

Olympia Economy Innovation Forum

February 7 & 9, 2018

How do we create an economy in our community that helps build stability and prosperity for those currently struggling to make ends meet?

Executive summary

On February 7 & 9, over 60 members of the Olympia community came together to consider this question. On behalf of a core team of 9 diverse members of the Olympia community, Michael Cade, executive director of Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC), and Stacey Ray, long range planner for the City of Olympia, invited the attendees into a conscious and deliberate conversation about how our community moves forward.

Michael and Stacey acknowledged that this is a complex problem with no short-term “fixes” and that it can’t be solved by one or even a few entities. We have reached a point in our community where we need to think very differently about our economy and economic development. At the same time, the City of Olympia is interested in learning what is the best role it can play in the community, with respect to this issue and other complex issues like homelessness.

Finally, they challenged participants to grow their commitment and increase their engagement in unique partnerships across the region as we engage to support what’s working and find new and innovative solutions.

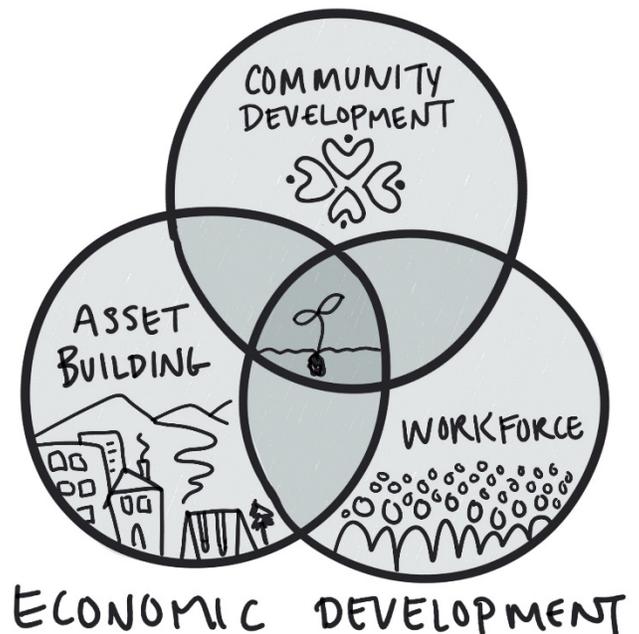


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The need

Despite economic data indicating that our local economy is the strongest it's been in nearly a decade, a growing number of our neighbors, friends, and family members in our community are grappling with poverty or underemployment, and many more are in danger of falling through the cracks. We recognize this is part of a complex system. (See handout: Appendix A)

- Yes, our economy is growing. What our local economy produces is increasing; so businesses are thriving. However, a growing number of households are burdened by not making enough money for what it costs to live here.
- Yes, unemployment is down...more people are finding work. However, nearly half of our county's workers see very minimal increases in what they take home in pay.
- Yes, many households in Thurston County are experiencing rising incomes; however, the cost of housing outpaces incomes. Rent is going up and it is getting harder and harder to buy a first home.
- Studies show that to overcome setbacks and hardships in our lives, we need grit, resilience, and hope that things can and will get better. However, Thurston County has one of the highest rates of adults with six or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). The greater the number of ACES, the more difficult it is for someone to develop the ability to face challenge and bounce back, or see that there is a pathway to a better life.

The vision: We are at a crossroads

We are at a crossroads with respect to the issue of poverty, not only in our community, but also in our region and nationally. The Olympia Economy Innovation Forum is taking an upstream, economic development approach to addressing poverty and generating innovative ideas and solutions to build stability and prosperity related to the ALICE Line (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) definition of poverty.

Taking an economic development approach to poverty

Michael Cade shared that the Thurston EDC continues to adapt its strategy to boldly address current realities. He challenged all participants to put on their economic developer hats, as everyone has an impact on economic and community development through their actions and leadership.

Michael shared the current EDC core values and their commitment to call together community leaders for the long-haul:

- Be candid in your commitment and passionate about it.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. It's OK.
- Look for unexpected partnerships.
- Be unique, be proactive, be creative.
- Think regionally.

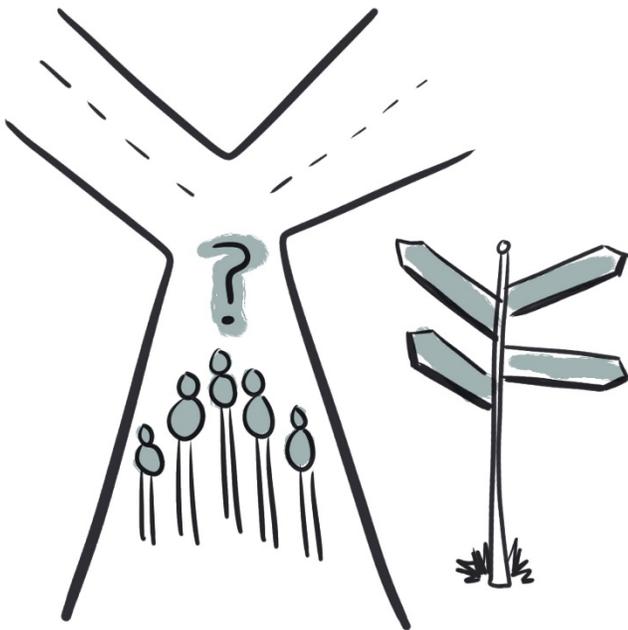
He encouraged participants to help us engage and build together an economy that is more equitable, participatory, growing, sustainable and stable. This is an opportunity to do something we have not done before.

Shared goals for long range city planning for Olympia

Stacey Ray asked participants to work together to help ensure as a city we can maintain and improve our quality of life as we grow and develop over the next 20 years. Quality of life includes:

- A stable, thriving economy.
- Residents don't struggle to find or keep a place to call home.
- Our neighborhoods are safe and welcoming.
- Everyone can get a high quality education that opens doors of opportunity.

Stacey emphasized, "We need to do it for everybody, not only for the approximately 93% of families living above poverty!"



What's next?

- Share out the harvest – especially the outcomes and key insights.
- Include a new invitation from The City of Olympia, EDC, CQC, and Childcare Action Council to continue the conversation and look for new opportunities. The City is still learning.
- As people move forward with conversations, collaborations and projects, keep posting updates and expand the community engagement.

What's moving since the two forums?

What, if anything, will you implement internally (in your organization) resulting from your participation in the Economy Innovation Lab?

This gathering reinforced our belief that now is the time to conduct training and education programs for small business professional advisors on the potential of worker co-op conversions as their clients explore exit strategies. With this in mind we are developing the training modules multiple staff can utilize.

Diane Gasaway, Northwest Cooperative Development Center

It affirmed the Community Foundation's support of the Thurston Asset Building Coalition. TABC is an important network in our community that is addressing barriers and developing solutions with people who are most impacted by poverty.

I am committed to continuing my own – and my organization's – learning about being more inclusive of people who are affected by poverty and working to reduce stigma around poverty.

Mindie Reule, Community Foundation of South Puget Sound

I have had a couple of individuals reach out to me after they were referred by either an attendee of our evening or from the committee.

Kairie Pierce, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

I will invite a speaker to talk with Olympia's neighborhood representatives about the underlying causes of homelessness in our community.

Diane Pantelis, CAN

What, if any, new efforts will you launch or implement externally (in the community) due to your participation in the Economy Innovation Lab?

To entice greater participation we are going to create training modules that will also satisfy continuing education credit needs the target audience may have.

Diane Gasaway, Northwest Cooperative Development Center

Our cooperative's board of directors is looking to create a budget next year for community development projects that we can then partner with other organizations to implement. We've been in communication with different parties looking for builders for tiny house villages, and we also know there's a need for low-cost, minimal hassle, repair services for lots of people who run into trouble with their homes that can't afford it. We don't have a specific plan for that as of yet, but will be in talks this Spring about how we might see that in the coming years.

Michael Snow, Northwest Construction Cooperative

I am following up with the City of Olympia folks to start a dialogue of identifying possible occupations with the City of Olympia that could be apprenticeable. My thought is, it's difficult to encourage employers in our community to consider apprenticeships when the City of Olympia only has a handful.

Kairie Pierce, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Exploring the feasibility (economic, political, cultural, social, etc.) of community service opportunities in exchange for housing and other support services.

Diane Pantelis, CAN

What else can you tell us about what is moving in the community since the Economy Innovation Lab?

I recently attended a workshop hosted by Jessica Jensen Law for small business owners regarding retirement and had some good conversations with local business owners who will consider selling to their employees when the time is right.

Diane Gasaway, Northwest Cooperative Development Center

I'm going to share my learning experience around the "Elevating Voices" workshop with a cohort of community philanthropy organizations I'm a part of that are working to address poverty in their own communities across the Pacific Northwest

Mindie Reule, Community Foundation of South Puget Sound

I'm still developing a written piece about the pervasiveness of poverty's impact. Would welcome some direction, guidance, and feedback.

Diane Pantelis, CAN

February 9 highlights and working session notes

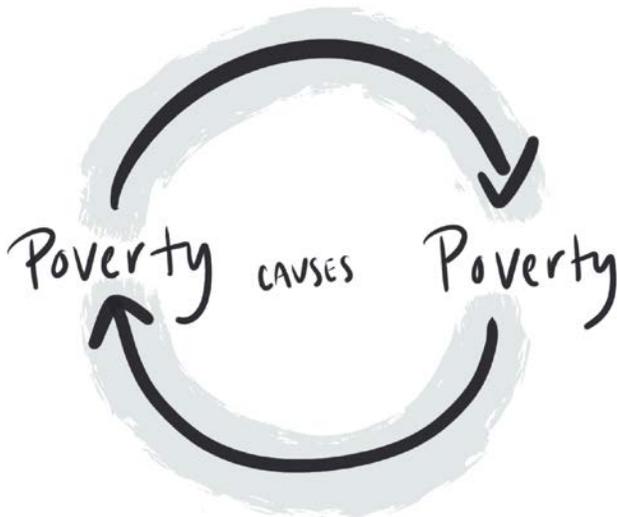
Reducing stigma around poverty, building relationships across the economic divides

In order to create an inclusive economy here, it is essential to hear from people who are traditionally not included in the current economy or are at risk falling into poverty. It is not an easy task! It takes time to build relationships and get out of the comfort zone to reach across differences.

There is a stigma in our society about people in poverty – they must have messed up along the way. However, it is often circumstances like an illness, job loss, an accident or divorce which puts things in motion to create instability or even homelessness. It can happen to almost anyone and it can happen really quickly.

For those struggling to make ends meet:

- **Things that are difficult include:** such as transportation, housing costs, child care, unpredictable work hours, past abuse, racial or gender discrimination.
- **Things that help include:** community, support systems, a place you belong, practical help along the way, affordable child care.



So, what causes poverty and what causes people to get stuck there? Poverty causes poverty. If you grow up poor, you grow up living life from one crisis to the next. The toxic stress and prevalence of adverse childhood experiences are greater. The crisis ridden life, almost ubiquitously leads to anxiety and depression, and often despair. What many people identify as “laziness” is usually extreme depression. We blind ourselves from what people are experiencing and the impact on their mental health and personal relationships. These experiences feed into our opioid epidemics and methamphetamine addiction. Addictions tend to be family disease or condition, there is an epigenetic effect. The long-term effects are cultural isolation, and deep alienation from the mainstream. The most alienated poor people tend to be the most deeply mentally ill.

The realities of those with significant disabilities is often dire. The disability benefit is \$750/month for those who can't work. Most people who get that amount can only hope to have stable housing if they have a housing voucher. To get a voucher you have to win the lottery of spots available, that gets you on a waiting list that is currently 2 years long.

The challenge to relate across our class and experience gap is huge. The key to us today is to think about innovation, we have to think innovatively on how to heal this breach and changing how we look at poverty is key. We are seeing change in our conversations on race and the treatment of women. The key is to see things from new perspectives and think in terms of innovation that makes a dramatic difference.

“How do we create that sea change moment, that times up moment, about poverty and the depth of poverty in our community.” Jill Severn, core team

We invited participants to reflect on their own experience – what relationships do you have with people experiencing poverty? What are you learning?

Where can we have an impact?

In small groups, people considered the questions, *where are there opportunities or leverage points for us to consider? How can we have a significant impact?* A number of innovative and promising ideas were generated and clustered under the headings of (1) Youth building and resilience, (2) Changing the conversation / Co-creating the future; (3) Work regionally, (4) Housing options, and (5) Changing economy.



Here is the list of ideas generated by cluster

Youth building and resilience

- Upstream solutions: mental health, education, reduce/address ACES
- Youth have no work experience – need jobs and financial education, life skills, help moving into the next stage of life
- Life and trade skills in high school – need it back!
- Help teens balance budgets and manage income

Changing the conversation / Co-creating the future

- Work regionally
- Develop awareness of what exists
- More education and skill sharing
- Reduce stigmas (“what do we believe?”)
- Systems that eliminate unhelpful “social norms”
- Expand voices
- Include people most affected in planning & decision-making
- More community conversations
- Intentional social gatherings across classes (food summit)
- Window Seat Media; Storytelling (ABC, NW Cooperative Development Center)
- Explore why the conditions are so conducive (ivy and the health of the forest)
- Stay committed!
- Engagement
- Social capital / network
- Strengthen community

Housing options

- “Hermit Crab” housing
- Housing solutions between a tent and an apartment
- Create more low-income housing

Changing the economy

- Diverse economic opportunities for different wage earners
- Sustainable funding
- One economy – “I’m no sissy; raise my taxes”
- Guaranteed minimum income
- Attract the right employees
- Subsidized child care
- Continue to work on making low paying jobs into livable wage jobs

Create opportunity clearinghouse / Places where people can go to find pathways, opportunities to employment [two similar design topics have been combined here]

Convener: Kathy McCormick; second convener not identified

Describe the idea or effort: How do people find out about opportunities, employment, and pathways to move forward and overcome obstacles. How to coordinate resources we already have: WA 211, Crisis Clinic, Together Resources Guide, Choice Regional Network, TABC Advocacy Network, AAOA, Senior Services – call them for anything. Gaps: housing, transportation, in-person face-to-face resource for referral, folks w/out tech resources (card, how-to info). How to reach markets? Creative use of technology for outreach (Instagram, Snapchat)

What is the need it connects with? Why does it matter? Good ideas come from collaboration and communication.

What is a next step (or steps)? Follow up coordination between Washington 211 and DSHS WA connections. 211 Summit (bring social service agencies and organizations together to coordinate outreach. Have 211 info available at every social service agency.

Expand apprenticeships to support employment

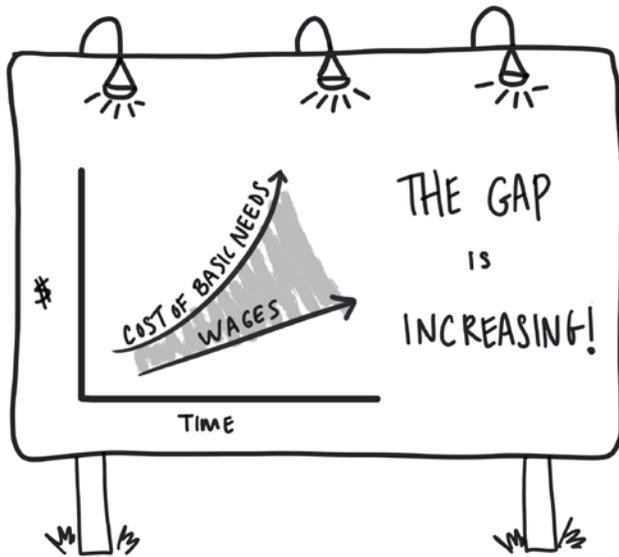
Convener: Brad Medrud

Describe the idea or effort: Using the model of the building trades, expand apprenticeship programs to other fields.

What is the need it connects with? Why does it matter? Getting people into the workforce, either initially or to change professions / get back into the workforce / retraining to new fields. There is a broad range of current programs that can be built on to support the idea – New Market (broad institutional support = support for students / future employees) – (transport, childcare, financing, place to bring people in professions to, etc. Work Source, Bates Technical College / SPSCC, Healthcare

What is a next step (or steps)? Talking to others: Chamber of commerce / government initiative / champions for leadership (time/money). Don't move too quickly into the details / problem-solving mode. Focus more on the broader connections that could support problem solving.

What help do you still need? More conversations with existing programs to identify good/bad aspects and then developing workable models.



"Hermit Crab" housing

Convener: Aaron Rodriguez

Describe the idea or effort: A "Hermit Crab" housing model where a community looks at what housing is available to represent the complete wage spectrum of that community.

What is the need it connects with? Why does it matter? One in two households are currently "cost burdened" in housing and that number is growing. Providing housing options that are tied to real wages allows households to not pay more than 30% of income to housing.

What is a next step (or steps)? Need "influencers" who share my passion for addressing the problem of housing affordability who can push this idea into legitimate prototyping (I have already ran scenarios!).

What help do you still need? A municipal partner, willing to provide a real piece of property for the purpose. Financial modeling (but that could be used if the idea proves viable).

Create cooperative and network ecosystem for a thriving community

Convener: Michael Snow

Describe the idea or effort: Cooperative ecosystem is a business development environment and network of partners that work to support creating cooperatives and help them grow and flourish through time.

What is the need it connects with? Why does it matter? Creating pathways for building wealth, or more generally distributing wealth among a greater number of population in lasting ways. Better paying, invested and dignified jobs improve our communities and hops people stay out of poverty.

What is a next step (or steps)? We need to connect with different people working in government and the non-profit sectors.

What help do you still need? Public advocacy skills and knowledge.

Seeing the forest not just the trees & keeping the ecosystem healthy (in light of ivy and other threats)

Convener: Denise Pantelis

Describe the idea or effort: Use an analogy to describe the bigger ecosystem recognizing the impacts of efforts often have unintended consequences. Looking from living systems view at the bigger system and how efforts can have more impact.

What is the need it connects with? Why does it matter? Social and economic impacts and interventions regionally have both local and global consequences. Pulling ivy in one location doesn't keep it from coming back. Putting all our attention on the big trees crowds out other trees from growing. Can we get better picture of what restores economy and watch for, learn from unintended consequences.

What is a next step (or steps)? Keep exploring the conversation.

What help do you still need? Finding and creating value through conversations!



Small group working sessions closing insights

Hermit Crab housing: When you look at small hermit crab, it trades a small shell for next appropriate size shell as it grows. Wages are graduating step for moving up. Been working on this idea for two years. The next iteration is to bring together team that can stress test this, do the math, and look at assets required to see if it can go. I believe it is one of 5-10% that will work out.

Importance of quality childcare that is affordable and people are paid well. Consider the value of elders in our communities, using volunteers to help with affordability. Supporting parents as the child's first teacher. Looking at doing a pilot or model.

Looking for opportunities to expand apprenticeship program. The important thing is looking at new markets, work sources. Our table was looking to figure out landscape of what is out there. Environment for capacity engagement, looking for demand in employment in healthcare, IT, trades.

How do you get developers to build at lower end of rent the spectrum. What kind of housing stock can move forward. Creative ownership structure, conversion opportunities, dorm style housing. How do we add stock across the spectrum. Incentivize development in areas of need.

Create a fun and diverse inclusive learning event to blur the divide between marginalized community and those that are trying to help. Will revolve around food, music, kids AND topic we want to learn about. Next step is planning.

Creating opportunity clearing house. I learned so much. Bringing together people who are in this business and giving them opportunities to talk to one another. Washington 211 is major coordinator in the state that is funded by state government; DSHS has portal program to do better outreach. Perhaps if the two of them coordinated they could do a better job of outreaching to folks in community who need a personal connection. Market differently to younger people with social media, recognizing that older people still need a card. That helps younger people take those next steps to get over the roadblocks to apprenticeships or employment. Recommendation is 211 or other organizations host a regular summit to do more than already doing.

Create a network to further develop our cooperative development ecosystem. Creating more cooperatives. We do have skills around technical assistance, business planning. We are lacking the public policy advocacy and funding for additional lending. There are a lot of people interested in this, we need to broaden are group of people that are working on this and we might already have some place to go.

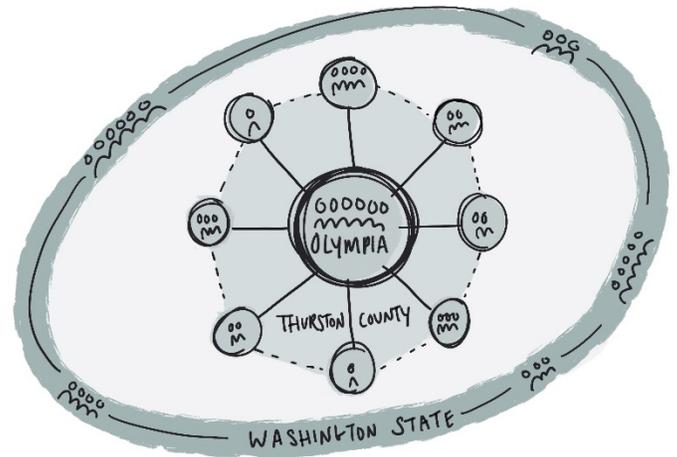
I wanted to champion a way of thinking about our environment or economy as an ecosystem. People can relate to concept of having a healthy forest where things can thrive, then having a problem need to address. Encourage people to look at bigger forest so efforts in one area don't have unintended consequences in other areas. Working to restore that is present underneath.

If you are interested in any of these projects check in with conveners.

Personal reflections and insights

- **This stuff is really complicated** and it will continue to take a lot of work. It is really important to stay engaged and create civic involvement.
- We need to **change our mindset and traditional thinking**, public and private sector, to truly address these topics.
- What I saw in all of the circles is **how we create amidst complexity**. How important it is to sit together as people to talk. That allows us to have more innovation and integration across different silos.
- These are complex issues AND going around to idea tables **there is so much intersection across these issues**, the amount you have to pay for childcare and what you can afford for housing, and how to connect with apprenticing opportunities. All of us are working toward the same goal and there are ways we can help.
- In my previous life I was a planner. I am more aware now of all who are out there doing incredible work! With that in place, **this community has no reason not to push these issues forward**. There is so much expertise out there. The importance of these kinds of forums happening in this community to bring the expertise in this community together. The opportunity to collaborate and educate and generate ideas is one of the ways forward. How do we make the most of these resources? And not only that we have a really caring community, how do we build on that?
- I would like to thank the core team for framing the question that brought us together. I think it is THE QUESTION **“What is that intersection of economy and poverty that we need to be paying attention to**. Not just focus on poverty but how do we develop an inclusive economy. I think it is THE question we need to be in continued conversation and action on.

- This is a quote that has inspired me for years, **“Practice of true community involves responsibilities and actions that do not come naturally to us”**. The continued pursuit of making this natural is what will ultimately bring our community to what we can all see today.
- **Every one of us is an economic and community developer**, wear that hat as you work and participate in our local economy.
- **What we are doing here matters not only here but has an influence across the state.**



February 7 highlights and working session notes

Creating pathways to stability and prosperity

We are taking an economic lens for how we create more economic stability or prosperity especially for those at risk of falling into poverty or working with economic instability. February 7, 30 people gathered to learn about what is happening with apprenticeship in the region and the state and consider what we can do locally to encourage alternative pathways to prosperity. How can we build a healthy and resilient community here in Olympia and Thurston County despite the national trends and regional pressures. Resilient community efforts exist in a broader context. It is individuals, families, community, and broader context of regional, state, national, and global trends.

Kairie Pierce brought together a group of friends and leaders from the apprenticeship community to share their stories and insights and help us think about alternative pathways. Kairie is with the Washington state labor council, she is the K-12 and college director. She also works for Pac Mountain Development Council.

We had the opportunity to hear and learn from: Tami Saint Paul (Apprenticeship coordinator) and Clint (Apprentice) for the operating engineers. Greg Christianson (Apprenticeship coordinator) and David (Apprentice) for the iron workers. Melinda Nichols: Retired from running the apprenticeship program in the state and now decided to solve homelessness.

Opportunities

- **There appears to be a lack of a clearing house for apprenticeship and other alternative pathways.** A vehicle that actively helps get more people, of all ages, into the apprenticeship programs, perhaps also community colleges and co-ops. We heard tonight about apprenticeship. Co-ops are another part of the “alternative pathways” economy to grow. We shouldn’t have to depend on serendipity, there are opportunities for outreach.

- **There are grants available in Washington to develop apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.** There is a window now with a strong economy and the need for more skilled labor. How might we take advantage of those grant opportunities. There currently are no training centers or pre-apprentice programs for labor in Thurston county and the apprenticeship community works with cities to establish these when there is a need for skilled labor and local commitment.
- **Employer engagement is key.** Locally we have particular industries that are really strong, how could we work with these industries to develop more programs to train and apprentice people into jobs. Anything that requires 2000+ hours of training and has wage progression can be an apprentice able skill.
- **The apprenticeship community has been very involved in building low-income housing and tiny homes** and can be involved in addressing this and other local challenges and opportunities.
- **There is a need to think through scenarios of when the economy is not doing well,** and what we need to do to capture opportunities now. Can we be engaging employers about the future of the work world, the disappearing jobs and shifting money to build the future workforce? Certainly the state can be a model and we can be here. How do we see into the crystal ball, what are the indicators, how do we coordinate?
- **The apprenticeship community does an excellent job supporting individuals on the path to success,** including building community and supporting them through challenges of life. How can we do more of this in more places and programs?
- **Grow understanding and empathy** – How do we continue to actively engage the community, neighborhoods and the local city government and build a groundswell of support for new solutions?



Key insights and information

- **Industries offering apprenticeship:** Washington State has 18,000 apprentices right now. It used to be that all apprenticeship was in the construction industry. It has changed in the last decade. They are being created now for other industries. Healthcare is a new arena, IT is new in the state and unique in the country. In Washington State, there are apprentices in everything from cosmetology to hospitality, to librarian and neon sign maker – over 250 different jobs. There have been federal grants that push the limits.
- **Expansion of Apprenticing in Washington:** Governor Inslee is looking to expand apprenticeship in every area that is an apprentice-able skill. Anything that requires 2000+ hours' worth of training and has wage and job progression can be an apprenticeable skill. It requires an employer - No employer, no apprenticeship. It is funded by combination of employers and the workers. There are a lot of grants for apprentice and pre-apprentice programs in the state.
- **Find out about apprentice opportunities:** Visit the Department of Labor and Industries website, apprenticeship section. Employment Security is doing a website. Visit one of the career fairs. Find out about apprenticeship with the following resources handed out at the event (add links)
- **Creating pathways to success:** Apprenticeships build community; those that move along in the program are expected to bring others with them. There are so many other things that get in the way, and helping people address challenges that come up in life is an essential part of creating pathways to success.
- **Childcare and other barriers:** There is a lot established in the apprenticeship community to address barriers including childcare. For example, they have people that help people get their driver's license back. The apprentice community has worked with the Pac Mountain workforce development council to help figure out equipment, childcare, gas cards.

- **Apprenticeship, employment and low income housing:** Being housed and being employed are intricately connected. The apprenticeship community and the Low Income Housing Institute have been leaders in building tiny houses and helping cities with their plans and engaging communities to help solve our homelessness crisis. There are many resources available.
- **Toxic stress:** In our region there is a higher than average burden of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) and toxic stress. Poverty and homelessness create some of that stress. The #1 protective factor for toxic stress is relationship. High ACE's with support has less of an impact on health and life trajectory than low ACE's without support. Support builds a sense of confidence, trust. Mastery of skills also builds resilience. When children have had trauma in life, or grow up with toxic stress, it impacts the developing brain, one of the area of the brain that is impacted is the pre-frontal cortex which is involved in planning, organizing and problem solving. It has an impact on school success, health and life trajectory. Apprenticing and alternative pathways to employment are key complements to traditional schooling and help adults build pathways to success with support.

Narrative of our dialogue

Our dialog began with the apprentice perspective: How you learned about apprenticeship, how you stay involved and what it has meant for you and your family.

Clint: I spent a lot of years in the military, for the majority of my adult life, the military was good to me. I felt financially I was fine. When I got out at Bangor with an honorable discharge, I was struggling going in my new line of work, construction, and I went through a divorce. I was living in a friend's camper and trying to take care of my son through whatever means I could. As you start working construction you don't make a lot of money.



A friend told me about the apprenticeship program and I used my GI bill. I made it through the apprenticeship process and hit the ground running in May 2015. It helped me move from \$12 to \$22/hr. Once I got going in the union everything started picking up. If you put forth the effort, people see it, they train you, and the union helps make sure you have work. I never thought I would be down and out. It has been a blessing, It got me back to where I can provide. Back to the way I enjoyed feeling as a parent, being able to support my kids. Every year through the operating engineers I go back for training. I am at 4800 hours and need to have 6500 to journey out. The program is great. If you don't know how to run a truck they will teach you, if you don't know how to run a crane they will teach you. I got welding training and was working tunnel and highway jobs. What is most important is that "you want it," have the motivation and drive.

David: I moved here two years ago from Nigeria. I parked my car in Seattle, when I returned, I saw a sticker on my car for program called PACE which introduced me to all the trades. I was an engineer back in Nigeria, materials and metalogical engineer. I told myself, "I want this." Before that it was really rough for me, it was hard to make ends meet. I went through "hell day" and did everything I could be one of the 20 people selected for the program. After 1 month in the pre-apprentice program, I had good knowledge to go to the jobsite. Most of the things I needed to know I had learned in class. My life changed all of the sudden, I was able to afford an apartment and feed my family well. It taught me a lot and I am really grateful. I really appreciate the patience. As an iron worker I am doing really good, even as first year, it is a great career.

Next we heard from the apprentice coordinators on how they support apprentices.

Tami: I am the support system and mentor for all of those who don't know what they are getting themselves into. I say, "I am the den mother to 100's, as an apprentice coordinator." What I get to do is help people get and stay on their path to success.

My journey started 30 years ago I was a college dropout, working minimum wage job and going nowhere. My dad sent me to a construction job, I loved it, and I wanted more of it – and to get out of crappy minimum wage jobs that are demoralizing. I went through program called ANEW which is apprenticeship for program for Women. They brought speakers in to talk about different trades. I jumped through all the hoops. The pre-apprenticeship program helps you plan, they helped me buy my first set of boots and rain gear. Fast forward 12 years I'm a journeyman and I love my career, can run backhoes, and dozers and cranes and excavators. I wanted to BE the person that who came to talk to me in ANEW. "If you are financially independent you don't have to be stuck in a bad situation, you can take care of yourself and your family."

Today I had 5 conversations with apprentices. There are 5 today that are wandering off the path to success and I had to have a conversation with them about how to get back on the path of success. There are a million reasons your life goes spinning out of control, death in the family, sick child, divorce.... and we do the mentorship thing. We connect them up with other apprentices and other support networks. Mostly, we get them networked in with each other and give them the best advice we can. We offer them financial tools for the trades, give them money sense, and help them along the way as they grow.

Greg: The iron workers now have 500 apprentices in our region, from the coast to Columbia river, Canadian border to Kelso. They are all working and we are bringing in more apprentices all the time. I run the school. I get calls every day for all kinds of situation. We offer support. The apprentices come to school one month a year and then they are working on the job, it is on the job training. We developed a pre-apprenticeship program so we can reach out to the community, to others that wouldn't usually get in, would be missed. I won't do a class unless I know all the class can go directly into the apprenticeship, that there are jobs waiting for them. We work with local unions and dispatchers to forecast and place. I had to pursue grants to get the pre-apprenticeship program running. There are a lot of grants available to fund the pre-apprenticeship programs.



Everyone who is not selected in a class is encouraged to come back and try again, “you know where you need to get to next time. It is a matter of your drive and how much you want it.” You get 3 hours in the class room, and 5 hours in the shop a day. In the grant you get the right kind of tools, the right kind of clothes, and are trained on what to do. So when they are done, they are completely ready to go to work and be successful. It is proven, we have greater retention. David commented, “When I got out there I was completely ready.” The last two years we’ve put 150 people into ironworkers apprentice this way. Ironworkers like to brag, “see that building I built that!” Of everything I’ve ever worked on in my 30 years the most rewarding is building apprentices, by far tops! To have a good livable wage and good livable job that is life changing for people. I’ve gone into Perdue women’s prison and recruited from there. I tell people, “We don’t care where you been, it’s where you want to go that counts.” Everybody’s got enough barriers out there. It’s about breaking down the barriers, accepting people in, most people if you give them a chance they are going to run with it.

Recruiting and demand

There are several ways of finding out about apprenticeship, and we are working to spread the word broadly. We have career fairs. There are 8 of us do apprenticeship outreach in building and construction trades.

David shared, “In my case, I parked my car. I came back and saw the sticker between my windshield and my wiper, that offered me the opportunity. That sticker they put on my car marked a turning point in my life.”

The new market skill center does “Try a trade day.” Pierce county does, “Pierce county career day” The school districts are invited to bring their juniors and seniors to try out our careers. Many who come can’t even see themselves doing construction. We bring bobcats, and construction heavy equipment, and wrenches and tools, iron and rebar, and people who are doing the trades. We let them do it and see themselves doing it.

We will go anywhere. If there is something we are not doing, we want to know about it. We heavily recruit from pre-apprenticeship as it teaches the trades, money education, sSoft skills, etc.

Apprenticeship is 90% on the job training, it does no good to invest in 8 weeks of training and not have a job. We absolutely try to keep pace with the market, and look in the crystal ball to forecast. We are using this time right now and bringing in a lot of people. There are also a lot of gray-haired guys so there is a huge gap forecasted and we need to be proactive to fill those spots and build that next generation of leadership.

How to find out about apprenticeship

- Department of Labor and Industries website, apprenticeship section lists the apprenticeship programs in the state and a number of pre-apprentice programs.
- Employment security is doing a website.
- Our area has one of the best workforce development councils in the state.
- See handouts in the highlights section.

I am following up with the City of Olympia folks to start a dialogue of identifying possible occupations with the City of Olympia that could be apprenticeable.

Kairie Pierce, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO



Expanding apprenticeship

There is not a labor training center in Thurston County, there are some in Tacoma. There has been some interest in building a pre-apprenticeship program in Olympia. The work that gets done in Olympia and surrounding areas are projects that apprentices are on. Hopefully we can get apprentices from this area on those jobs. "If we have the jobs to put them to work, we can do pre-apprenticeship programs, then they can get employed within the area. Operating Engineers program is only in Ellensburg where they have 1600 acres.

There are apprenticeships in other industries. It used to be that all in the construction industry. It has changed in the last decade. They are being created now. There have been quite a few federal grants that push the limits. There are a lot of grants for apprentice and pre-apprentice programs in the state. Almost anywhere where there is a need for skilled workers there can be apprenticeship program. Healthcare is a new arena, IT is new in the state of Washington and unique in the country, Hospitality, etc. The IT one is taking off, they partner with Microsoft.

Governor Inslee is looking to expand apprenticeship in every area that is an apprenticeable skill. Anything that requires 2000+ hours' worth of training and has wage progression can be an apprenticeable skill. There are apprentices in everything from cosmetology, to librarian and neon sign maker in Washington state, over 250 different jobs. It requires an Employer – No employer, no apprenticeship. It is funded by combination of employers and the workers.

Tiny homes and apprenticeship

Melinda: I became a carpenter in 1972, first woman to get journeyman card in the state. It took me 6 months to get a job. One of my main commitments is serving diversity. I ran the apprenticeship program for the state and retired. My focus now is building low income housing and tiny homes.

We have built 2,100 units of low income housing, including Billy Frank Jr. here. What we realized is we can't do this fast enough. We've got to have a place where people can stay where they can be safe and can have unity among themselves. Almost every pre-apprentice in the state has built tiny houses. Plenty of the pre-apprenticeship folks have been homeless themselves. We now have 7 tiny house villages with over 200 tiny houses. We are at a point now where mayor of city of Seattle says, "we want to build 1000 tiny houses." It isn't a complete answer, we've got 250 people jobs and 300 people permanent housing. It is a way to get started with a terrible problem we have to solve.

The apprenticeship community has been so compassionate. A lot of people around the country are talking about tiny houses, we are doing it. Working to get a real roof over a real person's head, so they can start to change how they survive and how they thrive. Being on the street makes you sick.

There are several things we have learned, 1) we need good partners, 2) we need to persuade local government and agencies this is a good thing, 3) you need to unite with the community. The more volunteers you get the better! That groundswell of help – real people in the real community working together – "I want to help them get a roof over their head, I want to help with food" or whatever they need. It could be you someday.

The low income housing institute has a program to help any city in the state to build tiny houses. It takes organizations and takes commitment. We have designs, materials lists, strategies for communications, whatever you need. We are interested in the whole I-5 corridor. These are our fellow human beings just like us, why aren't we taking better care of them, we need too"



In Olympia there is a ballot measure for 350 units in the next 10 years with wrap around services. It important to be is integrating them into the community, to have to have ways to get them to the services they need.

Doing with

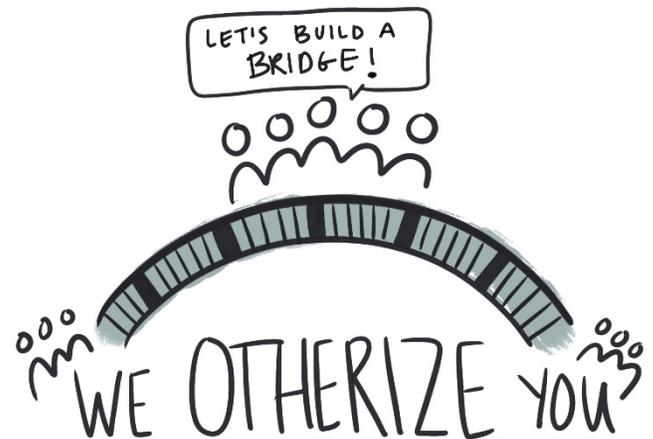
It doesn't do you any good to do things to people – you have to do things with them, you have to respect their organizations, you have to work with them, not at them. They talk about how they do things and work with us on plans and details including going for grants. Our grant is with Nickelsville and Sharewheel – you ask them for permission.

They are helping out, they manage the site, do all the cleanup, they are required to do volunteer work, sometimes to finish the house – everybody works, some pay a monthly fee. They make the decisions about disciplinary actions. It is significant! One person said to me, “Melinda when everyone comes into the tiny house villa they are broken, and the way they get healed is helping one another.” Video.

It is also a challenge and essential to work with neighborhoods to take on tiny house village or low income housing. Important to have a strategy, have drawings and meetings, to share what is going to happen, to tell the truth and discover what is useful for the community. Some of this is legal and required. It is best if community members and neighbors are advocating for it and positively engaged.

Governmental policy changes

It used to be only churches could do this and tent cities had to move every 4 months. With tiny houses we eliminated the amount of time they can live there. Public properties can be used as well and that takes policy changes.



Appendix A

The need and the challenge

The following data pairs tell a story about our current economy, which, while not comprehensive, served as a place to starting place for the subsequent conversations.

Thurston County Data Pairs

Our economy is growing.... gross local production is up 21.9% over the last five years. (Chmura Economics & Analytics)

However, 49.4% of Thurston County rental households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. (Employment Security Department)

Unemployment is down.... more people are going to work each day.

However, adjusted for inflation, the bottom 50% of workers have received only \$5/hr or less in additional wages since 1990. (Employment Security Department)

Household incomes are rising across many sectors.

However, housing costs are rising more. Median rent in Thurston County has risen 14.4% since 2009 (an extra \$120.00 per month compared to rental prices in 2009), and the cost to buy a home is rapidly becoming out of reach for first-time buyers. (Jason Robertson & Co.)

It takes a great deal of resiliency and hope to prosper (and in some cases, survive) in difficult times.

However, Thurston County has one of the highest rates of adults with six or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) – which means they are 9 times more likely to experience life dissatisfaction and 4.6 times more likely to suffer from chronic diseases and engage in risky behaviors such as smoking. (Anda and Brown 2009)

This data highlights why this is such a complex issue, and the different data sets touch on different parts of this complex system.

Appendix B

Definitions of Inclusive Economy and the ALICE Line.

The participants were encouraged to consider the following five Characteristics of an Inclusive Economy Creating an Inclusive Economy (Rockefeller Foundation, Chris Benner & Manual Pastor, December 2016) as a more robust and promising lens on what an economy that works for everyone might look like.

- **Equitable** - everyone has equal access to transportation, education, clean air, and water.
- **Participatory** - people can participate fully in economic life—as workers, consumers, and business owners.
- **Growing** - good job and work opportunities are growing, and incomes are increasing, especially for the poor.
- **Sustainable** - economic and social wealth can be sustained over time.
- **Stable** - individuals and enterprises are secure enough to invest in their future. Economic systems are increasingly resilient to shocks and stresses.

Building stability and prosperity around the ALICE Line

The participants were also encouraged to consider the upstream causes of poverty as they discussed innovative ideas and solutions to build stability and prosperity related to the ALICE Line (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) definition of poverty.

ALICE = Asset Limited
+
Income Constrained
+
Employed

Appendix C

Thurston County Economic Development Approach

Michael Cade suggested that we are at a crossroads with respect to the issue of poverty, not only in our community, but also in our region and nationally. He further pointed out that we have reached a point where we need to think very differently about the way our economy is functioning.

Michael pointed out that while the economy continues to expand, people are still falling behind. This is taking place amid some major changes in the local economy. For instance, historically, the state has been the community's largest employer (60%), whereas today, 40% of local jobs are with the state and 60% are with the private sector. In addition, household income is falling below the state average ("since the 2008 recession, it has been falling off a cliff").

According to Michael, the EDC used to take a myopic view of economic development. Where previously the focus was on land, labor, and capital and the recruitment of the big "rain-maker" companies, the emphasis has shifted to workforce development/employees and building a quality community. Michael offered today's three Pillars of Economic Development.

Workforce: ensuring that the region's workforce has every opportunity for success; a culture of innovation

Community Development: creating more "toe tapping" strategies

Asset building: creative partnerships; networks; strategic assets; and infrastructure systems

Thurston Economic Development Council

This new approach places additional emphasis on taking a regional approach, being impactful, and long-term commitment.



Appendix D

Background on Economy Innovation Lab

The effort was funded by the Center for Quality Communities (CQC), a 501c-3 of the Association of Washington Cities. Over a period of several months, a core group of 10 individuals from the Olympia, WA community worked closely with two professional trainers/facilitators to design and host a series of community conversations focusing on addressing poverty through a local economic development approach.

The first conversation, which took place on February 7 from 6-9:00 pm, focused on creating and improving pathways to economic equity and upward mobility (for a summary of this conversation, please see the earlier Highlights and Notes: Creating Pathways to Stability and Prosperity, Feb 7 section). The second conversation, which took place on February 9 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, was an broader opportunity to explore what our community could do to ease the burdens of stress and want on low-income families and adults, and to create more accessible pathways to prosperity.

The CQC's selected contractor, The Athena Group, provided training and targeted coaching support to the members in the principles and methods of the Art of Participatory Leadership and led the design and facilitation of the conversations.

Initial project “callers”

During early exploratory conversations between the CQC and the City of Olympia, Senior Planner Stacey Ray emerged as a passionate advocate for the Innovation Lab idea. At the time, the city was trying to better understand what role it could/should play in the community with respect to complex issues such as poverty and homelessness, and as it worked to implement certain aspects of its new Comprehensive Plan. Stacey first reached out to Michael Cade, Executive Director of the Thurston Economic Development Council, to discuss the idea of looking at the issue of poverty from an economic development perspective. The two quickly found alignment at the level of purpose and, with the support of the Athena Group, then began to reach out to other potential Innovation Lab core team members in the community.

Formation of a local core team

Through an informal, conversational process, a core team of 10 community members with diverse backgrounds eventually came together to become the Olympia Economy Innovation Lab's community core team. While each core team member chose to participate in the Innovation Lab for their own reasons, they all felt that the status quo was no longer acceptable. They also understood that such issues aren't “solvable” by any single individual or entity or single solution and instead requires a greater ability to work across sectors and traditional boundaries. This would ultimately require that they grow their capacity to foster productive dialogue, build relationships of mutual trust, tap into the collective experience and wisdom that exists within the community, and create opportunities for wise actions to emerge.

List of core team members

- Eric Trevan, The Evergreen State College
- Mindie Reule, the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound
- Kairie Pierce, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
- Keith Stahley, City of Olympia
- Jill Severn, former member of the board of Quixote Village
- Connor Tibke, community member (unaffiliated)
- Kyle Wiese, Thurston Economic Development Council
- Stacey Ray, City of Olympia
- Michael Cade, Thurston Economic Development Council
- Leonard Bauer, City of Olympia



The core team learning journey

From the very first project orientation session to the two community conversations in February, each leader was challenged to get out of their comfort zone, to reach beyond their silos and build new relationships. They also needed to better understand the issue in all of its complexity and learn what is already going on in the community and elsewhere that could be highlighted or strengthened.

Given the obvious complexity of this issue, the group agreed that at this stage, the most promising approach would be to convene multiple, diverse perspectives in a spirit of curiosity and shared learning.

The members also agreed to challenge themselves in stepping outside of their own realities and actively seek to build relationships with others in the community and to actively seek out new learning opportunities in relation to people who are experiencing poverty.

Core team principles

The core team recognized that in order to support their ability to have a meaningful impact in the community, there would need to be a different quality of learning and of working together. As such, the group named and committed to the following principles.

- We all have a responsibility to stay engaged and work together so that we create a community dialogue that is meaningful for the core team and those we invite beyond the core team
- We will achieve impactful leadership by relying upon the strength of our relationships with one another
- Be participatory – stay engaged with strength – and be passionate (enjoy) the opportunities
- We value civil dialogue and we will promote a discussion in the community that is respectful, honorable and seeks solutions for individuals to participate in all sectors and levels of the economy
- Strong partnerships create a dynamic relationship that promotes an equity for all community members

Appendix E

Resources

The following resources were gathered by the core team as part of their Economy Innovation Lab research. The resources highlighted at the forum events were:

- 1) [YWCA Barriers to Women Employment focus group report](#)
- 2) [ALICE Report](#)
- 3) [Thurston Maps for Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience](#)
- 4) [Parents Guide to Apprenticeship](#)
- 5) [Benefits of Apprenticeship for Employers](#)

