Healthcare Sector

Sector Strategy Update: June 2025

Prepared by the SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training and Education Fund ("The Training Fund" or "TF")

Please describe the greatest workforce needs facing your sector, with a focus on needs that career-connected learning strategies can help to address.

Shortage of Healthcare Professionals: Washington, like many other regions across the United States, experiences a scarcity of healthcare professionals in various fields, including nursing, primary care physicians, mental and behavioral health providers, and allied health professions such as medical assistants and radiologic technologists. Career-connected learning, through Explore, Prep, and Launch programs, can help attract and prepare individuals for these professions by providing early exposure to healthcare careers, hands-on training, and mentorship opportunities. This culminates in Career Launch programs that fill job openings with trained professionals. Entry-level positions, especially those that are unionized, often come with comprehensive educational and training benefits that facilitate upward mobility and career pathway opportunities within the healthcare system.

Rural and Underserved Communities: Rural and underserved communities in Washington face significant challenges in accessing adequate healthcare services due to workforce shortages. Career-connected learning programs can encourage students from these communities to pursue healthcare careers by offering funding for early exposure to healthcare careers, specialized training, scholarships, and incentives for practicing in rural areas. By cultivating a pipeline of healthcare professionals with ties to these communities, career-connected learning can help address disparities in access to care.

Diversity and Cultural Competency: Achieving a diverse healthcare workforce that reflects not only the demographics of Washington's population but also represents the populations that they serve is essential for providing culturally competent care. Career-connected learning strategies can promote diversity in the healthcare workforce by reaching out to underrepresented minority students, providing support services, and offering opportunities for mentorship and a pathway into healthcare occupations. A partnership with Career Connect Washington can ensure that the voices of underrepresented minority communities are represented and heard.

Technological Advancements: The healthcare sector is rapidly evolving with advancements in technology, including the integration of telemedicine, electronic health records (EHRs), and artificial intelligence (AI). By connecting with employers, career-connected learning programs can identify and incorporate training on in-demand healthcare technologies to prepare students for the modern healthcare landscape. By offering hands-on experience with emerging technologies and digital health tools, career-connected learning can ensure that future healthcare professionals are equipped with the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly digital environment. However, training needs to be geographically focused to fit the needs of the students in Washington's diverse communities. Partnering with regional networks and Career Connect Washington to support student learning, and when necessary, utilizing alternative learning methodologies can help address this challenge.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Effective healthcare delivery often requires collaboration among professionals from different disciplines, including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, behavioral health occupations, and allied health professionals. Career-connected learning strategies can facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration by providing opportunities for students from various healthcare disciplines to work together on projects, simulations, and clinical experiences. The expansion of the Explore and Prep programs offers more options to start exposure with an interdisciplinary focus at an early age, which can bridge to Career Launch opportunities that are more occupation-specific. The Healthcare Sector

Intermediary emphasizes the importance of partnering with other sector intermediaries while concurrently lifting non-duplicative programs that optimize offerings to youth across the state. The potential of partnering with the Life Sciences sector offers the possibility to collaborate in building foundational introductory programs that can feed into pathway opportunities in either industry. The Life Science Sector Intermediary and the Healthcare Sector Intermediary are engaging in ongoing conversations about partnerships, including those involving intersectional internships.

Lifelong Learning and Professional Development: Healthcare is a dynamic field that necessitates ongoing learning and professional development to stay current with best practices and advancements. Career-connected learning programs can foster a culture of lifelong learning by providing support for continuing education opportunities, mentorship programs, and pathways for career advancement. By supporting the ongoing development of healthcare professionals, career-connected learning can help address workforce needs and ensure high-quality patient care in Washington State. Program design centered on pathway progression is recommended to facilitate entry points into the healthcare system and to enable upward mobility centered on livable-wage careers. Program design should lead to necessary credentialing (certification or licensure) along with college credit when applicable to create growth opportunities for learners.

In summary, career-connected learning strategies have the potential to address the most significant workforce barriers and needs facing the healthcare sector in Washington by attracting individuals into healthcare careers, promoting diversity and cultural competency, preparing students for technological advancements, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and supporting lifelong learning to create a pathway into higher level positions and salaries. By investing in career-connected learning programs, stakeholders can help build a skilled and diverse healthcare workforce that meets the evolving needs of communities across the state.

Between now and June of 2025, what are your sector's 3-6 occupations that are highest-priority for building supportive career-connected learning pathways? Please focus on professions that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

- Medical Assistant (MA)
- Nursing Assistant (NAC/CNA) Nursing Pathway Occupations
- Behavioral Health (BHT/PC/SUDP)
- Radiologic Technologists and Technicians

For <u>each</u> of the occupations identified above, please provide the information below to help inform pathway development efforts and investments.

Occupation: Medical Assistant (MA) (SOC code: 319092)	**Sub-sector:** Allied Health
Average wage: Average annual salary: $52,272 Average hourly wage: $25.13 **Source:** https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/learn-about-an-occupation#/details	
Which skills/competencies do employers use as a benchmark to hire someone in this occupation? ● Social Perceptiveness ● Active Listening	**Which credentials do employers cite as a valuable benchmark to hire someone in this occupation?** ● A Medical Assistant Certification Exam, leading to Medical Assisting Certification, obtained through the Washington State

• Speaking to convey information effectively • Reading Comprehension • Critical Thinking • Monitoring • Service Orientation • Writing • Active Learning • Instructing • Learning Strategies • Complex Problem Solving • Judgment and Decision Making • Time Management	Department of Health, is required for this occupation.

Please describe possible career progression opportunities for this occupation:

Medical Assistant ("MA") to Phlebotomist with the potential to build out a pathway into Nursing or Physician Assistant. This pathway has been explored in the past, but requires further development to address barriers and identify solutions that support pathway opportunities.

Please share the data, employer feedback, and/or Regional Network feedback that helped you identify this as a high-priority occupation:

Washington labor market data indicate the need for almost 2,000 more medical assistants by 2031. WA Sentinel Network data show that acute care hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) list medical assistants among their top 10 occupations experiencing long-term vacancies. Employment Security Department data lists MAs as an "in-demand" occupation in all Washington Counties.

The Mid-Columbia and Northwest regions have identified MA as a high-priority occupation through career fairs and community and employer outreach. All regions have been engaged in pathway discussions for MAs due to the high need, with primary focus on training for post-secondary students in the Northwest Region.

In response to the high need for MAs, the Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium, a Washington Registered JATC staffed by the Training Fund, launched MAs as one of their first apprenticeship programs. The MA apprenticeship remains in high demand, with at least five cohorts of 20 students scheduled per year. Training Fund staff continue to receive feedback from employers who identify this occupation as a high need in delivering clinical care. Other apprenticeship programs, such as CHAS and the Washington Association of Community Health, offer apprenticeship programs for this occupation.

The need for more MAs is sufficiently high that partners, the Training Fund, college partners, and several skill centers across the state are in early stages of planning how to implement and expand apprenticeships into high school settings over the next two years.

In May 2024, the Training Fund met with all Regions and agreed to partner with ESD105, ESD123, ESD113, ESD121, and ESD189 to collaborate on building programs for Medical Assistants through their apprenticeship program and expansion efforts.

Please describe the top barriers employers have identified to hiring for this occupation:

1. Demand outpacing the number of incoming medical assistants (MAs) due to increasing demand for primary care services and pressure to reduce healthcare costs by shifting tasks to lower-cost providers. The UW Center for Health Workforce Studies noted in 2019 that the demand for MAs was sufficiently high and identified that many providers turned to apprenticeships to fill their needs.

2. A lack of medical assistants who are sufficiently trained to meet the specific needs of employers, despite the numerous training programs available.
3. High turnover, especially among MAs of color, according to interviews conducted by the UW Center for Health Workforce Studies.
4. Lower wages and fewer career pathway options than for some other healthcare occupations. Programs designed with college credits will help create opportunities for advancement in this occupation.
5. Credentialing requirements – Washington may be one of the few states that require certification for medical assistants (MAs).

Between now and June of 2025, where is there regional momentum to support pathway development in this occupation?

1. ***Key momentum factors:*** The regions listed for TF program expansion result from discussions with employers interested in implementing MA apprenticeships, existing college programs, high school training programs, MA programs that offer CTE opportunities, and resources received through the WJI grant and L&I funding. The TF is committed to helping the regions served by ESD105, ESD123, ESD113, ESD121, and ESD189 apply for funding and support expansion efforts to build and expand MA programs.
2. ***High-potential opportunities:*** Yakima Valley, New Market, Tri Tech, and other Skill Centers have launched a pilot program to incorporate "college in the high school" MA apprenticeships with college partners and the Training Fund, aiming to address the gap. Additional skill centers are also looking to expand MA programming.
3. ***Supporting those high-potential opportunities****: is a* ***shared priority*** *across SL and RN.* Mid-Columbia and Northwest in particular.
4. ***ABA grant awardees****: Providence and Training Fund are scaling programs in this space in addition to other apprenticeship programs operated by WACH and Training Fund's adult WA Registered apprenticeship programs.*

Occupation: Nursing Assistant (NAC) – Nursing pathway (SOC code: 311131)	**Sub-sector:** Allied Health into Nursing
Average wage: Average annual salary: $41,326 Average hourly wage: $19.87 **Source:** https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/learn-about-an-occupation#/details	
Which skills/competencies do employers use as a benchmark to hire someone in this occupation? ● Service Orientation – people skills ● Active Listening ● Social Perceptiveness ● Monitoring ● Coordination ● Critical Thinking ● Reading Comprehension ● Speaking ● Active Learning ● Judgment and Decision Making	**Which credentials do employers cite as a valuable benchmark to hire someone in this occupation?** ● NCSBN NNAAP CNA Exam written and hands-on skills sections. ● Additional certifications and licensures, including passing the NCLEX exam, to advance along the career pathway into nursing and specialty nursing.
Please describe possible career progression opportunities for this occupation:	

- Nursing Assistant Certified to Licensed Practical Nurse
- Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse
- Registered Nurse to Nurse Practitioner and other specialty nursing opportunities.

The occupation is in high demand with employers often supporting robust education benefits that can help NA-Cs advance in educational pathways into nursing occupations. There are continued opportunities to expand the mid- and high-wage earning potentials in these occupations.

Please share the data, employer feedback, and/or Regional Network feedback that helped you identify this as a high-priority occupation:

The need for nurses is well-documented and a frequent topic in discussions about the healthcare workforce and the media. However, the need for certified nursing assistants is less well known. WA Sentinel Network data for the last six months ranks Nursing Assistant among the top 5 occupations experiencing long vacancies in 8 of the state's 9 Accountable Health Communities (ACHs). The Nursing Assistant was also reported to be among the five occupations with the highest turnover in all 9 ACHs during the same period. The Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) lists Nursing Assistant as being "in demand" in all counties except Spokane, where the demand is "balanced." The need is so high that it is not being fully met by existing programs, which is why the Health Care Apprenticeship Consortium, JATC staffed by the Training Fund, has developed both a recognized NA-C Apprenticeship Prep program and an Introduction to Healthcare Apprenticeship Program (IHAP) to recruit individuals into NA-C programs and occupations. More than 342 individuals have enrolled in the NA-C program since its launch in the summer of 2022. Out of the 342 students, 198 came from the IHAP program. The demand for NA-Cs in long-term care facilities is so high that, in 2023, the legislature funded a $1 million project for SEIU 775, in partnership with the Training Fund, to pilot the NA-C Apprenticeship Prep program in nursing homes. The aim is to prepare staff better and increase retention.

NA-C programs are an excellent Career Prep or Launch opportunity as they can lead into nursing pathways with additional educational programming along the way. Many Washington community and technical colleges prefer nursing program applicants to have experience as a Certified Nursing Assistant (NA-C). The State Workforce Training Board is currently working on developing an NA-C to LPN apprenticeship pathway program.

The Mid-Columbia, Northwest, and South-Central regions have identified NA-C as a high-priority occupation through career fairs and community and employer outreach. In South Central, SEIU 775 Benefits Group has identified the need to place more NA-Cs in long-term care facilities as a critical need and is pursuing approval for an NA-C Pre-Apprenticeship and possible Apprenticeship. In the Mid-Columbia region, partners have come together twice to apply for Program Builder funding to implement the Training Fund's IHAP 1, which supports NA-C programs. Although they have been unsuccessful to date, they continue to be interested in approaches to expand NA-C programming into their region. Virginia Mason Franciscan Health operates a Healthcare Academy that offers an internal pathway for NA-C certification. Edmonds Community College and other community colleges also provide NA-C programs. The Healthcare Sector Intermediary is meeting with partners to explore how various programs are implemented, to support the expansion, growth, and replication of successful programs.

Please describe the top barriers employers have identified to hiring for this occupation:

1. Insufficient training/limited experience in medical settings, since this is an entry-level job for many healthcare workers
2. Long-term care facilities that are under sanction can't provide clinical opportunities, which makes both recruitment and onboarding challenging for these employers
3. High turnover, especially in long-term care settings
4. Socio-economic barriers to accessing education and training

5. Low wages and challenging work environments
6. Lack of awareness of training opportunities for advancement/understanding of potential career "lattices"
7. Credentialing hoops and regulatory limitations, including long delays in scheduling certification testing

Please describe the type of programs or approaches employers have found helpful in hiring for this occupation:

Washington healthcare employers hire NA-Cs from a variety of programs, including high schools, post-secondary programs offered by community and technical colleges, the Training Fund's NA-C Apprenticeship Prep program, private training organizations, and healthcare facilities. Many employers partner with training programs to provide clinical opportunities and hire program graduates directly. Many nursing homes and long-term care facilities train their own NA-Cs, who are often hired away by hospital systems that offer higher wages or better working conditions for experienced NA-Cs. This results in high turnover and a constant need to train new NA-Cs. The Healthcare Sector Intermediary will have the opportunity to continue gathering employer feedback on their preferred approaches for recruiting NA-Cs over the next year. Program designs with navigation services leading to employment can support more successful outcomes for learners. This is an area for continued discussion with employers. From a recruitment standpoint, we have hired our internal career navigator to support job searches for participants following their completion of the NAC program. The Career Navigator offers guidance for 90 days after course completion, and we will support other NAC programs in following a similar path. Additionally, we continue working with employers to identify job placement opportunities. As part of IHAP, we invite employers to engage with the cohort, offering interview tips, enhancing candidates' marketable skills, and presenting available job openings.

Between now and June of 2025, where is there regional momentum to support pathway development in this occupation?

- South Central
  - *Key momentum factors*: SEIU775 Benefits Group has identified NA-C placement needs
  - *High-potential opportunities*: Nursing Pathway opportunities in development
  - *Shared priority?* Yes
- Mid-Columbia, Snohomish, King, and Pierce County
  - *Key momentum factors*: Ongoing partner interest in implementing IHAP 1 and NA-C programs
  - *High-potential opportunities*: Implementation of IHAP 1 and the NA-C apprenticeship prep program in the region
  - *Shared priority?* Yes

Occupation: Behavioral Health Pathway - Behavioral Health Technician (Soc Code: 292053)/Peer Counselor (U.S. DOL does not have an occupational code for this occupation)/Substance Use Disorder Professional (21-1011.00)	**Sub-sector:** Behavioral Health
Average wage: Behavioral Health Technician – $18.82/hr. Peer Counselor - $21/hour	

Substance Use Disorder Professional - $24.87/hr.
Source: Zip Recruiter

Which skills/competencies do employers use as a benchmark to hire someone in this occupation?

Skills vary by occupation, but generally consist of helping individuals address and overcome behavioral health issues, including chemical dependencies. Here are some of the skills required for these occupations:

- Active Listening
- Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- Social Perceptiveness
- Monitoring
- Reading Comprehension
- Writing
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Persuasion
- Service Orientation
- Active Learning
- Complex Problem Solving
- Coordination
- Instructing
- Learning Strategies
- Negotiation
- Systems Analysis
- Systems Evaluation
- Management of Personnel Resources
- Time Management

Which credentials do employers cite as a valuable benchmark to hire someone in this occupation?

- Behavioral Health Technician – Nursing Assistant Certification (NA-C)
- Peer Counselor – passage of the Washington State Health Care Authority Certified Peer Counselor test
- SUDP - National Certified Addiction Counselor Level I (NCAC I) certification exam upon program completion, which permits Washington SUDP certification

Please describe possible career progression opportunities for this occupation:

Behavioral Health Technician to Peer Counselor or Behavioral Health Technician to Substance Use Disorder Professional to Social Worker to-Rehab Counselor to Psychologist or Psychiatrist

Please share the data, employer feedback, and/or Regional Network feedback that helped you identify this as a high-priority occupation:

The need for trained behavioral health workers has been increasing in recent years, especially among behavioral health facilities in both urban and rural areas. The Employment Security Department's data list Behavioral Health Technicians as an “in-demand” occupation, but does not provide data on Peer Counselors and Substance Use Disorder Professionals. According to the WA Sentinel Network data, all 9 Washington Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) list mental health counselor occupations, a possible career path for behavioral health workers, as one of their top 10 longest vacancies to fill. The rural Better Health Together and Olympic ACH also list SUDP among their top 10 longest vacancies.

The Mid-Columbia, Northwest, King, Pierce, and South-Central regions have all identified SUDP as a priority occupation for Career Connected Learning. Mid-Columbia launched a "Teach the Teacher" program in March, in partnership with Kadlec Resource Services, a local behavioral health provider.

Training Fund employer partners, along with hospital systems, identified the three behavioral health occupations described in this section as a top priority, prompting the Training Fund to develop apprenticeships for all 3, designed along a career path.

Please describe the top barriers employers have identified to hiring for this occupation:

1. Relatively few training programs are available
2. Retention, turnover, and burnout
3. Socio-economic barriers limiting access to training for those with lived experience
4. Lower wages for some occupations within this group
5. Lack of awareness of the training opportunities and of the career pathways that do exist
6. Challenges with background checks for those with lived experience, delays in licensing for the SUDP-T credential, and challenges with the long timelines for NA-C exams for BHTs
7. Lack of a sufficiently diverse hiring pool reflective of the communities served

Please describe the type of programs or approaches employers have found helpful in hiring for this occupation:

- **Apprenticeship –** Employers are partnering with the TF in Registered Apprenticeships in Behavioral Health, SUDP, and Peer Counselor apprenticeships to fill the hiring gaps. Employers have exceptionally well received the Training Fund's 2-year SUDP apprenticeship program. The Training Fund launched the program in 2022, anticipating that 84 cohorts would be conducted over two years. To date, seven cohorts have been launched with more planned in 2025. SUDPs are in exceptionally high demand in behavioral health organizations, as they can charge for these occupations as soon as they are licensed, even while still in the apprenticeship program. This makes the SUDP apprenticeship more financially viable for the employer.
- **Post-secondary programs -** Washington's growing behavioral health crisis necessitates the development of additional programs to meet community needs. Colleges and skill centers offer behavioral health training programs, but there is a much greater need than what is currently being addressed to address workforce gaps.
- **Pathway Programs-** Community Health workers and continued development in pathway programming is a continued focus for various entities to help address workforce shortages

Between now and June of 2025, where is there regional momentum to support pathway development in this occupation?

1. **Key momentum factors:** Behavioral health apprenticeships are being offered in 6 of the regions, increasing the potential for expansion.
2. **High-potential opportunities:** Spokane Falls Community College, Olympic College, Highline, Lake Washington, Edmonds, Whatcom, Yakima Valley, and Renton are several post-secondary programs that have behavioral health programs that could be partnered with to expand career-connected learning opportunities. Demand still is not met with existing programs. Puget Sound Skills Center is looking to support a two-year "college in the high school" program next year. Other colleges are exploring opportunities for expansion in this area. The Training Fund regularly convenes stakeholders annually to expand partnerships around behavioral health pathways. College partners, labor, and employers from across the state are involved in efforts to expand behavioral health occupations and address staffing shortfalls.
3. **Shared priority?** Yes. Employers and college partners are interested in expanding opportunities in behavioral health pathways.

Occupation: Radiologic Technologist and Technician. (SOC code: 29-2034)	**Sub-sector:** Imaging

Average wage:
Average annual salary: $90,755,56
Average hourly wage: $43.63
Source: https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/learn-about-an-occupation#/details

Which skills/competencies do employers use as a benchmark to hire someone in this occupation?

- Operate diagnostic imaging equipment.
- Adjust settings or positions of medical equipment.
- Prepare medical supplies or equipment for use.
- Position patients for treatment or examination.
- Monitor patient conditions during treatments, procedures, or activities.
- Take X-rays and Scans
- Inject non-radioactive material into the patient's bloodstream for diagnostics

Which credentials do employers cite as a valuable benchmark to hire someone in this occupation?

- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Apprenticeship
- Certificate of Accomplishment (6 months)
- Associates Degree
- Bachelor's Degree

Please describe possible career progression opportunities for this occupation:

Radiology Technician to Radiologic Technologist to Radiologist

Other adjacent job titles: Computed Tomography (CT) Technician, Diagnostic Imaging Specialty (Alternate Title: Radiology Specialist), Mammography Technologist (varied skills and salary)

Please share the data, employer feedback, and/or Regional Network feedback that helped you identify this as a high-priority occupation:

Radiologic Technologists and Technicians are in high demand for healthcare positions throughout the state. The Employment Security Department lists the occupation as a healthcare "in-demand "field. U.S. BLS data indicate an average total annual opening of 1,100 from 2031 to 2031. Within the broader field of imaging occupations, the number of openings increases annually. Many hospitals have stated that positions in imaging are in high demand. 29-2034.00 - Radiologic Technologists and Technicians (ONET) has listed the state's regional imaging facilities that are currently hiring. However, like many in-demand positions, there are barriers to filling these positions.

https://wa.sentinelnetwork.org/findings/ has recently stated that Medical Sonography has "exceptionally long vacancies," but this wasn't reported by enough facilities to appear in the hospital findings brief, as although an occurrence occurred, it wasn't reported in its entirety. It has been communicated to the Sector Intermediary. There are limited clinical preceptors in general, in a critical, in-demand need. Although the Sector Strategy focuses primarily on Radiology Tech Positions, the overarching umbrella of Imaging Technology is quite expansive, with a plethora of opportunities for partnership, expansion, and growth.

Apprenticeship in this space can provide a valuable alternative for strengthening the healthcare workforce and developing in-demand imaging careers. It enables employers to tailor training for both new and existing workers to fit their specific environments, streamlining onboarding while offering participants paid learning and portable credentials. Although apprenticeships require greater employer involvement than traditional education and training programs, they deliver direct benefits to both workers and organizations.

The Healthcare Sector Intermediary encourages CCW to support the intermediary in creating and expanding new imaging technology apprenticeship opportunities, as funding remains limited.

Additionally, program design should incorporate educational pathways for learners, ensuring that apprenticeship programs include college credits whenever possible, to support long-term career growth and development. This approach helps apprenticeship initiatives align with broader workforce development goals.

Please describe the top barriers employers have identified to hiring for this occupation:

1. Limited training options to meet the demand
2. Retention
3. Lack of available training programs
4. Lack of seats in available training programs
5. Lack of awareness of training opportunities when they exist
6. Community partners feel that resources are not evenly allocated
7. Lack of funding to build programs

Please describe the type of programs or approaches employers have found helpful in hiring for this occupation:

In this growing field, programs are developing that are supported by employers, including Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship, with partners such as UW and UW Medical Center, RAYUS, Lake Washington Technical College, and MultiCare. There are two-year collegiate programs at schools like Spokane Community College, as well as two- and four-year programs at institutions like Bellevue College. There are certification programs at Yakima Valley College, Columbia Basin College, and Bellevue College, depending on the specialty within the imaging space. There are no programs in this space supported by CCW, but there is a need for support, partnering, and development of programs in this field.
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For each region below, which CCW Career Explore, Prep, and Launch programs and post-secondary programs currently exist to support this occupation?

Not all programs are funded by CCW, but all programs listed align with one or more of the CCW Explore, Prep, and Launch Models.

Between now and June of 2026, where is there regional momentum to support pathway development in this occupation? 1. *Key **momentum factors:*** The Sector Intermediary receives inquiries about the possibility of addressing the need for Radiologic and Imaging training. Employers throughout the state have called out these in-demand careers and their willingness to partner in training 2. ***High-potential opportunities** to support pathway development and career placement* 3. *Is supporting those high-potential opportunities a **shared priority** across SL and RN?* TBD `*Program Expansion and barriers must be addressed*

For each region below, which workforce education & training programs are *effectively* meeting employer needs, or could effectively meet their needs with adjustment or expanded capacity? Where relevant, please color-code responses to reflect their relevance to specific occupations.	
Please provide your color-coding key below: Medical Assistant Yellow Nursing Assistant Grey Behavioral Health No Color Radiologic Technicians and Technologists Blue **NOTE:** In addition to the program listed below, the MA apprenticeship is offered by CHAS Health in Adams, Asotin, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman counties, as well as by the Washington Association for Community Health statewide. In addition to the programs listed below, most colleges and a variety of high schools, private training organizations, and nursing homes offer NA-C training. A complete list of programs that are certified or pending certification is available at https://nursing.wa.gov/education/nursing-assistant-training/nursing-assistant-training-programs. With numerous programs available, it would be necessary to conduct additional research to determine which ones are most effective in meeting employer needs.	
Capital	• New Market Skills Center, Training Fund Apprenticeships, MA Post-Secondary Programs • Training Fund NA-C Program Expansion • Training Fund Behavioral Health Apprenticeships
East	• Washington State University Stevens County Health Mentorship Program, WSU Healthcare Career Prep (Stevens), Training Fund MA apprenticeship expansion • WSU Stevens County Health Mentorship Program, Training Fund NA-C Program Expansion, WABS Nursing Pathway, Career Launch Spokane • Training Fund Behavioral Health Apprenticeships, Spokane Community Falls SUDP, WSU Health Mentorship Program • Spokane Community College, Wenatchee Valley Community College
King & Pierce	• WABS Health Industry Leadership Table, Health Career Explore, WABS Interactive Job Shadows, Training Fund Apprenticeship and Expansion, Pierce County for Arts and Tech Center • Training Fund NA-C Program Expansion, WABS Nursing Pathway, Next Move Nursing Internship, Tacoma Healthcare Career Academy, VMCH, VMFH, Edmonds Community College

	• Training Fund Behavioral Health Apprenticeships (Lake Washington Tech College, WABS Industry Leadership Table, WABS Interactive Job Shadows • Pima Medical, Bellevue College, Lake Washington Tech College, RAYUS, UW/UWMC, MultiCare, Tacoma Community College
Mid-Columbia	• Training Fund MA Expansion • Training Fund NA- Program Expansion, WSU/Tri-Cities Nursing Bridge Program • Training Fund Behavioral Health Apprenticeships Expansion, Columbia Basin College • Columbia Basin College
North Central	• Foundation for Youth Resiliency, Training Fund MA Apprenticeship, New Health Programs, MA Apprenticeships-Stevens, Whitman, Spokane • Training Fund NA-C Expansion
Northwest	• WABS Leadership Table, Sno-Isle Skills Center, New Health Programs, MA Programs • WABS Leadership Table, Sno-Isle Skills Center • WABS Industry Leadership Table, Whatcom Community Behavioral Health Center, Training Fund Behavioral Health Apprenticeships
South Central	• Pre-MA Program
Southwest	• Training Fund Behavioral Health Apprenticeship
West Sound	• Whatcom Community College • Jefferson Healthcare Career Explore and Prep and Launch, Goodwill Industries STEM • Whatcom Nursing Internship

Please describe the types of employers in your sector who are most eager to participate in career-connected learning to meet their workforce needs. Why are these types of employers interested in participating in career-connected learning, and what type of career-connected learning programs are most valuable to them?

In Washington State's healthcare sector, employer types vary widely, reflecting the state's diverse geography, population, and healthcare needs. Large healthcare systems and hospital networks such as Providence, Swedish Health Services, MultiCare, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health, and UW Medicine dominate urban centers like Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma. These organizations offer comprehensive services, opportunities for specialization, and well-established career pathways. In contrast, rural healthcare providers such as Forks Community Hospital and Coulee Medical Center serve more isolated communities and often face staffing challenges, prompting them to offer incentives like loan repayment or housing assistance to attract healthcare workers.

Community health centers, including Sea Mar Community Health Centers and Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, play a critical role in serving low-income and underserved populations across both

urban and rural areas. These federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) emphasize integrated care, including behavioral health and preventive services, and often align closely with public health goals. Tribal health clinics, such as the Quinault Indian Nation Health Clinic and the Yakama Indian Health Center, are sovereign entities that provide culturally competent care to Native American communities, offering unique opportunities for providers committed to holistic, community-based healthcare.

Additionally, the state's strong presence in healthcare innovation is evident in the growth of startups and tech-enabled healthcare employers, such as 98point6 and Health. Finally, Washington is home to prominent academic and research institutions such as the University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center. These employers combine clinical care with cutting-edge research and education, often collaborating with public health agencies and biotech firms to offer specialized roles in clinical trials, epidemiology, and translational medicine. This wide range of healthcare employer types ensures a dynamic labor market that supports diverse career pathways across the state.

What is needed to increase the participation of BIPOC students in your sector's high-priority occupations? To increase the participation of students from rural areas? Which programs are doing this well?

To increase BIPOC student participation in and awareness of CCW, the Training Fund has partnered with the BIPOC Health Career Ecosystem and Build 2 Lead to understand and address programmatic aps, thereby increasing BIPOC student involvement. The BIPOC Health Ecosystem has expressed interest in developing a comprehensive database of healthcare programs to identify those that can potentially partner with these organizations. The TF is in conversation with CCW regarding how that might be supported, as programs that aren't CCW-endorsed need to add themselves. The Training Fund has implemented regional convenings, which include organizations that speak and participate in these events. The Training Fund will continue to support these initiatives as part of their work to expand opportunities for employers, labor, other stakeholders, and the regional networks in the fall of 2025.

Continue to develop partnerships within the Career Ecosystem and establish new contacts directly with county school districts, focusing on schools with diverse populations. There has been a turnover at the BIPOC Health Ecosystem. The Training Fund will continue to support the creation of opportunities and partnerships with those who are far from opportunity.

Replication of successful programs and funding are essential to increasing BIPOC student participation in training for high-priority healthcare occupations. On-ramp programs that can be replicated, similar to Jefferson HealthCare's Care Team Specialist, include the Training Fund's Introduction to Healthcare Apprenticeships Program (IHAP 1), which is specifically designed to recruit BIPOC students into healthcare pathways. IHAP 1 is a three-week program that teaches work readiness and medical terminology, providing foundational knowledge for job placement in entry-level healthcare jobs for BIPOC and underserved communities. ESD123 and ESD113 are interested in replicating the program in rural areas, and CCW program builder support would go a long way toward expanding IHAP. The Healthcare Sector Intermediary also continues to partner with ESD123 and ESD113 to roll out programs, such as a Career Networking event and Summer Academies. Program implementation that includes participant support and planning on a regional level with stakeholders is instrumental in

helping build and lift programming. Flexible wrap-around resources can help participants engage and benefit from these types of programs.

Stem Like Me, MultiCare's MASH camps and Summer Academies in the Yakima Region are having success increasing BIPOC participation in rural areas. A nursing launch program was recently developed in the Tri-Cities area, and a new high school is being built in the Tri-Cities that will include a focus on healthcare academic tracks. The Healthcare Sector Intermediary is learning more about these opportunities and their potential for expansion and replication.

To learn more about how to engage underserved communities, Intermediary work should support attendance in various Explorer, Prep, and Launch events. Events supported by the TF range from planning committees for the HILT/SCIH and the Long-Term Care Initiative and attended the ECHO Tour, Sno-isle Skill Center Career for high school students in King and Snohomish County, and a Speed Networking event in Franklin County that provides inventive way to bring individuals in rural communities into healthcare. The Healthcare Sector Intermediary connectivity enables the highlighting of regional successes. ESD113, 189, 105 have expressed a strong interest in replicating or creating:

1. IHAP-NAC programs
2. Career Fairs- hands-on healthcare learning experiences
3. Quarterly Roundtable Discussions
4. Program Showcase participation
5. Job shadowing
6. Employer-based train-the-trainer programs
7. Internships
8. Healthcare career exposure camps
9. In school speaker series from the healthcare workforce

The Intermediary has held quarterly meetings with the Regional Networks to confirm the need for new programs, existing programs, opportunities for advancement, and programs that require funding. External impacts on funding, ranging from State, Federal, and private sources due to funding shortfalls, will make partnership even more critical in helping to support the continued efforts outlined under the Training Fund's HealthCare Intermediary efforts. Many organizations that support CCW programs have been impacted, and continued collective partnership with various stakeholders will be necessary to support the foundation that the Training Fund has established since the inception of the Healthcare Intermediary Sector designation.

One challenge in reaching all parts of the state is that there is a continued opportunity to share information in real-time with some Regional Networks. The Healthcare Sector Intermediary has focused on regions where healthcare is a high priority, helping to concentrate efforts on areas with a clear focus. By leveraging Roundtables, the Healthcare Sector Intermediary has built connectivity around future program building in coordination with the Regional Networks and Sector Intermediary work. Having access to current data from all Regional Networks will help the Healthcare Sector Intermediary better target efforts to build more career-connected learning opportunities. A streamlined information sharing process with regular sharing deadlines needs to be implemented. CCW assistance is required to strengthen the connectivity between the RN and SI roles, expanding and supporting Career Connected Learning opportunities for all Washington youth. Based on the impact of external funding, it is recommended that new programming be focused on, along with scaling existing successful programs, rather than duplicating them, with continued growth in partnership opportunities.

What overarching strategies do you recommend to support pathway development for the

highest-priority occupations in your sector?

To develop career pathways for high-demand healthcare roles, such as Certified Nursing Assistants (NA-C), Medical Assistants (MA), and Behavioral Health (BH) professionals in Washington State, we must expand and align programs that prepare students at every stage, from career exploration to job placement. A key strategy is to build out more Career Launch programs that combine classroom learning with real-world, paid work experiences. These programs help students develop practical skills and confidence while meeting the needs of employers.

Equally important is investing in Explore and Prep programs that introduce students to healthcare careers at an early stage. Strengthening healthcare-focused courses in high schools, primarily through dual credit options, can help students earn college credit and build momentum toward certification. These programs should be hands-on and engaging, with job shadows, simulations, and mentorship from working professionals to counter negative perceptions and highlight the rewarding aspects of care.

We also recommend working closely with employers to create on-the-job training and upskilling pathways. For example, current entry-level workers can be trained to become Medical Assistants or Behavioral Health Technicians through employer-sponsored programs. These types of earn-to-learn models provide financial stability for students and help retain workers in the field.

Behavioral health careers in particular need greater visibility and outreach. Marketing campaigns that highlight existing programs and roles, such as Peer Counselors and Substance Use Disorder Professionals, could attract more young people to the field, especially when paired with relatable success stories and accessible training programs.

Finally, all programs should be designed with an equity lens. That includes recruiting diverse instructors and mentors, integrating culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices, and ensuring that students have access to wraparound supports like transportation, childcare, and tutoring. Making healthcare pathways more inclusive and supportive will help build a stronger, more resilient workforce for Washington State.

Strategies for NA-C and nursing pathways

- Continued partnership work to expand youth NA-C training programs
- Previously, ESD112 planned to submit a Healthcare Program Builder proposal in the following Program Builder funding round. Adjustments to CCW funding will impact this plan.
- ESD123 to support the WSU Nursing Bridge Program and the launch of their two new high schools, which will have healthcare pathway programs
- Meet with all regions to discuss the possibility of implementing programs similar to on-ramp programs, such as IHAP, Care Team Specialist, and other entry-level healthcare training programs that can provide learners and the community with an introduction to healthcare professions.

Strategies for MA, Behavioral Health, and Radiology Tech and imaging positions:

- Continue to meet with ESD189 to support the Skagit Valley College career fair event and pathway for MA and the Whatcom County College MA and NAC pathway opportunities
- Meet with all registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs to gather information and foster potential expansion and replication of these programs.
- Work with regions, K-12 leaders, and College leaders to support program expansion and help bolster employer support and possible paid internships

- Work with Regional Network Directors for regionalized explorer programs that focus on Career Tours (Working with employers to tour healthcare facilities and expose students to careers in healthcare)
- Work with Southwest Washington's component of the WJI-funded Healthcare Talent Pipeline Development Sector Partnership, Washington Association for Community Health, and CHAS Health Centers to learn more about Medical Assistant training and see if there are opportunities to align or leverage their work to expand Career Connected Learning for this occupation

Strategies for all occupations

- Engage with the ESDs mentioned in this document to gather information on the appropriate avenues in their specific areas for training students in CLE, leading to various pathway progressions and certification opportunities.
- Support the ECHO event in Spring 2026 for middle schoolers in Snohomish County, Skagit, and Whatcom counties, in ESD189
- Learn and connect with various healthcare convening spaces, such as the Training Fund roundtable discussions throughout the year, which include the Workforce Training Board, AHEC, and the Allied Health Center of Excellence, where invited guests contribute to these discussions. These round table convenings provide a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and resource sharing, fostering a more holistic understanding of workforce needs and promoting the development of innovative solutions that address the complex challenges facing the healthcare industry.
- Recommend Program Showcases for the CCW community. The historical Healthcare Sector bimonthly Program Showcase will shift some of the focus to the Center for Excellence, AHEC, and employers to support networking, education, and partnering with the Regional Networks and other stakeholders who want to connect. By bringing together representatives from healthcare providers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations.
- The Healthcare Sector intermediary will require a reevaluation of what currently exists and what is needed to support continued development and progression moving forward, amid the transition of organizations.

Rural Strategy

Developing a comprehensive rural strategy is crucial to ensuring equitable access to training opportunities across diverse geographic regions. The Training Fund has historically partnered with workforce development organizations, CCW, and Regional Networks to develop a concrete, implementable strategy to address the challenges faced by rural communities. A primary focus should be on expanding ramp programs, such as the Care Team Specialist, IHAP, apprenticeship in rural areas, and high school skill center expansion work, as rural partners are strongly engaged, to help address training and workforce shortages in rural areas. The Training Fund, as the prior Sector Intermediary, supported Jefferson Healthcare's Care Team Specialist and Surgical Technologist programs, both of which are great successes. Both programs can be expanded and replicated in other rural areas. Both programs could leverage pathway support with appropriate funding and employer and other partnerships.

DEI Strategy

Incorporating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") into every facet of program development and policymaking is imperative. The strategy should continue with the organizational transition of the Sector Intermediary. There may be external challenges given the new federal administration's stance on DEI, as well as the budgetary impacts at the State and Federal levels.

The Healthcare Sector Intermediary requires support from CCW to expand DEI work. Possible ways that the CCW could assist include: 1) conducting a needs assessment and mapping project to increase community engagement; 2) providing guidance on inclusive policy and program development; 3)

training and capacity building; and 4) monitoring for accountability. By integrating these approaches, the CCW Community can contribute to building more equitable and inclusive systems in both healthcare and education.

Strategy to expand apprenticeship

The strategy is to make the process of developing apprenticeships more transparent and accessible. Recommendations on focusing on new apprenticeship programming versus duplicate programs should be taken into consideration. Program design should include pathway opportunities (such as college credits that lead to required industry credentialling). The Healthcare Sector Intermediary should continue engaging stakeholders, including Regional Network Leaders, workforce groups, and other partners, for the expansion of the new Career Launch program. Continued partnership support to help explore how best to support the expansion of apprenticeships in these focused areas, while highlighting employer/labor meetings when applicable. The sector intermediary transition should continue to highlight Career Launch as a solution to workforce needs. Various resources are outlined:

- Apprenticeship development inquiry (employer)
- Connect with L&I Apprenticeship Consultant, Offer a Registered Apprenticeship (wa.gov)
- Connect with Regional Networks and Career Connect Learning Coordinators to understand the needs of regional employers. Regional Networks & CCL Coordinators | Career Connect Washington
- Explore funding opportunities (such as apprenticeship) and the requirements to apply for Grant Funding | Career Connect Washington
- Connect with Centers of Excellence in your sector to understand training resources, Washington State Centers of Excellence (coewa.com)

To implement these strategies, continued support from CCW will be needed, with adjustments to the CCW system. This work is complex, and no one party can do it without strong and collaborative best-in-class relationships. The Sector Intermediary should continue to partner with CCW to ensure that both parties are aware of all existing programs, their start and end dates, and new partners who have expressed interest in developing programs.

Please **describe** the types of activities and tactics you believe are needed to make progress against each recommendation between now and June of 2026, including:

1. Key activities and tactics you plan to prioritize as a Sector Leader
2. Key activities other partners should consider advancing

Recommendations to be completed by the new Healthcare Sector Intermediary