



King County

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

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United Way of King County

News Release

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United Way of King County and Boeing partner with King County and the Workforce Development Council to put area youth on the path to education, employment and successful careers

Reconnecting Youth collaboration will help 1,000 youth earn GEDs and go on to college; United Way with Boeing commits \$550,000

More than 1,000 youth and young adults who left school without their high school diplomas will gain a stronger path to education, employment and careers in the community thanks to a new partnership between United Way of King County, The Boeing Company and King County. **Reconnecting Youth**, announced today, will more than double the number of youth who can be served and expand services to multiple locations in King County.

"I am committed to ensuring that every baby born and every child raised in our region has the opportunity to succeed, to thrive, to reach his or her full potential," said Executive Constantine. "Thanks to this partnership, we are able to expand successful work that helps youth and young adults earn the education they need to succeed and contribute to our region's prosperity."

More than 13,000 young people in King County have stopped their education short of a high school diploma. The Reconnecting Youth Project will help 1,000 students complete a GED and go on to college or technical training to prepare for living wage jobs in the community.

The Reconnecting Youth Project builds off a very successful King County YouthSource program working in collaboration with Renton School District, Tukwila School District and Renton Technical College to help youth who have dropped out of school. With support from the Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council, YouthSource has shown impressive results in helping at-risk youth return to the

classroom to earn their high school equivalency and move on to community college and employment. The partnership announced today will more than double the number of youth to be served.

"This is what United Way is all about," said Jon Fine, CEO of United Way of King County. "Understanding the problems in the community, identifying a program that achieves solid results, and then taking it to scale."

Together, United Way of King County and Boeing are investing \$550,000 to expand the program with two additional sites in South King County, doubling the number of youth able to participate. The partners will continue to explore ways to increase resources to reach and serve more youth in future years.

"We feel honored to partner with United Way as they help members of the next generation reach their full potential," said Bill McSherry, Vice President of State & Local and Global Corporate Citizenship at Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "As Boeing prepares to launch the 777X and the 737 MAX from Puget Sound factories in the coming years we will, more than ever, need a skilled and adaptable workforce. Reconnecting Youth is a critical partnership in making that happen."

The Reconnecting Youth project pairs a young person with a staff member who provides career counseling, technical assistance and support in navigating the enrollment, instruction and testing process of earning their high school equivalency. The next step is identifying career goals, applying for college admission and financial aid, and beginning a course of study. Youth will also have access to the career exploration, job training and work experience opportunities available through the Workforce Development Council.

The project will also work to remove the barriers that stand in the way of many struggling youth, such as lack of housing or transportation and the availability of quality child care. Referrals to the program will come from courts, youth-serving systems, teachers and school administrators.

Says Merri Rieger, Superintendent of the Renton School District, "With Reconnecting Youth, there is yet another pathway for students to build their academic and vocational skills so that they can be prepared for careers that will bring them even more opportunities."

In addition to The Boeing Company, United Way and King County, the Reconnecting Youth Project has been made possible through the dedication of other key partners, including the Seattle—King County Workforce Development Council, Wells Fargo Bank, Renton School District, Renton Technical College, Tukwila School District, Community Center for Education Results, and the Puget Sound Educational Services District.

Another critical partner is Washington State, whose Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction provides a base of per-participant funding through its "Open Doors" program, created by the legislature in 2010.