

**Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council**

**Policy No. 55-006**

**Date: June 26, 2001**

**Amended: January 29, 2013**

**SUBJECT: Determining Qualifying Occupations (Demand – Decline List)**

**ORIGINATOR:**

RCW 50.22.130 Training Benefits

RCW 50.22.130 Training Benefits Program - Intent

**Background**

The Revised Code of Washington requires that by July 1, 2001, each local workforce development council, in cooperation with the employment security department and its labor market information division, must identify high-demand occupations and occupations in declining employer demand. It is the intent of the legislature that training benefits program be established to provide unemployment insurance benefits to unemployed individuals who participate in training programs necessary for their reemployment.

The list will serve as the foundation for the Workforce Development Council's (WDC) strategic planning; assurance that Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training funds are expended for training for demand occupations and skill sets; determining eligibility for training programs under the Workforce Investment Act, extended unemployment training benefits for dislocated workers; determining eligibility for the Skills Gap Training Fund; and, making decisions on WorkFirst and Commissioner-Approved Training requests.

**Policy & Procedure**

The Workforce Development Council shall maintain Demand - Decline a list of occupations and skill sets that identifies the increasing and decreasing demand for such in Benton and Franklin counties.

The initial Demand - Decline List will be based upon a "core" list issued by the Labor Market and Economic Analysis Division of the Washington State Employment Security Department in Olympia. (The Demand – Decline Methodology can be located on the Employment Security Department's website.)

Upon receipt of the list, the regional labor market economist and the Executive Director of the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council, or his/her designee, will collaborate on a review. The local LMEA representative will advise on current local economic development trends and recommend suggestions on additions or deletions to the list. Area chambers of commerce, economic development councils, significant

businesses throughout the region, and the community college will be consulted for input to the list.

Once the review is completed, the final list will be submitted to the Benton-Franklin WDC Adult & Employer Linkage Committee for review and recommendation to the Executive Committee for adoption.

### **Revisions to the Qualifying List**

Recommended revisions to the list will be developed by the WDC's Executive Director of the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council, or his/her designee, and presented to the Adult & Employer Linkage Committee for review and approval. Recommended revisions shall be made when there are documented major shifts or changes in the local labor market that result in an occupational cluster being re-designated among the three categories of demand, decline, or balanced. Major shifts usually occur with plant closures, an influx of a new industry, changes due to training capacity, or funding changes to federally funded businesses. The Adult & Employer Linkage Committee will present all revisions to the Executive Committee for final approval.

### **Exceptions to the Demand – Decline List**

Customers can receive training in an occupation that has been designated as “*in decline*” due to limited labor market information for the local area. Customers must demonstrate these occupations are expected to be employment opportunities upon training completion. Under these circumstances the Employment Specialist then must submit an Exception Request form with supporting documentation to the WDC.

Exceptions apply to individual situations and must be approved by the WDC Director or his/her designee. A request for an exception must be presented to the WDC Director or his/her designee identifying that some or all of the following criteria are met:

- The participant has documented willingness to move to the area where the occupation is in demand;
- Evidence substantiates a bona fide employment opportunity upon successful completion;
- Supporting documentation including the training plan, labor market information, employer contacts and/or hiring commitments, training provider information and placement rates for training completers;
- Occupations not listed by LMEA for which employment opportunities can be documented to exist; and,
- Any occupation that would qualify for a revision to the list, but the small number involved does not merit a mid-year revision.

The decision on exception to the list by the WDC Director/designee shall be final.

## **Communication Procedure**

The Demand – Decline List will be posted on the Employment Security Department fortress web site and made available to partnership staff, contractors and the public. The WDC Program Coordinators are responsible for ensuring contractor staff is following local policies and facilitating any exceptions needed by staff at WorkSource Columbia Basin.