



Technology Station Pilot in Development

The Workforce Development Team is developing a pilot project to bring technology stations to rural, Tribal, and under served communities. These stations are being designed to support people who want to become caregivers but may not have the technology or internet access needed to complete hiring, training, or testing. The team is working with Tribal Nations, and community partners to finalize locations and details.

The goal is to establish 3–6 stations by the end of 2026. Each station will be tailored to the needs of the community it serves. Stations may include access to devices, internet, and light onsite support to help people navigate caregiver hiring and training platforms.

Why This Work Matters

Washington continues to face a caregiver shortage, especially in rural areas where long travel distances, limited broadband, and fewer training resources make it harder for people to enter the field. Many prospective caregivers want to work but struggle to complete required steps because they lack reliable technology.

By creating shared spaces with the tools people need, this pilot helps remove barriers and opens the door for more caregivers to get hired and trained. When caregivers can complete these steps more easily, communities experience fewer delays in accessing care.

If a technology station would support your community, please reach out to [Yan Heng](#). The team is gathering input as the pilot is finalized.

Supporting the Caregiver Workforce

Washington is facing a growing caregiver shortage, and caregiving is essential to helping people live with dignity and daily support. Caregivers build trusted relationships and are often the first to notice small changes in a person's health, comfort, or mood. Many people want to begin this work, and our workforce team offers one-on-one support that helps them move through training, testing, and into real jobs. Altogether, this support has helped more than 5,600 individuals and contributed to over 700

confirmed hires. The team also focuses on youth employment, career paths, and increasing the perceived value of caregivers, along with retention activities to help keep caregivers once they're hired. This work has been funded by a federal grant, Money Follows the Person. The funding for this work is ending. As we look ahead, we welcome ideas from partners and communities about how to keep this support in place.



Rural Outreach Adventure

By Julie Gardner, Region 1 LTSS Workforce Navigator

Julie is the Workforce Navigator for DSHS Region 1, which covers sixteen counties across the eastern side of Washington state. The region stretches from the Canadian border down to Oregon and includes farmland, forests, mountain passes, and long stretches of highway. People often travel long distances for services and support. Because of this, showing up in person matters, especially in rural communities.

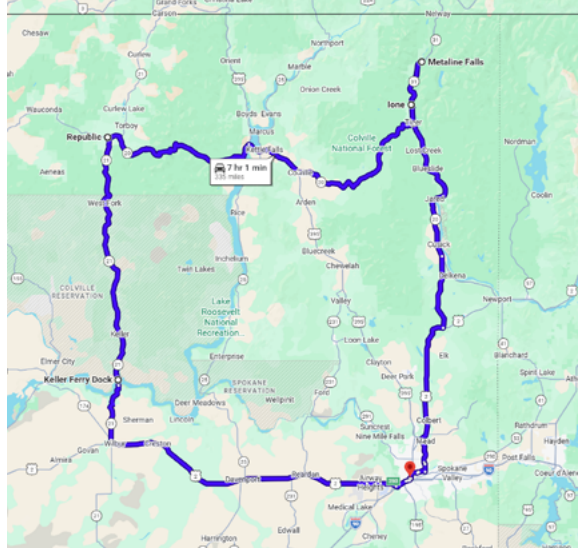
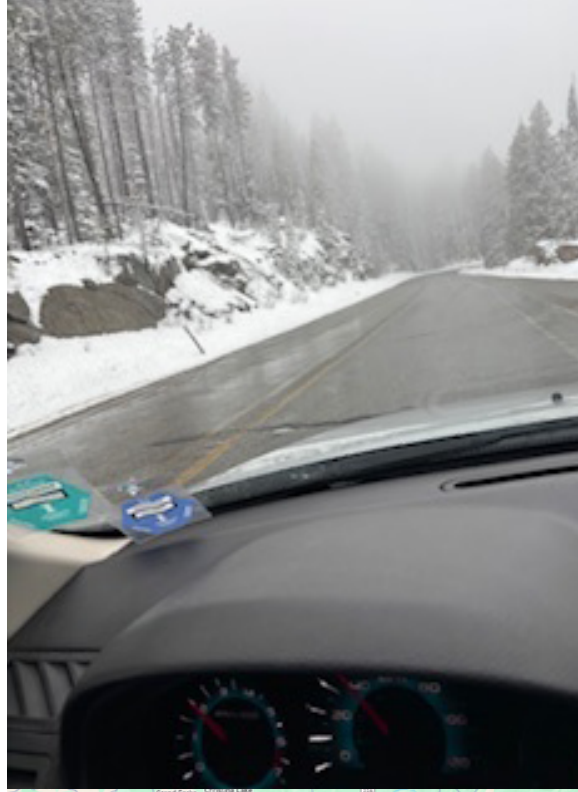
First Stops: Lone and Metaline Falls

My trip began with a beautiful drive from Spokane to Lone. After settling in, I walked through town and stopped at the post office, city hall, and the library to leave flyers. I introduced myself to the librarian and explained that I help people become paid caregivers. She was welcoming and said she would share my contact information.

The next morning brought light snow. It was unexpected for April but still easy to manage. After my event, I continued to Metaline Falls. I visited the local post office and library. Next, I stopped at Selkirk High School to leave flyers for the CTE teacher, and any students interested in becoming a caregiver.

Crossing Sherman Pass to Republic

From Metaline Falls, I drove toward Republic. Surprisingly, my route took me over Sherman Pass. The views were beautiful. The snow returned near the top, and I was a little nervous with my tires, but it was light and the drive was safe. In Republic, I visited the post office, the library, and the high school to share information and offer support.



A Snowy Morning and a Successful Presentation

The next morning brought three inches of fresh snow. Even with the weather, my presentation at Ferry Hospital went very well. I met with caregivers and professionals and had great conversations about the needs of rural communities.

Heading Home and Looking Ahead

On my way home, I chose a different route through Keller. This route included a short ferry ride across the river. The rest of the drive gave me time to think about the trip and the next communities I want to visit. As someone who grew up in a one stoplight town, I know how important it is to show up for rural communities. I look forward to continuing this outreach and helping more people learn about caregiving opportunities.



Our Radio Ads Hit the Airwaves in June

This June, you may hear something new on the radio. Caregiver Careers is sharing messages that shine a light on caregiving as a profession and honor the people who do this work every day. These ads are running statewide to help more Washingtonians understand the value of caregiving and the impact caregivers make in their communities. Radio reaches people in places where other outreach does not always land. Someone might hear the message while driving to work, listening at home, or tuning in from a rural or Tribal community. No matter where they are, the goal is the same. We want people to know that caregiving is essential work and that caregivers deserve to be seen and appreciated. If you hear one of our ads, we would love to know. Your feedback helps us understand what is reaching your community. Email us at caregivercareerswa@dshs.wa.gov and tell us where you heard it.



Meet Workforce Navigators at Local Events

Workforce Navigators are out in communities across Washington. They attend local events and job fairs to share information about caregiving careers and to answer questions in-person. Their goal is simple. They want to meet people where they are and offer free support to anyone who is curious about becoming a paid caregiver.

Do you have an event coming up and want to invite a Workforce Navigator? Navigators can give short presentations, join a panel, or host a table at community gatherings. If you would like a Navigator to be part of your event, please reach out. They are happy to support events of all sizes.

Email us: caregivercareerswa@dshs.wa.gov

Workforce Navigators

Have questions about becoming a caregiver? Get free support anywhere on your caregiver journey.



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Hiring Minors as Home Care Aides

There is a common misunderstanding that 16- and 17-year-olds cannot be hired as Home Care Aides. This confusion creates real barriers for high school students who have completed their training and are ready to work. Students in the High School Home Care Aide Training Program earn graduation credit, learn hands-on caregiving skills, complete training that meets state requirements, and take the same Home Care Aide exam as adults.

The Workforce Development Team heard of a student last year who was told he could not be hired simply because he wasn't 18 yet. To help clear up this misunderstanding, Program Liaison Carly Seagren and Workforce Navigator Naomi Spector have been meeting with the high schools, home care agencies, and the Department of Labor & Industries to share what the rules allow.

Where Minors Can Work

Under current rules, 16- and 17-year-olds can work as paid caregivers:

- For Licensed Home Care Agencies
- In Assisted Living Facilities (with an adult caregiver on site who has CPR and first aid training)

Where Minors Cannot Work

- In Adult Family Homes
- As Individual Providers

What Employers Are Saying

One home care agency that recently hired a 17-year-old certified HCA shared that young caregivers are reliable, well prepared, organized, and tech savvy. They communicate well, complete documentation on time, and often show more flexibility with scheduling and travel. With good supervision and onboarding, they grow quickly into confident and capable caregivers.

Please email caregivercareerswa@dshs.wa.gov for questions or comments.

Let's Connect



Looking to bring the [Home Care Aide Program](#) to your high school? Reach out for more information.

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Learn More

For more details on hiring minors as Home Care Aides visit our web pages:

- [DSHS Hiring a Minor as a Caregiver](#)
- [L&I Youth Employment Requirements](#)
- [DSHS High School HCA Program Information](#)

