

AI SUMMARY OF MEETING

Career Connect Washington Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Kimberly and Inez opened the meeting by reaffirming the advisory committee's purpose: to strengthen cross-sector collaboration, gather structured feedback, and support the long-term sustainability of Career Connect Washington (CCW). The committee is designed to elevate diverse stakeholder perspectives across K-12, higher education, employers, labor, and community organizations to shape statewide strategy and ensure equitable, high-quality career pathways for students and adult learners.

Committee responsibilities include providing policy and program input, amplifying stakeholder voice, and reinforcing alignment across systems to meet the needs of students, adult learners, employers, and communities.

Career Connect Washington Overview

Kimberly provided a comprehensive overview of CCW, its origins, and the career-connected learning ecosystem. Launched in 2019 under Governor Inslee to bridge gaps between education, employers, and labor, CCW supports scalable pathways with stackable credentials and meaningful paid work experiences. The coalition includes K-12, postsecondary, industry, labor, and local partners, anchored by oversight through WSAC and statewide workforce partners.

Funding Challenges & Sustainability

Kimberly and Andrew shared major funding challenges:

- State funds for CCW cut by ~80% (and ~70% at ESD)
- Federal grants ending soon (ABA and WJI)
- Loss of regional career learning coordinators and reduced grantmaking
- Consolidation to a single funding program supporting 13 projects vs. the original statewide scale

Despite constraints, current grants continue to serve ~5,000 individuals and sustain high-priority industry pipelines.

The group discussed the need for new sustainability strategies, long-term funding, and improved ROI demonstration to secure future investment.

Program Outcomes & Case Studies

CCW highlighted successful programs demonstrating strong workforce impact:

- **Lab Launch (Shoreline CC & Fred Hutch):** 7 of 12 recent participants placed into lab tech roles
- **Ecotour Healthcare Exploration:** 477 rural students served
- **Career Academy:** Scalable career navigation/prep model serving rural students
- **Jefferson Healthcare Pathway:** Local talent education and upskilling pipeline in rural community
- **MAC Framework:** Cross-industry welding curriculum aligned across K-12 and community colleges

Breakout Rooms & Discussion Themes

After initial technical challenges with breakout rooms, participants engaged in small-group conversations. Key themes shared out included:

1. Protect Workforce Education Funding

- Strong consensus on protecting the Workforce Education Investment Account (WEIA) from being repurposed.
- Legislative coordination needed to preserve funding for higher education and CCW initiatives.

2. Strengthening CTE & Teacher Capacity

- Expand certification pathways, foundational CTE training, and ongoing support for teachers
- Prioritize rural and under-resourced districts

3. Rural Access & Equity in Apprenticeships

- Distance to skill centers and limited program availability create inequity
- Need to strengthen CTE “on-ramps” to apprenticeship and adjust policy for rural participation

4. Data, Measurement & ROI

- Align CCW measurement with workforce outcomes
- Improve job placement tracking beyond internships
- Explore alignment with Washington Jobs Initiative data systems

5. Implementation Realities in Schools

- Local control affects adoption; superintendent and district priorities vary
- Loss of regional CCW CCL coordinators reduced on-the-ground support
- Committee stressed keeping classroom educators' voices central

Looking Ahead

Kimberly emphasized CCW's direction for the next biennium:

- Recenter CCW as a convening and grantmaking leader within the workforce ecosystem
- Strengthen measurement and data alignment to show ROI
- Engage statewide partners in developing policy proposals for the legislature
- Prioritize student and workforce outcomes, equity, and system alignment

The next meeting will focus on deeper stakeholder input and collaborative strategy building.

Follow-Up Actions

Funding & Policy

- Advocate to protect the Workforce Education Investment Account (WEIA)
(Joel Anderson)

Program & Talent Development

- Develop strategies to build CTE instructor capacity and support rural districts
(Joel Anderson & Sarah Patterson)

Access & Equity

- Recommend policy solutions to improve rural access to apprenticeships
(Joel Anderson)

Data & Accountability

- Share CCW legislative report with any missing participants *(Kimberly)*
- Provide data measurement follow-up to Ryan *(Kimberly)*
- Strengthen job placement and longitudinal tracking strategies

Stakeholder Engagement

- Follow up with AESD & Michelle Price to expand regional involvement *(Kimberly)*
- Continue shared document reflections and collaboration.

