

# The Connection

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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](#).

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## Message from the Director



Greetings, Employment Connections team,

March is Women's History Month! It's a great time to celebrate women and to look for ways to honor them by ensuring equitable access and treatment in employment and beyond. Our work gives us opportunities to support women as well as identify and remove biases that may still prevent equal treatment. I've had the blessing to be influenced by strong women throughout my life, both personally and professionally. I'm grateful for the lessons I've learned from the many powerful women leaders and front-line contributors across our agency. I'd encourage you to take a minute to consider the women that have positively contributed to

your life and learn more about some of the great contributions women have made to our country [here](#).

This leads to another topic that has been on my mind lately – teamwork and how we support each other. It feels like we're picking up momentum and establishing a better cadence to our work together. The loosening of COVID restrictions will further move us in that direction, but I know many of our team members may still be managing high levels of stress.

Cami shared an important [message](#) last week in which she named some local, national, and international events that may be on your mind and creating anxiety. She also shared some links to EAP, The Well and other helpful resources. I can't encourage you enough to check out those resources and to take care of yourselves. It's also more important than ever to look out for one another. Whenever we work as a team, no one person has to carry the full load. We need to be able to jump in and out, and support each other as needed. We can accomplish a lot for our customers and communities by jumping in to help each other.

I recently came across a presentation from Nash Consulting entitled "The Leadership Mindset." The skills we all need to be great team members are very closely aligned with leadership skills. Here's a great list of large and small actions we can take today to make a difference:

- Build relationships on trust and respect
- Truly listen to each other
- Get curious
- Consider the needs of others and be responsive to them
- Advocate for each other
- Share information generously
- Watch for individuals who may not be included and invite them in
- Be collaborative and open to all kinds of feedback
- Let go of assumptions and replace them with inquiry
- Give recognition generously to others
- Speak up when there is a problem
- Follow through on commitments
- Remember that it's ok for all of us to make mistakes
- Jump in and help

I see examples of this kind of teamwork happening across our division on a regular basis. I also see instances in which we can all improve our own skills. I find that to be inspiring – the goal is not perfection, it's progress! While we talk about outcomes and measures, your leadership team and I are keenly aware that there is a human being behind every number that we track. We track and measure because we want to have the greatest positive impact on the most people possible. We're making progress, and we'll continue to get better and better!

Thank you for supporting each other, our customers, and our communities.

*Jairus Rice*

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## Employment services

### ***WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) Replacement project update***

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

WIT Replacement is moving along!

One of the top priorities for Employment Security Department is the replacement of the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) system. The "WIT replacement" covers both the replacement of ETO (the current case management system) and Labor Exchange in a multi-phase process. In order to keep WorkSource and inter-agency partners up-to-date, a bimonthly WIT (ETO Replacement) Town Hall has been scheduled for people to hear the latest news! They are scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month, and there is a

morning session and afternoon session. Please only attend one, as the same information is shared at both. In February, we had over 421 people attend, and we expect to exceed that at the next town hall on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you deleted the series by accident, please check with your Supervisor to get it re-sent to you.

A small team is out visiting WorkSource offices as part of the customer experience and requirements gathering process to assist in creating the requirements for the RFP (request for proposal). They are about halfway through the first round of site visits, and I know how excited they have been about meeting with you! If they have not come to your area yet, don't worry...every WDA will be covered at least once in the first round, and the team will be back out visiting offices during round two.

Finally, if you just want to keep up on what is going on with the WIT Replacement, you can always check out the latest information in the Workforce Professionals Center: [WPC - WIT Replacement Project](#). This is the platform where we will post status updates on the project, recording of town hall sessions, FAQs and more.

If you have any questions about the WIT Replacement project, don't hesitate to reach out to me at [nona.mallicoat@esd.wa.gov](mailto:nona.mallicoat@esd.wa.gov).

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## Resources

### ***Colleges may adjust financial aid based on changed circumstances***

If someone in your family has lost a job or is working less, colleges may be able to provide more financial aid. Colleges may adjust financial aid based on a student's or parent's job loss, loss of benefits (like child support), or even extraordinary medical or dental bills. Learn more at the Washington Student Achievement Council's [Financial Aid Appeals](#) page.

Please feel free to share this information with customers!

### ***Grow with Google - Career certificate scholarships launching statewide this spring***

In December 2021, ESD's Employment Connections division, along with the workforce agencies in four other states (OR, NV and CT), joined with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and Google to pilot the Grow with Google Career Certificate Scholarship program. EC's Central and Eastern regions each received access to 50 scholarships. EC is excited to expand our participation in the program statewide in April 2022.

Targeted toward economically-disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved populations, the Grow with Google scholarship program allows referred participants, at no cost to them, to complete self-paced, professional-level online training to learn skills they need as they work to pursue hot entry-level tech jobs. A device with internet connection is needed. Certificates are available in four areas: IT Support, Data Analytics, UX (User Experience) Design or Project Management. Enrollees can expect to earn a certificate in three to six months working 10 hours per week. Program

graduates can share their profiles with Coursera's consortium of more than 100 certificate-recognizing US employers, as well as utilize job-seeking services from WorkSource.

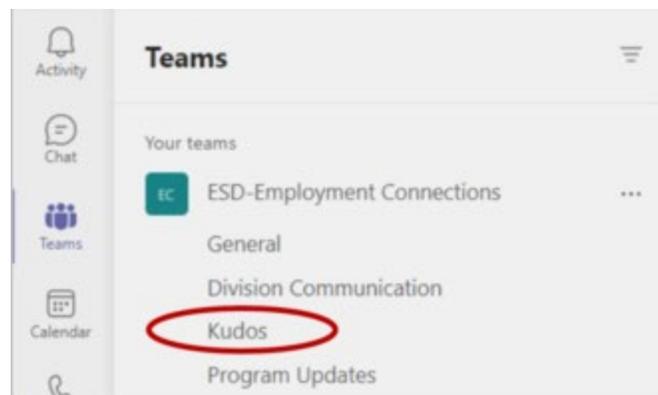
If you have questions about the program, please contact [Amy Lagerquist](#) or [Elizabeth Court](#), and watch for more information to come later this spring.

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## 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](mailto:NewsNet@esd.wa.gov). To find all newsletter stories, go to the [NewsNet home page](#) on InsideESD.