

2025

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Prepared for the 2025 Washington State Legislative Session



The following State Legislative Agenda is prepared by the Columbia River Economic Development Council's Policy and Legislation Committee and its partners to inform Southwest Washington legislators on the alignment between proposed policies and projects with the Clark County Comprehensive Economic Development Plan.

Business Attraction and Engagement

- Underline state-level leadership in economic development with an additional \$5 million (\$10 million annual total) to support associate development organizations' work in Business Recruitment, Retention/Engagement, & Expansion
- Maintain Tax Increment Financing as a viable tool for local governments to fund economic development projects that support existing businesses, attract new ones, and support job creation across Washington state.
- Promote continued awareness among community leaders and legislators regarding the competitiveness of Washington state's economy and industries across sectors and geographies.
- Reassess the threshold for state-level business attraction and retention tools that support semiconductor and microelectronics industry manufacturing competitiveness.

Infrastructure that Facilitates Business Activity

- Economic development programs:
 - Support state funding for public works programs designed to help recover and expand businesses, including Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), Public Works Trust Fund and the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB).
 - Renew state funding in the MRSC's public works program, which partners with Washington APEX Accelerator network to offer training on public agency contracting practices and apprenticeship.
- Transportation:
 - Protect the Move Ahead Washington Transportation Package investment to continue progress and honor Washington State's commitment to replacing the functionally obsolete and seismically vulnerable I-5 Bridge.

- Emphasize freight mobility, economic development, and tourism in the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project design while increasing safety and addressing seismic issues.
- Support funding to widen the SR 14 West Camas Slough Bridge to increase safety and mobility along this key east-west highway, which connects Columbia River Gorge and east Clark County communities to jobs, goods, and services in the Vancouver/Portland region.
- Support and protect investments to maintain road and transit infrastructure and services to move people and freight more efficiently.
- Energy
 - Support the Port of Vancouver USA's investment of \$150,000 to plan and design a new substation to support current and future business growth at the port while meeting emissions reduction goals.
 - Continue to grow knowledge and inform community members on the energy capacity and infrastructure needed to deliver quality, reliable, affordable utilities to companies; advocate for additional tools that help utilities serve the needs of businesses and the region.
- Transit
 - Support C-TRAN's \$10 million capital budget request for the extension of Bus Rapid Transit along the Fourth Plain Boulevard corridor in Vancouver.
 - Support funding for C-TRAN to make systemwide improvements to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards and improve access to transit for people of all abilities.
- Education
 - Support Washington State University Vancouver's \$3 million capital budget request to replace the chilled water system at the main campus. This system is required for building climate control/cooling and is nearing the end of its lifespan.

Investment that Fortifies Talent Cultivation

- Renew funding for the state's Child Care Partnership Grant
- Maintain state funding achieved in the 2024 Legislative Session for workforce development and support streamlined budget processes for local workforce boards.

- Support the Cascadia Technical Academy's (CTA) OSPI budget request for \$55.7 million for the replacement of Building 100. The project replaces the existing, aged facility with a larger, modern facility to meet enrollment needs and conducts site work to increase student safety and ease of access. *Increasing capacity for CTA also helps close the gender gap in traditionally male-dominated industries taught in the existing facility and supports employer demand for a highly trained workforce that can step into vacancies in the trades and quickly provide family wage positions for young workers.*
- Support the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' call for increased base funding, and additional funding to support salary competitiveness for faculty and staff.
- Fully fund Washington State University's request for cost-of-living adjustments that were authorized by the state and applied to all other state employees besides those working in higher education. Fully funding this request would result in compensation increases of 3% in fiscal year 2026 and 3% in fiscal year 2027, for a total request of \$27.5 million in state funding.
- Continue to address the Special Education Funding Shortfall, taking steps toward full funding.
- Fully fund the Prototypical Model and Staff Allocation Formulas to support a thriving K-12 school district, teacher, student, family ecosystem.