

Good morning Mayor Hales; Commissioner Fritz, Commissioner Novik, Commissioner Saltzman, Commissioner Fish. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning.

My name is Holly Whittleton, Executive Director at SE Works. I am here today for two reasons:

- 1.) To support the budget request for PDC's Adult and Youth Workforce Development Economic Opportunities Initiatives (EOI) and:
- 2.) To request continued funding of the SE Works Youth Career Development Center.

SE Works is respectfully asking for your collective support to reinstate the \$40,000 for our Youth Center while not impacting and reducing the PDC Economic Opportunity Initiatives programs.

1.) Adult and Youth Workforce Development-support for the requested budget

PDC collaborates with Worksystems, Inc. to co-fund and administer workforce development programs for low-income Portlanders with significant barriers to employment. WSI contracts with eleven non-profit providers which serve approximately 1,000 individuals, with up to three years of individualized support and training providing an emphasis on career track employment.

Adult Workforce providers include: Oregon Tradeswomen/Constructing Hope; Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO); SE Works; Central City Concern; Human Solutions Inc./Self Enhancement Ink

Youth Workforce providers include: Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA); Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO); New Avenues for Youth; Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC); Portland Youth Builders.

Overall, PDC's \$3 million investment leverages at least \$2 million in investment from Worksystems. PDC is proactively connecting the workforce development providers with NPI and Main Street Managers with the goal of connecting under and unemployed residents of NPI areas to career track employment opportunities.

The FY 2016-17 Requested Budget for this program is \$1,257,305 City General Fund. PDC-funded portion of this program is also anticipated to be funded with non-City General Fund including \$1,627,557 in Community Development Block Grant funds and \$59,000 from Multnomah County.

1.) SE Works, Youth Education and Career Development Center Funding -Restore the \$40,000.00 required to provide Case Management services and referrals. SE Works Request is to restore SE Works Youth Center funding while not impacting the PDC EOI workforce development programs funding.

The funding allocated to this program currently funds a full time Case Manager to provide critical wrap around services and referrals for housing, health and pregnancy supports, mental health, drug and alcohol treatment, and college and career readiness. Our Case Manager provides post-secondary transitioning supports and assists with integration with Job Corps and our On Site WorkSource center. 100% of our youth are low income and out of school youth who have been out of school an average of 17 weeks to 2 years.

We serve 120 youth each year ages 17-24 annually who have been through 4 other schools before they enroll with SE Works. Youth come to us with a variety of challenges including homelessness, drug or alcohol addictions, trauma from foster care, they are justice involved or have suffered abuse and neglect or have no supportive family or adults in their lives. . We are proud to say that we serve the hardest to serve and have great success with those who have dropped out or have been expelled from other alternative schools or public schools.

Thad is here to speak to his experience- he has been chosen to speak for the Youth in the Center.

Funded by the Portland Development Commission and Worksystems, the EOP was started to facilitate collaboration between public agencies and community-based organizations to help Portlanders with barriers to employment embark on sustainable career paths.

Worksystems provides program coordination to support the seamless integration of the partners into a cohesive program aligned with the public workforce system. These activities include program management, common performance measures and service definitions, implementation of a system-wide client tracking and performance reporting system, and training and technical assistance.

The Economic Opportunity Program

How the public workforce system and social service agencies successfully address the employment challenge of Portlanders with barriers



The Economic Opportunity Program is supported by



PORTLAND HOUSING BUREAU
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner

Key Agency Partner



This program is financed in whole or in part with funds provided through Worksystems Inc. from the U.S. Department of Labor. The programs are equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aid and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. To place a free relay call in Oregon dial 711.

The Economic Opportunity Program, funded by the Portland Development Commission and Worksystems, helps disadvantaged individuals gain career-track employment. The EOP is comprised of nine agency partners including SE Works, Inc. that serve low-income residents of Portland through programs tailored to meet the needs of specific populations.



SE Works strengthens the economic health of a diverse community by facilitating successful connections between job seekers and employers.

“For the past 18 years, SE Works has intentionally built services targeted to returning citizens,” says Holly Whittleton, Executive Director of SE Works. That effort has nurtured a growing list of second-chance employers. SE Works staff are screened to do pre-release work to help people transition out of prison. Ninety-three percent of the program’s customers never return to prison.

As a partner in the Economic Opportunity Program, SE Works coordinates services with WorkSource Portland Metro to provide career paths to people returning to their communities from incarceration. Known as “PREP,” the Prisoner Re-entry Program is one of two initiatives run by SE Works as part of the Economic Opportunity Program (EOP).

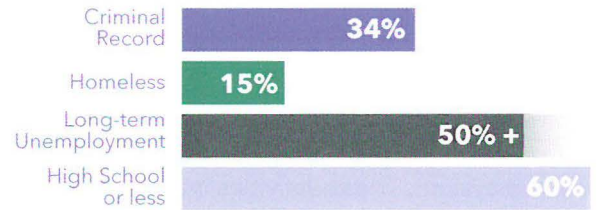
PREP helps returning citizens prepare for, find and keep career-track employment. The program uses a person-first approach, teaming vocational case managers one-on-one with customers to develop an individualized job plan and placement support.

Both EOP programs fit well with SE Work’s efforts to move the needle on poverty. Holly explains: “We tailor our services and training so that the people walking through our door get what they need to become successful. Our services can transform lives and communities. I see amazing turnarounds every day.”

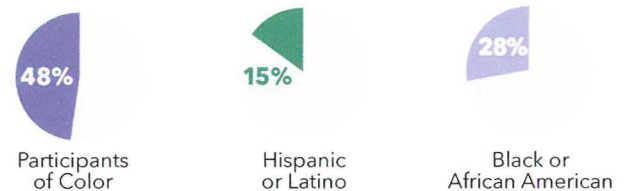
Cindy Knotts, a Career Coach in the Prisoner Re-entry Employment Program (PREP) at SE Works handles a caseload of some 40 returning citizens. She describes her customers as men and women who have served their sentences and want to rebuild their lives. Cindy explains “they want decent jobs to pay rent and put food on the

Program-Wide EOP Snapshot

EOP participants contend with **longstanding challenges** that make it difficult to pursue and attain career-track employment.



In a city where Census data indicates that 76% of residents are caucasian, the EOP serves a disproportionately **diverse** group.



The EOP model empowered participants to take advantage of WorkSource services. More than 70 percent of program participants exited into employment at an average wage of \$12.82/hour - a per hour rate that is 40% higher than Oregon’s minimum wage. Some participants now earn as much as \$20/hour. Most importantly, many of these placements are on the initial rungs of actual career ladders that promise ongoing advancement opportunities.



WorkSource Skill Development Activities

5 average number of **skill development activities** offered by WorkSource that EOP participants took part in

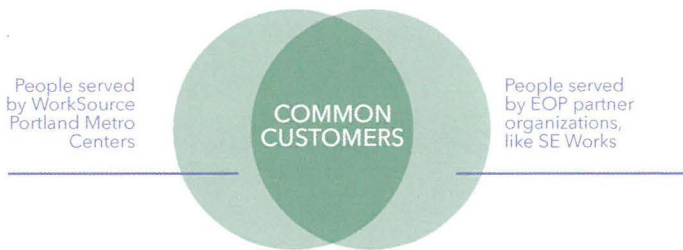
2,000 workshops attended

1,460 coaching appointments with WorkSource Career Specialists

164 participants **started occupational training programs** (24% of those enrolled in the program)

The Economic Opportunity Program Model

Each of the nine EOP partner projects provides a combination of services to specific populations. When their customers, like Bill Beall, are ready for occupational training or employment, EOP case managers help them develop a career map and introduce them to WorkSource Portland Metro job-seeker services. This enables partner organizations, like SE Works, Inc., to focus on their strengths while tapping the strengths of the public workforce system.



The EOP model focuses on Portlanders served by WorkSource Portland Metro and an EOP partner organization, like SE Works.

EOP provides each organization's customers a complete, complementary and coordinated suite of services that exceeds what any one organization can provide. By improving access to employment-related education, training and services, the EOP model helps address the equity gap for communities of color, returning citizens, public-assistance recipients, people experiencing homelessness and others facing barriers to living-wage employment.

Through the EOP partnership, career coaches have access to a WorkSource liaison, a person that trains them on the career-mapping process and is dedicated to keeping them informed about WorkSource Portland Metro services and programs, as well as provide ongoing technical assistance.

"With funding for programs like the EOP, we are moving mountains," Holly says. "Poverty can paralyze people. They want to move ahead and provide for their families and they need a supportive place to turn to. For many people in the Portland area, SE Works and the EOP programs are that place."

"For the past 18 years, SE Works has intentionally built services to target returning citizens."

— Holly Whittleton, Executive Director of SE Works

table. They face high but surmountable barriers that include self-imposed limits as well as institutional and cultural stigmas.

"I'm passionate about this population. They are some of the hardest workers you will ever find," says Cindy.

She tells the story of a woman who was being denied a job because of her past, "She looked the employer in the eye and said, 'Every employer has the opportunity to become a second-chance employer. I hope that starts today with you when you hire me.' They used their attorney and their HR (department), and they changed their policy and hired her."

She's there for her customers as they deal with rejection. "I have grown men cry at my desk all the time," she says. "Constant coaching helps them not to see themselves as felons anymore but as job-seekers with skills, talents and abilities."

At SE Works, Cindy and another case manager offer coaching, career mapping, building of targeted resumes, and access to support services such as clothing and public transportation for interviews.

"I believe everybody deserves a second chance."

— Cindy Knotts
vocational case manager,
SE Works/PREP

Co-located with the WorkSource Portland Metro-SE Center on Foster Road, SE Works creates an accessible environment that responds to the community's needs and concerns. "I love being embedded in the WorkSource Center," Cindy says, adding that her PREP

participants accessed up to 500 WorkSource services in 2014 alone. Holly adds, "The integrated model of EOP and WorkSource brings the one-stop concept to the customer."



Bill's Story

Bill Beall celebrated his 60th birthday in June and his first year as a Forensic Peer 1 Support Specialist at Cascadia Behavioral Health Services. Tall and trim, with clear blue eyes and a warm laugh, Bill loves his work and is excited for his future.

The contrast to his past is stark. He spent most of his life in and out of the criminal justice system, beginning with a drug conviction at 15. Half of the next 40 years were marked by drugs, crime, disappointment and heartache. He lost family, jobs and self-respect.

The turning point came in 2010. Arrested on his eighth felony charge, he was told, if convicted again, he would be prosecuted as a career criminal and sentenced to 25 years to life, before the possibility of parole.

"When they released me from jail and I realized that I was out on the streets again, I knew something had changed." Bill says. "I just wasn't supposed to do 25 years in the penitentiary. I was supposed to be doing this."



Bill Beall with PREP Career Coach Cindy Knotts.

Bill came to SE Works in late 2013 to participate in the Discover Your Road to Success Job Club. Then he enrolled in the Prisoner Re-entry Employment Program (PREP). His vocational case manager, Cindy Knotts, helped him with resumes, cover letters, interview coaching and support for interview clothing and transportation.

"For the first time in my life, I felt like there were people who really cared about me. If I missed an appointment or Job Club, my vocational case manager would call to see if I was okay."

"Now I get to give back."

— Bill Beall

Today he helps seriously persistent mentally ill offenders make better choices in the community and stay out of jail. "Now I get to give back."

He credits much of his success to the help he got from staff at SE Works.

"Who would've thought five years ago that I'd be where I am today? I just never in my wildest dreams ever saw a life so full and rich with so many opportunities. I can't thank SE Works enough for their dedication to help me reach my goals and succeed."

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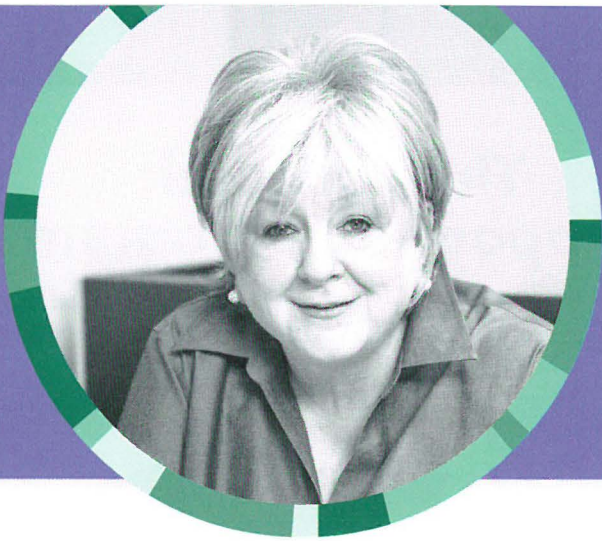
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SE Works strengthens the economic health of a diverse community by facilitating successful connections between job seekers and employers.

“I’ve been working in non-profit organizations for thirty-five years for one reason: to move the needle on poverty,” says Holly Whittleton, Executive Director of SE Works, Inc.

“Poverty is about lack of choice and opportunity. SE Works works with people and assists them with the tools and support they need to find jobs that pay them a living wage,” Holly continues. “Many doors lead out of poverty. We help people find the opportunities to help open those doors.”

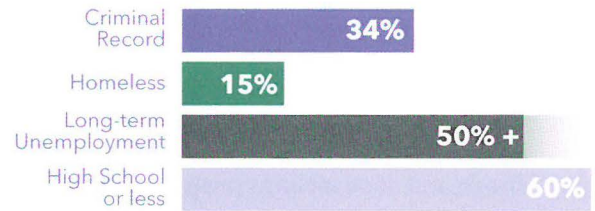
She credits SE Works’ dedicated, experienced employees and volunteers for delivering diverse programming that successfully engages multi-barriered, low-income, underserved populations including at-risk youth involved in the justice system, unemployed adults, immigrants, people experiencing disabilities, and people returning from incarceration.

Holly explains: “We tailor our services and training so that the people walking through our door get what they need to become successful. Our services can transform lives and communities. I see amazing turnarounds every day.”

Conveniently co-located in a Portland Worksource Metro Center, SE Works creates an accessible environment that responds to the community’s needs and concerns. While the “SE” in their name derives from their original focus on southeast Portland—where they continue to have a strong presence—they now manage a range of federal and local programs that serve several counties.

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nearly **700** participants in various stages of job readiness

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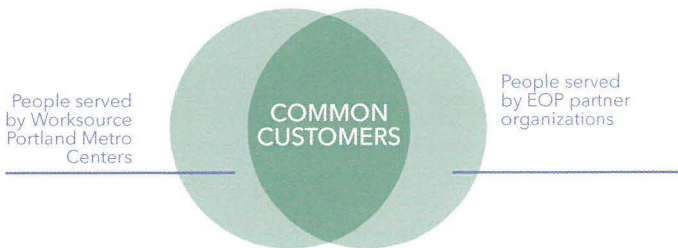
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From her position as SE Works Executive Director, Holly feels optimistic. "With funding for programs like the EOP, we are moving mountains," she says. "Poverty can paralyze people. They want to move ahead and provide for their families and they need a supportive place to turn to. For many people in the Portland area, SE Works and the EOP programs are that place."

"Our services can transform lives and communities. I see amazing turnarounds every day."

– Holly Whittleton, Executive Director of SE Works

SE Works' involvement with the Economic Opportunity Program (EOP) supports the Professional Immigrant Credential Program (PICP) and the Prisoner Reentry Employment Program (PREP).

"I see daily results with my customers," says Lyubov Tsinovkina, the PICP Career Coach. She helps immigrants and refugees who come to the US as professionals—doctors, engineers, scientists, managers, social workers—from all around the globe.


"It's exciting to help these qualified people prepare for professional jobs," says Lyubov. "It's a struggle for them to succeed in the US. Their certifications aren't recognized. They lack references. They lack professional networks. They lack money for transportation and for appropriate work clothing. Potential employers may discriminate against them. They may lack language skills. PICP offers lots of ways to help people who face these obstacles."

For example, PICP participants get help translating and evaluating their professional credentials for the local job market, a vital step to getting the right professional certifications/licenses and continuing education.

"It's rewarding to be part of the process of changing lives and improving communities"

– Lyubov Tsinovkina
PICP Career Coach

She adds, "I'm always happy when a customer gets an interview call and then a job offer. It's rewarding to be part of the process of changing lives and improving communities."



Claudia's Story



"When I found SE Works and the PICP, I felt that I was in the right place," says Claudia Acaroaie-Pop, who moved to the Portland area in July 2013. Back in Romania, she had been an accountant. She needed help getting started in her profession in this new country. Several people told her about SE Works, so she went there, joined the PICP, and spent several months working with Lyubov, the program's vocational case manager.

"Lyubov taught me that job hunting is different here," Claudia says. "I had to prepare my resume differently, and I had to interview differently. I also had to get certified in the United States. For this, I had to have a company officially evaluate my bachelor's degree. It's not as easy as translating my transcript; our grading systems are different. In Romania, we don't have grades A through F. Students get graded on a scale of one to ten."



Claudia at Willamette International Travel with colleague Kathy Blaster

As of this writing, Claudia is as an accountant at Willamette International Travel. Eventually, she hopes to get her CPA certification. On the path to her current position, Claudia worked two part-time jobs: one as a cook in a home for the elderly and one as a bookkeeper in a Portland CPA's office. In assessing her career path, Claudia acknowledges the help and support SE Works and particularly Lyubov. "Lyubov made me feel safe. I knew I could call, email, or text, and she was always willing to give me advice. She's a wonderful person, a professional. She helped me feel confident in going out to look for jobs."

"People who have learned skills in their home countries can do a lot in the US if they're given the chance."

Claudia continues: "It's confusing to move to the US. You have to learn everything. You're a capable adult, and suddenly you're like a baby. You need somebody to help you understand how to be your best, how to do what you do in a new way. People who have learned skills in their home countries can do a lot in the US if they're given the chance."

Parsons, Susan

From: Holly Whittleton <hwhittleton@seworks.org>
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2016 3:31 PM
To: Parsons, Susan
Subject: REQUEST: SE WORKS TESTIMONY

Hi Susan

This is a formal request to testify to Council on February 24th at 9:30 am . My name is Holly Whittleton, Executive Director at SE Works, Inc.

I will be testifying on PDC funds for the SE Works, Alternative Youth Education Center.

Thank You, Holly

Holly Whittleton
Executive Director
SE Works, Inc.
Suite #104- 7916 SE Foster Road
Portland, 97206
503-772-2310 direct
503-997-3670 cell

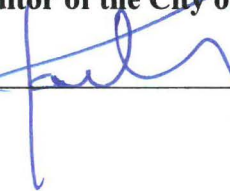
Request of Holly Whittleton to address Council regarding Portland Development
Commission funds for SE Works, Alternative Youth Education Center
(Communication)

FEB 24 2016

PLACED ON FILE

Filed FEB 16 2016

MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  Deputy

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Novick		
Hales		