

The Connection

It is with pleasure that we introduce "The Connection!"

Welcome to the Employment Connections (EC) division's newsletter, where we'll focus on sharing information to support connection, engagement and excellence.

In these monthly newsletters, you can expect to find regular updates on topics such as projects and programs, as well as messages from our Director, Jairus Rice. We'll share other useful information as well—please let us know what you'd like us to include! Feel free to share any comments or ideas you have with [Jordyn Johnsen](#) or [Anne Goranson](#), or submit your feedback via [survey](#).

Message from the director



Greetings, Employment Connections,

I'm looking forward to sharing information with you through this newsletter each month. While this is primarily meant for you, please feel free to share this information more broadly across your local partnerships when you identify things that your local partners might be interested in. We recognize that as WorkSource team members, many of you have two "families"—your local area partnership and your home agency. My goal is to ensure our division leadership team and central operations are doing all we can to provide you with the tools and support you need to provide the best service to your local communities. We will work hard to align those efforts with the priorities your local partnerships are setting.

In the coming months, our reemployment work volume will continue to grow, and we'll need to have clear priorities. In preparation for that, the EC Leadership Team will be rolling out a Recovery Plan in the near future with a focus on four areas: Supporting our Staff, Addressing Barriers that Improve Equity, Providing the Best Customer Service, and Innovating for the New Post-COVID World in front of us. Your regional director and administrator will share the details of the plan soon. This plan is intended to help us focus our efforts as a division on what is most important to ensure every one of our customers receives the best support possible.

During times of great change, I have found that leaning into our core purpose helps me stay grounded. There is a great deal of change happening all around us. At the same time, our core mission to provide critical reemployment support to the most vulnerable in our communities has not changed. In fact, it is more important than ever. This is the same line of work that has been accomplished by ESD staff

since the 1930s when Wagner Peyser was enacted! Our tools and methods will continue to evolve as we work on our Recovery Plan. But the human to human interaction that supports one of the most important components of our lives—employment—will continue to be the center of attention.

Your stories inspire me every day. Thank you for your dedication to this important work. We are blessed to get to have such a profound positive impact on people's lives. We'll keep learning and evolving together, and we'll remain committed to our core mission along the way.

Thank you,

Jairus Rice

Project updates

Workforce Professionals Center

Watch for changes at wpc.wa.gov, the Workforce Professionals Center, where you can find policy updates, technology information and other valuable resources. *Shout out to Ardiel Galvan, Caitlin Cormier and the WPC publishers who are supporting reorganization and updated language!* Project updates and related documents will be available on this site soon!

Zoom

We received close to two hundred responses to our recent survey about virtual platforms. Thank you! We found that Zoom is requested more often than any other platform by our customers. Your feedback has prompted a new project in which the Employment Connections division will be adding Zoom licenses for our employees. You can expect to see a roll out later this year after security and training requirements have been met. *Special thanks to Nona Mallicoat and Bianca Wulff for keeping this moving!*

Texting solution

Do your customers prefer to receive texts over phone calls or emails? Texting is the primary method of communication for many of our customer groups. WorkSource leaders are exploring options and we would love to hear what you hear from your customers. Please send feedback to [Jordyn Johnsen](#). Thank you!

WorkSourceWA.com and ETO plans

We will continue to work with Monster Government Solutions through May 2023 for support of our current customer facing (WSWA) and customer management (ETO) platforms. It takes several years to procure, train for and implement a new solution. That work will begin soon. Now is a great time to share your ideas for a

new system with your leaders. Please feel free to email ideas to [Eric Lee](#) and [Anne Goranson](#).

Employment services

Virtual job fairs

The Employment Connections division has been utilizing Brazen, a virtual job fair platform, since May of 2020 when our first job fair was held. Virtual job fairs are a great way to connect employers and job seekers together during the pandemic. We've had up to 1,017 job seekers, 90 employer booths and 155 employer representatives available to chat with attendees during a singular fair.

Recently we were able to obtain more licenses with Brazen, so the local areas could have more hands on control over their job fairs. All 12 WDCs were given the opportunity to participate, with all but 1 area selecting an individual to serve as a Brazen administrator for that area's license. Pierce is the only WDC not participating in the Brazen platform, as they have decided to go with the EZ Virtual Fair platform.

Shortly, we will be sending out bi-weekly emails around the virtual job fair data. If you are interested in receiving those updates, email [Jordyn Johnsen](#) to be added to the distribution list.

Below are the virtual job fair contacts for all 12 WDCs. If you have questions about virtual job fairs in your area, please reach out to them.

Brazen Administrator Contacts		
WDC	Administrator	Administrator email
WDC 1 - Olympic	Mike Robinson	MRobinson@esd.wa.gov
WDC 2 - PacMtn	Micah Pong	mpong@thurstonchamber.com
WDC 3 - Northwest	Kevin Logan	KLogan@esd.wa.gov
WDC 4 - Snohomish	Heidi Schauble	heidi.schauble@workforcesnohomish.org
WDC 5 - King County	Carol Young	carol.young@esd.wa.gov
WDC 6 – Pierce Using EZ Virtual Fair	Teresa Delicino	tdelicino@workforce-central.org
WDC 7 - Southwest	Alyssa Joyner	ajoyner@workforcesw.org
WDC 8 - North Central	Aaron Parrott	aaronp@skillsource.org
WDC 9 - South Central	Michelle Smith	michelle.smith@co.yakima.wa.us
WDC 10 - Eastern	Alice Freyer	afreyer@esd.wa.gov
WDC 11 - Benton Franklin	Jasmine Sanchez	jsanchez@esd.wa.gov
WDC 12 - Spokane	To Be Determined	
EC Central Operations	Jordyn Johnsen	jjohnsen@esd.wa.gov
EC Central Operations	Bryce Bateman	BBateman@esd.wa.gov
EC Central Operations	Arturo Espinoza	AEspinoza@esd.wa.gov

Kudos

If you'd like to submit kudos to be shared in The Connection, send them to [Jordyn Johnsen](#).

Make sure to also submit your kudos to "ES-tounding!", to be shared in the all staff NewsNet articles. You can do so by emailing NewsNet@esd.wa.gov. To find all newsletter stories, go to the [NewsNet home page](#) on InsideESD.

A management tip from the Harvard Business Review

Build resilience by turning to your network!

The ability to bounce back from setbacks is often described as the difference between successful and unsuccessful people. But how do you build that resilience? Research shows that it comes down to the people in your network: You need relationships that are broad and deep enough to support you when you hit setbacks. So think about what you need in tough times. Some people need laughter, others need empathy, and others need logical perspective. Then consider your network. Identify who you go to when you're in a rut — and ask yourself if they meet your needs. If they don't, who else might be able to help? Look to your family, your colleagues, or your loose-tie friendships. The pandemic

has caused a significant amount of uncertainty and challenges for us all; the importance of building and maintaining connections has never been clearer.

This tip is adapted from "[The Secret to Building Resilience](#)," by Rob Cross et al.