



WWEE History and Timeline

Twenty-six years ago, four Pierce county women set out to help those less fortunate in their community. They realized that there were no programs in the Puget Sound area addressing the needs of women who wanted to get off welfare and become self-sufficient. Their vision has given more than 13,000 families the opportunity to create a better life for themselves and break the cycle of poverty.

2008 Robin Lester, CEO of WWEE, is the recipient of the Executive Alliance 2008 Leadership Award given to an outstanding executive who is dedicated to advancing the non-profit sector through exemplary leadership.

WWEE hosts meeting of state and federal elected officials and service providers to address issues with the current TANF regulations at The Tacoma Club.

2007 WWEE celebrates 25th anniversary!

Developed stand-alone Financial Literacy Program to help newly employed participants manage and grow their financial resources.

WWEE Board of Directors receives Jane T. Russell Excellence in Governance Award.

2006 Program success rate reaches 90%.

2005 Housing Bridges to Self-Sufficiency (HBSS) expanded to include rental assistance to assist in housing stabilization.

Modular program components developed from the REACH program are offered off-site.

2004 Received Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Capacity Building grant to assist with reorganizing the Development Department to diversity funding base.

Developed and launched REACH Plus, a program combining WWEE's renowned workplace essentials and job readiness course with computer skills.

Graduation rates increase by 10% with graduates earning 180% more than when they started with WWEE.

Relocated Kent office to the Alliance Building, a one-stop Human Services project in downtown Kent.

2002 WWEE celebrates 20th anniversary!

2001 WWEE begins the Housing Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Program, a joint project with the Martin Luther King Housing Development Association to serve homeless and near-homeless residents of Tacoma's Hilltop area.

2000 First-ever Computer Applications & Career Development (CACD) course begins in Tacoma.

Modeled after the successful WWEE Kent program, CACD offers six weeks of intensive computer training.

WWEE receives largest-ever private grant in history of organization, which allows for comprehensive improvements to REACH, the core job readiness program in Pierce County.

1999 Computer-Based Training (CBT) Program begins in King County, and is followed soon after by the Pierce County program.

1998 King County WWEE is awarded the Kent Chamber of Commerce Award of Excellence.

1996 Pierce County coordinates with Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) and Washington State University (WSU) to provide computer training via an on-site computer lab at Salishan housing development.

Graduation of the first Computer Proficiency Class (CPP) in Pierce County.

Administrative offices moved to larger space and joint location with CACD on South Central Avenue in Kent.

Implementation of Welfare Reform; known as WorkFirst in Washington State. WWEE services are redefined in order to serve individuals required to participate in pre-employment training programs.

A team comprised of WWEE staff, members of the Board of Directors and Consultants from both the Battelle Seattle Research Center and WISDM Corporation began embedding a new discipline for change initiative known as ODI (Organizational Development and Improvement).

1995 WWEE collaborates with Children's Home Society, Auburn; Renton Area Youth Services; South Central School District ECEAP Program, Tukwila to provide job readiness workshops to low-income individuals.

1994 Agency hosts conference of several agencies from other states similar to WWEE which are based on the original model of National Women's Employment and Education (NWEE). A national affiliate has been formed with five similar "WEE" programs.

First King County Benefit Breakfast event held at the DoubleTree Suites in South Center. Over 400 people attended to hear keynote speaker, Chris Gobrecht (University of Washington Women's Basketball Coach) and outstanding WWEE graduates. A total of \$27,000 is raised for this event.

King County program teaches off-site satellite classes in Tukwila, Federal Way and Auburn and firms up their partnership with King County Children's and Family Commission as well as participation with Auburn Healthy Families Project and Federal Way Family Network, two new projects based on grassroots community collaboration.

King County Computer Proficiency Class is expanded and renamed Computer Applications and Career Development (CACD). This is a six-week comprehensive hands-on computer-training program.

1993 Agency uses King County satellite projects as the model for a new South Pierce County satellite program and puts down the groundwork for 3 additional classes to be held on-site at other

Pierce County locations.

A 22-member Corporate Advisory Council is formed, and representatives from various management levels of local area businesses meet quarterly to help WWEE stay in touch with the business community.

1992 WWEE celebrates 10th Anniversary Year, a decade of service to the Puget Sound.

WWEE is notified by the White House of agency selection as POINT OF LIGHT #818.

In partnership with Neighborhood House and Employment Security's JOBS program, WWEE establishes satellite locations in White Center and West Seattle. This initiates our first one-week class for job-ready participants.

1991 An Essential Needs Bank is established to provide toiletries and other basic needs not available through food stamp redemption.

Agency enters partnership agreement with King County Housing Authority to provide employment training to low-income residents of housing developments in a drug elimination project.

1990 A Computer Proficiency Project is implemented in King County to teach basic computer literacy to WWEE program graduates, the only short-term training of its kind offered free-of-charge to low-income participants.

WWEE moves King County program to new location in South King County to facilitate agency services to low-income residents of that area.

WWEE graduates the first ever all-youth class at Tacoma Community College.

Agency is nominated for a Small Business Administration Award, the first time a non-profit agency has been nominated by the Tacoma/Pierce County Chamber of Commerce.

1989 WWEE's Executive Director, Cecilia Funkhouser is named "Woman of the Year."

1988 WWEE receives a "Recognition of Excellence in Management" from Medina Foundation.

1987 WWEE successfully opens the doors of a new sister agency in downtown Seattle to meet the needs of King County residents.

Tacoma Municipal Leagues votes WWEE "Organization of the Year."

1986 Pierce County program becomes a United Way agency receiving funds to provide child care and transportation subsidies. Later, the King County program was also funded by United Way

WWEE is selected by Pierce County and City of Tacoma to receive a grant for Project Self-Sufficiency to administer the HUD program of housing subsidies.

1983 WWEE works with other groups to develop a corporation to initiate sliding-scale day care centers for low-income individuals. (We Care Day Care Centers). Agency remains active on the Board of Directors.

1982 Washington Women's Employment & Education (WWEE) first provides services to low-income

single parents in Pierce County.