



## EDC Trades Training Initiative



SJC Economic Development Council  
January 2023

# Trades Training Initiative, 2022-2023



## Contents

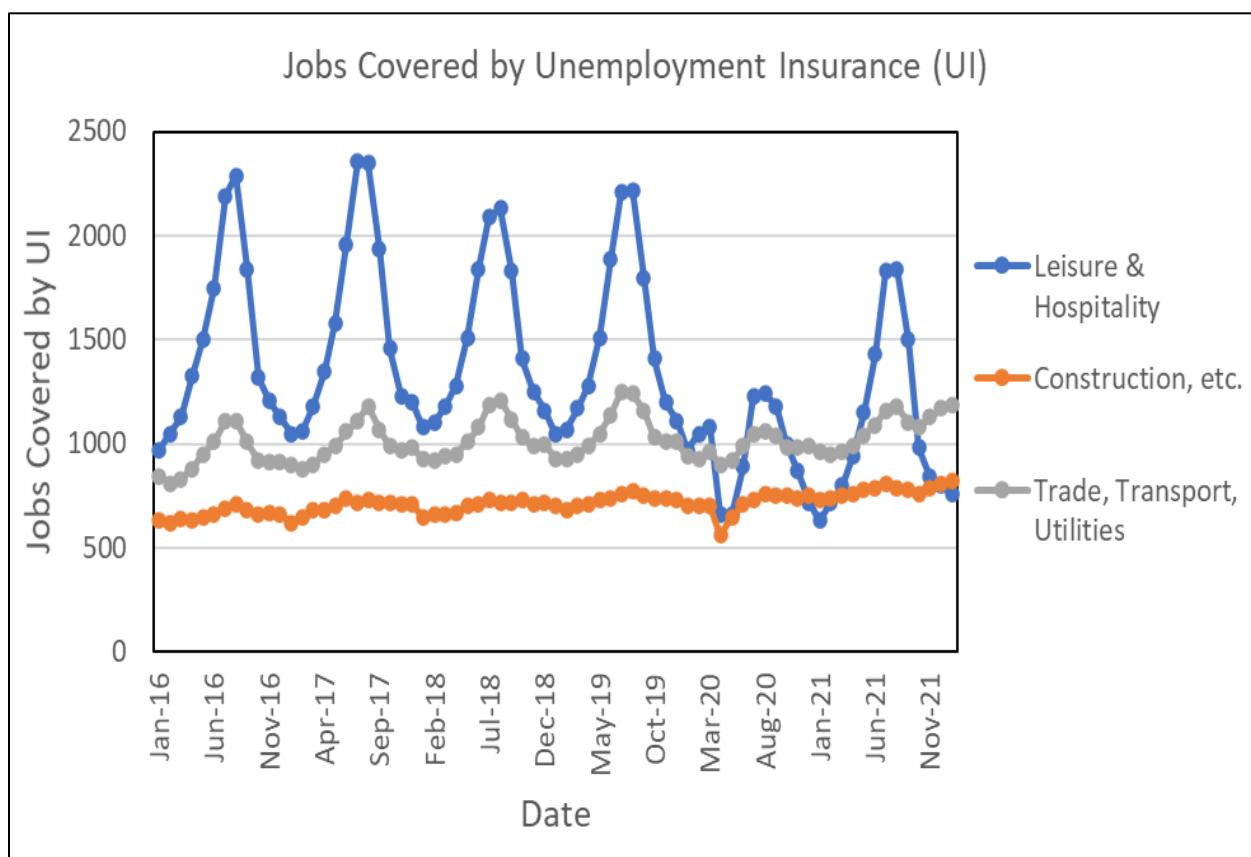
Introduction .....	2
Background .....	2
Adult programs .....	3
Youth Trades .....	5
Looking to the future .....	6
<b>Thank you!</b> .....	<b>7</b>

## Introduction

Thanks to the generosity of the EDC's funders and volunteers, we relaunched and reimaged our Trades Training Initiative in 2021. EDC courses offer low-cost opportunities for residents to discover and start pathways into careers with good wages that help the community meet its challenges. We have received strong positive feedback from participants in both our adult and youth programs. Even just a short time out, participants from the past two years have told us about new jobs, raises, career changes, and strengthened businesses from these courses.

## Background

The pandemic starkly revealed the needs of the San Juan Islands' community, at the same time that it caused massive disruptions. The economic crisis keenly highlighted the value of trades education for adults and kids as we worked with unemployed and underemployed people in hospitality, dining, and personal care industries, while jobs went unfilled in trades. We continue to hear about the need for workers in construction, maritime, healthcare, and other trades, while student seek out our courses to gain the skills to succeed in those jobs.



Seasonality and pandemic job losses. Data from WA ESD Accessed 03/11/20

Trades training provides people with pathways to stable, family-wage careers in the islands, and trades training helps support the whole community by creating the workforce to build housing, retrofit homes for aging in place or to meet sustainability goals, and to help employers in other industries stay open. In addition to the building trades, healthcare, manufacturing, maritime, and automotive trades provide pathways to economic independence while meeting major community needs.

## Adult programs

We offered eight courses for adults this past year (January through December 2022), training over 100 people in skills including welding, masonry, and tree work. We also organized a Business Management and Leadership series that helped community member build resilience within their companies.

Attendees in adult-focused programs included everyone from people seeking a first career to people looking to start fresh, and people looking to start or strengthen businesses.

We are excited that our classes brought people together – whether virtually or in-person – from across the County. Students from Lopez, Orcas, and San Juan feel strongly enough about the value of trades classes that they brave ferry disruptions to attend classes.



Home Island	Students
Lopez	31
Orcas	33
San Juan	42
Other	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>107</i>

Originally stimulated by inquiries from the public and the need for socially-distanced courses, we were excited to offer online training programs. We quickly discovered that these could benefit people who cannot take do physically demanding manual labor. For example, one student indicated that they were seeking to change roles in the construction industry since they were no longer able to climb ladders as they had been. In 2022, the Tech Training Accelerator Initiative was launched, and

we are excited to offer tech courses that overlap with Trades Training courses, like Online Marketing, QuickBooks, GIS, and Computer Aided Design.

Motivated by the need for caregivers for our aging population and the need to provide pathways into healthcare careers, the EDC continued to offer free Home Care Aide (HCA) training, in partnership with Cornerstone Healthcare Training. We have 14 people enrolled currently, in various stages of completion. Once licensed, these aides will contribute to our community in a variety of capacities, offering in-home care that helps our neighbors age-in-place with dignity.

The massive disruptions to the community due to ferry crew shortages led to the creation of an innovative Mariner Training Initiative, launched in 2021. This program combines an in-person mariner experience workshop, coaching through the complex and expensive process of obtaining the Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), and financial support for participants who seek the credential.

Obtaining an MMC is the key barrier to entering Washington State Ferries entry-level crew positions which are open now and needed for our community. The EDC has received inquiries from other organizations interested in offering similar programs.



The first workshop was very successful, with nine prospective maritime workers learning about safety equipment, ropes, rescue boats, and career pathways. Students expressed great enthusiasm for the program.

Periodic Maritime Career Fairs continue to address questions people raised about whether working as a mariner, especially at WSF, is a good option for islanders. The fairs are hybrid in-person and online

opportunities to learn about maritime careers and include representatives from WSF and other local and regional maritime businesses. Attendees are offered support to apply for a Merchant Mariner Credential.

## Youth Trades

To inspire kids to consider careers in the trades we continue a Youth Trades partnership with the San Juan and Lopez Family Resource Centers and Funhouse Commons on Orcas Island, and we are expanding our partnership with the WSU Extension's San Juan County 4-H Program.

Based on feedback from the 2021 pilot program, last summer we sent 75 construction kits to island family resources centers, where mentor pairs were able to design and build bridges, solar cars, and simple engine drag racers as part of our Youth Trades program.

Beginning in fall of 2022, the EDC is joining forces once again with San Juan County 4-H to introduce students to the trades. The Inter-Island 4-H club offers a variety of 4-H projects to youth, and we are adding woodworking, metal working, and masonry to their project offerings. Monthly meetings will continue online, and in-person workshops will alternate between the islands throughout the year. We have already seen great enthusiasm from leaders, parents, and students alike, and the students will be completing projects that teach the basics of the trades while serving our community, county-wide.



## Looking to the future

We have worked with partners such as the local high schools, local businesses, statewide organizations, the Long-Term Care Network, and others to lay the groundwork for offering critically needed training programs in years to come. Notably we have reached out to programs that offer apprenticeships (e.g. the Construction Industry Training Council of Washington, Northwest Auto Care Alliance/iTAC), certifications (Skagit Valley College) or pre-apprenticeship programs (Northwest Career and Technical Academy, ANEW) to strategize bringing their programs to San Juan County residents.



The EDC plans to build our 2023 programs to offer more critically needed job skills training for all ages. We are currently recruiting instructors and/or fundraising to offer a number of courses, including AutoCAD for Construction, Welding, Accounting Principles, Automotive Technology, Masonry, Fiberglass Repair, Early Childhood Education training, or others as opportunities or needs arise.

In addition, we continue our mariner and Home Care Aide workforce through our ongoing MMC Support Program and our HCA training program, and we will be helping kids move towards rewarding careers that support themselves and the community through our Youth Trades programs.

## Thank you!

We deeply appreciate that the generous support from San Juan County, the Raynier Institute & Foundation, and the Town of Friday Harbor have largely covered the planning, research, advocacy, and outreach costs of adapting the Trades Training Initiative for the uncertain conditions that face us now.

We are currently seeking funding from other organizations and private donors to help deliver programs that we expect will immediately benefit over 150 children and 100 adults (including recent high school graduates) in 2023.

We anticipate additional and substantial indirect benefits from these programs through connecting tradespeople to educational organizations, through the economic multiplier effects of trades jobs, and through the support of our small businesses through the provision of workforce training.

We are incredibly grateful to the Raynier Institute and Foundation, San Juan County, and the Town of Friday Harbor for their cornerstone support of this initiative.

For their past or ongoing support of programs within the Trades Training Initiative, we also thank PeaceHealth, the Harvest Foundation, the Building Industry Association of Washington, the Boden, Corbin, Levinson, Madsen, VanHyning families, the Washington State Department of Commerce, Heritage Bank, the San Juan Island Community Foundation, the Lopez Island Lions Club, United Way of San Juan County, Friday Harbor Kiwanis, Orcas Kiwanis, Islanders Bank, Heritage Bank, the Port of Friday Harbor, the Port of Lopez, the Orcas Island Community Foundation, Rotary Club of the San Juan Islands, Browne's Home Center, Ace Hardware of Friday Harbor, Sunset Builders Supply, and other donors.

We also thank the many volunteers who donated countless hours to making these programs work. And we thank our instructors who have gone above and beyond to share their skills.