

PORTLAND WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

DEI IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026



WHO WE ARE

PWA serves as a bridge between employers and Portland-area high schools. We see meaningful and equitable access to career development as a matter of social and economic justice, and young people as the key to our region's long-term economic prosperity and quality of life.



OUR WORK

We work to facilitate diverse and equitable partnerships and experiences that allow young people to prepare for life after graduation through the development of skills, networks, confidence and knowledge.

In the 2025-2026 School year, PWA facilitated over **9,300 career learning experiences** for students from over **85 high schools** in Oregon and SW Washington.

9,300 CAREER
LEARNING
EXPERIENCES

WHAT EQUITY MEANS TO US:

From ideation to implementation, PWA focuses on centering the needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color students; female and gender-expansive students; LGBTQ+ students; and students from under-resourced schools and households in our programming.

SERVING STUDENTS

There's more than one way to explore a career at PWA. Students can spend a day behind the scenes at a local employer, explore hundreds of possibilities at the Careers Expo, or dive deeper through mentorships that build skills, connections, and confidence.

CAREER DAYS

During our Career Days, students explore workplaces in every corner of Portland, getting hands-on, in-person insights into local careers.

504 students attended 25 career days in 2025-2026.

More than half attended an under-resourced high school or qualified for free-and-reduced lunch. Among those who shared racial/ethnic data, 55% identified as BIPOC.

- *"I really liked that it was full hands on and all the people that work here are very knowledgeable so I felt like I could ask a lot of questions. It confirmed for me that this is the job I want to do." - Career Day Student Attendee*
- *"I learned a good amount and feel like I am leaving with something of value. I am more sure what I will be doing for college and my future career." - Career Day Student Attendee*

NORTHWEST YOUTH CAREERS EXPO

PWA's Careers Expo brings our network, programming, and community partners together under one roof, giving thousands of students the chance to explore careers, make connections, and discover opportunities across the region.

5,900+ students and educators from across Oregon and Southwest Washington attended the 22nd annual Expo in 2026.

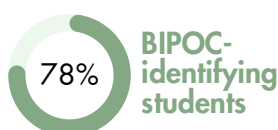
PWA prioritizes registration for partner districts and uses an equity lens to support student participation from underrepresented, marginalized, and rural communities. Students participating in the 2026 Expo said:

- *"Because there were so many opportunities to begin networking and the people I talked to were so passionate, I was able to think and be extremely excited for my future."*
- *"Seeing so many businesses represented helped open my eyes and reminded that I have options."*

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

PWA collaborates with community partners to offer multi-day programs for students to work with employers, network, and gain valuable career experience and skills.

In the 2025-2026 Program year, our mentorship programs supported 117 students from 25 different Portland-area high schools!



To learn more about our mentorship programs, visit: portlandworkforcealliance.org/mentorinternships/



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

PWA has worked to advance equity in our organization and in our community by uplifting student voices, connecting students to mentors who share their experiences, and helping them navigate barriers in starting their career journeys.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP, AGENCY & VOICE

Student Leadership in the Youth Impact Council: In the Youth Impact Council (YIC) students shape PWA programming and develop their career skills and goals. The YIC evaluates and provides a student perspective on PWA's programming, and YIC students work as student volunteers supporting their peers at the Expo.

*"I loved how community centered the YIC was. I also believe that we grew as a team and it allowed us to be **heard and active in our community.**"*

2025-2026 YOUTH IMPACT COUNCIL STUDENT

Student Voice and The Oregon Humanities Podcast: In a collaboration with the Detour, a podcast hosted by Oregon Humanities, 9 PWA students had the chance to participate in an interview and talk about what work means to them – and how they define "success" for their future selves.

"[We value hearing about] the work they might do, their hopes and concerns ... and what the years ahead look like from their vantage point."

ADAM DAVIS, OREGON HUMANITIES



CAREER CONFIDENCE

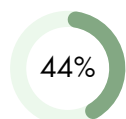
Healthcare Fellows: This program supports young multi-lingual professionals in attaining certifications and paid career experiences in healthcare fields.

"I've been getting connected with programs and trained in ways I couldn't have imagined were possible. I am ahead of the game and more prepared thanks to you guys."

HEALTHCARE FELLOW, 2026

"This program helped me ... get the healthcare certificate that I have been wanting and dreaming about."

HEALTHCARE FELLOW, 2026



44% of our Fellows have received 2 or more certifications relating to medical careers



Of our 28 fellows, 86% identify as Black, Indigenous and People of color.



89% speak more than one language.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

ACCESS & REMOVING BARRIERS

Language access at the Reynolds Career Series:

The Reynolds Career Series (RCS) centers career readiness resources and training to students in Reynolds High School.



This year, the RCS served our largest cohort yet: 23 students, including 12 newcomer students. Recognizing the additional support needed, PWA hired and collaborated with two language support professionals: These intentional supports contributed to an 87% program retention rate, despite many students being new to both the school system and workforce development programming.

"The most important thing that I learned today is that real experiences can come from everyday responsibilities."

2025-2026 RCS STUDENT

"My favorite part of the series was interviews because it helped me on what to expect for a real interview."

2025-2026 RCS STUDENT



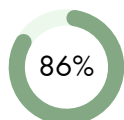
52% of the 23 students were multilingual, English language learners



84% of students felt more prepared for their next job interview.

Mentors that look like you in the Summer Career Academy:

The Summer Career Academy is a career-mentoring program for students with marginalized genders (including female, non-binary, and trans youth).



Of the 22 students in the 2026 program, 86% said they felt like there was a place for them in their chosen career path



100% said they felt more connected to people in their community after the program.



*"I really enjoyed my time here! I felt that my **knowledge on future careers increased** vastly."*

JUNE 2026 SUMMER CAREER ACADEMY STUDENT

*"I met a ton of different women with a variety of careers. It was amazing hearing **all their stories** and their advice."*

JUNE 2026 SUMMER CAREER ACADEMY STUDENT

LOOKING BACK & MOVING FORWARD

In the 2025-2026 school year, PWA worked to prioritize DEI in our work by expanding our connections and opportunities for students:

Money and Workforce Moves: For many students, the biggest step is getting that first real chance to work. PWA co-created paid work experiences at:

- Schoolhouse Supplies, Trail Blazers and BRIC Architecture, plus leadership roles at the NW Youth Careers Expo.
- 50 students earned a paycheck while building workplace skills, confidence and real-world experience they can add to their resumes.

Alumni Engagement: PWA is creating more ways for alumni to stay connected and give back. The goal is to keep students' connection to us going after their first program ends, and come back as peers, mentors, and future professionals:

- Alumni joined a YIC workshop and shared their experiences with current students.
- Alumni had access to new opportunities like Healthcare Fellows.

Staff training and programming impacts: Staff participated in DEI workshops centered in trauma-informed, equity-centered practices in non-profits, including:

- Accessibility for neurodivergent youth in our programming
- Trauma informed practices that increase student participation.



PWA has set some goals as we plan our work for the coming year:

- Expand our outreach to PWA Alumni and host our first Alumni networking event.
- Continue delivering culturally relevant, empowering, student-centered career experiences.
- Provide more professional development opportunities for staff, board members, and students.
- Improve our data systems to better track students, engage Alumni, and facilitate community connections.
- Expand our pool of volunteers who reflect students' diverse backgrounds and career aspirations.

To learn more about our mission and equity commitment, visit our website at: <https://www.portlandworkforcealliance.org/dei>