Washington State Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Highway Construction Workforce Development Report

2026–2027 Biennium Legislative Report

Reporting period: July 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026

Not included in reporting September 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

Executive Summary

This report is submitted in accordance with ESSB 6005, Section 217(1)(b), of the 2026 Supplemental Transportation Budget, and RCW 47.01.035, which establish legislative reporting requirements related to highway construction workforce development. RCW 47.01.435 requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in coordination with the Department of Labor and Industries, to report annually on workforce development activities, funding available and expended, and performance outcomes, including the number of individuals receiving services, training, and employment. This report summarizes program activities, participation, reported barriers, and funding for July 1, 2025, through August 31, 2026.

WSDOT, through the Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR), administers workforce development programs designed to expand access to transportation-sector career opportunities. The Pre-Apprenticeship and Support Services (PASS) program supports pathways into highway construction and related careers, while the Workforce Advancement and Vocational Education (WAVE) program supports pathways into maritime careers.

During the 2025–2027 biennium, PASS and WAVE have collectively trained 438 individuals. PASS has trained 383 individuals to support access to opportunities in the highway construction workforce. WAVE, launched during this biennium through a partnership with the Youth Marine Foundation, has trained 55 individuals for maritime career opportunities.

PASS participant intake information demonstrates that individuals entering workforce training may experience barriers beyond technical skill development. The most frequently reported standardized barriers were limited math skills (56 participants, 14.6%), no dependable transportation (54, 14.1%), no high school diploma or GED (23, 6.0%), and lack of reliable childcare (19, 5.0%). Participants also reported disability, substance abuse, limited English proficiency, housing instability, and other barriers.

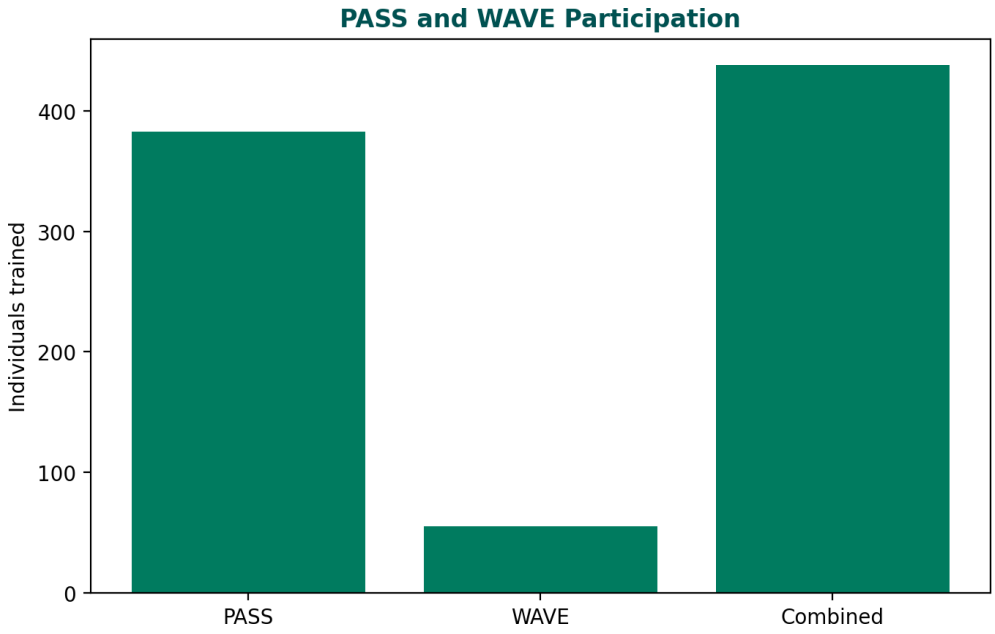
Among the 383 PASS participants, 55 reported being formerly incarcerated, 27 reported foster care system experience, and 24 reported Juvenile Rehabilitation involvement. A total of 327 participants reported a valid Washington State driver's license, meaning 56 participants did not report a valid license.

WAVE provides maritime workforce training and supports participants in navigating industry credentials and career entry. The program includes assistance with Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) and Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) processes, Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED) training scholarship opportunities, and Washington State Ferries internships.

2025–2027 Biennium at a Glance

Measure	Result	Context
PASS individuals trained	383	87.4% of combined total
WAVE individuals trained	55	12.6% of combined total
Combined individuals trained	438	PASS + WAVE
PASS participants ages 18–24	225	58.7% of PASS participants
PASS male participants	344	89.8%
PASS female participants	39	10.2%

PASS limited math skills	56	14.6%
PASS no dependable transportation	54	14.1%
PASS no HS diploma/GED	23	6.0%
PASS formerly incarcerated	55	14.4%
PASS Juvenile Rehabilitation	24	6.3%
PASS foster care system	27	7.0%
PASS no valid WA driver's license reported	56	14.6%
PASS currently unhoused	13	3.4%
WAVE female participants	22	40.0%
WAVE male participants	33	60.0%
WAVE currently unhoused	2	3.6%
WAVE childcare barrier	2	3.6%
WAVE no dependable transportation	7	12.7%
WAVE no HS diploma/GED	1	1.8%



1. Program Overview

1.1 Pre-Apprenticeship and Support Services (PASS)

PASS is a workforce development program designed to help individuals prepare for and enter careers in highway construction and related transportation industries. The program combines workforce preparation, pre-apprenticeship opportunities, support services, and connections to career pathways. PASS recognizes that successful entry into the construction workforce may require more than technical training alone.

1.2 Workforce Advancement and Vocational Education (WAVE)

WAVE expands WSDOT's workforce development efforts into the maritime sector. Launched during the current biennium through a partnership with the Youth Marine Foundation, WAVE provides training and career-

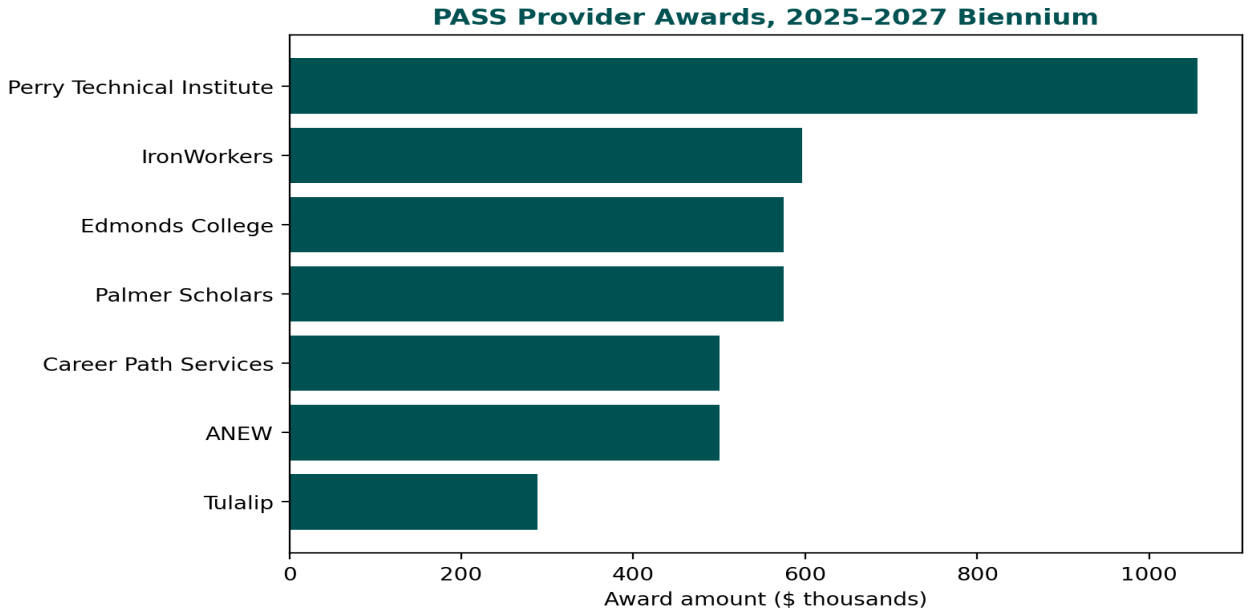
development opportunities for individuals interested in maritime occupations, including assistance with TWIC and MMC processes, QMED scholarship opportunities, and Washington State Ferries internships.

2. Program Funding and Provider Network

The PASS provider awards supplied for this report total $4,090,820. The WAVE award to the Youth Marine Foundation is $500,000, for a combined PASS and WAVE award total of $4,590,820. Award amounts represent provider awards and should not be interpreted as expenditures or outcomes.

2.1 PASS Provider Awards

Provider	Award	Area Served	WSDOT Region
ANEW	$500,000	King County	Northwest Region
Career Path Services	$500,000	Benton, Franklin and Spokane counties	North Central, South Central and Eastern Regions
Palmer Scholars	$575,000	Pierce County	Olympic Region
Edmonds College	$575,000	Snohomish County	Northwest Region
Tulalip	$288,420	Snohomish County	Northwest Region
Perry Technical Institute	$1,056,120	Yakima County	South Central Region
IronWorkers	$596,280	King and Spokane counties	Northwest and Eastern Regions
TOTAL PASS	**$4,090,820**		



2.2 WAVE Provider Award

Provider	Award	Area Served	WSDOT Region
Youth Marine Foundation	$500,000	Pierce County	Olympic Region
TOTAL WAVE	**$500,000**		

2.3 Geographic Reach

The provider network supports workforce development across multiple WSDOT regions and communities. PASS provider awards cover King, Snohomish, Pierce, Yakima, Benton, Franklin, and Spokane counties, as well as a broader Northwest Region service area through the Tulalip partnership. WAVE serves Pierce County through the Youth Marine Foundation.

3. PASS Participant Demographics and Characteristics

3.1 Age

Of the 383 PASS participants, 225 were ages 18–24, representing 58.7% of all PASS participants. This demonstrates the program's role in providing early career pathways for individuals entering the workforce and exploring highway construction and related careers.

3.2 Gender

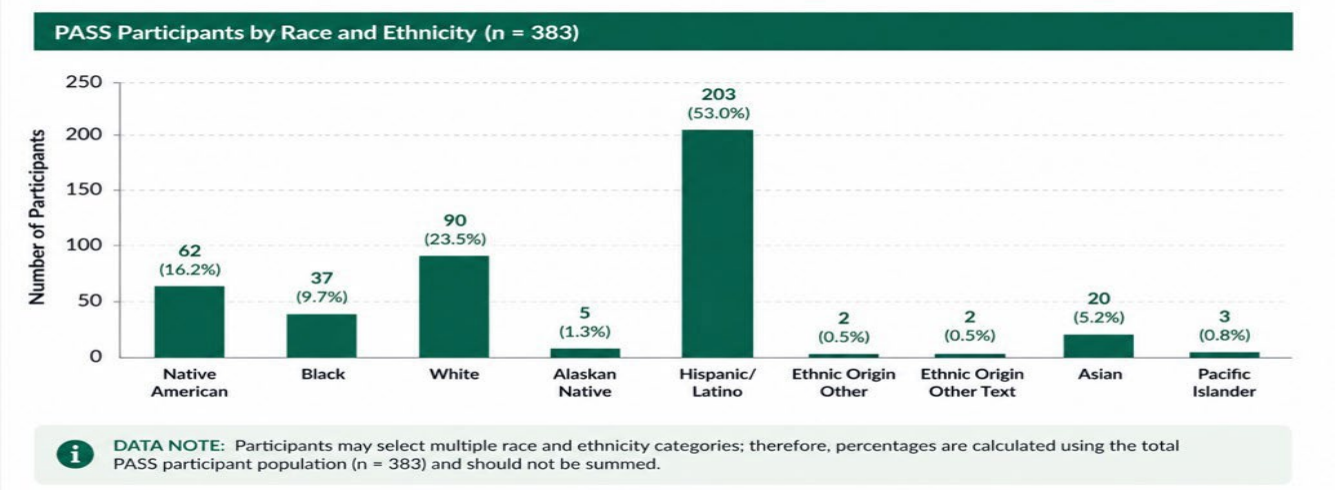
- 344 male participants (89.8%).
- 39 female participants (10.2%).

3.3 Workforce and Life Experiences

- 55 reported being formerly incarcerated.
- 27 reported foster care system experience.
- 24 reported Juvenile Rehabilitation involvement.
- 327 reported a valid Washington State driver's license.
- 56 did not report a valid Washington State driver's license.

3.4 Participant Race and Ethnicity

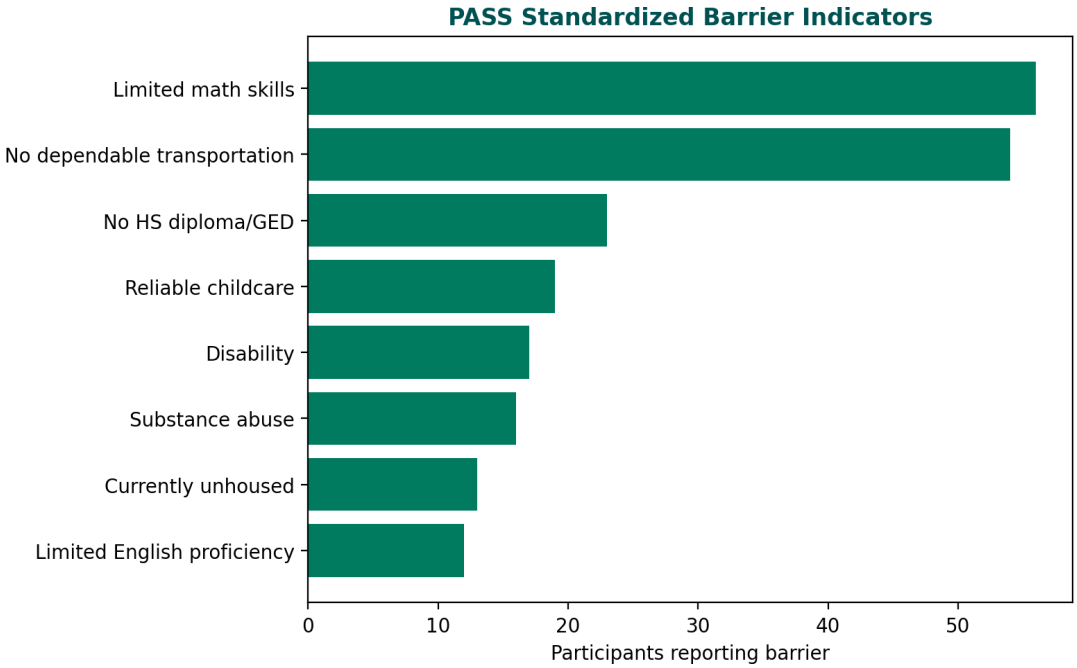
PASS served a diverse participant population during this time period, with 383 individuals trained through August 31, 2026. Hispanic/Latino participants represented the largest reported racial/ethnic group, with 203 participants (53.0%), followed by White participants at 90 (23.5%) and Native American participants at 62 (16.2%). The data demonstrates PASS's reach across a range of racial and ethnic communities and its role in expanding access to transportation workforce training and career pathways.



4. PASS Participant Barriers

PASS intake information indicates that participants may identify multiple barriers. Percentages are calculated against the 383 PASS participants and should not be summed.

Barrier	Participants	Percentage
Limited math skills	56	14.6%
No dependable transportation	54	14.1%
No HS diploma/GED	23	6.0%
Reliable childcare	19	5.0%
Disability	17	4.4%
Substance abuse	16	4.2%
Currently unhoused	13	3.4%
Limited English proficiency	12	3.1%



The standardized barrier data indicates that workforce participation is influenced by factors extending beyond technical training. Transportation, educational preparation, childcare, disability, housing, and other circumstances can affect an individual's ability to enter, participate in, and complete workforce training.

4.1 PASS 'Other' Barrier Themes

Financial and economic hardship

Financial need or hardship, lack of funds, financial aid needs, tuition and travel costs, difficulty paying bills, medical expenses, low income, and general financial instability.

Employment and reduced income

Unemployment, loss of employment, reduced work hours, moving from full-time to part-time work, leaving employment to attend school, and loss of steady income.

Transportation and distance

Long-distance commuting, gas expenses, long commutes between communities, and transportation costs associated with training.

Family and caregiving responsibilities

Single-parent responsibilities, caregiving responsibilities, and balancing family obligations with education and employment.

Legal and background-related circumstances

Criminal background, felony history, incarceration, and related justice-system circumstances.

Educational and workforce experience

Limited work experience, lack of construction experience, and lack of family connections in construction.

The recurring financial and employment-related responses suggest that participation in training can coincide with short-term economic pressure. Participants may reduce work hours or leave employment to participate in school or training while also facing tuition, travel, housing, or household expenses.

5. PASS Strategic Partnerships

5.1 Department of Corrections

PASS partners with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) to strengthen workforce pathways for individuals involved with the justice system. Through this partnership, participants have access to flagger certification training, providing an industry-recognized credential that can help reduce barriers to employment and provide an entry point into transportation construction careers.

5.2 Innovative Impact Strategies

PASS also partners with Innovative Impact Strategies to connect individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability with workforce training and supportive services. This partnership helps create a pathway for individuals who may face significant barriers to employment, including housing instability, transportation challenges, and other immediate needs.

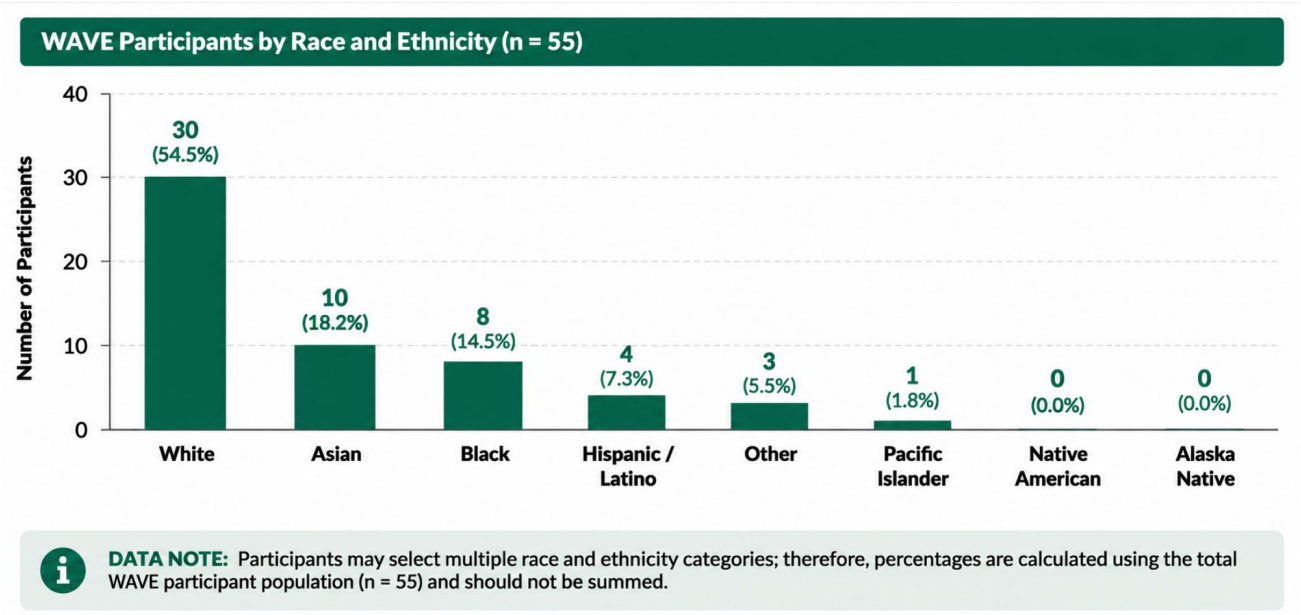
5.3 Washington High School Summer Camp

The PASS Program has also created a partnership with the University of Washington and Washington State University with a one-week high school summer camp program. This summer camp is hosted on the college campuses and teaches students about advanced degrees and careers in fields related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

6. WAVE Participant Demographics and Characteristics

WAVE served a diverse group of 55 participants during the 2025–2027 biennium through maritime workforce training and career pathway opportunities. White participants represented the largest reported racial/ethnic group, with 30 participants (54.5%), followed by Asian participants with 10 (18.2%) and Black participants with 8 (14.5%). Hispanic/Latino participants accounted for 4 participants (7.3%), while 3 participants (5.5%) reported another ethnic origin and 1 participant (1.8%) reported Pacific Islander. No participants reported Alaska Native or Native American ethnicity. This data reflects WAVE's efforts to expand access to maritime

career pathways and connect individuals from diverse communities with industry-recognized credentials, work-based learning, and employment opportunities.



- 55 individuals trained.
- 22 female participants (40.0%).
- 33 male participants (60.0%).
- 7 participants without a valid driver's license.
- 4 veterans.
- 3 participants with Juvenile Rehabilitation involvement.
- 5 formerly incarcerated participants.
- 4 participants with foster care system experience.

7. WAVE Participant Barriers

WAVE intake data indicates that participants may experience multiple barriers. Percentages are calculated against the 55 WAVE participants and should not be summed.

Barrier	Participants	Percentage
No dependable transportation	7	12.7%
Disability	6	10.9%
Currently unhoused	2	3.6%
Lack of reliable childcare	2	3.6%
No high school diploma/GED	1	1.8%
Limited English proficiency	1	1.8%
Other barriers	2	3.6%

WAVE 'Other' responses provide qualitative context related to financial and economic hardship, employment and reduced income, and family and caregiving responsibilities. These responses are best treated as themes rather than precise counts.

8. WAVE Maritime Workforce Activities

- 55 individuals trained during the current biennium.
- 22 female participants and 33 male participants.
- Assistance with TWIC processes.
- Assistance with MMC processes.
- Resume building
- Maritime experience

8.1 Maritime Career Interests

Career Interest	Reported Participants
Ordinary Seaman	11
Maintenance	8
Able Bodied Seaman	11
Skilled Trade Position	6
Captain	6
Undecided	32

Participants may identify more than one career interest; these figures are not mutually exclusive.

9. QMED Training Scholarship

Separate from the WAVE Program, the QMED Training Scholarship provides targeted maritime workforce development through training and QMED certification, qualifying participants to apply for engine room positions within Washington State Ferries. Data reflects 21 current participants not reflected in the 55 WAVE participants.

QMED Measure	Result
Total participants	**21**
Male	17
Female	3
Non-binary	1
Reported unhoused	4 (19.0%)
Reported financial hardship	7 (33.0%)

10. Work-Based Learning and Career Entry

WAVE's partnership activities extend beyond classroom-based training. Washington State Ferries internship opportunities provide participants with exposure to the maritime workplace, sea time and opportunities to develop practical experience. The combination of industry credentials, technical training, scholarship opportunities, work-based learning, and career-entry support provides multiple components of a maritime career pathway.

11. Combined Program Impact

PASS and WAVE have collectively trained 438 individuals during the 2025–2027 biennium. While the programs

operate in different transportation sectors, they share a common workforce development approach: connecting individuals with training and career opportunities while recognizing and addressing barriers that can interfere with workforce participation.

Program	Primary Sector	Individuals Trained
PASS	Highway construction and related transportation careers	383
WAVE	Maritime	55
Combined	**Transportation workforce**	**438**

12. Performance Measurement and Outcomes

The current biennium data provide strong measures of program participation, participant characteristics, reported barriers, and training activities. Future reporting should strengthen the connection between participation and longer-term workforce outcomes.

- Training completion rates.
- Industry credentials earned.
- Flagger certifications completed.
- TWIC and MMC credentials obtained.
- QMED certifications earned.
- Internship and work-based learning placements.
- Employment placements.
- Entry into registered apprenticeships.
- Transportation-sector employment.
- Employment retention.
- Advancement within transportation careers.

13. Key Findings

Scale: PASS and WAVE have trained 438 individuals during the current biennium.

Young adult participation: 225 PASS participants, or 58.7%, are ages 18–24.

Barriers to participation: Participants report barriers extending beyond technical training, particularly transportation, math skills, educational attainment, childcare, disability, and housing instability.

Access: PASS serves participants reporting former incarceration, foster care system experience, Juvenile Rehabilitation involvement, and lack of a valid driver's license.

Economic pressure: PASS qualitative responses show recurring themes involving financial instability, unemployment, reduced work hours, and costs associated with training and transportation.

Partnership value: DOC and Innovative Impact Strategies expand access to workforce training for populations that may face significant barriers to employment.

Maritime pathway: WAVE expands WSDOT workforce development into maritime careers through training, credential assistance, scholarships, and internships.

14. Data and Reporting Considerations

The data presented in this report are based on participant intake information and program counts supplied for the 2025–2027 biennium through August 31, 2026.

- Participant demographic and barrier categories may allow multiple selections; individual categories should not necessarily be added together.
- Qualitative 'Other' responses are presented as themes rather than precise counts because source responses include duplicate entries, blanks, 'N/A' responses, and varied wording.
- Participation measures should be distinguished from outcome measures such as credentials, internships, employment, apprenticeship entry, and retention.
- Award amounts reflect provider awards supplied for this report and are not presented as expenditure or employment outcome data.

Continued refinement of data collection and outcome tracking will improve WSDOT's ability to assess program effectiveness and demonstrate longer-term workforce outcomes over the full biennium.

15. Conclusion

During the 2025–2027 biennium, WSDOT's PASS and WAVE programs have provided workforce training and career-development opportunities to 438 individuals across highway construction and maritime career pathways.

PASS has trained 383 individuals, with substantial participation among young adults and individuals reporting barriers related to transportation, education, housing, childcare, finances, employment, and justice-system involvement. Partnerships with the Department of Corrections and Innovative Impact Strategies extend workforce opportunities to individuals who may face significant barriers to employment.

WAVE has trained 55 individuals and represents an expansion of WSDOT's workforce development efforts into the maritime sector. Through maritime credential assistance, QMED scholarship opportunities, Washington State Ferries internships, and the Youth Marine Foundation partnership, WAVE provides multiple avenues for maritime career exploration and entry.

Together, PASS and WAVE demonstrate the value of workforce development strategies that combine training with industry credentials, work-based learning, partnerships, and attention to barriers that can affect participation. Continued measurement of credentials, internships, employment, apprenticeship entry, and retention will provide additional information regarding longer-term workforce outcomes.

16. Small Business Support Services

The Small Business Support Services (SBSS) Program provides free business assistance to eligible firms in the highway construction and consulting sectors. The services are delivered through the Tabor 100 Technical Assistance Program, which offers a range of workshops, one-on-one assistance, and access to hardware and software licensing to help members thrive in their industries. Services are provided in the following areas:

- accounting
- bookkeeping
- bid preparation
- contract requirements
- certified payroll
- prevailing wages

- web development
- business development
- other business-related services as requested

Since the program began in spring 2022, it has provided 747 service instances to 260 firms. Since 2025, it has provided 261 service instances to 151 firms. The most common requests include business consultations, accounting assistance, bid development, website development, and DBE personal narrative assistance.

17. Small Business Enterprise Program Trucking Consortium

In 2023, the Washington State Department of Transportation engaged a third-party trucking administrator to establish a nonprofit Trucking Consortium to help minority- and women-owned trucking companies compete with larger firms. The consortium enables small trucking businesses to pool resources, compete more effectively against larger operations, and expand their capacity. It also helps large contractors reduce administrative costs when awarding contracts to small companies. In preparation for a contract award, the program recently hired an on-call trucking dispatcher.

The Washington Trucking Consortium currently has 17 active members, with several additional memberships pending, and was recently awarded its first contract for the SR 167 New Expressway project, valued at $2,614,000. The Consortium is negotiating flatbed trucking services for WSDOT's Portage Bay Project.

18. Capacity Building Mentorship Program

The Capacity Building Mentorship Program pairs large, experienced contractors with small, less experienced Washington businesses that do similar work. Mentors help protégés build business skills and prepare them to compete for larger public works contracts. WSDOT works with APEX, Sound Transit, the Port of Seattle, King County, and the City of Seattle to run the program.

From 2018 through late 2025, the program supported 71 mentors and 85 protégés across seven two-year cohorts. Following the program relaunch in late 2025, it received 60 applications: 40 from prospective protégés and 20 from prospective mentors. As of July 31, 2026, 11 new mentor-protégé agreements (MOUs) had been signed.

Appendix A. Provider Funding Detail

Program	Provider	Award	Area Served	Region
PASS	ANEW	$500,000	King County	Northwest Region
PASS	Career Path Services	$500,000	Benton, Franklin and Spokane counties	North Central, South Central and Eastern Regions
PASS	Palmer Scholars	$575,000	Pierce County	Olympic Region
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PASS	Tulalip	$288,420	Snohomish County	Northwest Region
PASS	Perry Technical Institute	$1,056,120	Yakima County	South Central Region
PASS	IronWorkers	$596,280	King and Spokane counties	Northwest and Eastern Regions
WAVE	Youth Marine Foundation	$500,000	Pierce County	Olympic Region
TOTAL	**PASS + WAVE**	**$4,590,820**		

Appendix B. Reporting Snapshot

Reporting Item	Current Status
Reporting period	July 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026
Biennium	2025–2027
PASS participants trained	383
WAVE participants trained	55
Combined participants trained	438
PASS provider awards	$4,090,820
WAVE provider awards	$500,000
Combined provider awards	$4,590,820

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 Notice to Public

In accordance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the ADA, WSDOT will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its programs, services or activities. WSDOT will make reasonable modifications to policies to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services and activities. Discrimination complaints and complaints that a WSDOT program, service or activity is not accessible to people with disabilities should be directed to ADA Coordinator Allison Spector, by email at Allison.Spector@wsdot.wa.gov or by phone at 360-705-7045. This material can be made available in an alternate format by contacting the ADA Coordinator. Persons who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.