Washington State Jobs Initiative

2026 Equity Toolkit

❋ Washington STEM

Building Equity-Centered Workforce Development Systems

This Toolkit is a comprehensive guide designed to help workforce development organizations recruit, train, and retain underrepresented workforce participants—including multilingual job seekers, people of color, women, and others who have been historically excluded from economic opportunity. It also provides strategies for building strong, equity-driven relationships with workforce development partners.

Toolkit Goals

- Increase equitable access to good jobs.
- Create inclusive and welcoming training environments.
- Support successful outcomes for diverse job seekers.
- Build sustainable partnerships grounded in equity and accountability.

Equity-Centered Executive Leadership

As an organization convening a sectoral partnership, one partners with training programs, industry leaders, and community leaders to support workforce development pipelines. This requires leaders in various roles in the organization who are familiar with diverse needs of participants, employers, and diverse communities.

Strategies

- Prioritize hiring people who reflect the racial, cultural, gender, and linguistic diversity of the communities served.
- Seek leaders with lived experience or demonstrated success supporting programs for underrepresented populations.
- Provide onboarding and training on equity-centered program design, anti-racist leadership, and inclusive decision-making.
- Include community voice in hiring panels and leadership development.
- Build diverse leadership pipelines from within existing staff or program alumni.

Where & How to Recruit Leaders

- Partner with BIPOC-led professional associations (e.g., Black Women in Leadership, Latinos in Public Service).
- Recruit through culturally specific job boards (e.g., Diversity Jobs, Women of Color in Tech).
- Engage community colleges and universities with equity-focused leadership certificate programs.
- Identify and cultivate alumni or frontline staff for leadership pathways.
- Host "Future Workforce Leaders" fellowships or executive-in-training initiatives, program design, anti-racist leadership, and inclusive decision-making.

Tools included

- Inclusive Recruitment Strategy Template
- Inclusive Interview Questions
- Leadership Pipeline Development Plan

Recruitment of Underrepresented Workforce Participants

Strategies

- Partner with trusted community-based organizations and cultural centers.
- Develop multilingual and culturally responsive recruitment materials.
- Hold community info sessions and orientations in accessible locations and formats.
- Engage alumni, peer mentors, and community influencers as ambassadors.
- Use digital platforms and social media to expand reach.

Tools Included

- Inclusive Community Partner Outreach Plan Template
- Supporting Multilingual Learners in Workforce Development Programs
- Success Strategies for Supporting Multilingual Learners and Participants
- Peer Ambassador Training Guide
- Best Practices: Gender Diverse Participants in Nontraditional Employment (NTE)
- Best Practices: Women in Nontraditional Employment (NTE)

Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Training Programs

Strategies

- Train staff on culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices.
- Integrate real-world examples that reflect lived experiences of participants.
- Provide translated training materials and visual learning supports.
- Offer hybrid and flexible training formats (e.g., evening classes, childcare availability).
- Facilitate identity-affirming and team-building exercises.

Tools included

- Facilitator Training Modules
- Culturally Responsive Workforce Development Curriculum Design Checklist

Maintaining Engagement and Supporting Participant Success

Strategies

- Assign culturally responsive mentors or case managers.
- Offer consistent, personalized check-ins and milestone recognition.
- Provide transportation, tech, and childcare support.
- Build peer networks and ongoing alumni engagement.
- Use disaggregated data to identify and respond to equity gaps.

Tools included

- Support Services Guide
- Participant Progress Tracker
- Equity Data Reflection Template

Building Strong Workforce Development Sectoral Partnerships

Strategies

- Partner with employers committed to equity and inclusive practices.
- Co-design job pathways with employers, training partners, and job seekers.
- Facilitate ongoing dialogue and joint reflection with partners.
- Provide employer equity coaching and resources.
- Host roundtables and community feedback sessions.

Tools included

- Employer Partnership Equity Rubric
- Sample MOU with Equity Clauses
- Inclusive Job Pathway Planning Template

Continuous Equity Improvement

Strategies

- Conduct quarterly equity audits and focus groups.
- Use participant and staff feedback to drive changes.
- Celebrate and communicate successes widely.
- Provide ongoing DEI professional development.
- Build organizational equity goals into performance systems.

Tools included

- Quarterly Equity Check-In Tool
- Feedback Collection Template (Participants & Staff)
- Annual Equity Action Plan Template

Real-World Examples from Washington State

- Community-based pre-apprenticeship programs successfully recruiting immigrant women.
- Multilingual digital outreach campaigns increasing Latinx participation in training programs.
- Employer partnerships resulting in inclusive hiring commitments and job redesign.

Conclusion

Equity is not a one-time initiative—it's a continuous practice. This toolkit offers actionable strategies, real-world examples, and adaptable tools to help you recruit, train, support, and retain a workforce that reflects and uplifts Washington's diverse communities.

Inclusive Recruitment Strategy Template

For Workforce Development Programs in Washington State

Purpose

To increase the representation of diverse leaders and instructors in workforce development programs through intentional, equity-driven recruitment strategies tailored to both urban and rural contexts.

Core Strategies (Applicable Statewide)

Strategy	Action Steps
Community-Based Outreach	Partner with cultural organizations, faith-based groups, and local champions to share job openings.
Culturally Responsive Job Descriptions	Use inclusive language and highlight values of equity, mentorship, and lived experience. Avoid unnecessary credential inflation. Have job description offered in the top languages of program participants.
Diverse Hiring Panels	Ensure interviewers reflect racial, cultural, gender, and geographic diversity. Include community voices like alumni, current participants and diverse employment partners.
Targeted Advertising	Post in BIPOC professional associations, LGBTQIA+ networks, multilingual job boards, and trade-specific affinity groups.

Core Strategies (continued)

Strategy	Action Steps
Pathways from Within	Develop internal leadership pathways for alumni, current instructors, and support staff from underrepresented groups.

Urban-Focused Recruitment Strategies

Strategy	Action Steps
Metro-Based Institutions	Partner with colleges, workforce boards, and unions serving BIPOC and immigrant populations (e.g., Seattle Colleges, Highline College).
Events & Networking	Attend and sponsor job fairs at urban community colleges, multicultural job expos, and affinity group conferences.
Digital Targeting	Use geotargeted social media ads (Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok) in urban ZIP codes with high diversity indexes.

Rural-Focused Recruitment Strategies

Strategy	Action Steps
Local Visibility	Advertise in rural newspapers, local radio, bulletin boards, and tribal newsletters.
Grow-Your-Own Models	Build long-term local talent by supporting residents with training and mentorship to become instructors or leaders.
Transportation & Housing Support	Offer relocation stipends, short-term housing, or mileage reimbursement to remove geographic barriers.
Tribal & Agricultural Networks	Collaborate with tribal workforce programs, farmworker organizations, and rural CBOs.

Outcome Tracking

- % increase in hires from underrepresented groups
- Geographic diversity of applicants
- Candidate satisfaction and experience feedback
- Retention rates after 1 year

Inclusive Interview Questions

For Leadership & Instructor Applicants in
Workforce Development

Equity, Inclusion & Cultural Responsiveness

1. Tell us about a time you adapted your leadership or teaching approach to meet the cultural or linguistic needs of a participant or team member. What was the outcome?
2. How do you ensure your curriculum or leadership decisions are inclusive of underrepresented or marginalized communities?
3. What strategies have you used to build trust and connection with participants from different racial, cultural, or economic backgrounds?
4. How do you address unconscious bias in your teaching, coaching, or team leadership?

Teaching & Facilitation for Diverse Learners

1. Describe how you create a learning environment that is inclusive, trauma-informed, and supportive of adult learners.
2. How do you differentiate instruction or support for participants with varying levels of literacy, language skills, or education experience?
3. Give an example of a time you had to redirect or re-engage a participant who was disengaged or struggling. What did you do?

Leadership & Team Building

1. Describe your approach to leading or collaborating with a team that includes individuals with diverse identities and experiences.
2. How do you handle conflict or differing opinions, especially when related to issues of equity or inclusion?
3. How do you mentor or support staff or participants from underrepresented backgrounds toward leadership roles?

Program Alignment & Real-World Connection

- How do you stay current with industry trends and ensure training remains relevant to employer and community needs?
- What role should workforce development programs play in addressing systemic barriers to employment (e.g., transportation, childcare, gender fluidity, re-entry)?
- How would you approach building partnerships with community organizations, employers, or tribal nations to strengthen your program's impact?

Closing & Reflection

1. What does inclusive leadership mean to you, and how has it shown up in your career so far?
2. What support would help you thrive in this role and continue growing in inclusive practices?

Leadership Pipeline Development Plan

Vision

Create a lasting leadership pipeline that is fair and inclusive and reflects the culture, language, and experience of the communities. This will help build stronger, more effective workforce programs that meet real community needs.

Goals

Find and support diverse leaders: Look for emerging leaders among program graduates and active community members.

Create mentorship opportunities: Set up mentor relationships inside and outside the program that respect culture and experience.

Offer inclusive leadership training: Teach leadership skills that focus on fairness, equity, and real-life experience.

Increase diverse representation: Make sure leaders reflect the language, culture, and skills of Washington's communities.

Improve job placement and retention outcomes through leadership that understands and reflects community needs.
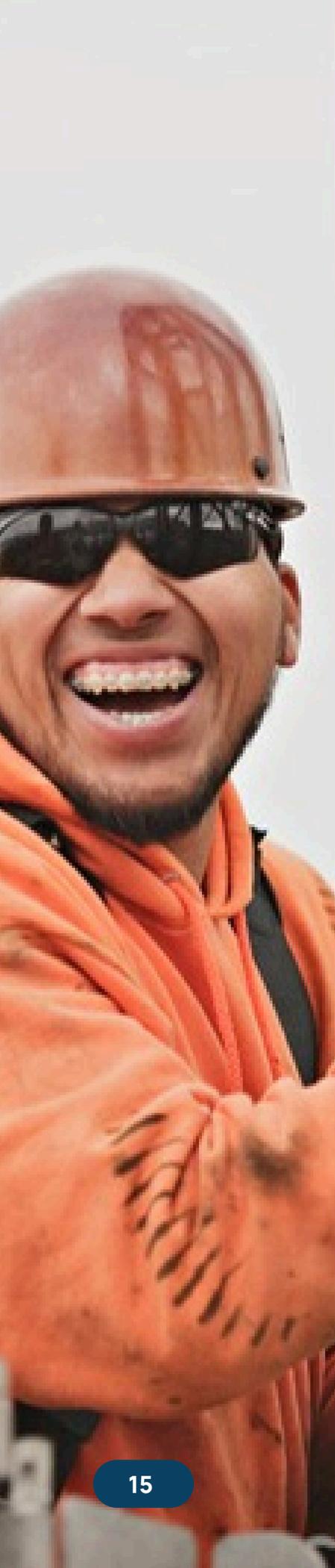
Commitments

Advance equity by design: Ensure leadership opportunities are accessible to Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander, immigrant, refugee, and rural communities.

Center lived experience: Prioritize leaders who have navigated barriers to economic opportunity.

Promote data-informed systems change: Keep track of progress and share results to improve the program.

Support regional workforce development ecosystems: Create leadership paths that link with businesses, schools, and community groups.

Key Components

1. Recruitment of Diverse Leadership Talent

Who to target:
- Program graduates with leadership potential.
- Community members active in local organizing, cultural work, mutual aid, or advocacy.
- Multilingual individuals and first-generation workers.

How to reach them:
- Share leadership opportunities through trusted cultural hubs, and ethnic media.
- Work with community-based organizations (CBOs) and training providers to identify strong candidates
- Use community-centered outreach (flyers in community languages, social media takeovers, radio ads, WhatsApp groups).

2. Mentorship & Coaching Framework

Mentorship from Within:
- Pair graduates with experienced leaders from training programs, employers, and unions who reflect their communities.
- Train mentors on inclusive practices, language access, and navigating systemic barriers.

Mentorship from Beyond:
- Connect emerging leaders with professionals in STEM, healthcare, construction, and clean energy sectors through existing partnerships.
- Include intergenerational mentoring and peer mentoring to build community bonds.

3. Inclusive Leadership Training

Curriculum Themes:
- Equitable Leadership Models
- Power Mapping and Systems Navigation
- Workforce Equity Policy and Advocacy
- Public Speaking Across Cultures and Languages
- Trauma-informed Leadership and Community Healing

Support:
- Training materials in top languages spoken by participants.
- Childcare, stipends, food, and travel reimbursement.
- Options for both virtual and in-person sessions in trusted community spaces.

4. Community-Based Engagement & Events
- Host leadership events in underrepresented communities.
- Co-host with CBOs and regional or industry partners to lift up local leadership and build trust.
- Highlight stories of success and create visibility for new leaders through various communications platforms.

5. Ongoing Feedback and Visibility
- Consider forming an Emerging Leaders Advisory Council with diverse regional representation.
- Share regular leadership spotlights and offer opportunities for panels and speaking events.
- Gather input from participants and alumni through surveys, listening sessions, and storytelling efforts.

Implementation Timeline

Phase	Key Activities	Timeline
Phase 1: Design	Develop curriculum, onboard mentors, identify partners	Months 1-4
Phase 2: Launch	Begin outreach, host kick-off events, start mentoring	Months 4-6
Phase 3: Deepen	Monthly coaching, leadership projects, community events	Months 7-12
Phase 4: Scale & Sustain	Evaluate, document impact, expand to more WJI partners	Months 12+

Success Indicators

- Percentage of leadership pipeline participants from underrepresented communities.
- Number of mentors and mentees paired successfully.
- How many graduates stay in their jobs and find new opportunities after the program.
- How satisfied participants are and whether they feel they belong.
- Leadership participation in program design, hiring, and policy decisions.

Sustainability & Long-Term Goals

- Partner with CBOs, WDCs, and employer groups to sponsor annual leadership cohorts.
- Develop or support current efforts to initiate a Statewide Leadership Fellowship to place graduates in advisory and program design roles.
- Make leadership development a regular part of funding requests from public and private sources.

Inclusive Community Partner Outreach Plan Template

For Workforce Development Programs in Washington State

Supporting Equitable Pathways to Living-Wage Careers

Purpose

To outline a strategic, culturally responsive plan to engage community partners that reflect and serve underrepresented populations—ensuring inclusive recruitment, retention, and success in workforce development initiatives.

Phase 1: Example Community Landscape Assessment

Question	Urban Focus	Rural Focus
What are the key demographics of the community?	Immigrant/refugee communities, multilingual residents, unhoused populations, youth of color	Tribal communities, farmworker families, veterans, formerly incarcerated individuals
	Transportation, childcare, housing instability, tech access	Broadband access, geographic isolation, transportation, limited program availability

Phase 1 (continued)

Question	Urban Focus	Rural Focus
What are the key demographics of the community?	Cultural navigators, BIPOC-led CBOs, tenant unions, community colleges	Tribal workforce programs, agricultural advocacy groups, food banks, libraries, churches

Phase 2: Example Inclusive Partner Mapping

Category	Potential Partners
Cultural & Ethnic Organizations	Somali Health Board, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Latinx coalitions
Tribal Entities	Workforce offices of Yakama Nation, Lummi Nation, or other local tribes
Faith-Based Organizations	Local mosques, Black churches, Sikh temples, rural pastors' networks
Educational Institutions	Urban and rural community colleges, adult basic education, skill centers
Social Service Providers	Housing agencies, food banks, childcare collaboratives
Local Employers	Union reps, BIPOC-owned businesses, agricultural employers, chambers of commerce
Justice-Involved Support	Reentry programs, restorative justice coalitions, drug court liaisons

Phase 3: Outreach Strategies

Core Inclusive Strategies (Statewide)
- Co-host info sessions with community partners.
- Offer translated materials and interpretation.
- Attend community cultural events.
- Provide stipends or food for community feedback events.
- Use plain language and culturally relevant examples.

Urban-Specific Outreach Strategies
- Partner with transit-accessible organizations and social media influencers.
- Host pop-up outreach at housing sites, food banks, and college campuses.
- Collaborate with BIPOC-led unions and labor apprenticeships.

Rural-Specific Outreach Strategies
- Attend county fairs, church gatherings, and farmers' markets
- Use local radio, print media, and bulletin boards.
- Leverage mobile or satellite services (e.g., library vans, pop-up resource centers).
- Collaborate with Grange Halls, rural schools, and tribal education centers.

Phase 4: Example Success Metrics

Metric	Target
# of new partnerships established	5–10 annually
Partner engagement in outreach events	3+ events per partner per year
Referrals received from partners	Minimum 10 per quarter
Referrals received from partners	15–25% growth annually
Partner satisfaction survey results	80%+ positive feedback

Phase 5: Example Outreach Calendar

Month	Activity	Partner	Community
March	Resource Fair Table	Afghan Health Initiative	King County (Urban)
May	Career Info Night	Lummi Workforce Services	Whatcom County (Rural)
July	Youth Apprenticeship BBQ	El Centro de la Raza	Pierce County
October	Mobile Outreach Event	Columbia Basin Health Assoc.	Adams County (Rural)

Phase 6: Example Continuous Feedback & Relationship Maintenance and Cadence

- Quarterly partner check-ins (virtual or in-person).
- Shared calendar of outreach events.
- Partner recognition program.
- Community roundtable twice a years
- Feedback loop: partners help co-design improvements.

Section 2 Tool

Supporting Multilingual Learners in Workforce Development Programs

Building inclusive classrooms where every learner can thrive and gain living wage and beyond careers.

Multilingual learners bring valuable life experiences, resilience, and motivation to workforce training programs. However, many face language, cultural, and confidence barriers that can make learning difficult—especially if they don't feel seen or supported by their instructor. Your approach can make a lasting difference.

Understand the Challenges

Language Barriers
Learners may struggle to follow instructions, ask questions, or understand technical terms.

Cognitive Load
Processing new information in a second language is mentally exhausting.

Cultural Differences
Cultural norms may affect how learners participate, show respect, or ask for help.

Emotional Toll
When participants feel misunderstood or underestimated, it can lead to low confidence and disengagement.

Inclusive Teaching Strategies

Speak Clearly and Simply
Use plain language. Avoid jargon or idioms. Slow down and pause often for understanding.

Check for Understanding
Don't just ask, "Do you get it?" Use visual checks, rephrasing, or ask participants to explain in their own words.

Provide Visual Aids
Use diagrams, charts, and demonstrations whenever possible. Multimodal instruction boosts comprehension. Use visuals that include the home languages of your participants.

Create a Safe Learning Environment
Encourage questions. Normalize mistakes. Build trust through patience and empathy. Bring in alumni or community guest experts that speak the languages of your participants.

Build Cultural Awareness
Learn about your participants' backgrounds and value the knowledge they bring. Avoid assumptions. Include what you have utilized in your classroom environment through choices of snacks, décor, music and incentives.

Use Peer Support and Group Work
Pair learners with supportive peers. Language buddies and group collaboration help build confidence.

Offer Extra Practice and Flexibility
Give time for repetition and review. Allow learners to access materials in their home language or take notes on note card in their home language and English on the other side.

Refer to Support Services
Connect learners to English classes, tutoring, counseling, or community resources when needed.

Your Impact Matters

Your belief in a learner's potential may be the encouragement they need to succeed. When multilingual learners feel respected, supported, and understood, they rise.

> "Every participant can learn—just not on the same day or in the same way."
>
> -George Evans

Success Strategies for Supporting Multilingual Learners and Participants

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Being in a workforce development program with English as a second language and facing an instructor's perceived lack of understanding and belief in your ability to learn can be incredibly isolating and discouraging, leading to feelings of frustration and inadequacy. Here's a breakdown of why this situation can be so challenging and some potential coping strategies:

The Challenges

Communication Barriers:
Language differences can create significant obstacles in understanding instructions, participating in discussions, and grasping complex concepts.

Feeling Invisible:
When an instructor doesn't seem to try to understand your needs or struggles, it can lead to feelings of being overlooked and unheard.

Loss of Confidence:
The belief that you can't learn the curriculum can erode your self-esteem and make it difficult to continue pursuing your goals.

Cultural Differences:
Cultural differences in communication styles and learning approaches can also contribute to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Discouragement:
The combination of these factors can lead to feelings of discouragement and a desire to give up.

Success Strategies

Advocate for Yourself:
Don't be afraid to speak up and ask for clarification or extra support.

Communicate with the Instructor:
Try to have an open and honest conversation with your instructor about your challenges and how they can help you succeed.

Seek Additional Support:
Explore options like tutoring, language support services, or peer mentoring.

Focus on Your Strengths:
Remind yourself of your accomplishments and strengths, and focus on your progress rather than your perceived shortcomings.

Build a Support Network:
Connect with other participants in the program to form study groups or find a mentor who can offer guidance and encouragement.

Practice Your English:
Try to practice your English outside of the classroom to improve your fluency and confidence at your home or at community gatherings.

Seek Help from Outside the Program:
If the situation is not improving, consider reaching out to a counselor or advocate who can help you find alternative solutions.

Remember Your Goals:
Keep your long-term goals in mind and focus on the positive outcomes of completing the program.

Peer Ambassador Training Guide

Empowering Peer Leaders to Support Living-Wage Career Pathways

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Purpose

To prepare peer ambassadors—participants or alumni from underrepresented communities—to provide culturally responsive mentorship, outreach, and support to peers enrolled in workforce development programs.

Who is a Peer Ambassador?

A Peer Ambassador is a trusted, trained leader who:
- Reflects the cultural and lived experiences of participants.
- Offers emotional, academic, and logistical support.
- Connects peers to resources and staff.
- Models success and resilience in pursuing living-wage careers.

Training Components

1. Foundations of Peer Leadership
- What is peer leadership?
- The power of lived experience.
- Role clarity: mentor, connector, advocate—not a counselor.

2. Cultural Humility & Responsiveness
- Understanding intersectionality (race, class, language, immigration, gender identity, ability).
- Active listening and empathy across cultures.
- Reflecting on personal identity and community ties.
- Addressing bias and microaggressions in supportive ways.

3. Communication & Boundaries
- Confidentiality and trust.
- Setting healthy boundaries.
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies.
- Trauma-informed peer support.

4. Navigation & Resource Training
- Overview of program structure, support services, and pathways.
- How to refer peers to staff, wraparound services, and external resources (childcare, transportation, housing, etc.).
- How to help peers access technology, tutoring, or mental health support.

5. Career & Academic Coaching Basics

- Supporting goal setting and time management.
- Resume and interview encouragement.
- Encouraging continued training or certification.
- Sharing your own success story as a learning tool.

6. Community Building & Peer Events
- Co-planning peer meetups, orientation support, and celebration events.
- Creating inclusive, welcoming spaces that reflect the diversity of the participants.
- Gathering peer input and feedback.

Key Concepts to Emphasize

- **Representation matters:** Shared lived experience fosters trust and belonging.
- **Cultural wealth:** Peers bring multilingual, intergenerational, and community knowledge.
- **Asset-based support:** Focus on strengths, not deficits.
- **Whole person support:** Career success is linked to well-being and stability.

Peer Ambassador Expectations

- Commit to at least one academic cycle (quarter, semester, cohort, etc.).
- Attend regular check-ins and training refreshers.
- Engage at least 5–10 peers per month.
- Log outreach and submit brief monthly reflections.

Tools to Provide

- Peer Ambassador Handbook
- Contact list for staff referrals
- Peer resource guide (translated and culturally relevant)

Tools to Provide (continued)

- Event planning templates
- Monthly check-in log template

Closing: Why It Matters

Peer ambassadors play a vital role in reducing isolation, affirming cultural identity, and boosting retention and completion for underrepresented job seekers pursuing family-sustaining careers.

Best Practices: Gender Diverse Participants in Nontraditional Employment (NTE)

I. Recruiting Gender Diverse Individuals into NTE Pathways

Partner with LGBTQIA+ Organizations and Community Centers
Collaborate with organizations that center gender-diverse people to host career events, information sessions, and co-branded outreach efforts.

Create Inclusive Marketing Materials
Use gender-neutral language and imagery that reflects diverse gender identities. Feature testimonials and stories from gender-diverse alumni.

Host Panels and Events with Gender Diverse Professionals
Elevate voices of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming professionals in NTE fields through panels, workshops, and mentorship events.

Engage in Community Spaces with Gender Diverse Visibility
Table or host outreach efforts at Pride events, LGBTQIA+ youth centers, and inclusive community spaces like libraries, art collectives, or wellness centers.

Work with High Schools, Community Colleges, and Technical Programs
Partner with GSAs (Gender & Sexuality Alliances), DEI offices, and equity centers to reach gender-diverse participants exploring career options.

Ensure Name and Pronoun Respect in Recruitment Forms
Allow participants to provide their chosen name and pronouns and ensure these are used respectfully across all recruitment and administrative materials.
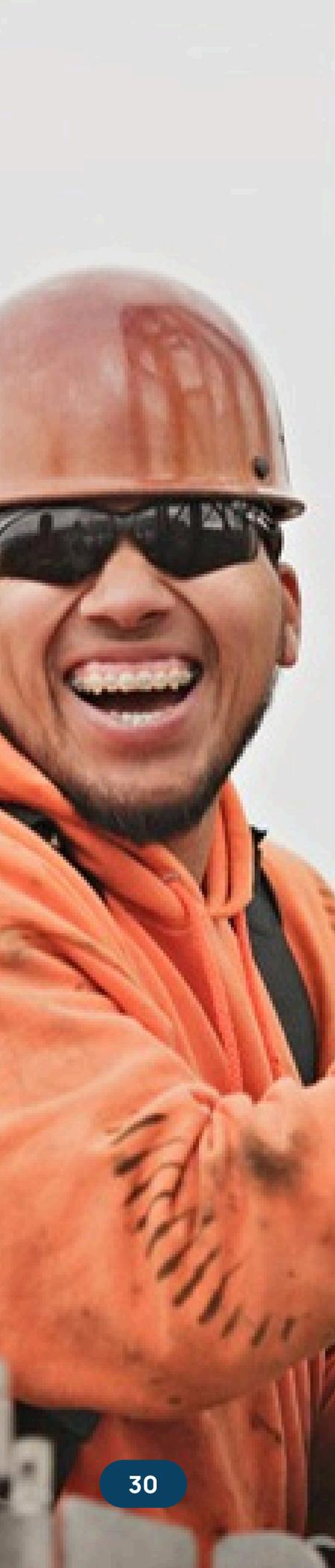
II. Supporting Gender Diverse Participants During Training & Employment

Offer Resource Guides with Inclusive Supports
Share resources specifically affirming to gender-diverse individuals, such as LGBTQIA+ counseling services, health providers, legal name change support, and workplace rights information.

Provide Inclusive Restrooms and Changing Spaces
Ensure facilities are accessible and affirming, such as gender-neutral restrooms and flexible uniform policies.

Train Staff, Instructors, and Employers on Gender Inclusivity
Provide ongoing training on gender identity, pronoun usage, microaggressions, and creating respectful learning and work environments.

Build Peer and Mentor Support Networks
Facilitate mentorship programs with gender-diverse professionals. Create peer support groups where participants can share experiences and find solidarity.

Allow Flexible Program Structures When Needed
Recognize that some gender-diverse participants may require flexibility during times of transition, medical appointments, or as a result of discrimination or mental health needs.

III. Maintaining Employment and Advancing Careers

Conduct Regular, Safe Check-Ins
Schedule monthly or quarterly check-ins with participants in private, safe spaces (or virtually) to surface and resolve issues related to gender-based harassment or isolation early.

Work with Employers on Inclusive Workplaces
Encourage employers to adopt:
- Gender-inclusive policies
- Clear nondiscrimination statements
- All-gender restrooms
- Transition support policies

Celebrate Achievements and Visibility
Highlight gender-diverse participants' milestones and successes through storytelling, events, and leadership opportunities—only with participant consent.

Provide Rapid Response to Discrimination or Bias
Establish clear reporting pathways for participants experiencing harassment. Ensure timely, participant-centered resolution processes.

Track Data with Respect and Transparency
Allow participants to self-identify their gender on forms and use aggregate data to advocate for better services—never publish or disclose identities without consent.

Optional Add-Ons
- Include workshops on self-advocacy, workplace rights, and navigating discrimination.
- Partner with gender-affirming mental health and medical professionals for referrals.
- Establish alumni councils or advisory groups composed of gender-diverse graduates.
- Offer name/pronoun stickers or cards during events to normalize inclusive introductions.

Best Practices: Women in Nontraditional Employment (NTE)

I. Recruiting Women into NTE Pathways

Target Outreach to High Schools
Present NTE career options to girls through assemblies, career days, and CTE classes. Highlight successful women in NTE roles.

Partner with Community & Technical Colleges
Collaborate with Women's Centers and faculty to co-host career awareness events. Offer NTE workshops and pathway navigation sessions on campus with women presenters.

Engage Women-Centered Community Spaces
Conduct outreach and host information sessions at places where women gather, such as playgrounds, parks, farmers' markets, community centers, parenting groups, and family shelters.

Host Female-Led Info Panels and Events
Leverage female alumni and women in leadership roles to speak on panels, conduct Q&A sessions, and lead hands-on "Try a Trade" demonstrations.

Offer Childcare at Recruitment Events
Partner with local providers or onsite programs to offer free childcare. Advertise childcare availability clearly to reduce attendance barriers.

Utilize Affinity Group Events
Participate in or co-host recruitment booths or sessions at women-focused job fairs and events hosted by industry-specific organizations (e.g., NAWIC, Women in Manufacturing).

II. Supporting Women During Training & Employment

Distribute Support Resources Early
Provide comprehensive lists of support resources to participants, training providers, and employers. Include resources for childcare,

Distribute Support Resources Early (continued)
transportation, mental health, peer mentorship, and legal rights.

Build Peer and Mentor Support Structures
Match participants with mentors, particularly other women in the field. Create optional peer support groups or digital communication channels

Engage Employers in Inclusive Practices
Train employers in gender equity and in building supportive, harassment-free workplaces. Promote visibility of women in leadership or journeyperson roles.

III. Maintaining Employment and Advancing Careers

Quarterly or Monthly Check-Ins
Schedule regular 1-on-1 or small-group check-ins with participants and alumni to proactively identify and address emerging challenges in workplace culture, scheduling, or advancement.

Proactively Resolve Issues Before They Escalate
Offer mediation or advocacy support when needed and ensure participants have easy access to escalation or grievance processes.

Celebrate Milestones and Retention
Acknowledge key accomplishments like work anniversaries, certifications, and promotions. Share women's success stories through newsletters, events, or media.

Track and Share Outcomes
Collect data on retention, satisfaction, and barriers. Share findings with stakeholders to improve future recruitment and support practices.

Optional Add-Ons
- Include family members in awareness and recruitment events to strengthen support systems.
- Co-create marketing and support materials with women who have lived experience in NTE fields.
- Offer stipends or support funds to help cover costs related to training and participation.

Facilitator Training Modules for Inclusive Workforce Development

Purpose

Equip facilitators in Washington State workforce development programs to lead inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive instruction ensuring participants of all backgrounds have equitable access to meaningful, high-quality learning and job placement.

Training Overview

Module	Focus	Format Options	Duration (Hours)
1	Adult Learning & Learning Styles	Workshop & Activity	
2	Teaching Multilingual Learners	Workshop & Roleplay	
3	Accessibility & Disability Inclusion	Presentation & Case Study	
4	Trauma-Informed & Poverty-Aware	Workshop & Reflection	
5	Equity-Centered Facilitation	Discussion & Planning	
6	Plain Talk in Workforce Programs	Practice & Peer Review	

Core Outcomes for Facilitators

By the end of the training series, facilitators will:
- Use inclusive, plain language to increase comprehension for all learners.
- Teach in ways that respect different learning styles and cultural norms.
- Support multilingual learners using asset-based strategies.
- Understand how trauma, poverty, and lived experience affect learning.
- Apply equity practices and language around systems change.
- Create welcoming, accessible classrooms for all learners, including those with disabilities.

Module 1: Adult Learning Styles & Strategies

Objectives
- Understand adult learner principles: relevance, autonomy, lived experience.
- Identify common learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, verbal.
- Practice instructional strategies that support multiple modalities.

Activities
- "Teach It 4 Ways" micro-teaching demo.
- Learning style self-assessment.

Washington Plain Talk Alignment
"Organize content logically. Use short sentences. Use headers. Use visuals where appropriate."

Module 2: Supporting Multilingual Learners

Objectives:
- Identify strengths of English learners and bilingual participants.
- Use clear instructions, visuals, and sheltered instruction techniques.
- Engage interpreters, translated materials, and culturally relevant content.

Activities:
- Lesson planning with built-in language supports.
- Pronunciation and code-switching sensitivity exercise.

"We build on the strengths of immigrants, refugees, and multilingual job seekers through access to equitable training and culturally responsive environments."

Module 3: Accessibility & Disability Inclusion

Objectives
- Recognize and support visible and invisible disabilities.
- Design inclusive classrooms using Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Use accommodations like screen readers, alt text, large print, and captioning.

Activities
- Accessibility checklist walk-through.
- Inclusive redesign of program flyers/materials.

Alignment
"STEM is for everyone—this includes learners with disabilities. Accessibility isn't optional; it's essential."

Module 4: Trauma-Informed & Poverty-Aware Instruction

Objectives
- Understand how generational poverty and trauma impact memory, communication, and trust.
- Create a culture of dignity and predictability.
- Use strength-based, non-punitive language and discipline.

Activities
- Reflect on assumptions using the "River of Life" timeline.
- Build a group trauma-informed learning agreement.

Alignment
"We recognize the role of lived experience and economic exclusion in shaping workforce participation. Our facilitators must reflect compassion, equity, and cultural humility."

Module 5: Equity-Centered Facilitation

Objectives
- Explore racial equity, intersectionality, and system barriers in workforce systems.

Objectives (continued)
- Learn how to apply the Diverse Talent Pathways and the Systems Change Framework.
- Co-create action plans for building equitable classroom and program cultures.

Activities
- Case studies from across regions (e.g., rural access, Indigenous learners, reentry populations).
- Group "Equity Plan for My Classroom" worksheet.

Alignment
"Equity is not an add-on. It is the strategy."

Module 6: Using Plain Talk in Workforce Programs

Objectives
- Learn the State of Washington Plain Talk principles.
- Review program materials for readability and tone.
- Practice rewriting instructions, job postings, and intake forms in plain language.

Key Plain Talk Practices
- Use active voice: "You will..." instead of "It will be..."
- Avoid jargon or acronyms unless explained.
- Keep paragraphs short and focused.

Activities
- Rewrite exercise with peer review.
- Readability checker tutorial.

Evaluation & Accountability
- Pre/Post Surveys to measure learning growth.
- Facilitator Observation Rubric for equity practices.
- Annual refreshers to incorporate new WJI/WA STEM equity findings.
- Optional micro-credential or certificate for training completion.

Implementation Support

For Program Directors
- Embed modules in onboarding for new staff.
- Offer stipends for facilitators to complete training.

For Program Directors (continued)
- Co-train with community-based partners to deepen local impact.

For State Agencies
- Incorporate training expectations into contracts or MOU with providers.
- Track equity-focused facilitator development as a quality outcome.

Culturally Responsive Workforce Development Curriculum Design Checklist

---

1. Foundational Equity & Inclusion Alignment

- Does the curriculum reflect Washington state's racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity?
- Have community members, alumni, or participants from underrepresented groups provided input into the curriculum design?
- Is the curriculum aligned with state equity initiatives (e.g., Washington Jobs Initiative, Career Connect Washington, Future of Work Task Force)?

2. Cultural Relevance in Content & Delivery

- Are examples, case studies, and visuals inclusive of different races, cultures, gender identities, ages, and abilities?
- Is there space to incorporate lived experience, cultural knowledge, or community values into instruction?
- Are teaching methods (e.g., storytelling, oral traditions, group projects) inclusive of different learning styles and cultural norms?

3. Language & Accessibility

- Is the curriculum available in multiple languages spoken in the community (e.g., Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese)?
- Are materials written in plain language at an accessible reading level?
- Are materials and activities accessible to learners with disabilities (ADA compliant, screen-reader compatible, captioned videos)?

4. Instructor Readiness & Support

- Do instructors receive training in culturally responsive teaching, trauma-informed practices, and adult learning theory?
- Are instructors encouraged to integrate community guest speakers, elders, or cultural leaders?
- Are instructors reflective of the communities they serve?

5. Support Services Embedded in Curriculum

- Are wraparound supports (e.g., childcare, transportation, mental health, technology access) acknowledged and built into program expectations?
- Are learners coached on navigating systemic barriers, including racism, poverty, re-entry, or immigration status?
- Does the curriculum include resource navigation or peer support as part of its structure?

6. Career Relevance & Employer Engagement

- Are employers engaged in co-developing or validating curriculum content?
- Are career pathways aligned to living-wage occupations across urban and rural Washington regions?
- Are local labor market trends, apprenticeship options, and union pathways integrated?

7. Assessment & Reflection

- Are participants invited to give regular, anonymous feedback on instruction, content, and learning environment?
- Are success measures beyond completion—such as skill growth, confidence, cultural safety, and connectedness—also captured?
- Are feedback loops in place to improve the curriculum based on participant and partner insights?

8. Continuous Improvement & Accountability

- Does the curriculum undergo annual equity audits or reviews?
- Are alumni and workforce equity partners part of an advisory group?
- Is demographic and outcome data disaggregated to track equity gaps and close them?

Support Services Guide

Purpose

To provide workforce development partners with clear guidance on designing, sourcing, and delivering participant-centered support services that intentionally reflect the cultural, linguistic, and lived experience diversity of program participants.

Phase 1: Create Clear Support Service Language to Ground Support Service Providers in the Work

Tip: Copy and paste the paragraph(s) or attachment wording verbatim so that all partners can reference the original text without paraphrasing.

Phase 2: Clarify Recommended Support Services

See example table below:

Category	Required by Grant	Recommended Enhancements	Examples
Barrier removal	Transportation assistance, Childcare & Dependent care, Equipment & tools	Mobile repair vouchers	Bus/rail passes, gas cards, tool stipends
Academic & career	Tutoring & mentoring, Certification exam fees	Industry guest speakers	Literacy tutoring, OSHA-10 fee coverage
Health & Wellness	Mental health counseling referrals	On-site therapy hours	Sliding-scale counseling, mindfulness workshops

Category	Required by Grant	Recommended Enhancements	Examples
Financial Stability	Emergency cash assistance	Matched-savings programs	Rental support, utility grants
Accessibility	Disability accommodations	Universal design learning assets	ASL interpreters, screen reader-friendly curricula

Use this table as a compliance checklist; tailor the examples to local context.

Phase 3. Share the Core Principles for Culturally Responsive Support Services

Equity & Inclusion First
Resource allocation should prioritize populations historically excluded from quality employment (e.g., BIPOC, immigrants, women in non-traditional trades, people with disabilities).

Participant Voice & Choice
Co-design supports through surveys, focus groups, and advisory boards representing participant demographics.

Community-Rooted Providers
When possible, partner with organizations led by and serving the same communities as participants.

Multilingual Access
Provide all communications and services in the dominant languages of the participant cohort.

Continuous Improvement
Measure take-up/impact disaggregated by race, gender, language, and disability status; adapt quickly.

Phase 4. Strategize to Ensure Provider Diversity & Alignment

1. Map Participant Demographics & Needs
- Collect baseline demographic data (race/ethnicity, gender identity, primary language, disability, veteran status, caregiving responsibilities).

- Identify support-service demand by subgroup (e.g., % of women requiring childcare).
- Update the map each enrollment cycle.

2. Example: How to create an Inclusive Procurement & Partnership

Step	Action	Tools & Examples
Pre-Sourcing	Publish a Sources Sought notice in ethnic media and community networks.	Email template; sample posting
RFP Language	Include scoring criteria for: • Cultural competence training (10 pts) • Staff diversity reflective of participants (10 pts) • Language access plan (5 pts)	Sample RFP snippet
Contracting	Use size-appropriate contracts (micro-purchasing, simplified acquisition) to enable small CBOs to compete.	Contract tiers matrix
Financial Stability	Emergency cash assistance	Matched savings programs
Accessibility	Disability accommodations	Universal design learning assets

3. Support Capacity-Building for Emerging CBOs
- Offer mini-grants for insurance, audit prep, or technology upgrades.
- Pair newer providers with experienced fiscal sponsors.
- Provide quarterly technical-assistance clinics on reporting and compliance.

4. Create Accountability & Feedback Loops
- Insert DEI performance metrics into provider agreements (e.g., 70 %+ staff share lived experience with cohort).
- Convene quarterly provider learning circles to share practices.
- Use anonymous participant feedback to trigger corrective actions.

Phase 5. Create an Implementation Checklist

- Grant language inserted and circulated to all partners.
- Participant demographic map updated for current cohort.
- Provider directory reflects ≥3 culturally specific partners.
- All service descriptions translated into top 3 participant languages.
- Childcare and transportation funds budgeted and disbursed.
- Data dashboard built with disaggregated KPIs.

Phase 6. Example of Key Metrics & Continuous Improvement

Metric	Definition	Data Source	Review Cadence
Service Utilization Rate	Participants receiving each support: eligible participants	MIS attendance logs	Monthly
Provider Diversity Index	Herfindahl-Hirschman Index of providers by ownership demographics	Contract database	Semi-annual
Participant Satisfaction (DEI)	% reporting services were "culturally responsive"	Post-service survey	Quarterly
Employment Retention	% employed 6 and 12 months post-exit	State UI wage records	Bi-annual

Use PDSA cycles to test improvements; engage participants in interpreting results.

Participant Progress Tracker

Participant Profile

Full Name

Preferred Name/Pronouns

Contact Information

Primary Language

Interpreter Needed? (Y/N)

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Race/Ethnicity

Gender Identity

Disability Status (Voluntary)

Veteran Status

Justice-Involved (Y/N)

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Housing Stability (Stable/Unstable)

☐ Stable ☐ Unstable

Transportation Access (Y/N)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Childcare Needs (Y/N)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Enrollment & Orientation

Initial Intake Form Date

Orientation Attended Date

Equity & Access Assessment Date

Individual Employment Plan (IEP) Date

Goals & Milestones

Short-Term Goal

Mid-Term Goal

Long-Term Career Goal

Learning & Training Progress

Training Name

[   ]

Start Date

[   ]

End Date

[   ]

Attendance (%)

[   ]

Completion Status

[   ]

Modality (In-person/Online)

☐ In-person   ☐ Online

Support Services Provided

Service Type

[   ]

Date Provided

[   ]

Provider/Partner

[   ]

Notes/Outcome

[   ]

Competency & Skill Gains

Communication Skills

[   ]

Math/Numeracy

[   ]

Job Readiness

[   ]

Industry-Specific Skill

[   ]

Outcomes & Exit

Credential Earned

[   ]

Job Placement

[   ]

Enrolled in Apprenticeship

[   ]

Enrolled in Further Training

[   ]

Other Positive Exit

[   ]

Still Active in Program

[   ]

Follow-Up (30, 60, 90 Days Post-Exit)
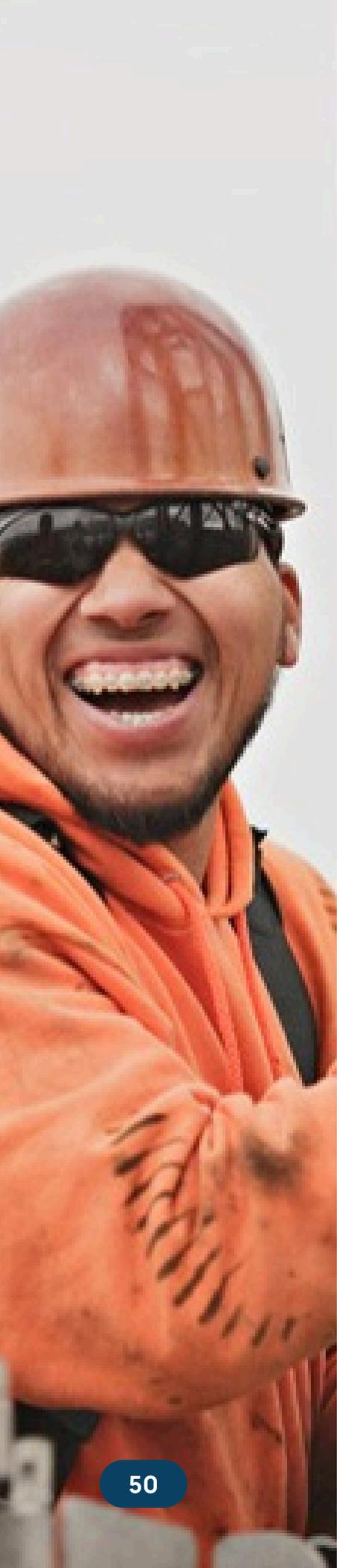
30-Day Status

60-Day Status

90-Day Status

Staff Observations & Notes

Date

Staff Initials

Comments

Equity Data Reflection Toolkit

Purpose

To provide workforce development partners with clear guidance on designing, sourcing, and delivering participant-centered support services and intentionally reflect the cultural, linguistic, and lived-experience diversity of program participants.

Rubric Framework

Domain Basic Requirements Progressing Practices Equity Best Practices Data Indicators

1. Pre-Partnership Readiness
- Policies and Commitment
- General DEI policy in place
- Commitment to hiring underrepresented workers stated
- Written equity plan with goals, targets, and strategies for hiring and retention of underrepresented workers
- DEI policy document
- Equity plan with measurable goals
- #/% of diverse staff in leadership and frontline roles
- Leadership Buy-In
- Basic awareness from HR
- HR and mid-level managers engaged
- Leadership fully bought in; DEI integrated into mission and strategic planning
- Participation in equity training
- Leadership equity training attendance

2. Partnership Orientation & Onboarding
- Onboarding Process
- Employer attends info session
- Employer attends equity-focused onboarding
- Employer co-designs onboarding that includes trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices
- Employer onboarding completion
- Feedback from workforce orgs on onboarding quality

2. Partnership Orientation & Onboarding (continued)

- New Hire Support Plan
- Basic orientation materials provided
- Orientation includes cultural responsiveness
- First 30-90 day onboarding plan includes mentorship, language supports, resource navigation
- Orientation plan
- New hire satisfaction survey after 30/60/90 days

3. Inclusive Employment Practices

- Workplace Culture
- States support for DEI
- Some affinity groups or DEI initiatives in place
- Inclusive culture fostered through ERGs, DEI committees, multi-lingual communication, and anti-racism practices
- Exit interview data
- DEI program participation rates
- Language accessibility audits
- Supervisory Support
- Basic supervision structure
- Some supervisors trained in inclusive supervision
- All supervisors trained in trauma-informed and equity-centered coaching practices
- % of supervisors trained
- Supervisor check-in documentation
- Advancement & Mobility
- Advancement possible
- Advancement discussed but informal
- Transparent career pathways, promotion data monitored for equity
- Promotion and raise data disaggregated by demographic group

4. Ongoing Employee Support

- Wraparound Support
- Access to HR
- Connection to EAP or internal support programs
- Active partnership with workforce programs to provide resource navigation, mentoring, and culturally responsive supports
- # of referrals to support services
- Worker retention data by demographic group
- Feedback Mechanisms
- Informal feedback possible
- Some exit interviews conducted

4. Ongoing Employee Support (continued)
- Regular anonymous feedback channels and quarterly employee listening sessions
- Quarterly survey data
- Exit interview trends analysis

5. Ongoing Check-Ins & Partnership Engagement
- Employer-Workforce Org Check-ins
- Ad hoc or reactive
- Quarterly check-ins with workforce orgs
- Monthly data review and equity learning community participation
- Check-in frequency logs
- Meeting notes from equity discussions
- Continuous Improvement
- DEI reviewed annually
- Some changes made based on workforce partner input
- Annual equity audits + co-designing equity improvements with workforce org
- Annual audit report
- Implementation of equity recommendations

6. Data Collection & Evaluation
- Data Collection Systems
- Some basic HR data kept
- HR data disaggregated by gender and race
- Data collected and used for equity improvements, shared transparently with partners
- New hire, retention, and promotion data by demographics
- Quarterly employment outcome dashboards
- Reporting Frequency
  - As needed
  - Quarterly reports shared
  - Monthly and quarterly dashboards shared with workforce development partners for joint planning
  - Monthly hire/exit data
- Quarterly retention outcomes
- % of diverse hires retained >6 months

Implementation Notes

Use: Workforce development programs use this rubric to screen potential partners, provide technical assistance, and build long-term, equity-centered relationships with employers.

Rating: Employers can be rated across the rubric as:

- Basic (1) – Minimum requirement met
- Progressing (2) – Working toward best practices
- Exemplary (3) – Leading with equity and continuous improvement

Data Sharing: Employers are encouraged to sign a data-sharing agreement outlining the types of anonymized data to be shared quarterly.

Section 5 Tool

Employer Partner Equity Rubric

Purpose

To evaluate and guide employer partners in adopting inclusive, equitable practices across the workforce development pipeline — from recruitment to retention

Core Pillars

Access & Inclusion: Everyone can participate.

Culturally Responsive Practices: Respect culture, language, and backgrounds.

Career Pathways & Advancement: Opportunities for growth and learning.

Supportive Work Environments: Safe and welcoming workplaces.

Community & Systemic Accountability: Work with community and share results.

Scoring Key

Score	Description
1	No evidence or not yet started
2	Developing or beginning
3	Consistent and emerging practice
4	Strong and embedded practice
5	Exemplar and influencing others

Rubric

Criteria	Description	Score (1-5)	Evidence & Notes
Inclusive Recruitment & Hiring	- Employer actively recruits from underrepresented communities (e.g., BIPOC, multilingual, justice-involved). - Job descriptions are clear, jargon-free, and accessible (multiple languages, plain language). - Demonstrates commitment to hiring based on skills and potential, not just degrees or traditional credentials.		
Equitable Onboarding & Training	- Onboarding is inclusive and accommodates language, cultural, and literacy needs. - Paid on-the-job training, mentorship, or internships are offered. - New hires have access to culturally responsive coaching or support.		
Safe & Supportive Workplace	- Workplace is welcoming and safe for everyone. - Reports clear anti-discrimination and harassment policies, with accountability systems. - Accommodation is provided when needed (disabilities, access needs)		
Advancement Pathways	- Promotion criteria and career paths are clear. - Entry-level workers get help moving into higher-paying jobs. - Opportunities for learning, apprenticeships, or continuing education exist.		

Criteria	Description	Score (1-5)	Evidence & Notes
Wage Equity & Benefits	- Pays a living wage with transparent wage scales. - Offers benefits accessible to all employees (healthcare, PTO, retirement, transportation stipends). - Barriers to full-time work are reduced (e.g., flexible scheduling, childcare support).		
Community Engagement & Accountability	- Demonstrates long-term commitment to local workforce initiatives. - Participates in local collaboratives (e.g., RPAC, workforce boards, sector partnerships). - Provides data or testimonials on the progress of equity goals and hires.		
Continuous Improvement & Equity Capacity	- Has a strategy with staff roles accountable for equity. - Staff and leadership receive ongoing training in anti-racism, inclusive leadership, or trauma-informed practices. - Engages in feedback loops with employees from marginalized communities.		

Overall Reflection

- What are the employer's current strengths?
- What growth areas can WJI and partners support them with?
- Are they ready for deeper partnership (e.g., co-designing trainings, hosting interns, etc.)?

Recommended Follow-up

- Action Item
- Timeline
- Responsible Party

Sample MOU with Equity Clause

Equity & Inclusion Commitment

All parties to this Memorandum of Understanding affirm their shared commitment to advancing racial equity, inclusion, and economic justice within workforce development systems. This agreement is rooted in the belief that diverse lived experience, language, and cultural identity are assets, and that equitable access to opportunity is essential to building a thriving, representative workforce in Washington state.

The parties agree to:

1. Map Participant Demographics & Needs
Embed equity considerations into all phases of program planning, recruitment, instruction, support services, and evaluation—especially for populations historically excluded from education and career pathways.

2. Support Culturally Responsive Practices
Implement training, tools, and curriculum that reflect and respect the cultural, linguistic, and lived experiences of participants. This includes multilingual access and inclusive materials that meet the principles of the State of Washington Plain Talk guidelines.

3. Remove Systemic Barriers
Collaboratively identify and dismantle structural obstacles to participation and advancement—such as lack of transportation, childcare, digital access, legal system involvement, or credential recognition—particularly for participants from underserved communities.

4. Collect & Use Disaggregated Data
Gather and analyze participant data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, language, and geography to identify disparities, track progress, and inform continuous improvement with transparency and accountability.

5. Promote Equitable Leadership & Decision-Making
Ensure underrepresented communities and program alumni are represented in program design, hiring, advisory roles, and leadership development opportunities.

6. Uphold Accountability
Review this equity clause annually as part of the MOU evaluation process, ensuring alignment with goals and adjusting practices as needed in collaboration with regional and state workforce equity partners.

Optional Add-on for Enforcement

Non-compliance with the equity commitments outlined above may be grounds for MOU review, partnership renegotiation, or realignment in accordance with local, state, or funder expectations regarding equity-centered program implementation.

Inclusive Job Pathway Planning Template

Designed for Workforce Development Practitioners Supporting Underrepresented Populations

Phase 1: Program Overview

Item	Description
Program Name:	
Target Population(s)	(e.g., BIPOC, women, immigrants, youth, individuals with disabilities, justice-involved)
Living Wage Career Focus	(Specify industry/occupation)
Program Duration	(e.g., 12 weeks, 6 months, ongoing)
Lead Organization(s):	
Employer Partners	(List committed employers)
Support Partners	(e.g., CBOs, training providers, unions, schools)

Phase 2: Inclusive Pathway Design

A. Entry & Recruitment

Component	Strategy
Community Outreach Plan	(e.g., flyer distribution, multilingual social media, outreach through faith-based orgs, housing services, etc.)
Eligibility Criteria	(Ensure criteria do not unintentionally exclude marginalized populations)
Application Support	(e.g., info sessions, coaching, tech access, language assistance)
Wraparound Services at Entry	(childcare, transportation, digital access, case management, etc.)

B. Foundational Supports (Pre-Employment)

Component	Strategy
Skill Assessment Tools	(Include accessible, culturally relevant options)
Foundational Training	(e.g., digital literacy, ESL, financial literacy, mental health resilience)
Barrier Reduction	(Address legal, housing, trauma, caregiving challenges)
Mentorship Access	(Peer mentors, affinity groups, professional mentorship)

C. Job-Specific Training & Career Navigation

Component	Strategy
Training Model	(e.g., cohort-based, hybrid, on-the-job, apprenticeships)
Language Access & Accommodations	(e.g., interpreters, translated materials, assistive tech)
Career Navigation Services	(Goal setting, resume support, mock interviews, job matching)
Certifications & Credentials	(List relevant, industry-recognized credentials)
Paid Training Opportunities	(Stipends, WEX, pre-apprenticeship pay)

D. Employer Engagement & Placement

Component	Strategy
Employer Selection Criteria	(DEI commitment, mentorship structures, wage thresholds, inclusive practices)
Customized Placement Supports	(Interview coaching, soft skill matching, placement specialists)
Living Wage Threshold	(e.g., $23/hour or local MIT living wage data)
First 90-Day Retention Strategy	(Employer onboarding, job coach check-ins, resource navigation)

E. Retention, Advancement & Alumni Engagement

Component	Strategy
Retention Check-ins	(30/60/90-day follow-ups, supervisor engagement)
Career Laddering Plan	(Opportunities for promotions, further training, upskilling pathways)

Component	Strategy
Alumni Services	(Leadership development, networking, re-engagement)
Wage Tracking & Advancement Data	(Quarterly wage progress by demographic group)

Phase 3: Equity & Accountability Measures

Area	Metrics/Data to Track
Demographic Reach	Enrollment by race, gender, language, disability, immigration status
Barrier Reduction Effectiveness	# participants using wraparound services

- Percent who complete training after support.
  - Placement Outcomes: % placed in living-wage employment
- Employer diversity practices.
  - Retention Outcomes: % retained after 3, 6, 12 months.
  - Participant Voice: Surveys, focus groups, exit interviews disaggregated by demographic.
  - Employer Feedback: Employer survey on inclusive hiring/ retention progress.
  - Systemic Improvements: Changes made based on participant/employer data.

Phase 4: Equity & Accountability Measures

Focus Area	Strategy
Funding Model	(Grants, employer contributions, braided funding)
Scalability Plan	(How to expand reach, industries, locations)
Policy Advocacy	(E.g., support for childcare, transportation subsidies, licensing reform)
Partnership Sustainability	(MOUs, shared data systems, co-branded programming)

Quarterly Equity Check-In Tool

Designed for Workforce Development Practitioners Supporting Underrepresented Populations

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Overview

Purpose: To assess equity and inclusion in program design, delivery, and outcomes each quarter by gathering structured feedback from participants, employer partners, and staff.

Frequency: Quarterly

Use: Analyze responses to inform equity improvements and accountability actions.

Phase 1: Year-in-Review Summar

Method: Survey, focus group, or 1:1 check-in

Languages: Available in all primary languages of participants

Topic	Questions
Program Access	Were the application and enrollment process clear and accessible?

Participant Demographics Served: Total # served
- Did you receive support with transportation, childcare, or other barriers?
- **Belonging & Respect:** Do you feel respected and valued in this program?
- Do you feel your background and experiences are reflected in the program content or delivery?
  - **Support Services:** Did you receive timely help when you needed support (e.g., financial, emotional, academic)?
- What additional support would have helped you stay engaged or succeed?
- **Job Placement Experience:** Was your job placement aligned with your goals?
- Do you feel your employer values diversity and supports you?

- **Language & Communication:** Were services and materials available in your preferred language?
- Did staff communicate clearly and respectfully?
- **Suggestions:** What's one thing we could improve to better serve you or others like you?

Phase 2: Employer Feedback

Method: Online survey, quarterly partner meeting, or 1:1 check-in

Topic	Questions
Workload & Support	Do you have the tools and capacity to serve participants equitably?

- Are you supported in addressing participant needs related to trauma, housing, mental health, etc.?

Cultural Responsiveness
- Do you feel prepared to support participants from different backgrounds (race, gender, language, immigration status, etc.)?
- Have you received recent training in DEI or trauma-informed practices?

Program Equity Goals
- How is equity integrated into your daily work?
- Do you believe the program is effectively reducing barriers for underrepresented participants?

Data Use & Feedback Loops
- Is participant feedback collected and used to improve services?
- Are you involved in equity-related decision-making processes?

Suggestions
What improvements would help make the program more equitable —for participants and staff?

Phase 3: Example Equity Indicators Dashboard (Fill in Quarterly)

Indicator	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
% of participants from priority groups (BIPOC, women, LGBTQ+, multilingual, disability, etc.)				
% of participants accessing wraparound supports				
Participant satisfaction with cultural responsiveness (avg. rating)				
Employer satisfaction with workforce match (avg. rating)				
Retention rate after 90 days (disaggregated)				
Participant satisfaction with program equity				

Indicator	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Advancement or wage gain after 6 months				
# of staff receiving equity training this quarter				
# of equity improvement actions implemented				

Phase 4: Example Action Plan & Follow-up

Action Item	Responsible Staff	Timeline	Status
e.g., Translate intake form into top 3 home languages	Program Coordinator	Q2	In progress
e.g., Provide DEI training for employer partners	Employer Liaison	Q3	Not started
e.g., Launch peer mentorship for new participants	Program Manager	Q2	Complete

Feedback Collection Template (Participants & Staff)

For Workforce Development Program Participants & Staff

This feedback helps us improve our programs and ensure they are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all job seekers and workforce staff.

Part 1: General Information

(Optional, unless follow-up is requested.)

1. How satisfied are you with your overall experience in the program?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Comments

2. Was the program welcoming and inclusive to people from diverse backgrounds? (e.g., race, language, gender, ability, life experience)

- ☐ Yes, fully
- ☐ Yes, somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Feedback Collection Template (Participants & Staff)

For Workforce Development Program Participants & Staff

This feedback helps us improve our programs and ensure they are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all job seekers and workforce staff.

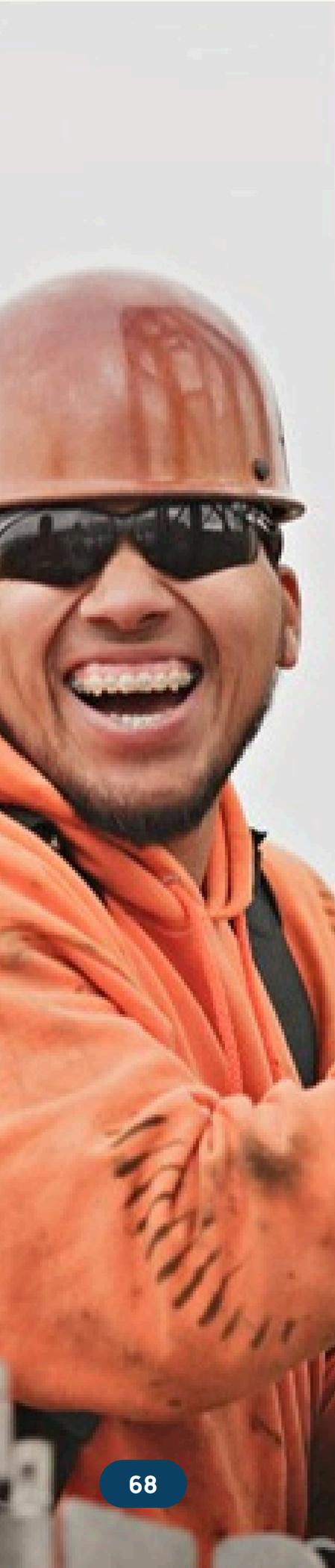## Part 1: General Information

(Optional, unless follow-up is requested.)

Your Name (optional)

[   ]

Role

☐ Participant   ☐ Staff   ☐ Other: [   ]

Program Name

[   ]

Location (City/County)

[   ]

Preferred Language

[   ]

Date of Feedback

[   ]

Submission

<div style="border:1px solid black; height:60px;"></div>

Part 2: Program Experience

1. How satisfied are you with your overall experience in the program?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Comments

<div style="border:1px solid black; height:120px;"></div>

2. Was the program welcoming and inclusive to people from diverse backgrounds? (e.g., race, language, gender, ability, life experience)

- ☐ Yes, fully
- ☐ Yes, somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

If "Somewhat" or "No," please explain:

<div style="border:1px solid black; height:120px;"></div>

3. Did you feel supported throughout the program?

- ☐ Yes, fully
- ☐ Yes, somewhat
- ☐ No

3. Did you feel supported throughout the program?

Please describe any support services that helped you (or were missing):

[blank box]

4. Were the teaching or training materials accessible and culturally relevant?

☐ Yes, fully

☐ Yes, somewhat

☐ No

☐ I didn't use training materials

Comments:

[blank box]

5. Did the program support your learning style and needs?

☐ Yes, fully

☐ Yes, somewhat

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please explain how or how not:

[blank box]

6. What parts of the program were most helpful to you?

[blank box]

7. What would you change or improve?

[ ]

Part 3: Outcomes & Impact

8. What skills or certifications did you gain?

[ ]

9. Did this program help you reach your employment, education, or career goals?

[ ] Yes

[ ] Partially

[ ] Not yet

[ ] No

Explain (if you'd like):

[ ]

10. What are your next steps after this program?

[ ] Employment

[ ] Apprenticeship

[ ] Additional training/education

[ ] Not sure

[ ] Other

Part 4: Final Thoughts

11. Would you recommend this program to others?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

☐ No

Why or why now?

[   ]

12. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

[   ]

Optional: Request Follow-Up

Ig you'd like someone to follow up with you, please provide your contact info.

Name

[   ]

Phone/Email:

[   ]

Annual Equity Action Plan Template

Companion to Quarterly Equity Check-In for Workforce Development Programs

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Purpose

The Annual Equity Check-In:
- Assesses overall equity performance and growth across the year.
- Synthesizes feedback from participants, staff, and employers.
- Identifies systemic barriers, opportunities, and innovations.
- Supports intentional planning and continuous equity improvement.

Phase 1: Year-in-Review Summary

Topic Reflection

Participant Demographics Served: Total # served
- % by race/ethnicity, gender identity, language, disability status, etc.

Industries/Career Pathways Supported: List and assess equity of access to each industry.

Key Equity Goals from Last Year: What were your stated equity goals last year?

Progress Toward Those Goals: Describe what was achieved and what was not. Include data.

Phase 2: Participant Feedback Themes

Use surveys, focus groups, interviews, or case studies from across the year.

Equity Domain	Summary of Participant Feedback
Access	(e.g., challenges with childcare, transportation, eligibility criteria)

Equity Domain	Summary of Participant Feedback
Belonging & Safety	(e.g., sense of respect, discrimination or microaggressions, culturally responsive services)
Support Services	(e.g., quality and timeliness of wraparound supports)
Job Placement Experience	(e.g., match to goals, support at worksite, retention challenges)
Voice & Power	(e.g., opportunities to influence program decisions or provide feedback)

Phase 3: Employer Feedback Themes

Equity Domain	Summary of Participant Feedback
Inclusive Hiring	(e.g., employer readiness, equity in recruitment and interviewing)
Onboarding & Retention	(e.g., supervisor training, support for cultural integration and retention)
Job Quality	(e.g., living wages, advancement opportunities, workplace flexibility)
Employer Support from Program	(e.g., satisfaction with services, DEI coaching needs, retention help)
Voice & Power	(e.g., opportunities to influence program decisions or provide feedback)

Phase 4: Staff Feedback Themes

Equity Domain	Summary of Participant Feedback
Capacity & Support	(e.g., workload, training, trauma-informed care readiness)
Organizational Culture	(e.g., inclusion, voice in decision-making, burnout or turnover concerns)
Program Improvement	(e.g., what changes were most effective or most needed)
Staff Development	(e.g., DEI trainings received or requested)

Phase 5: Equity Outcome Dashboard (Annual Summary)

Disaggregate data by race, gender, language, disability, age, etc. as applicable.

Indicator	Value	Analysis & Insights
% of participants from underrepresented groups		
% completing training		
% placed in living wage jobs		
90-day retention rate		
Advancement or wage gain at 6–12 months		
Participant satisfaction with program equity		
Employer satisfaction with inclusive hiring results		
# equity-focused trainings for staff or partners		
# equity-related changes made		

Phase 6: Barriers & Blind Spots

Area	Description
Top 3 Equity Barriers Identified	(e.g., transportation access, digital divide, exclusionary credentials)
Top 3 Equity Wins/Innovations	(e.g., new peer mentorship model, employer DEI training series, policy change)
Equity Lessons Learned This Year	
Stories that Illustrate Impact	(Anonymous quotes or short case studies)

Phase 7: Example Equity Goals

Goal	Action Steps	Who's Responsible	Timeline	Resources Needed
e.g., Improve retention of Spanish-speaking participants	Hire bilingual case manager; offer retention bonuses for bilingual staff	Program Manager	Q2	Grant funding
e.g., Diversify employer partners in high-wage sectors	Host 3 equity focused employer convenings	Employer Liaison	Q3	DEI facilitator

Phase 8: Action Plan for Next Year

Goal	Action Steps
Who will review this tool annually?	(e.g., leadership, advisory board, equity committee)
How will results be shared with the community?	(e.g., community report, listening session, infographic)
What changes will be implemented in the next program cycle?	(Summary of major commitments)