



Economic and Community Development Leaders and Partners,

I am pleased to share our annual report of activities of the Economic Development Council (EDC) and our Center for Business & Innovation (CBI). This report highlights our strategic efforts to boost Thurston County's economy, aligning with our mission to foster a dynamic and sustainable community.

Our vision is a prosperous Thurston County, rich with employment, cultural, educational, and investment opportunities. At the EDC, we believe that regional partnerships and strategic alliances are key to enhancing wages, wealth, and community resources.

We're proud of our role in driving economic development forward. We want to thank and congratulate all the cities in Thurston County, Port of Olympia, Thurston County, Saint Martin's University, South Puget Sound Community College, The Evergreen State College, chambers of commerce, and all of our 65 dedicated partners for their collaborative efforts.

In this report, you'll see how we've strategically utilized our budget and maximized your investments. Every dollar invested in the EDC/CBI has generated a \$48 return for the county's economy. Thanks to our Board's strategic leadership, our initiatives have contributed \$478 million in economic activities, over the last year alone.

We remain committed to exploring innovative strategies to attract investments and enhance our local economy, and we look forward to continuing our work with you to improve our regional economy.

Mark Steepy

President, EDC Board of Directors

Managing Principal, KPFF Consulting Engineers

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Cover photo of Rising River Farm at the Olympia Farmers Market by Angela Kelly (Kelly Design) courtesy of the City of Olympia's Olympia Strong program. Others courtesy of Ebony & Ivory Coffee and the Thurston EDC.

Thurston EDC Board of Directors



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KPFF Consulting Engineers

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Tony Taylor
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Chris Woods
Yelm Community Schools

Shina Wysocki
Chelsea Farms

Nancy LaPointe
Ex Officio Member
Navigate Financial

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Navigate Financial

Grace Kendall, *President-Elect*
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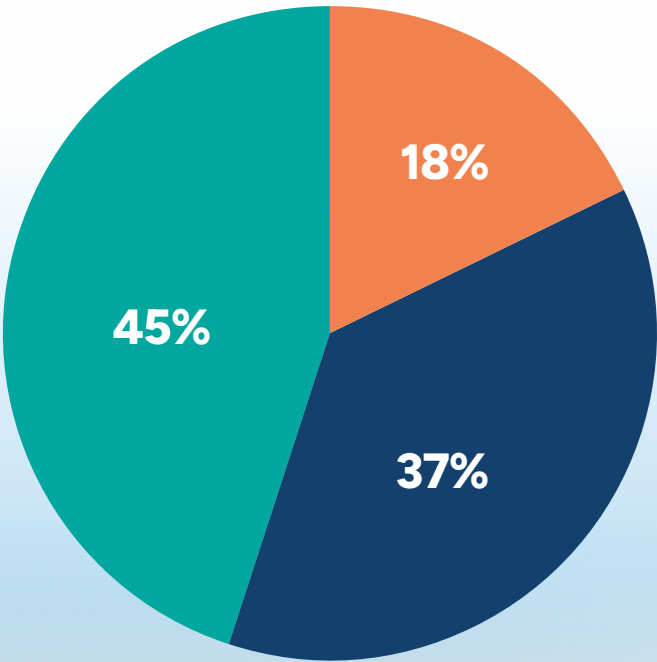
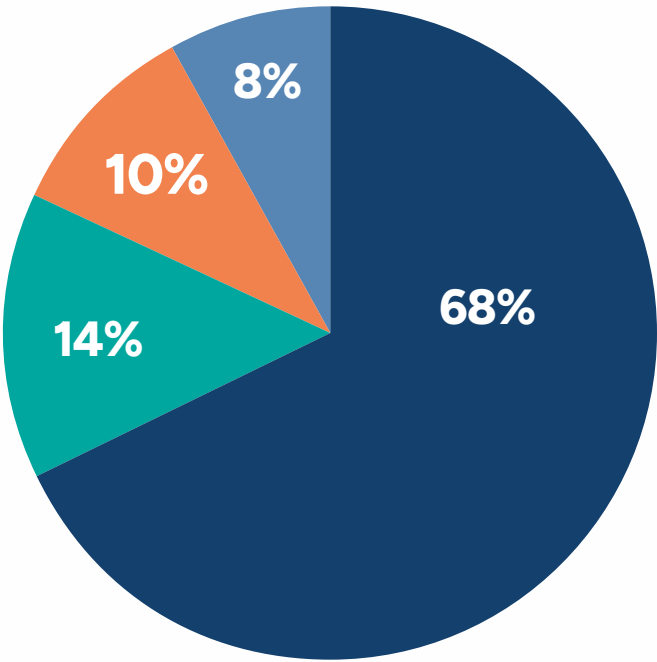
Todd Whitley
Intelligent Technical Solutions

Financials

TOTAL INCOME
\$9,896,048



EXPENSES
\$9,855,038



Photography by Nate Burgher.

Our Economic Impact

As the state-designated economic development agency for Thurston County, we're dedicated to creating a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive economy. The Thurston EDC is always innovating to strengthen and diversify our local economy.

Using the IMPLAN input/output model, an industry-standard tool for economic impact analysis, we've quantified our total economic impact. **Our latest research, based on the most recent trade data, reveals impressive results:**

1,448 JOBS
CREATED OR SUSTAINED

LABOR INCOME:

\$109,818,629

TOTAL ECONOMIC OUTPUT
FOR THURSTON COUNTY:

\$478,491,104

We also measure our impact through economic interactions, which reflect the interconnectedness and values of our community. These interactions are crucial for understanding our community's collective aspirations and long-term prosperity.

Thurston EDC had a total of

2,323 BUSINESS INTERACTIONS

Of these:

520
WERE
BIPOC

821
WERE
WOMEN

189
WERE
VETERANS





WASHINGTON APEX ACCELERATOR

APEX Accelerator offers comprehensive support to businesses aiming to win government contracts and subcontracts. Our one-on-one technical assistance includes bid reviews, marketing help, contract performance guidance, and small business certifications. We also host procurement training classes and seminars, and assist businesses with registering in the correct databases to compete for government contracts.

Our mission at Washington APEX Accelerator is to increase the number of government contracts awarded to Washington firms, helping them grow and succeed.

Jay's Tactics, famous for its martial arts-inspired combat training, has trained hundreds of thousands of local soldiers over the past decade. This year, Jay's Tactics reached a major milestone by securing a military contract, thanks to the support from APEX Accelerator Services. Owner Jason Palacios highlights the invaluable assistance provided by APEX.

"APEX is a phenomenal program, and a great resource for anyone adapting to all the changing regulations in government contracting."

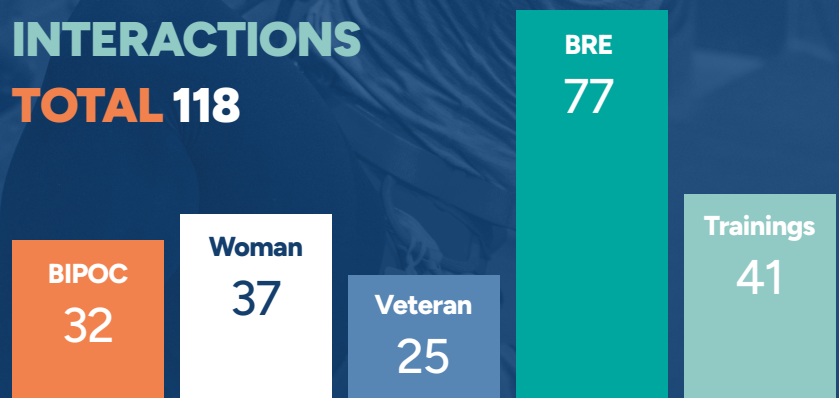
- Jason Palacios

IMPACT DATA

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	11.77	\$683,303.33	\$1,466,761.76
Indirect	1.84	\$123,590.45	\$402,848.82
Induced	2.4	\$147,839.42	\$449,786.23
TOTAL	16	\$954,733.20	\$2,319,396.81

INTERACTIONS

TOTAL 118



Center for Business & Innovation

In 2015, the EDC Board of Directors embarked on a strategic initiative with South Puget Sound Community College to create an entrepreneurial and business center. That partnership is known as the Center for Business & Innovation (CBI). The CBI has created an entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides and channels assistance to the region's entrepreneurs. It is a powerful network that provides valuable platforms and resources to launch, grow, expand business and markets. The CBI is a collection of some of the deepest technical assistance and market growth programs in the state of Washington.

Business TuneUp is an online course for early-stage businesses that offers step-by-step guidance in accounting, marketing, and human resources. The accounting module teaches QuickBooks Online, third-party app integration, and financial statement analysis. The marketing segment covers basic website design, search engine optimization, Google Business Profile, and Instagram setup. The human resources portion focuses on building an operations guide and understanding recruitment and retention. This course provides the essential tools for streamlining operations, boosting online presence, and growing teams.

Visit thurstonedc.com/business to learn more about our resources.

ScaleUp

In 2020, the Washington State Department of Commerce partnered with the EDC to launch a new iteration of our successful ScaleUp program. ScaleUp aims to help established businesses increase profitability, build capacity, and foster growth. Funded through 2025, this 9-week online curriculum course is designed to equip small businesses with the tools and strategies to succeed in a competitive environment.

Since expanding statewide in 2021, ScaleUp has become a vital part of the local small-business ecosystem by serving over **250 small businesses**. In this reporting period, ScaleUp had over **170 graduates and enrollees**.

Here's what ScaleUp Graduates are saying:

"This course was so accessible and made a world of difference for me. The information and resources provided were so applicable and well laid out - it far exceeded my expectations. I am very grateful for the opportunity to complete the ScaleUp program and I look forward to continuing to lean into the alumni network and course material as I grow my business."
– Anonymous 2023 participant

"...a WONDERFUL resource for any business owner who wants to get a better understanding of what makes a successful business. Wonderful format, wonderful course material."
– Mossy Gate Flower Farm



Pacific Salish Economic Development District

The Pacific-Salish Economic Development District (PSEDD) includes four counties in southwest Washington: Grays Harbor, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston. PSEDD's mission is to create a diverse and thriving economy by supporting strong industry sectors and robust entrepreneurial systems, driving job creation, wage growth, and increased taxable sales.

The Thurston Economic Development Council leads this initiative, uniting Mason, Pacific, and Grays Harbor Counties to form the PSEDD. Thurston EDC's proactive efforts ensure a successful launch by laying the groundwork and inviting neighboring counties to join the partnership, fostering a resilient economic ecosystem across the district.

With a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) complete and Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation underway, the Thurston EDC aims to fully establish the PSEDD by late 2024.



Photo (top) by Nate Burgher. Photo (below) courtesy of Explore Hood Canal.



Research

The EDC's Board and team have developed a robust research and analysis component that enhances our understanding of Thurston County's economy. Our research department offers high-quality, cost-effective data and economic research services, distilling regional economic complexity into actionable insights. Our Economic Vitality Index (EVI) sets the standard for evaluating local economic health, consolidating diverse economic indicators into a single, accessible metric.

Explore the latest Economic Vitality Index (EVI):

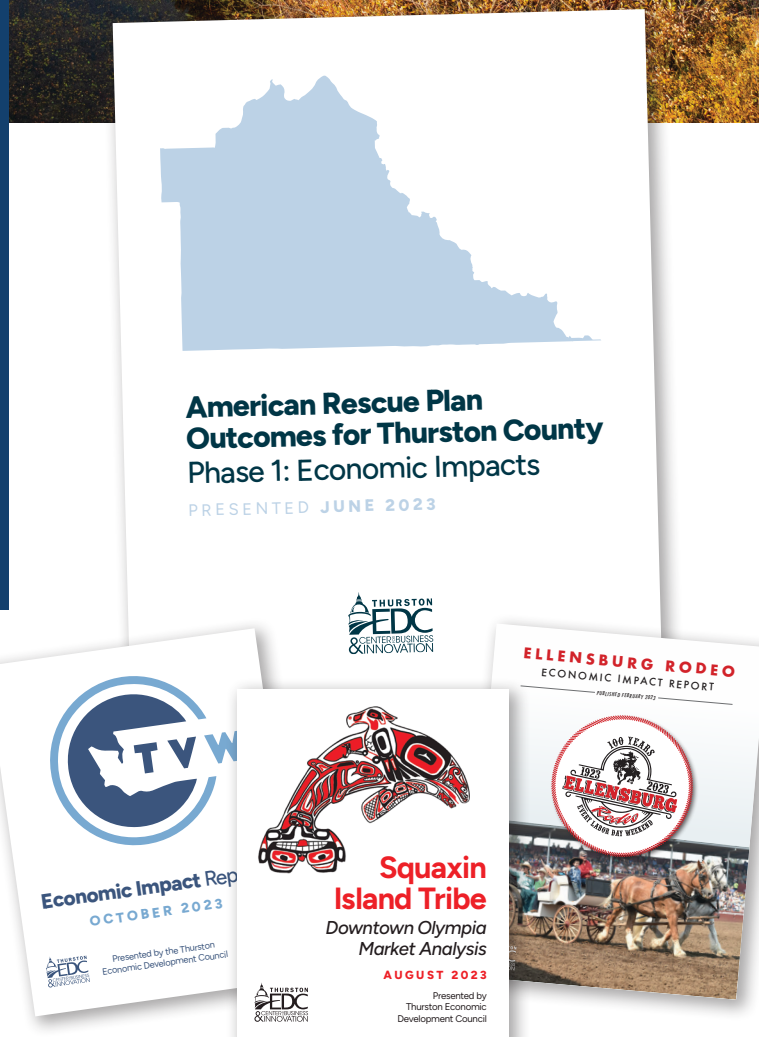


This year, our economic impact assessments have garnered record interest, providing clients with powerful analyses to showcase their organizational impacts in terms of job creation, economic output, and tax revenues. These assessments are invaluable for nonprofits, developers, and fundraisers looking to demonstrate economic returns to stakeholders.

We're also proud to release our initial findings on the economic impact of American Rescue Plan Act funds in Thurston County during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting critical emergency measures for nonprofits and businesses alike.

Contact the Thurston EDC's Director of Research and Evaluation, Gene Angel at gangel@thurstonedc.com to discuss your project or economic curiosity!

View the American Rescue Plan Act results:





BIPOC Business Task Force

In spring 2022, the BIPOC Business Task Force launched to address structural and socio-cultural barriers hindering equitable market access. This included establishing the BIPOC Business Community Liaison role to ensure fair resource access.

Monthly meetings of the Task Force identified gaps in business support and proposed proactive solutions to foster economic equity and advancement. The Liaison actively connected BIPOC and minority businesses with local and regional resources, facilitating pathways to success. Our initiatives and efforts work in alignment with the overall vision of the EDC and CBI to create investment and employment opportunities that create a sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive community.

Contact Mayra Peña at mpena@thurstonedc.com to learn more.

In the reporting period, the EDC's BIPOC Business Initiative made significant strides in engaging and supporting business development within our communities.

241 successful interactions

167 sessions dedicated to Business Retention and Expansion

71 interactions focusing on nurturing new ventures

Photography by Shanna Paxton Photography.



The **Washington Center for Women in Business (WCWB)** offers no cost, one-on-one business coaching with professionals experienced in business startup, finance, accounting, marketing, and operations. Coaching can be conducted over the phone, through webinars, or in person. Entrepreneurs will leave coaching sessions with a list of next steps in their business journey.

Throughout the reporting period, the WCWB facilitated a total of **260 interactions**. This included **23 sessions** focused on Business Retention and Expansion (BRE), which assisted existing businesses in sustaining and growing their operations, and **52 sessions** dedicated to startups, which guided new businesses from concept to launch. Additionally, the WCWB conducted **185 coaching sessions** that equipped women entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their business endeavors.

Quick Startup is an online incubator brought to you by the Washington Center for Women in Business that provides approved participants a scholarship that includes startup training, business branding, and an e-commerce seller's site package that includes an annual subscription.

Intro to Business is the ideal entry point for those considering launching their own business. This course is available entirely online, with an option to attend monthly webinars led by experienced instructors. It offers aspiring entrepreneurs an eight-step framework to guide them through the initial stages of building their business. In addition to business fundamentals, the course emphasizes the importance of creating a business plan, securing funding, and exploring the various resources available in the State of Washington. This comprehensive approach ensures participants have a solid foundation to turn their entrepreneurial dreams into reality.

150+
ENROLLEES



Business Enterprise Startup Training (BEST) is a Self-Employment Assistance Program (SEAP - A certified program of the Washington State Department of Employment Security) approved online course designed to help entrepreneurs craft a well-structured business startup plan. Individuals under SEAP can collect unemployment benefits while pursuing entrepreneurial training courses like BEST. Using online learning modules, a business plan workbook, and a business plan web application, entrepreneurs have access to tools that make writing a business plan much less intimidating.

50+
ENROLLEES

3 IN 5
PARTICIPATED THROUGH
SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

**Community
Impact** Since
2016



1,000+
Business Starts



5,000+
Small Business
Counseling Sessions



4,250+
Training Attendees

Agriculture

Regional Agriculture Business & Innovation Park

Construction has begun! The Agriculture Business Park is an integrated multi-tenant business park focused on value-added, agricultural/food-related enterprises. Located within the City of Tenino in south Thurston County, The Park will include a state-of-the-art hospitality event center and business resource innovation hub. The Park will become an agri-tourism destination. It will be a step toward establishing a local supply food chain. Future phases of the Park may also include establishing research and educational components. Upon completion, it is projected that the Park will be home to 150+ jobs within the agricultural sector. Once established it is projected that the park could generate more than \$25 million for the region. **Opening of the Agriculture Business Park is projected for Fall 2024.**

Regional Agriculture Development

The Thurston EDC is leading efforts in support of agricultural business viability and towards building a more resilient regional food supply chain. In collaboration with a broad base of private, public, and nonprofit partners, the EDC is working to build a vibrant agricultural economy. Ultimately, the EDC is working toward growing and processing more food within our region for distribution to the people of our region and beyond.

Southwest Washington Food Hub

The SW WA Food Hub, a collaboration among the EDC, Thurston Washington State University Extension, and Northwest Agriculture Business Center, facilitates market connections among members, retailers, institutions, and consumers. It aims to promote healthier communities and enhance economic opportunities for regional producers.

Operating across Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Mason, and Pierce Counties, the Food Hub aggregates, distributes, and markets locally grown produce. It supplies fresh produce to local school districts, restaurants, institutions, and agencies, supporting local food systems and fostering regional economic growth.

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	3.7	\$293,009.43	\$675,220.27
Indirect	0.79	\$52,664.26	\$164,811.12
Induced	1.04	\$64,230.27	\$195,410.76
TOTAL	5.53	\$409,903.96	\$1,035,442.15

Numbers associated with construction costs from April 2022-April 2023. Since that time, the Park has generated

\$700,000+

in construction and investment.

	Impact
General Sub County	\$4,181.82
Special Districts Sub County	\$8,666.65
County	\$4,091.99
State	\$34,097.37
Federal	\$103,656.11
TOTAL	\$154,693.94

Farm to School Program

In 2022, the Food Hub joined the Farm to School program. This impactful partnership with local schools distributes fresh produce to nine school districts, ESD 113, and assists local schools with F2S grant applications. The Food Hub offers two Community Supported Agriculture box subscription programs that are designed to promote healthy eating and support local agriculture.





NINE DROP SITES FOR FAMILY FOOD SUPPORT:

The Feed Bin *Rochester, WA*

8 Arms Bakery *Tumwater, WA*

Dancing Goats Coffee Tasting Lab *Olympia, WA*

Human Bodyworks Massage *Lacey, WA*

Well 80 Brewhouse *Olympia, WA*

Three Magnets Brewing Company *Olympia, WA*

Headless Mumby Brewing Company *Olympia, WA*

Nature Nurture Farmacy *Chehalis, WA*

Shona's Food Company *Chehalis, WA*

Regional Food Security Program

In 2009, the EDC and the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council produced a report highlighting key economic sectors in Thurston County and the surrounding region. Notably, the report confirmed, along with other critical sectors, the significant impact of the agriculture sector on the local and regional economy.

Utilizing the results of the aforementioned report, the EDC's agricultural efforts have concentrated on building infrastructure, facilities, and networks to create a robust supply chain for food and products in Thurston and the broader region. Collaborating with private, public, and nonprofit partners, the EDC aims to develop a vibrant agricultural economy with diverse markets, necessary infrastructure, a stable land base, consumer awareness, favorable regulations, living wages, and business support services.

The **Workplace Wellness Farmshare Program** is a 15-week customizable subscription that provides a weekly Farmshare box. This program is specifically designed to encourage healthful eating habits within the workplace. Subscribers receive weekly cooking videos and a newsletter with recipes and food storage tips. During the reporting period, ten community workplaces participated in the Farmshare Program.

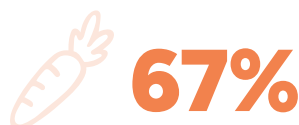
The **Multi-Farm Produce Box** is a 15-week customizable subscription that aims to support local farmers and promote local businesses by using them as drop sites for pick-up locations.



IN SALES GENERATED
FOR HUB FARMS



CUSTOMERS REACHED
VIA DIRECT ADVERTISING



EMPLOYEES WHO LEARNED
TO COOK PRODUCE



HOUSEHOLDS WITH
SEASONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS



FARMERS NOW HAVE
ACCESS TO NEW MARKETS



SCHOOL DISTRICTS BUY
VIA FARM TO SCHOOL

2023 BY THE NUMBERS



SCHOOL CHILDREN EAT
LOCAL PRODUCE FOR LUNCH



LOCAL BUSINESS PARTNERS
AS SUBSCRIPTION DROP SITES

Marketing and Events

Alliance Northwest is the largest business-to-government conference in the Pacific Northwest. This event features high quality workshops and one-to-one meetings between small businesses, government agencies, and prime contractors. The event is in its 37th year. Alliance Northwest has a strong history of federal agency support. It is widely known as the place where business and government learn and make connections with small and disadvantaged businesses.

**ALLIANCE
NORTHWEST**

50+ sponsors
100+ exhibitors
700+ in person attendees

Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation EXPO

Drawing over 400 decision makers, community leaders and innovators from all sectors of business and industry, the EXPO is the region's largest economic conference in SW Washington. This conference is in its 14th year and brings together regional businesses from a wide range of industries, as well as leadership from nonprofit, education and the public sector. Exhibitors display cutting-edge technology, products and innovations. Attendees have the opportunity to network, attend breakout sessions, and hear a forecast from national and regional economists.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC
FORECAST & INNOVATION
EXPO

20+ sponsors
40+ exhibitors
400+ in person attendees

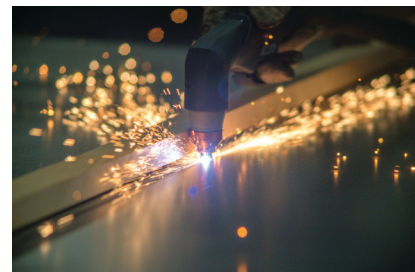
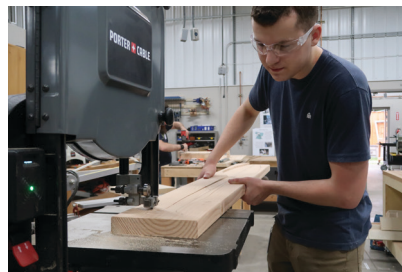
Real Estate Forum

Hosted in partnership with National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, the Real Estate Forum showcases the latest projections and trends in commercial real estate and development within the dynamic South Sound region. Experts provided data and information on Thurston County's unique market appeal in the sectors of commercial, industrial, retail, and multi-family properties.

 **REAL ESTATE
forum**

15+ sponsors
20 exhibitors
200+ in person attendees





The **Lacey MakerSpace** (LMS) is a workshop with state-of-the-art equipment and machinery. It was created to be a catalyst for community growth, economic development, and ensuring that our community's youth have access to resources that allow them to explore their future and current pathways. Entrepreneurs have the ability to build, prototype and test new products; employers have access to technical skills development. LMS was a unique collaboration in partnership with EDC/CBI, City of Lacey, and Saint Martin's University. Located on the SMU Campus in Zaverl Hall, the space serves as a critical component for our regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. LMS benefits the community by providing access to advanced design and fabrication tools, business and education resources, and skill development. Throughout the reporting period, LMS has built out an online-learning course and continues to develop and make new courses which are available to the community.

STEDI

South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) represents a collaborative alliance of communities and organizations dedicated to fostering long-term economic and community development in South Thurston County. The partnership encompasses the communities of Bucoda, Grand Mound, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, and Yelm. This unified approach aims to drive sustainable growth and strengthen the entire region.

OTHER PARTNERS INCLUDE:

Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
Experience Olympia & Beyond
Grand Mound-Rochester Chamber of Commerce
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Port of Olympia
Tenino Area Chamber of Commerce
Thurston Conservation District
Thurston County Government
Thurston Regional Planning Council
Timberland Regional Library
South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity
Washington State University Extension
Yelm Chamber of Commerce

Staff representatives from Congresswomen:
*Maria Cantwell, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez,
Marilyn Strickland, and Patty Murray*

STEDI SUCCESSES

- Supported the development of We Love Rainier WA nonprofit to build economic activity in the Rainier Community.
- Co-developed Tenino Arts Holiday & Spring Markets, where more than 75 local artisans generated more than \$350,000 in sales, attracted 2,000+ people per event weekend, and generated sales for many of the businesses in downtown Tenino.
- Assisted the City of Tenino to become a ArtsWA Certified Creative District and the creation of the Tenino ARCH Commission.
- Coordinated 2023 Tenino Oregon Trail days that saw an increase in 4,000 new visitors.
- 2022 Boo-Coda Spook-Tacular was named the Washington Festival and Events Association South Puget Sound Event of the Year and has received more than \$100,000 of earned media since its development in 2018.
- Secured funding and managed the implementation of the Tenino Metal Art Banner Project.



***Every dollar invested in the EDC
has generated a \$48 return for
the Thurston County economy.***

EDC Economic Impact

Using the IMPLAN input/output model, an industry-standard tool for economic impact analysis, we've quantified our total economic impact. Our latest research, based on the most recent trade data, reveals impressive results:

1,448 jobs created or sustained
\$109,818,629 in labor income
\$478,491,104 total economic output

EDC Business Interactions

We also measure our impact through economic interactions, which reflect the interconnectedness and values of our community. These interactions are crucial for understanding our community's collective aspirations and long-term prosperity.

2,323 total business interactions
520 were BIPOC
821 were women
189 were veterans

BIPOC Business Task Force

In the reporting period, the EDC's BIPOC Business Initiative made significant strides in engaging and supporting business development within our communities.

241 successful interactions
167 dedicated to Business Retention & Expansion
71 interactions focusing on nurturing new ventures

Washington Center for Women in Business

In the reporting period, the WCWB facilitated:

260 business interactions
23 sessions dedicated to Business Retention & Expansion
52 sessions focusing on nurturing startups
185 coaching sessions for women entrepreneurs

ScaleUp

Since expanding statewide in 2021, ScaleUp has become a vital part of the local small-business ecosystem. In this reporting period, ScaleUp had:

250+ small businesses served
170+ graduates and enrollees

Regional Agriculture

In the reporting period, EDC investments in regional agricultural development have resulted in:

11,858 students eat local produce for lunch
\$277K+ in sales generated for Hub Farms
205+ households have seasonal subscriptions
20+ farmers now have access to new markets

Events

In 2023, EDC events produced:

85+ event sponsors
160+ exhibitors
1300+ in person attendees



CONTACT US
(360) 754-6320
thurstonedc.com

***Our initiatives have contributed
\$478 million in economic
activity this year alone.***