

The Connection

Welcome to the Employment Connections (EC) Division's newsletter - The Connection! This newsletter focuses on sharing information to support, connect, engage, and excel.

Read regular updates on projects and programs, and messages from Director Jairus Rice. Please share comments or ideas you have with [Jordyn Johnsen](#) or [Anne Goranson](#), or submit your feedback via [survey](#).

Message from the Director



Hello, Employment Connections team!

Greetings and happy Black History Month, Employment Connections!

It's hard to believe it is already February! I'd like to start by recognizing all of EC's Black employees as we celebrate Black History Month. I love hearing the stories of the many Black individuals who have made amazing contributions in the realms of science, politics, entertainment, sports, and so much more. It's a great opportunity to take a minute to reflect on the sacrifice so many have also made to help our nation truly fulfill its founding creed, that we are all created equal and that we should all have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I've heard that EC's own Cheri Willoughby, Shanika Allen and Tennille Johnson have been helping to capture some of those stories for the agency NewsNet publication that will be released throughout the month. Thank you, team!

It's a great time to recognize love and friendship as we celebrate Valentine's Day as well. At work we don't use the "L" word very often, but if you think about love as "unconditional positive regard," it has an important place in our work. The more we can come from that place as we work together to serve customers, the deeper our connections will be. Love is a foundation for serving others!

In this month's newsletter you'll hear from Nona Mallicoat, our deputy director, about the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) Replacement Project and what to expect moving forward. Finding a replacement for ETO is our agency's number one priority and I encourage you to share your ideas about how we can best meet your needs and our customer's needs. We'll be adding updates to future newsletters as we move ahead. Please feel free to ask questions!

Standing up EC's Virtual Services is my other primary area of focus (in addition to the 4 pillars of our Recovery Plan). I was able to meet with the Virtual Services

Team (VST) recently, and I loved witnessing their commitment to finding innovative ways to improve our customers' experiences. This team is bringing a lot of positive energy to that work and is dedicated to serving more customers by partnering with the rest of Team EC! We created this team to support our local offices and supplement work across the whole state, particularly when local offices are experiencing temporary or long-term service needs. The EC regional directors and their leadership teams are working with Anne Goranson, Mary Zavala, and David Gutierrez Betancourt to prioritize what the VST works on. It's currently a bit different for each of EC's regions, and that is by design. Customer and team needs differ across regions, and as this team evolves, we'll learn how to best meet those needs and use virtual options to engage even more effectively with customers. You can find additional information about their focus in the Virtual Services Team Charter below.

Finally, I want to give you a heads up that we'll be making some small adjustments to our Recovery Plan, which I usually refer to as the 4 Pillars. For now, we've realigned the team leads:

- Support staff – Jairus Rice and Norton Sweet
- Focus on equity – Lekha Fernandes and Anne Goranson
- Boost customer service – Jennie Weber and Elizabeth Court
- Innovate & adapt – Alberto Isiordia and Jessica Barr

For our 2022 Recovery Plan work we will intentionally focus on just 1-2 projects at a time in each pillar. There is a lot going on and I'd rather do fewer things really well and more quickly than try to take on too much. The first couple projects we take on won't be all we do for 2022, it will just be our starting point. So, as we complete projects, we'll stand up the next most impactful thing. More to come on what those projects will be in the March newsletter. In the meantime, please keep the great ideas and feedback coming!

Thank you for supporting each other and our customers.

Jairus Rice

Employment Connections Virtual Services Team Charter

Team Established: October/2021

Purpose Statement:

The Virtual Services Team (VST) exists to supplement and support local WorkSource activities by:

- Offering statewide services to maximize efficiency and accessibility
- Assisting local areas to fill temporary gaps in services and staffing
- Serving as an additional entry point for statewide customers
- Referring customers to local services that will be most beneficial to them
- Ensuring that each customer receives the highest quality service available
- Continually improving our processes to support customer needs within the Worksource system

Team Expectations/Abilities:

- Practice active listening in order to offer services the customer needs
- Provide hope and encouragement while offering empathy
- Help customers identify their next steps
- Connect customers to local WorkSource services to help customers overcome employment challenges and access services they need
- Promote culture of continuous improvement and innovation
- Work as a team to support the most important customer needs
- Integrate the agency values lens and strategic plan into daily work
- Ensure a design that is Customer First focused
- Celebrate success

Principles:

- Prioritize the needs of our customers
- Work with local WorkSource leaders to strategically leverage Virtual Services Team to maximize integrated customer services statewide
- Find innovative ways to serve customers under current labor market conditions
- Meet employment and training needs for all customers, particularly those who have been marginalized
- Use data and results driven approach to improve performance
- Include direct customer feedback in decision making

Stakeholder Groups:

- Customers – Job Seekers and Employers
- EC Leaders
- EC Staff
- Partners

Key Deliverables:

- Expand virtual capacity to deliver services to WorkSource customers
- Support local need through Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
- Create an additional avenue for customers to connect with the WorkSource system
- Support and promote collaboration of services statewide.
- Time savings/cost benefit – saving on gas, childcare, hygiene products, etc.
- Identify ways to streamline and identify best processes, and make them accessible to WorkSource leaders
- Maximize effectiveness with customers who are best fit for virtual services

Process/Structure:

Monthly TEAMS Meetings:

- Monthly Team meetings will be scheduled to keep communication constant and address issues in the virtual world, coordinate efforts and problem solve
- Scribe for monthly meetings – identify note taker/scribe
- Scribe will email minutes to Team
- Ad hoc work groups will be established as necessary.

Quarterly TEAMS Meetings:

- Team will meet quarterly, to do team check-ins, team building exercises, discuss process improvements and share updates in the virtual services community, as well as do "Report-outs" on Action Items.

Team Composition:

Virtual Services Manager/Sponsor	Anne Goranson
Virtual Service Administrator	Mary Zavala
Virtual Services Supervisor	David Gutierrez Betancourt
Virtual Staff	Please see below link

<http://insideesd/Media/Default/all-org-charts/ec-virtual-services.pdf>

Employment services

WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) Replacement project update

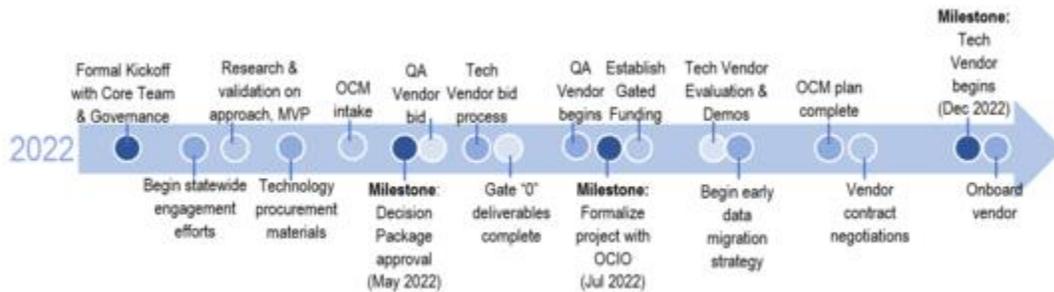
Submitted by Nona H. Mallicoat, Deputy Director, Employment Connections

The official kickoff to the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) replacement recently occurred, so I wanted to share an update. First, we have hired a fabulous Project Manager (Linda Kleingartner) who is keeping this project and team members organized and moving forward. I couldn't do this without her! In addition, we have also created planning and implementation teams from all across the agency that will see this project through to the end. It's so exciting to see the passion in this team and everyone working together to ensure we get the best solution for case management system replacement.

Guiding Principles: Customer Centric • Integrity • Accountability • Openness • Commitment

Currently, we are identifying request for proposal (RFP) team members and subject matter experts (SMEs) to help us gather the business requirement for the next case management system, so if you are interested, please reach out to local leadership to see how you can participate! In addition, we have several planning

and implementation team members who are starting to come out to the offices so they can see how the existing system works in real time.



Above are the project milestones for 2022. The goal is to have a vendor selected by fall, to begin in December, with implementation occurring in 2023.

The focus between now and April is to:

1. Identify the RFP team members.
2. Compile previous research and visions into one document.
3. RFP teams develop the business requirements and other RFP section recommendations.
4. Present the information to the Advisory committee for review.

We should have a solid RFP draft in April and are excited to publish it in May/June.

On the last Friday of every other month (beginning in February) we will be holding WIT replacement town hall meetings in the morning and afternoon. The same information will be shared at both sessions, so you only need to attend one (either morning or afternoon). These will be open to all WorkSource partners and anyone else in the agency that is interested in hearing updates on the WIT replacement progress. Keep an eye out for that invitation in the next couple weeks.

Thank you all for your support on this much needed project!

Thank you for your support of ESD Non-perm staff from UI & Fraud!

Previously we shared that approximately 850 non-permanent positions in the UI and Fraud Divisions are coming to an end. Even though these were short-term additions to support a temporary workload, any time a large group is impacted, we want to do everything we can to support them. A project team was created to assist them in their transition.

Since the start of this process, the WorkSource system has received rave reviews from the UI and Fraud folks who have connected with their local WorkSource

offices, participated in the Rapid Response events, and attended statewide workshops.

We want to take another moment to say THANK YOU for your hard work in assisting our colleagues in the UI and Fraud Divisions in finding their next meaningful chapter. Over 100 of these employees have found new employment so far. Employment Connections has hired nine of these individuals. Your efforts do not go unnoticed!

Many of these individuals have expressed a desire to stay with state or local government service, so a small team of WorkSource partners quickly stood up a Public Service Virtual Job Fair which will be held on Feb. 23. So far, 32 employers have signed up to participate and 163 staff have registered to attend.



Kudos

Kudo submissions

Give your coworkers some kudos on an open canvas as a fun virtual recognition board! Share stories, comments, your appreciation and even a GIF or emoji to help share your kudos story!



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