



Make it in Washington

The Challenge

Too often, manufacturers in rural communities go it alone — from growing their business, to training their employees, to marketing their products. Access to business assistance is limited by distance, lack of connections, and uncertainty about operations and needs.

The Answer

Several state organizations — the Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board, Impact Washington, Innovate Washington Foundation, the University of Washington Applied Physics Laboratory, the Washington Department of Commerce, Shoreline Community College, Highline College, and Washington State University, — have joined forces to deliver much-needed services to Washington’s rural manufacturers.

The project identifies:

- Business location
- Industry sector
- Product
- Material needs
- Employee needs
- Interest in additional education and training
- Market targets

The project’s partners coordinate outreach efforts and provide on-site technical assistance to manufacturers across the state. Businesses no longer have to go it alone; they now have professional help.

Education is Key in Rural Areas

Building the skills of current employees and attracting new people to manufacturing isn’t easy in rural areas where populations are low, and training opportunities are limited. To meet this need, the Make it in Washington challenge offers online training programs accessible anytime and anywhere in the state to help “upskill” local workforces—both current workers, and those needing more education to become employed. Through online training at both the community college and university levels, participants are gaining industry- recognized credentials, two- and four-year degrees, as well as advanced degrees, to move ahead in their careers and enhance their employer's competitive edge.

Make it in Washington is made possible by the following federal partners:



“The goal of Make it in Washington is to increase manufacturing capacity, strengthen supply chains, attract investment, and create new opportunities for businesses and individuals.”

Make it in Washington helps manufacturing workers gain needed education and training, while also helping manufacturers better compete for business going overseas and build partnerships with other Washington companies.

How does it work?

- Enhances productivity of manufacturing workers through tuition-funded online training.
- Boosts a company’s profitability through strategic consulting.
- Helps manufacturers solve supply chain challenges to better compete for global customers.
- Connects companies with new sources of growth/development capital including Foreign Direct Investment.
- Gives manufacturers access to state-of-the-art product development resources at the University of Washington.

How is it funded?

The Workforce Board was awarded \$1.3 million from the U.S. Department of Labor to fund training of manufacturing workers in rural and distressed Washington counties. Also, Innovate Washington was awarded \$750,000 from the U.S Economic Development Administration for business consulting, and Impact Washington was awarded \$375,000 from the National Institute of Standards and Technology for outreach and assessment.



The Make it in Washington Alliance is comprised of businesses that have participated in the Make it in Washington program.



Make it in Washington

Program Reaches Rural Communities

This project's concept, program, and deliverables are unique among the entire group of Make it in America and Jobs Accelerator federal grant recipients. It provides a strong partnership model for a more complete economic development system that works in a large geographic region to deliver cutting-edge services to the most rural communities.

Statewide Results To-Date

- Partnership is actively working in 31 eligible counties covering over 71,000 square miles across Washington.
- Over 700 businesses surveyed.
- Over 150 businesses receiving direct support.
- Currently 70 students enrolled. Half are enrolled in undergraduate programs at Highline College, Shoreline Community College, and Washington State University (WSU), and half are participating in graduate programs at WSU.
- Real-time data on industry location, sector, employment, skill needs, product, and market details

Get More Information

To learn more about the partnership, partners, projects, or results, contact Mike Brennan at the Workforce Board: (360) 709-4616 or by email at mike.brennan@wtb.wa.gov.



"What I learn in class the night before, I apply on the floor at work the very next day. It's changing how we do things here, and for the better."

Cubcrafters, Yakima



"I would just like to say 'Thank You.' This is a great opportunity for me. I would not have been able to do this if I had to pay full price for the courses. I appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow, thank you."

Decagon, Pullman



"I have always wanted to go back to school and finish my AA degree, but life got in the way. This grant made it possible for me to go back and gain a certificate. Thank you for the opportunity!"

IsoRay Medical, Richland