

Employer Spotlight

Cascade Veterinary Clinics (CVC) is a group of locally owned veterinary centers offering general practice and urgent care services in Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, and Leavenworth, Washington. These three clinics employ 16 veterinarians and a large support staff serving nearly 45,000 patients annually.



THE OCCUPATION: Veterinary technicians are responsible for medical testing and supporting patient care, helping to diagnose and treat animals' injuries and illnesses. Most veterinary technicians complete an Associate of Science or Applied Science degree, including an externship. All must pass the national licensing exam.

INDUSTRY NEED: CVC estimates that the number of licensed veterinary technician graduates in Washington state currently meets only a quarter (27%) of the projected demand statewide. Historically, training opportunities have been minimal in North Central Washington, where the nearest veterinary training program is more than two hours away.

INDUSTRY-DRIVEN SOLUTION: Recognizing the decades-long success of registered apprenticeship models in other industries, CVC set out in 2018 to create the nation's first employer-sponsored and registered licensed veterinary technician (LVT) apprenticeship program. The LVT apprenticeship was designed to offer a hands-on learning experience and address the "training desert" across North Central Washington. To further expand access to veterinary careers, CVC also built a one-year veterinary assistant apprenticeship, which is open to individuals as young as 16 and provides an early entry point to the field.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The three-year LVT registered apprenticeship combines 6,000 hours of on-the-job training with 766 hours of supplemental instruction, all delivered at CVC under the supervision of veterinarians and LVTs. Apprentices receive comprehensive training across clinic functions, including office management, pharmacy, nursing, anesthesia, surgery, laboratory work, and more. The apprenticeship culminates in the national LVT licensing exam. LVTs can pursue numerous career advancement opportunities, including specialization, leadership and supervisory roles, and teaching positions.



Demand for new veterinary technicians in Washington is expected to grow nearly 30% between 2023 and 2032, increasing from 2,630 to 3,410 positions statewide.

WHY IT MATTERS:

The LVT registered apprenticeship provides a reliable pipeline of well-trained veterinary professionals, offering apprentices a direct pathway to a rewarding career while building a pool of skilled candidates. CVC designed the apprenticeship for replication at other clinics across the state and nation.

HOW THEY DID IT:



1. INTERNAL RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION:

The idea for the apprenticeship began at a 2018 career exploration event for local students. Clinic owners recognized the need for greater awareness about the veterinary profession and more accessible local training options. Clinic leaders formed a vision, rallied staff to lend relevant expertise to program development, and researched laws and regulations needing revision.



2. STARTER FUNDING: CVC received a Career Connect Washington (CCW) Program Builder grant to hire a full-time apprenticeship coordinator to manage the state apprenticeship application and curriculum development.



3. PERSISTENCE AND PARTNERSHIP: Navigating policy changes with the Veterinary Board of Governors (VBOG) and state regulation required persistence from the apprenticeship coordinator and CVC team. Local experts and stakeholders supported the effort to ensure the program's success.

TIMELINE:

2018-2022:

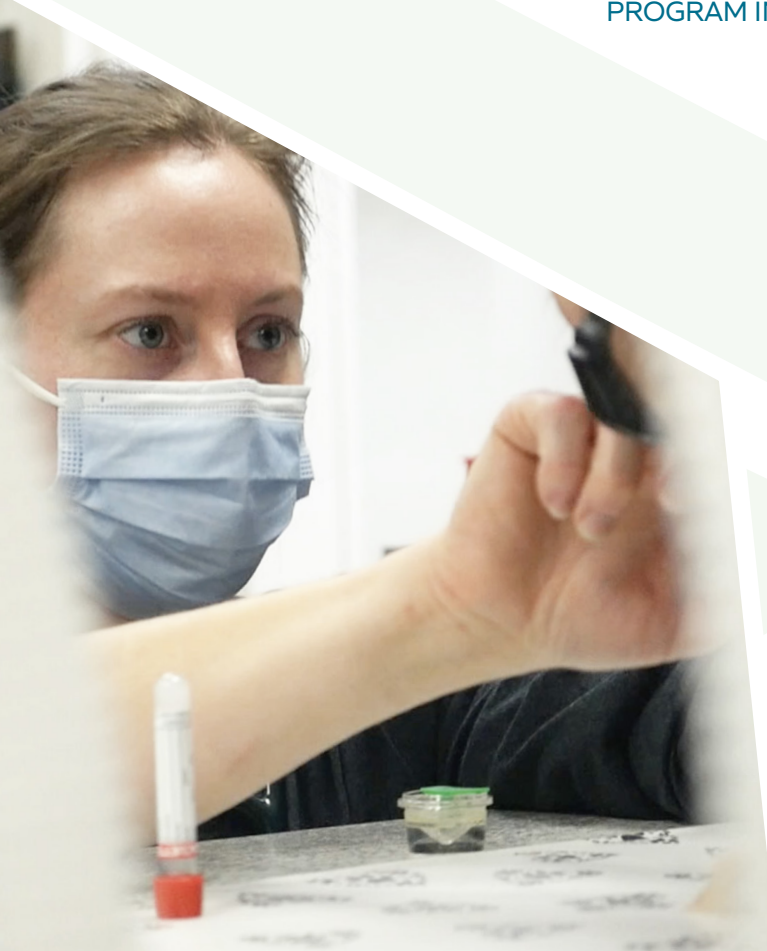
- INTERNAL COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH
- OUTREACH TO VBOG

2022:

- CVC RECEIVES PROGRAM BUILDER GRANT
- WASHINGTON STATE APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COUNCIL (WSATC) APPROVES PROGRAM IN OCTOBER

2023-2024:

- CVC HIRES ITS FIRST LVT APPRENTICES
- VBOG APPROVES NEW STATE REGULATION ALLOWING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AS AN EXPLICIT PATHWAY TO LICENSING EXAM



“Developing the first-ever registered LVT apprenticeship program required persistence, collaboration, and innovation. From navigating political challenges to building the program in-house with limited resources, we were driven by a commitment to advancing the veterinary profession. Thanks to the support of our dedicated team, community members, and leadership, we created a sustainable model that is now paving the way for other programs to follow.”

—Karly Murray, Apprenticeship Director



CASCADE
Veterinary Clinics

BUILDING CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING IN YOUR SECTOR:

1. IDENTIFY KEY WORKFORCE NEEDS IN YOUR SECTOR.

High-demand, early-career positions vary across industries, as do training and skill requirements. Collaborate with your organizational leadership to assess your most pressing workforce needs, particularly for entry-level positions. Articulate the career trajectory of the entry-level position and the required training/education, and brainstorm ways to accelerate or innovate skill development. Consider if apprenticeships could be designed for jobs that require at least 2,000 hours of hands-on training. There may be opportunities to partner with other employers to address shared workforce challenges.

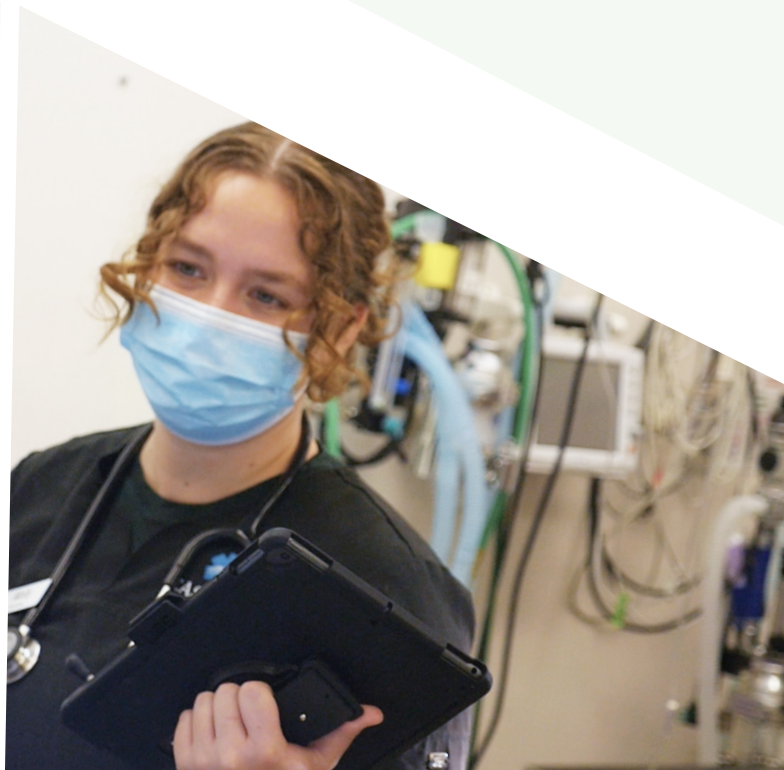


2. CONNECT WITH A CCW REGIONAL NETWORK OR SECTOR LEAD.

Infrastructure and resources are available to connect you with the partners and start-up funding you need to scope and build a career connected learning program, be it an exploration activity for students as early as middle school, a career preparation internship or pre-apprenticeship program, or a Career Launch program in partnership with a college or registered apprenticeship model. Start by reaching out to CCW leaders by sector or by region for partnership and technical assistance. Then identify internal resources to coordinate programming and logistics.

3. COMMIT TO PROVIDE WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS.

Whether your company brings students in for worksite tours or offers paid work experiences, work-embedded learning is critical to addressing skills gaps. Designate internal staff to coordinate programming and logistics for your program that will allow students to explore and learn. You can boost future recruitment and retention by aligning students' passions with hands-on experiences.



OUTCOMES:



FOR EMPLOYERS:

SKILLED, LOCAL TALENT.

By partnering with apprenticeship experts, CVC developed a career pathway that combines paid, on-the-job training with academic instruction. This approach fills skill gaps, strengthens recruitment and retention, helps diversify the workforce, and enhances talent pool resilience. The first-in-nation LVT registered apprenticeship is ready for replication across Washington and the country.



FOR STUDENTS:

PAID WORK EXPERIENCE AND AN INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL.

The LVT registered apprenticeship model enables students to gain paid, real-world experience while earning a credential in a high-demand field.



FOR WASHINGTON:

A WORKFORCE PREPARED FOR TODAY & TOMORROW.

Washington state will have 1.5 million job openings in the next decade. The vast majority will require postsecondary credentials—degrees, apprenticeships, and high-value industry certifications.

Build the workforce you need by creating opportunities for career exploration, supporting tailored skill development, and delivering on-the-job training for Washington students and adults. These efforts will support your company's success, boost employees' economic mobility, and help secure a stronger future for our state.



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LEARN MORE:

[Career Connect Washington](#) is a public-private initiative that seeks to create and expand meaningful, hands-on learning experiences and aligned academic coursework that build skills, credentials, and careers to launch students into rewarding futures and meet the demands of our state's economy. This employer spotlight series profiles Washington employers that are leading the development of and successfully running career connected learning programs to expand talent pools, build diverse teams, improve retention, and more.

LEARN ABOUT PROGRAMS ACROSS THE STATE OR HOW TO LAUNCH YOUR OWN

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