

Pierce County Library System partners with WorkForce Central to help people get jobs

The partnership that began in 2010 between Pierce County Library System and WorkForce Central, Pierce County's Workforce Investment Board has garnered attention from high level officials. The Governor Office's Retooling Washington's Workforce highlighted the partnership in a presentation to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The group applauds the partnership as it helps put people back to work and increase the number of people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits by 29 percent.

Beginning in 2010, Pierce County Library System bolstered its commitment to the small business and job seeking community by creating [Job and Business Centers](#) in six of its libraries. The centers help people improve their job skills, and search for and get jobs, as well as start and retain small businesses. These dedicated spaces in libraries offer one-stop shopping where people can easily find greater access to free job and business resources.

As part of the Job and Business Center initiative, the Library cultivated a partnership with WorkForce Central, which invests in the WorkSource career development center and eight affiliate sites throughout Pierce County. Library staff visit WorkSource sites and work with job seekers in conjunction with WorkSource instructors. The main goal of the Library's participation is to connect people looking for jobs with the most useful electronic resources.

In 2009, prior to the partnership with WorkForce Central, job and business e-source usage was approximately 2,400 sessions. In 2010, with the introduction of the Library's partnership, usage jumped to 25,000 sessions. As the relationship matured, usage increased to 90,000 sessions in 2011. The introduction of WorkSource classes has a direct correlation to the increase in business e-source usage, with each usage now costing the Library approximately \$1. These e-sources give job seekers help writing their resumes and professional job coaches to help them improve their interview skills.

WorkForce Central donated \$27,623 to Pierce County Library Foundation to invest in mobile computer labs for eastern Pierce County. The Library System uses these labs to teach computer classes in more rural and isolated communities. These classes average between 20 and 30 participants, costing the Library approximately \$3 per attendee to put on the classes.

Eight organizations have provided funding to help the Library respond to this significant need: FRIENDS of Lakewood Library; Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation; Lucky Seven Foundation; The Norcliffe Foundation; Paul G. Allen Family Foundation; Pierce County Library Foundation; Renew Washington grant program, administered by the Washington State Library and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services; as well as WorkForce Central.