

Southeast King County Higher Education Needs Assessment

Advisory Committee Kick-Off Meeting

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM | July 22, 2016 | Covington, Washington

City of Covington Welcome (10:00-10:05 AM)

City of Covington City Manager Regan Bolli welcomed participants to the City offices and expressed their gratefulness for the legislative support that enabled this needs assessment. He explained that the City of Covington functions as the retail and medical hub of southeast King County, however, that the area currently lacks access to higher education options.

Introductions & Goals (10:05-11:00 AM)

Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) Director of Academic Affairs and Policy Randy Spaulding introduced himself and WSAC's goals for the project – identifying the higher education needs present in southeast King County and identifying potential options and associated costs for meeting those needs. He then introduced the organization contracted for this work, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

WICHE's Director of Policy Analysis, Demi Michelau, introduced the organization. Michelau explained that WICHE is a regional compact of the 15 western states and the Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States with the mission of improving access to high quality higher education for all citizens of the west. She went on to describe WICHE's four units: Programs and Services, Mental Health, the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technology, and Policy Analysis and Research as well as the organization's governance structure. WICHE Project Coordinator Christina Sedney then shared examples of the state contract and grant-funded work WICHE's Policy Analysis and Research is currently engaged in.

Sedney then asked present members of the Advisory Committee to share their connection with southeast King County and their goals for the needs assessment. Members' goals included increasing access to higher education for underserved students in the region - including adults with some college credit and no degree, supporting increased higher education attainment in the region, and identifying and developing a higher education solution for those whom issues such as transportation and cost create a "higher education desert," possibly keeping them from earning a high-value credential.



Meeting Objectives (11:00 AM – 11:05 AM)

WICHE staff then reviewed meeting materials and gave an overview of the meeting goals: introducing needs assessment staff; presenting and soliciting feedback on the Study Plan of Action; discussing the role of the Advisory Committee; identifying key regional stakeholders; and confirming upcoming meeting dates.

Data Background (11:05-11:10 AM)

Sedney followed with a brief overview of relevant projects conducted by WSAC to date, their statewide 2013 Roadmap report and 2015 Roadmap update, as well as a 2014 overview of the City of Covington.

Data Overview (11:10 – 11:50 AM)

The next session focused on a presentation of preliminary data describing the southeast King County region, beginning with an interactive discussion on the specific geographic area to be studied. The current language describing the geographic area for the needs assessment from the Study Plan of Action reads "southeast King County, Washington (defined as rural suburban cities such as Covington, Enumclaw, Maple Valley, Black Diamond, and urban and rural portions of unincorporated King County." For purposes of the kick-off meeting, WICHE looked at data from the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA)¹ defined by the U.S. Census Bureau for "King County (Southeast)-Maple Valley, Covington & Enumclaw Cities" as well as the surrounding PUMAs.

Geographic Definition

This definition of the study area generated significant discussion as to the appropriate boundaries for the needs assessment. City of Covington City Manager Regan Bolli suggested that the southeast King County PUMA was a good boundary for the work, while others shared different opinions. Some felt that the neighboring areas of Kent and Auburn should be included, for example, Joe Potts shared that the Kent school district serves students from both southeast King County and surrounding areas and Cathy Calvert noted that many Auburn residents commute to Covington for services. Jean Flotan added that some nearby areas seem to have a greater proportion of under-served populations and Cody Eccles mentioned that neighboring areas might also be in need of services. Bolli responded that higher education access concerns specifically are most relevant to the southeast King County PUMA. Antonio Sanchez suggested

¹ Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) are statistical geographic areas defined for the dissemination of Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data. They are also used for disseminating American Community Survey (ACS) and Puerto Rico Community Survey period estimates. 2010 PUMAs: Nest within states or equivalent entities; contain at least 100,000 people; cover the entirety of the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; are built on census tracts and counties; and should be geographically contiguous.

that it will be important to understand where existing higher education physical facilities are located and commuting patterns to get a better sense of the needs. Demi Michelau agreed that this work cannot be done in a vacuum and that it will be important to understand the needs and use patterns of all areas in the region.

WICHE staff went on to outline demographic, economic, occupational, and educational data for southeast King County and the surrounding areas drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census Bureau² as well as WICHE's own Knocking at the College Door projections of high school graduates.

Demographics

The demographic data indicate that the population of the southeast King County PUMA is predominantly White (81 percent), followed by Hispanic or Latino (6.4 percent) and Asian (4.9 percent). The area is also home to the Muckleshoot Reservation, and .3 percent of southeast King County's population is American Indian or Alaskan Native. The surrounding areas—such as central and southwest central King County—have more demographically diverse populations.

WICHE's Knocking at the College Door projections of high school graduates demonstrated that the Western region of the United States is seeing a strong trend towards diversification, in large part driven by a growing share of Hispanic or Latino students. Washington's state-level trends show a similar shift towards a more diverse population of high school graduates – however, Washington's shift is driven by growth in the number of both Hispanic or Latino students and Asian students. However, Michelau clarified that these projections were developed in 2008-2009 and are therefore somewhat dated and noted that new projections will be available in December of 2016 though likely too late for inclusion in this assessment.

Income

WICHE staff went on to share income and earnings data for the southeast King County PUMA compared to the 15 surrounding PUMAs in King County and Seattle City, the county as a whole, the state, and the country. The median family income for the southeast King County PUMA is \$98,477 compared to a high of \$141,955 in the central King County PUMA and a low of \$59,239 in the west central King County PUMA. Median annual earnings in southeast King County were \$44,820 compared to a high of \$66,592

² WICHE used ACS 5 year estimates, which include data from 2010-2014.

in central King County and a low of \$28,315 in west central King County. Finally, annual per capita income in southeast King County was \$36,512 compared to a high of \$56,788 in central King County and a low of \$25,084 in west central King County.

Occupation

In terms of occupation,³ 26 percent of civilian southeast King County residents aged 16 and above work in sales and office occupations; 18 percent work in management, business, and financial occupations; 13 percent work in service occupations; 12 percent in production, transportation, and material moving; eight percent in education, legal, community service, arts, and media; eight percent in computer, engineering, and science; six percent in construction and extraction; four percent in healthcare and technical occupations; four percent in installation, maintenance and repair; and one percent in farming, fishing and forestry. Southeast King County has the highest percentage of sales and office workers in the area, but generally its occupational breakdown is fairly similar to other PUMAs in the region.

The occupational categories overview was followed by some Advisory Committee discussion, as WICHE staff asked for further insights into local industries and employment patterns. Mark Lanza shared that the MultiCare Health System is building a hospital in Covington which, though not yet open to the public, has begun employing people and will likely employ more people locally going forward. Josh Lyons noted that the occupational employment breakdowns from the ACS data did not necessarily align with his expectations as a resident and business owner in the area and that perhaps people interpreted ACS occupational categories differently than he might. Bill Allison commented that in Maple Valley, most people commute to other areas for work, such as to Microsoft and Boeing facilities. Cathy Calvert mentioned that she has heard that the Muckleshoot Tribe is the area's second largest employer. Others speculated that the school district might be among the area's largest employers, and Randy Spaulding suggested that Employment Security Department data could be used to get a better understanding of employment outcomes for area residents.

³ Occupational categories are those defined by the ACS

Education Attainment

Sedney then ran through educational attainment levels for the region – looking at the highest level of education achieved by the working age (25-64) population. Southeast King County's educational attainment levels break down to: five percent with less than a high school degree; 26 percent with a high school degree or equivalent; 28 percent with some college, but no degree; 10 percent with an associate's degree; 22 percent with a bachelor's degree; and nine percent with a graduate or professional degree. Out of the area PUMAs, southeast King County ranks 12th out of 16 in terms of postsecondary degree attainment with 41 percent of their population holding an associate's degree or higher and 59 percent not holding a postsecondary degree of any kind. Northeast Seattle leads area educational attainment with 77 percent of their working-age population holding an associate's degree or higher, while southwest King County (Auburn City and Lakeland) rank 16th with only 32 percent of their population holding an associate's degree or higher.

A question was raised by the City of Covington representatives as to the differences in these attainment numbers versus prior reports on the area (such as WSAC staff member Daryl Monear's 2014 look at the City of Covington specifically). Likely explanations for these discrepancies include different geographic boundaries (unlike the older study, this area includes not just the City of Covington as defined by zip code, but the entire PUMA including Black Diamond, Maple Valley, Enumclaw, and adjacent unincorporated areas of the county), the age group studied (the numbers presented at the meeting refer to the working-age population and include those with degrees who migrated into the area – not just area residents who earned degrees); and the data sources used (the data sources presented at the meeting reflect more recent ACS data).

Place of Work

The next item of discussion was place of work – which provides an initial look at where area residents work in relation to where they live. Southeast King County residents overwhelmingly work within the county, with 90 percent working in King County, nine percent working in a different Washington county, and only one percent working

outside the state – a breakdown which is fairly consistent among other area PUMAs. More unique to southeast King County is the percent of residents who work outside their place of residence (a smaller Census location designation), with 85.08 percent of county residents working outside their place of residence. Of the regional PUMAs, southeast King County ranks two out of 16 in terms of percentage who commute outside their place of residence for work – just barely topped by west central King County where 85.75 percent of residents commute outside their place of residence to work.

Discussion

General discussion on the data overview began with Cody Eccles suggesting that the assessment needs to consider what kinds of populations could be served by this initiative. Antonio Sanchez cautioned that there is significant underreporting in the Hispanic population, which should be considered when looking at the growth of the Hispanic population. Jim Schmidt added that disaggregated data—including for subgroups within the “Asian” demographic designation—should be available at the K-12 level at least.

Randy Spaulding noted that the income figures will require a more granular breakdown to provide an accurate view of the area, and suggested looking for bimodal income distributions (as the median may be skewed by high-income pockets, such as around the local golf course). Jean Flotan reiterated that since under-served areas are so close that incorporating them into the needs assessment study area might strengthen the case for support for providing additional higher education options.

Jenee Myers Twitchell noted that most community and technical colleges in the area should have workforce demand estimates of some type that could be used. Jean Flotan added that during her time in Bellevue, a local bank had done survey research into local employer demand and suggested that something similar might exist in this region. However, no Advisory Committee members were aware of analogous research in southeast King County.

Study Plan of Action

WICHE staff then moved on to describe the Study Plan of Action they developed in collaboration with WSAC for the project.

Project Partners

Demi Michelau began by introducing the project partners WICHE is engaging in the work. She explained that WICHE is subcontracting with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to assist with the data collection and analysis for the project, as well as to assist with the cost estimates for the identified project plan. She noted that NCHEMS shares an office building with WICHE and the two organizations have a long history of close collaboration. She also mentioned that NCHEMS' President Emeritus Dennis Jones will serve as the key contact on this project for NCHEMS, and that Jones has conducted similar assessments in over 20 states and brings a wealth of experience to the project.

Michelau went on to introduce the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), a separate division of WICHE which focuses on the practice, policy, and advocacy of technology-enhanced learning in higher education. WCET's Director of Policy and Analysis Russ Poulin will consult on the project on an as-needed basis to provide insight into relevant trends in distance education that may affect the area's higher education options.

Deliverables

Michelau then covered the project's deliverables, which are: a draft preliminary report of the Higher Education Needs Assessment (due September 30, 2016); draft preliminary report of the Higher Education Needs Assessment (due November 1, 2016); a draft Final Higher Education Needs Assessment and a draft Program and Operating Plan (due December 1, 2016); and a Final Higher Education Needs Assessment and a Final Program and Operating Plan (due December 30, 2016). She then outlined the data to be included in these documents: postsecondary data on enrollment trends, participation rates, transfer patterns, and existing programs; economic demand and

workforce needs; demographic data on the population; and data on commuting times to existing postsecondary options and to employment.

Data Sources

She also described the data sources that will be included in the analysis: the U.S. Census and American Community Survey; Washington State's Education Research and Data Center; Burning Glass⁴ workforce data; Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board data; State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); as well as regional stakeholder interviews.

Timeline

WICHE staff then outlined the timeline for the project which began in June 2016 and will continue through December 2016. Stakeholder interviews will be conducted in August (potentially extending into September); data collection will take place over August and September; and data and findings will be interpreted, summarized, and compiled into the draft preliminary report during the month of September. In October, WICHE staff will incorporate feedback from the Advisory Committee on the draft preliminary report into the final preliminary report. In November, WICHE staff will prepare the final report and in December they will incorporate Advisory Committee feedback into the final report.

Break (11:50 AM – 12:00 PM)

Lunch Discussion (12:00 – 12:45 PM)

Lunch featured informal discussions among all participants based on three guiding questions:

- What major trends have you observed in the area in the last 5-10 years?
- What do you see as key factors affecting the area in the next 5-10 years?
- What would you like to see the area look like in 10-20 years?

Role of Advisory Committee (12:45 – 1:00 PM)

After lunch, the Advisory Committee reconvened as a group to clarify their specific role in the needs assessment process moving forward. The group committed to meeting five

⁴ Real-time data on local job openings

times (including the current meeting). When asked by WICHE staff the desired frequency of updates from project staff, general consensus seemed to emerge that updates via a group email would be desirable when key milestones were reached but that a prescribed update calendar was not necessary.

WICHE and WSAC staff reiterated that they would be available for individual questions throughout the project and Ellen Matheny of WSAC clarified that meeting notes would be posted after meetings and that a website would be developed for the group to access these and other relevant resources.

Identification of Regional Stakeholders (1:00- 1:20 PM)

Advisory Committee members then began a discussion focused on identifying who in the southeast King County area should be interviewed by project staff to contribute to the staff's understanding of regional context and trends. These suggestions are listed fully in a separate document, but included entities such as local employers, Green River Community College, Renton Technical College; local policymakers and state legislators; school district representatives; county planners; additional representatives from the Muckleshoot Tribe; and community development directors.

Logistics for Upcoming Meetings (1:20 – 1:35 PM)

The Advisory Committee then worked to confirm dates, times, and locations for the upcoming meetings. The group tentatively agreed on August 31, 2016 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM for the next meeting, at a to-be-determined location. The Advisory Committee also discussed potential future meeting locations including returning to the City of Covington offices, the Kent Station higher education facility, a location in Maple Valley, and the Muckleshoot Casino. The group concluded with the plan to check the availability of meeting space at the Muckleshoot Casino for the August 31 meeting and to hold the final November meeting in Covington – possibly at the new MultiCare facility.

Adjournment (1:35 – 1:40 PM)

As there was no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 PM.