
- Onward
- Private employers

"I believe that most of these students would not have been able to attend the school without the financial assistance of this grant. For many of the clients they are in dire straits financially, even some homeless. It has been rewarding to see how these students have been able to turn their lives around and most have been employed within 2 weeks of graduation. Graduates are starting at \$25-\$28 per hour. Many have come back and shared with us how they would never have been able to change their lives without the training they have received. We know that this was made possible by the Prosperity grant."

**-Don Edward- Recruiter,
Aisling Truck Academy**

Medical Assistant Apprenticeship

SOWIB's Medical Assistant Apprenticeship started in 2018 and remains **SOWIB's most successful apprenticeship.**

New Enrollments - 55

Applications Received - 244

Completers (From Previous Years) - 38

This apprenticeship is approved in 22 counties in Oregon:

Baker, Benton, Coos, Clackamas, Clatsop, Curry, Douglas, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lincoln, Linn, Malheur, Morrow, Multnomah, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Washington.

We currently have 15 approved employer/training agents, and we continue to conduct outreach to attract additional employers.

Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship

SOWIB's Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship was approved by the Bureau of Labor and Industries and the Oregon Health Authority in January 2025. **It's Oregon's first Surgical Technology Apprenticeship.**

New Enrollments - 7

Applications Received - 90

This apprenticeship is approved in 15 counties in Oregon:

Benton, Douglas, Jackson, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Wallowa, Lane, Grant, Clackamas, Wasco, Multnomah, Tillamook, Harney, and Deschutes.

Our goal is to make the program available statewide, allowing SOWIB to support the growing need for more trained surgical technologists.

Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship

Oregon's first Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship started in July 2022, with its first two apprentices completing the program in the 2025 fiscal year.

New Enrollments - 6

Applications Received - 9

Completers (From Previous Years) - 2

*"...One of the steps to unemployment is going to the career center for a meeting and help with job searches. There, I was given a flyer for the Early Childhood Apprenticeship program. I emailed the same day, asking for more information, and was contacted back immediately. I was thrilled to hear that not only will they pay for me to get an education, but they will also place me in a paying job working for Head Start. **This program saved me, and it has felt like it was meant to be from the start. I would not have gone back to school without this program.** I still had student loan debt from my veterinary degree, and I wasn't about to create more. I am also a single parent, and I am the sole provider for my son. I have to work, so going to school didn't seem in the cards. The way this program is set up made it completely attainable for me to go back to school fully online and continue to work to support myself and my son. **This has been such a positive, life-changing experience for me.** Where am I heading now? Well, I did so well with this program I earned a full scholarship through the Ford Family Foundation. I am two semesters in on my bachelor's degree at Southern Oregon University, and have already been asked if I am interested in the master's program. I am!"*



-Rebecca, Attended Southwestern Oregon Community College. Earned- Associate of Applied Science in Preschool Child Development/Certificate Preschool Children Education and Development II.

