

Washington Talent Triad
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FIRST Washington

1. Why are the partner organizations that are or will be included in this work the ones that came together to address educational attainment through place-based work in your region?

- **More than 190** state agencies, technical schools, colleges, universities, and several industry partners like the Association of Washington Business and Industry (AWBI).
- **Model Solutions** is a mission-driven government affairs and marketing firm focused on building a better world by sharing best practices. This team has decades of experience in working with all 50 states, hundreds of municipalities and leading corporations and governments throughout the world.
- **The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB)**. WTB was created by Washington Legislature in 1991. It is a Governor-appointed partnership of labor, business and government that is dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers. (included to ensure alignment, but will not receive funding)
- **WSU Extension (project advisor)**. WSU Extension's Community & Economic Development (CED) serves 39 counties and more than 27 federally recognized tribes. WSU Extension CED has a longstanding history of achievement in community resilience. WSU Extension's Division of Government and Social Sciences (DGSS) will assist by providing an economic impact analysis through an economist in partnership with the WSU Medical College.
- **Kalispel Career Training Center (KCTC)**. The Kalispel Tribe, along with community partners have developed KCTC and provides adults and youth vocational training needed to acquire living wage jobs in the community. The Kalispel Tribe works with WSU Extension through the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP). Health and nutrition through the lens of Food is Medicine is an important aspect of learning and education leading to community resilience.
- **Pend Oreille Innovation Center (POIC)**. POIC is nurtured by a federally recognized non-profit and facilitates non-credit and credit opportunities through apprenticeships and microlearning, the Datacenter Greenhouse project and Food is Medicine. This will be the first pilot project in the AgriProspect Clearinghouse (a USDA funded skills and competency-based credential engine for agriculture) that will serve adult earners, learners, and employers. The Datacenter Greenhouse has been and will continue to be the center of this work bringing together innovation, agricultural needs, and economic growth opportunities. Aligning accredited academic programs alongside state-level departments, private businesses, a nationwide microcredentialing platform, and interns.
- **Merits**. A technology company that developed Washington's first digital wallet contributing to the skills and competencies of earners, learners, and employers through the NGA/WSAC/GSI pilot project in partnership with Eastern Washington University and the Community College of Spokane. The pilot project focused on the health industry and apprenticeship opportunities.
- **The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)**. SBCTC is led by a nine-member governor-appointed board — advocates, coordinates and directs Washington state's system of 34 public community and technical colleges and almost 275,000 students. (included to ensure alignment, but will not receive funding)
- **EBSCO** is a global Education SaaS provider with a longstanding history of supporting the needs of students and adult learners. They are the provider of a very successful solution, the Talent Triad. EBSCO is the leading data management, data mapping, interoperability, platform innovator, and user experience organization in the industry. EBSCO connects the needs of educational institutions, learners and earners, workforce development professionals, employers, and policy makers through technology. EBSCO is the hosting and data provider for many scholarly, medical, and scientific journals, as well as the world's leader in portal login technology for most of the world's public libraries.

2. How is or will the partnership be structured?

FIRST Washington will lead development of the charter for microcredentials and a credential registry with a designated project manager through Model Solution. FIRST Washington and Model Solutions will achieve this with more than 190 agencies and industry partners to formalize the charter upon completion of the grant cycle. This charter was created by university and college educators and administrators who realized the importance of creating a credential registry for non-credit and credit learning and stackable learning pathways embracing an equitable approach to student-centric learning and contribute to skills or competencies. The educators and administrators began to realize the critical importance of broadband and digital equity in aligning credit and non-credit learning for tribal and rural communities that will lead to an interoperable Learning Employment Record (LER). In a sea of competitors, a guiding document or chart led by a universal LER is needed to work with any digital wallet or credential engine. This will create the landscape for statewide deployment benefiting every citizen and business.

3. How have or will the partner organizations learn from each other and the communities served, and how does or will the partnership incorporate this learning into ongoing work?

FIRST Washington and POIC have a symbiotic relationship with the Kalispel Tribe, the community, small businesses, and an industry partner. FIRST Washington is supported by EBSCO and WSU Extension to bring resources and evaluation support. The draft charter will require taskforces and working committees. These committees will work independently to achieve stakeholder buy-in and improving the charter for stakeholder buy-in and formalization. Evaluation and reporting will work in tandem with the implementation grant to demonstrate economic impact that will build community resilience and address the area's economic sustainability and growth in partnership with the local Economic Development Center (EDC). Dr. Trevor C Lane, a state specialist and associate professor, who has over 20 years of experience in public education, including a decade at a tier one community college mapping data and programs, will be an advisor. He is now an Extension specialist in Northeastern Washington, focusing on upskilling, community resilience, and agriculture. His efforts have led to successful upskilling of communities, improved broadband access, greenhouse technology development, and the establishment of mobile units for broadband, meat processing, and health. Dr. Lane, along with the planning team and project manager for implementation, will foster collaboration between regional community, education, and training providers.

Our partnership will invite collaboration with existing and future workforce projects across the state, such as the Workforce Training Board's Talent and Prosperity (TAP) Plan and Washington Career Bridge. Collaboration, alignment, and interoperability with like-minded workforce projects such as these, as well as the Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) LER project and efforts with the Tri-County Health District, brings betterment for all jobseekers and employers and increases the ROI of all education and workforce projects.

4. Who are the focal population(s) in your partnership's work, and what assets do learners and families in these populations bring to their educational journeys?

This charter planning team will work in tandem with the implementation team and EBSCO. The charter team will provide oversight to ensure the implementation team will serve primarily adult learners in a tribal and rural area largely known for poverty and unemployment (low to middle income learners and earners). Specifically, the charter will acknowledge the importance of post-secondary learning and ensuring the implementation team will serve adult-centric learners to amplify the success of programs by providing evaluation and an economic impact study by WSU DGSS. The charter evaluation and impact study will be assessed through stackable learning pathways in the form of flexible and modular sequences of microcredentials that can lead to employment, a certificate or a full degree, depending on the learner's needs and goals. Microcredentials are short, focused credentials that provide in-demand skills, know-how and experience in various fields and disciplines that could have a large impact if a Talent Triad system

existed for these tribal and rural communities to equitably access the information and resources to achieve their goals, which are enhanced by the broadband efforts in tribal and rural areas like the one in this pilot project. The learners and families in the identified populations bring life and work skills which are valuable to employers. The goals of these initiatives are to make all learning count, support skills-based learning and hiring, and better connect education to the needs of these families and to the needs of employers.

5. What is the geographic region where the focal population(s) that would be served by this investment live?

The agencies and partners are located in Olympia, Wenatchee, and Spokane. We will leverage an east/west approach to coalescing and centralizing decision-makers to achieve success with the charter leading to statewide implementation of a credential registry and Learning Employment Record (LER) through the Food is Medicine pilot project with the Kalispel Tribe and Pend Oreille Innovation Center. This is where work has been conducted in collaboration with the project partners in the areas of upskilling, broadband, and remote worker/supervisor certifications. The opportunity to scale the program beyond these boundaries is plentiful with additional partners following our progress.

6. What are some of the systemic barriers that learners and families in your focal population(s) encounter?

These remote, rural, and tribal communities are economically distressed and disenfranchised. WSU Extension is a known and trusted element in community resilience. Additionally, WSU Extension is federally mandated to bridge these gaps because access to broadband, access to devices, and tech adoption impacts the State's mission to achieve digital equity. Dr. Lane has extensive experience in helping communities overcome systemic barriers by developing Local Investment Networks (LIN) and grant writing workshops that improve small business ecosystems and improve access to broadband, devices, and technology. WSU Extension is well-versed and prepared to help bridge the urban and rural divide while the Talent Triad technology is designed to remove bias, create opportunity, and empower every contributor across the ecosystem.

7. What work do you propose undertaking during the granting period?

The core design team for this charter development will work in tandem with the project implementation team with EBSCO to establish governance protocols and group norms that will continue to be utilized to uphold proposal commitments. Core design team members will meet regularly and with EBSCO. This group will review project roadmap, tasks, deliverables, and help resolve any barriers to implementation and formalizing the charter. Transparency across the project team is also key as there are many stakeholders working within their area of expertise, but also connecting across silos. FIRST Washington will host a series of in person meetings in Olympia, Wenatchee, and Spokane. These meetings will culminate in a fourth meeting at the end of the 3rd quarter to finalize the charter and prepare for signature authority and formalizing the charter upon conclusion of the grant cycle. There will be timelines for deliverables and achieving formal signature authority upon conclusion of the grant cycle in 12 months. This charter will drive policies and funding to create a sustainable and replicable ecosystem from the Food is Medicine pilot project and implementation grant in Eastern Washington with the Kalispel Tribe and Pend Oreille Innovation Center.

8. How will this proposed work contribute to increasing educational attainment for the focal population(s) in your region?

The proposed charter will help guide partnerships, collaboration, and technology implementation with the EBSCO grant. These collective efforts will demonstrate how a skills-based economy increases opportunities to identify both new earning and learning opportunities and exhibit how all learning counts. When both short- and long-term programs are seen as valuable and attainable, more jobseekers become

and remain lifelong learners and students seeking continuous personal improvement. The Talent Triad will empower individuals to understand and communicate what they know and can do as well as recognize the opportunities available to them and achievable by them. These are skills that impact and influence communities and families through equitable opportunities. Reference TAP plan for quick facts and statistics. <https://wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/TAP-Plan-Overview-1.22.2024.pdf>