

NAWB SELECTS 2016 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS
Awards Honor Excellence in Workforce Development Board Leadership, Business Leadership

Washington, D.C.– The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), the membership organization and advocate for more than 550 workforce development boards (WDBs) nationwide and their network of American Job Centers, has announced the 2016 winners of its annual leadership awards, the **WIOA Trailblazer Award** and the **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award**.

The **WIOA Trailblazer Award** recognizes a workforce development board that has been a leader in adopting the changes envisioned in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and in expanding its ability to develop comprehensive workforce solutions for its community. This year's winner is the **Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC)** in Seattle, Washington.

The WDC is a nonprofit workforce think-tank and grant-making organization whose mission is to support a strong economy and ensure the ability of each person to achieve self-sufficiency while working collaboratively to find – and fund – solutions to workforce challenges. It oversees the Seattle-King County Workforce Area, including WorkSource centers and affiliate sites throughout the county, which provide direct services to a region of more than 2 million people.

“In every category where workforce development organizations have been tasked by WIOA, the WDC of Seattle-King County has made impressive strides. Their willingness to step out, lead, and convene, not only in their region, but in their state, has positioned them as example to others in the areas of strategic planning, integrated services, sector strategies, and business services,” said NAWB President and CEO Ron Painter. Among the many milestones achieved in the area of WIOA implementation, the WDC has hosted community forums to gather input on the WorkSource system; addressed its governance through board appointments that represent a cross section of private sector, labor, adult education, higher education, and economic development; and made strides in improving business services and defining career pathways.

The **W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award** honors a business or business organization that made the commitment of time, money, and leadership to make their community's workforce and economy more vibrant and has gone above and beyond to be a full partner in their local Workforce Development Board's endeavors. This year's winner embodies a commitment to workforce development that stood out even among a field of impressive nominations.

BayCare, in Saint Petersburg, Florida, is the 2016 winner of the W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award. BayCare is a leading not-for-profit health care system, connecting individuals and families to a wide range of services at 13 hospitals and other medical facilities. As one of the largest employers in Tampa Bay with over 23,000 employees, BayCare has taken a leadership role in working with CareerSource Pinellas to provide specialized healthcare training that is supplying the region with talent in high-wage, high-demand allied health care occupations.

BayCare has been an essential partner to CareerSource Pinellas in the implementation of several initiatives, including contributing an astounding \$4.57 million in matching funds for the H-1B grant awarded to CareerSource by the U.S. Department of Labor. These pooled investments in the healthcare workforce in the Tampa Bay area helped train over 650 individuals since 2011, including creating jobs for 140 new registered nurses at BayCare. Its contributions to workforce development are further demonstrated through a number of community partnerships and financial support for organizations that address health and wellness needs, provide health care for disadvantaged citizens, or improve the lives of children.

“BayCare is a role model not only for its willingness to invest its own resources in the health care workforce talent needs of its community, but for its unwavering commitment to improving the economic prosperity of the entire region through partnerships, job creation, and improving the lives of individual citizens,” said NAWB President and CEO Ron Painter. “Both of this year’s winners have embraced partnership and collaboration in a way that honors both the intent and spirit of our workforce system. Their leadership examples can help us all see how best to achieve the vision of WIOA.”

Winners will be recognized at the [The Forum 2016](#), presented by the NAWB in Washington, D.C. March 12 – 15, 2016. The Forum is NAWB’s premier event, where workforce development professionals and leaders in business, government, labor, and education gather to gain insights into the current state of our nation’s workforce system and America’s ability to compete in a global economy. The Forum 2016 engages and prepares workforce, education and economic development stakeholders to embrace **technology, community, and transformation** as they address the needs of businesses, career seekers, and local economies to build the competitive capacity of their regions. For information or to register, visit www.NAWB.org/Forum.

About the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) supports its members through a comprehensive program of advocacy, training and technical assistance, communication, and the promotion of strategic partnerships for the advancement of our nation’s workforce. For more information on NAWB, visit www.nawb.org, and to see how investments in workforce development keep Americans working, go to <http://www.WorkforceInvestmentWorks.com>.