

# Career Pathways

## PLAYBOOK

Actively Recruiting and Coaching  
Your Employees to Develop Skills  
to Achieve Their Career Goals



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# A Note on Talent Development



The talent your company employs affects your company culture, efficiency, customer satisfaction, innovation and, ultimately, success. Finding, cultivating, and encouraging your employees through further education and training opportunities allows your company to further develop your employees' skills and retain that talent. In today's economy, businesses are struggling to not only retain their employees, but also to find new talent due to the effects of COVID-19. It is a different world than it was previously and for that reason businesses must adjust their practices.

The Career Pathways Playbook will assist your business with new strategies for locating talent, hiring, upskilling current employees and increasing retention. It contains business resources and data to assist in implementing new strategies, attracting skilled employees, increasing retention of top talent and adjusting problem areas of your business.

## What is the biggest hiring challenge that you face? *(check one)*

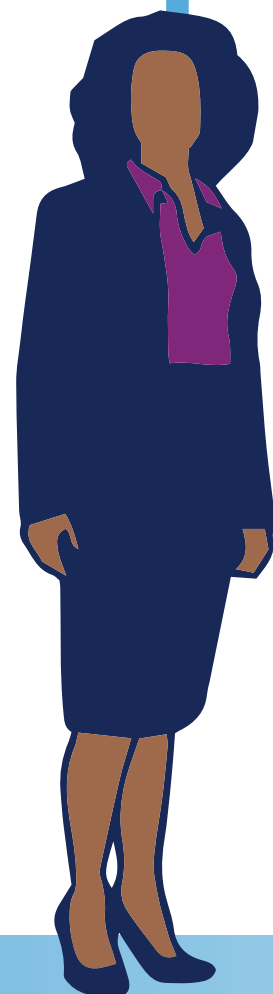
Answers	Responses	
Not enough applicants	15	16.30%
Applicants lack relevant work experience	26	28.26%
Applicants lack relevant education or training	12	13.04%
Applicants lack appropriate social skills	7	7.61%
Applicants have questionable work history (firings, bad references)	6	6.52%
Applicants want higher wages than we are able to provide	20	21.74%
Applicants have hard-to-accommodate scheduling and lifestyle needs	6	6.52%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# A Look at the Correlation Between **Talent Development & Business Success**

In today's economy, many job seekers entering the workforce out of school have an academic knowledge of their chosen field but lack the hands-on experience that many businesses require, and which reduces training time and costs on the business side. In fact, in a recent survey conducted by the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, that was the top challenge that was faced by hiring teams. While an academic knowledge of the field is also important, the importance of on-the-job training cannot be understated.

While the courses and training programs designed for students are informed by employers and industry experts, that information may become quickly outdated due to changes in regulations, operating protocols and updates to technology. It is important for businesses to not only engage their current employees, but also to develop relationships with training programs and higher education platforms that funnel talent into their hiring pool. By doing so, you can not only influence what students are being taught, but also create career pathways to attract top talent into your organization. The time taken to develop these relationships and create pathways into your business are an investment in your business's future workforce.

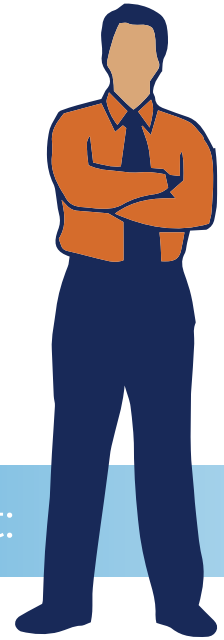
Another crucial investment is the time and resources required to adequately train new employees. Nurturing these investments is an important part in increasing retention, reducing turnover cost and improving the bottom line. So how does one go about this? By maintaining departmental training programs, retraining where necessary and upskilling employees that show potential to higher positions within your organization, your company can stay up to date on industry regulations and safety measures as well as increase your employee engagement.





# A Case for Investing in Talent

As stated earlier, investing in your future and current talent is pivotal working around the inefficiencies created by outdated education and lack of hands-on experience.



There are **three main cases** that work to show just that:

## Investing in Employee Development, Boosts the Bottom Line

In June of 2020, Washington state's unemployment rate was 9.8%. While lower than the 11.1% national unemployment rate at that time, Washingtonians are still feeling a great impact from the pandemic and subsequent economic downturn. As COVID-19 continues to affect our economy, businesses must stay competitive within the market while remaining lean. By looking within your company and upskilling top talent, your company can reduce training costs that would come with hiring from outside, increase employee retention and boost the overall quality of your workforce.

## Investing in Talent, Attracts Talent

By investing in your current talent, developing training programs and upskilling employees to higher positions, it increases your employee engagement and subsequently, employee satisfaction. This has an overall positive affect on the company image and what it projects to potential talent. By elevating your image, your business becomes more attractive to top talent seeking employment. When upheld, this cycle positively impacts overall talent within your company, increasing productivity, creativity and problem solving.

## Investing in Your Culture, Drives Success

It's widely known that into today's market, employees are putting greater stock in company culture than in decades passed. When asked what they look for in a potential company, top answers from job seekers included room for growth, company reputation, and passed employee reviews. Each of these factors is influenced by training programs set up within your organization. Once again, by creating a culture of internal growth and continued training, your company exhibits increased value and attraction to potential employees.

# Take **Action**

## Who Can Use the Career Pathways Playbook?

The Career Pathways Playbook provides employers of any industry with resources and proven strategies for locating talent, hiring, upskilling current employees and retaining top talent within your organization. Any employer can utilize this information to get started on a plan for their organization. Furthermore, our team is here to assist you with questions and industry specific direction.

## Putting the Playbook to Use!

Within the Playbook you will find statistics, resources and a case study to utilize as a starting point for your own strategy. You will also find links to upskill training programs, access to workshops and resources for hiring and increasing retention.

### **The resources found within the playbook will assist your business with:**

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- **Locating Potential Talent Pools**
- **Attracting Top Talent to Open Positions**
- **Upskilling Current Employees**
- **Reducing Costly Turnover**
- **Increasing Retention of Skilled Employees**
- **Designing Job Descriptions**
- **Posting Job Announcements for Greatest Effect**
- **Incumbent Worker Training**
- **Wage Analysis**





# Put it **In Motion**

It is one thing to read through the resources and quite another to put them into motion. Within the playbook you will find myriad resources and strategies to implement within your organization.

## **Step 1: Build Your Action Team**

Your Action Team is a cross functional team assigned to determine what processes will most benefit your organization and how each will be implemented. All levels of your organization should be represented within the team including decision makers and those with hands-on interaction with new and experienced employees.

## **Step 2: Evaluate Your Current Talent and Organization's Needs**

- Pinpoint current talent discovery strategies. How does your company typically find talent? How do they find you? In terms of race, ethnicity, age, and background, how diverse is your organization?
- Evaluate talent retention and training costs. What is your current rate of retention? Are there certain roles or departments that have higher turnover? How has this affected profit? What is the cost of training a new employee?
- Identify potential training and upskill opportunities. Are there areas of your business that would benefit from retraining? Are there employees that could be upskilled into other positions?
- Locate existing barriers. Are there policies or requirements that may create barriers to hiring, diversity or equity in the workforce? Are these regulations required by law or are they necessary for your business practices?

## **Step 3: Identify Problem Areas**

Prior to creating an action plan of procedures and phasing in new initiatives, it is important to first identify all problem areas within your organization so your plan can be customized to those areas that require assistance. By taking this next step in identifying problem areas, you will be able to align any new processes with your company strategy and values. In the long run, your company will save time and resources by aligning goals prior to beginning any implementation.

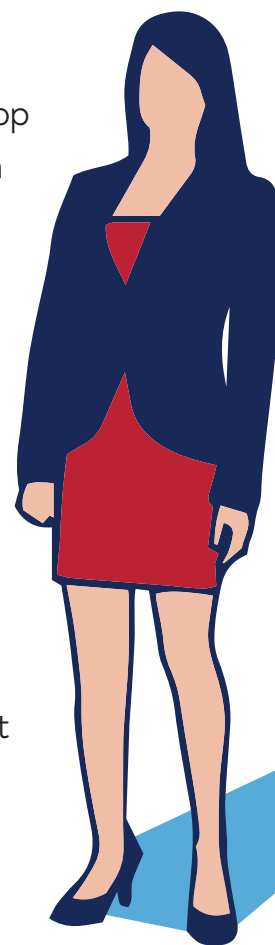


## Step 4: Develop Your Training Goals

You have identified departments that would benefit from re-training as well as top talent that can be upskilled into new positions. Create your goals and action plan for implementing those training programs. Within the Playbook, you will find resources for both retraining and upskill programs and financial assistance. Determine what may most benefit your business and put it into action.

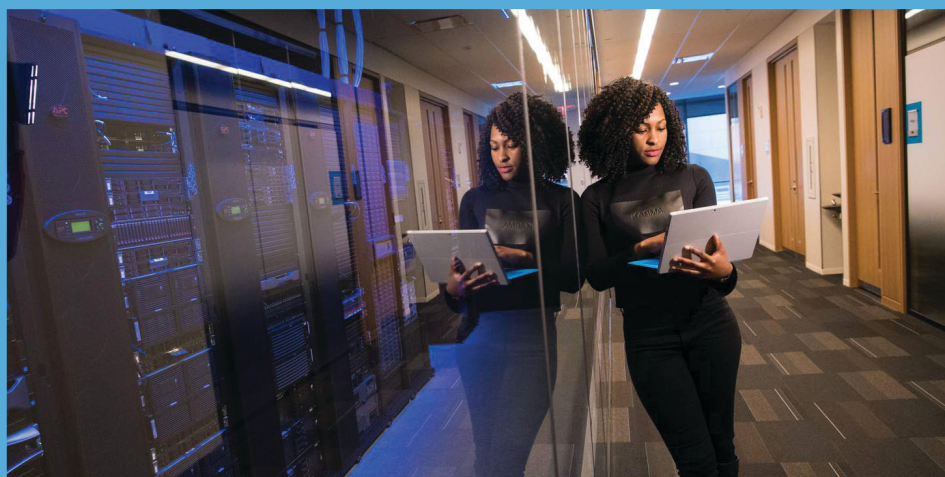
## Step 5: Communicate Your Vision

A meticulously designed and laid out plan only works if everyone is aware of the overarching vision they are working to achieve. Now is the time to communicate that vision to the company. Likely, each department will be impacted in some way. Outline your goals both in the short and long term. Who will be affected? Are they aware of their part in the process? Ensure that all parties are on the same page and have had a chance to get clarity around any areas that affect them.



## Step 6: Make It Happen

Now is the time to put the plan into action. Create check-in points to ensure that your plan is continually aligning with your goals and company values. Along the way you may find that parts of your plan need to pivot. Be flexible in this; no one process fits every organization. Keep the playbook handy so that you can reference back to different sections when needed.



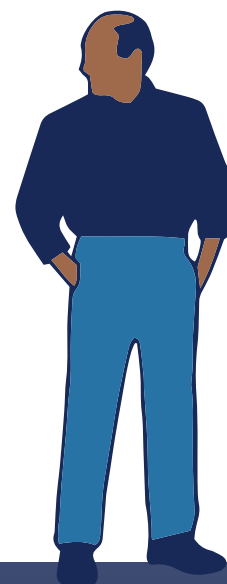


# THE Career Pathways EMPLOYER

Engaging Employees in  
Demand-Driven  
Career Pathways

## Developing Career Pathways

Leveraging your employee's skills and creativity by elevating them to new positions allows your company to create pathways within your organization. Subsequently, this increases employee engagement and retention and can increase your company's ability to source properly trained employees from partnering organizations and education platforms. All around, these project a more attractive company image to prospective talent and keeps your company competitive.



### What Are They?

Career pathways are a set of progressive training and occupations within a specific career that build off of the previous position's skills and duties and in turn increase in rank, responsibility and pay. By creating career pathways, employers create a path of upward mobility within their organization for employees to grow, learn, train and reach higher levels of success.

These can include education and training as well as hands-on work experience. Employers can customize career pathways to their specific organization's structure or work with industry contacts, educational institutes and training programs to develop collaborative career pathways. A benefit of working with outside organizations is that it allows businesses to develop a system to funnel trained employees directly into their talent pool.

## Why Create Them?

By creating career pathways, your employees can more easily understand how to reach their career goals as well as how various training and experience build off of each other in order to develop the skills necessary to reach higher levels of responsibility. The ability to visualize these connections and upward progress allows employees to see greater opportunities in remaining with your company and increases engagement. This also provides many other benefits such as:

### **Creating a System to Funnel Trained Talent into your Hiring Pool**

By collaborating with educational institutes and training programs, companies can create a talent pipeline of employees that have received proper training that aligns with your company's needs. Not only does this benefit the company by preparing potential employees with job-specific training needed to successfully fill entry-level positions, but it also equips job seekers and students with the industry-specific training needed to secure a job upon graduation.

### **Boosting Employee Retention and Engagement**

By creating career pathways, employees are able to see how their positions within the company can lead to higher levels of responsibility, rank and pay. Furthermore, promoting in-house training and upskill programs demonstrates to employees that you are invested in their future, keep employees more engaged and increasing overall employee satisfaction. All-in-all, you are developing a healthy company image.

### **Remaining Competitive in the Market**

Job seekers state that when evaluating a company for employment, some of the top factors include company culture and passed employee reviews. The healthy company image that is projected from employee engagement and satisfaction in turn boosts your company's overall reputation. This attracts top talent to your organization, increasing your competitiveness in the market. It all comes full circle.

### **Reducing Turnover and Training Costs**

It's simple logic that turnover results in further training costs. Those training costs come in multiple forms including cost of training programs or instructors, time given by other employees to assist in training and additional time for the employee to get up-to-speed on processes until they are working at full capacity. As stated earlier, clearly defined career pathways lead to higher employee engagement, higher engagement leads to lower turnover and thus, reduced training costs.

# Manufacturing Career Pathway

**Core Plus is a two-year, standardized high school curriculum** recognized by the manufacturing industry throughout Washington State to prepare high school graduates for an entry-level career in manufacturing.

## Year 1 - The Core

The first year of curriculum teaches basic manufacturing skills that apply to industries across all Washington industrial sectors. This includes use and safety of shop equipment, precision measuring, material science, print reading, as well as extensive record keeping.

## Year 2 - The Plus

The second year goes more in depth on the industry sector in which the teacher deems as important to their community. Focuses can be composites, construction, electronics, metal fabricating, aerospace, maritime and auto.

Professional development opportunities are available on a continuing basis to teachers through the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Start-up grants are available from the State of Washington.

## Where to Start

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### Locate Sector Partnership in Your Industry

The best way to begin is to locate sector partnerships within our industry as a way to connect with other businesses, organizations, and educational platforms that are developing similar career pathways within the industry. By creating these connections, you're already on your way to developing a career pathway of your own.

### Identify Pathways Already Established Within Your Organization

Many businesses have existing career pathways which they have not made visible to their workforce. By identifying these areas, you are already on your way to developing funnels for talent and upward mobility within your organization. These pathways can then be used when recruiting talent, training and coaching existing employees.

### Develop a Team to Lead and Manage These Efforts

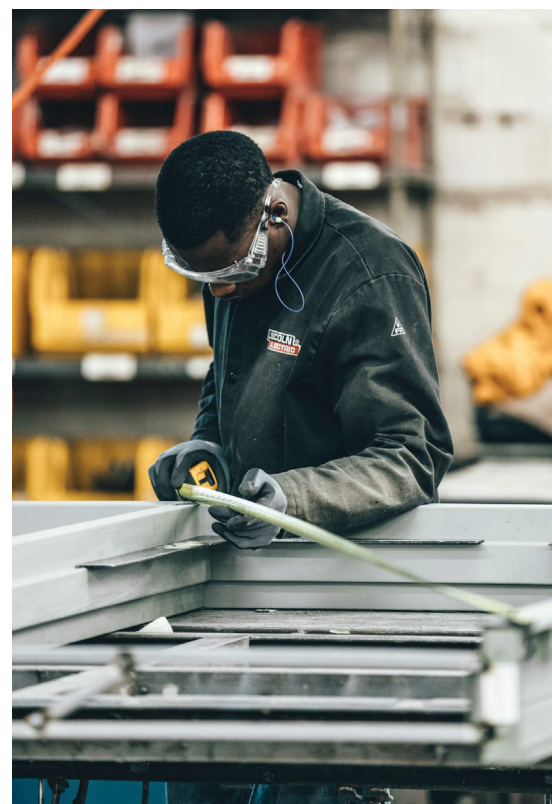
Ensuring that your organization is on the same page regarding these efforts is a necessity. Within your Action Team should be a clearly defined group dedicated to the development, progress, and vision for your organization's career pathways. This team should be made up of the key decision makers as well as those that will be able to measure the success of the career pathways and those that will be coaching employees on the steps needed.

### Measure, Review, Adjust

As with any new plan, once implemented you must measure the results, review the effectiveness and adjust as necessary.

## Structured, On-the-Job Training

Many companies report that one of the main difficulties in hiring is finding experienced workers. In addition to working with trade schools and other education platforms in your area, created structured on-the-job training opportunities provides businesses with a way to train employees in your company's specific protocols.





# CASE STUDY

# Oceana Spa

Oceana Spa in Aberdeen, WA is a great example of an employer collaborating with the public workforce system to access and leverage resources for recruitment, training, and retention. Master Esthetician and Owner, Katrina Zozaya, needed to increase her capacity to deliver service to her growing spa clientele. She posted a job on Washington's WorkSourceWA.com site, which is free to employers. Soon after she was contacted by a staff member at WorkSource who saw the post and wanted to assist in recruiting and sharing information about available workforce programs.



The spa was interested in training the current Receptionist, Samantha, but was no longer able to utilize the apprenticeship program Katrina had started years prior because it took Katrina, the sole Esthetician, away from delivering services. When WorkSource explained there was training funding available through the Future of Work Employee Development Program, Katrina immediately applied to help Samantha attend a six months esthetician program. Furthermore, while Samantha was away from her receptionist duties, attending school, Katrina learned she could host an intern named Dawn, through the WIOA WEX work experience program, who had recently graduated from the same esthetician school with the assistance of Workforce funding. It was a win-win for all. Within a year, Oceana Spa hired the intern on full-time and Samantha graduated from her program and started working as a full-time esthetician, increasing the capacity for Oceana Spa to better serve the community in Grays Harbor.

## From Katrina, Owner:

*"Simply incredible how one meeting with a WorkSource Business Services Specialist has impacted my business! Loretta Thomas contacted me after seeing my job posting on the WorkSource website and she wanted to let me know about the programs available that could support my business operations; she advised me about two programs that have just gone into action. I have an employee who is ecstatic to have been approved for esthetician training through the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development. Samantha has been a team member here at Oceana Spa for just over 1 year. She had a passion for the industry when she applied and has showed her dedication to learning by attending continuing education classes provided by our retail partners. It is exciting that she will be greatly expanding her knowledge, skills, and abilities to become a licensed Esthetician and practice here at Oceana Spa where she has developed relationships with spa guests through her amazing customer service and product knowledge.*

*As a strong front desk Receptionist is stepping away for a few months to attend training, I had a vacancy for a part time Receptionist. Dawn Curry is currently in training with us through the WIOA WEX program. Dawn is a student at Academy of Aesthetic Arts and will soon have her Esthetician license. She was just the candidate we were looking for, she has a wonderful personality, strong customer service skills and will be a licensed Esthetician within a few months.*

*I have attached a couple of pictures of the ladies at work today. Dawn is being trained by both Samantha and Alisha on our reservation system and office protocols for the Front Desk Coordinator position. How exciting to have the WEX program in place for both parties to experience this working relationship."*

**Katrina Zozaya**  
**Owner, Master Esthetician**  
**Oceana Spa**

# Possibilities



## National Fund for WorkSource Solutions

What does a quality job look like? The Job Design Framework allows you to choose the combination of items that best fit the needs of your business and your employees. Think of it as a menu rather than a mandate. Employers should discuss job design with frontline workers to identify the most impactful changes. A good job for one worker may not be a good job for another. But the better the job, the more likely an employer will attract and retain the best workers in a tight labor market. It is vital for employers to understand what comprises each element of this chart. We have divided the elements that go into designing a good job into three categories, Foundational, Support, and Opportunity. Each of these categories, and the elements within, are important to understand when designing good jobs. With this information at hand, employers can choose which elements best fit their needs and the needs of their workforce.

The Job Design Framework (on the following page) allows you to choose the combination of items that best fit the needs of your business and your employees. Think of it as a menu rather than a mandate. Employers should discuss job design with frontline workers to identify the most impactful changes. A good job for one worker may not be a good job for another. But the better the job, the more likely an employer will attract and retain the best workers in a tight labor market.

For more information on designing quality jobs, visit <https://nationalfund.org/our-solutions/make-jobs-better-for-competitive-advantage/job-quality-resource-center/defining-job-quality/>

## Employment Security Department of Washington State

Jobs & training! Together with other partners in the statewide WorkSource system, we help workers find jobs and map out new careers by connecting to a variety of training programs.

## Core Plus

Core Plus helps students across Washington learn to build airplanes, boats, buildings – and their futures. This site connects you with Core Plus programs, teachers, employers, opportunities and resources. Core Plus is a two-year, written curriculum for high school industrial arts instructors. The Core is 1st year foundational skills like safety and tool use, the Plus represents sector-specific skill sets.

## Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

OSPI is the primary agency charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington state. Working with the state's 295 public school districts and 6 state-tribal education compact schools, OSPI allocates funding and provides tools, resources, and technical assistance so every student in Washington is provided a high-quality public education.

***[Resources for posting announcements, link into WorkSource for programming/resources, incumbent worker training, wage analysis, stay interviews.](#)***

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# JOB DESIGN FRAMEWORK

## What does a quality job look like?

The Job Design Framework offers a menu of components that come together in different ways to create the right quality job for the context.

### Foundational

#### Compensation

Wages & Benefits  
Financial Incentives  
Employee Loans  
Access within Pay Period

#### Structure

Open Communication  
Stable Hours & Scheduling

#### Fundamentals

Safety  
Fairness  
Respect  
Job Security  
Grievance Procedure

### Support

#### Training

Entry Level  
Specialized

#### External Linkages

Tax Credits  
Childcare  
Transportation  
HR Services

#### Internal Assistance

Supervisory Training  
Job Coaching  
Peer Mentors  
Team Development  
Financial Counseling

### Opportunity

#### Career Development

Cross Training  
Advancement  
Educational Benefits

#### Acknowledgement

Internal & External Recognition  
Leveling of Perks

#### Engagement

Participation  
Self-Management  
Representation  
Mattering  
Pride  
Ownership

## The Three Pillars of the Job Design Framework

### Foundational

The Foundational pillar includes many of the basic elements of a job that any person would expect walking into a workplace. Together, these define the core, everyday relationship between an employee and employer. In addition to fundamental items such as wages, benefits, and safety, this pillar includes:

**Financial Incentives** Employee bonus systems that are tied to results

**Employee Loans** Short-term loans for emergencies that are repaid with payroll deductions

**Stable Scheduling** Work schedules that are set two weeks in advance, allowing employees to plan for childcare coverage and other needs.

### Support

The Support pillar includes assistance to help employees perform their job well – and achieve stability outside the workplace. In addition to elements such as on-the-job training, this pillar includes:

**Supervisor Training** To build the skills of supervisors (communications, coaching, priority setting) to help them get better results from their teams

**Job Coaching** To help employees manage life issues that may impact job performance (i.e. transportation challenges)

**Financial Counseling** To help employees better manage their income and expenses and build personal wealth

**External Referrals** To connect employees to programs and services that can assist with childcare, transportation, etc.

### Opportunity

The Opportunity pillar includes support to help employees advance in their careers and develop as individuals. In addition to educational advancement options such as paid tuition, this pillar includes:

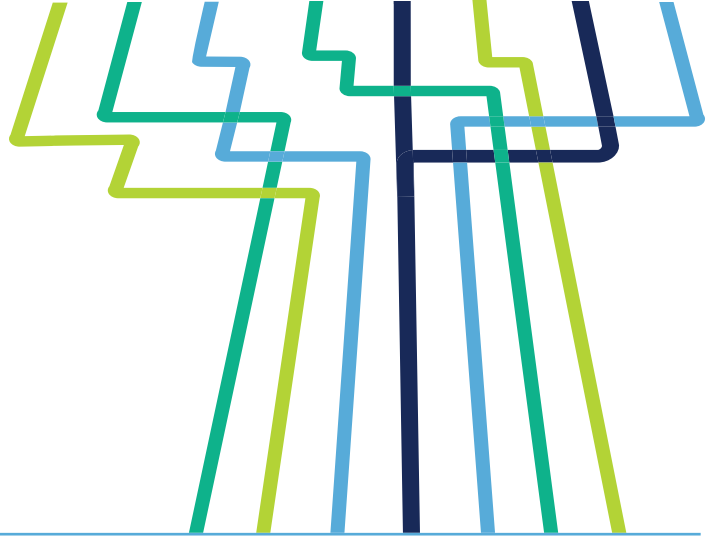
**Connection to Mission & Goals** Clear and frequent communication of the company mission and short- and long-term goals so all employees understand how their work contributes to something greater

**Cross Training** Where wages increase as skills increase

**Career Ladders** Provide opportunities for skill growth, career advancement, and higher wages.

**BETTER JOBS AS A COMPETITIVE BUSINESS ADVANTAGE**

# Tools & Resources



## Colorado Toolkit

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/13O6zIDh1ZHW\\_kDYXtH6rBLq9G7M5gOmL/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13O6zIDh1ZHW_kDYXtH6rBLq9G7M5gOmL/view)

## DOL Apprenticeship Toolkit

<https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/toolkit/toolkitfaq.htm>

## Seattle Toolkit

<http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/workforce-development/career-pathways-initiatives>

## Urban Institute | Local Workforce System Guide

<https://workforce.urban.org/strategy/career-pathways>

## National Funds for Workforce Solutions (The Boeing OJT Project)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561308.pdf>

## Robert Half | Supporting Employee Career Advancement

<https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/management-tips/7-ways-to-support-employees-career-advancement>

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