



The Connection – March 2023

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

Read regular updates on projects and programs, and messages from Director, Ismaila "Ish" Maidadi. We also want and need to hear from you! Send your thoughts and suggestions to the [EC Virtual Suggestion Box](#); and for newsletter ideas and comments, you can share those by emailing the EC Communications [inbox](#), and we'll be in touch with you!

Message from the director

The Connection -- MARCH 2023 DIRECTOR's Message:



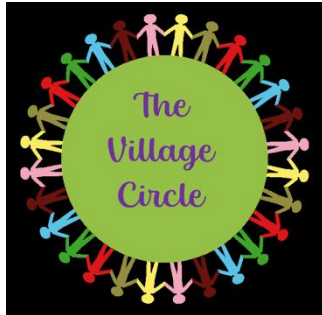
Greetings, Employment Connections team,

The time clock is ticking. Spring is officially here, and we are leaning into our new 2023 EC Division Playbook. This was presented to all of you at the EC All-Staff Town Hall meetings in late February. I am excited to help build and add to the momentum we need to achieve our team's strategic goals.

Our team has received recent news on significant leadership changes this month. Just this week, you all received my news that our Deputy Director, **Nona H. Mallicoat**, will be leaving EC in mid-April. After 16 years with ESD, she is headed to a federal division director position, and I celebrate her decision. I am happy for her and am challenged at filling the void she will leave. Her drive, knowledge, and intuition about our customers' needs and the support our staff requires to do the work we do has been invaluable. We will all need to flex our "Nona" muscle to step up and keep the momentum and successes in play. Right now, the leadership team is working on a transition plan; and we will be taking time to celebrate and recognize Nona in the weeks to come. This newsletter is a first step; so, make sure to read the [Kudos section](#) below.

On March 13, we received the news that **Dr. sarahlloyd** had left ESD; and with that difficult news, I felt weighed down and that the great service equity work she spearheaded may be at risk. After listening to my peers and to EC voices, I am grateful and hopeful. Grateful that I, we, experienced a vision of equity and inclusiveness through sarahlloyd's eyes; and hopeful for the commitment and determination this news sparked for all of us to carry on the work she started.

In sarahlloyd's three months leading our customer-facing divisions, she passionately broke down barriers and opened closed minds to the possibility of change. These are not small achievements, and we are not small in what we can accomplish with the insight and skills we have gained. Our work is not done, and ESD's leadership is committed to creating a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.



This month also kicked off the new [Office of Equity's](#) series **Doing the work: Truth in Action**, which was previously titled: [Speak Your Truth](#). This forum and the gathering of EC staff in **The Village Circle** are opportunities for us to come together and share, learn, and grow as we bravely take the steps to reshape our agency's culture. In its fourth month, **The Village Circle** is evolving and changing as new voices join the space. Most recently, there was a lot of discussion around the required equity trainings, and Ayanna Colman, Director of the Office of Equity, joined in and gave a comprehensive history of the Governor's first memo and the establishment of the WA State Office of Equity and ESD's own Office of Equity.

Our ongoing conversation on **Professional Pathways** continues. ESD and EC are awaiting the bargaining process with the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE). This will take some time, and you can be assured there will be updates as progress is made. Once the WFSE bargaining process concludes and we have a negotiated understanding, we can then begin the work of revamping the Pathways programs.

With the next Village Circle meeting on Wednesday, March 29, I am asking that we host a "chat-free" space as a pilot so that we can focus on our voices and a single conversation. I know, for me, it's difficult to give my full attention when multiple conversations are occurring, and I want to be present and attentive to all. This will be a trial run to see how being "chat free" impacts the conversation and how you all feel about it. This space is yours and our goal is to make it safe for all who participate. We heard loud and clear that there is another conversation that needs to be scheduled — one where all staff feel safe to speak and share all sides of the EDI lens.

I am excited to share that the **Virtual Suggestion Box (VSB)** is now available for easy access on [InsideESD](#), and we also have direct access to a new [Update Summary](#) of topics submitted and their status. You will also receive a confirmation email that your submissions have been received. Much gratitude to Anne Goranson, Acting Strategic Initiatives Manager, for all her hard work on fielding and tracking your suggestions. The work to support this great idea is an organizational feat. She is our wizard behind the curtain!

On Thursday, March 9, I was honored and excited to be included in [ESD Government Relations Office Legislative Town Hall](#) with [Representative Liz Berry](#) from the 36th Legislative District. Commissioner Cami Feek, CFO Danielle Cruver, Government Relations Director Caitlyn Jekel, Budget Director Lisa Henderson, UICS Director J.R. Richards, Leave and Care Deputy Director Matt Buelow, and other ESD experts asked the questions; and we all added to the conversation with Rep. Berry on her start in the Washington State Legislature. She was first elected in 2020. Rep. Berry has a passion for supporting Washington's working families and this year was appointed Chair of the Labor & Workplace Standards Committee and is a member of the Environment & Energy and Transportation Committees. She also serves as a member of the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations.



2023 ESD Legislative Session Town Hall on March 9 at the Maple Park Office, Olympia, WA.

One of her bills this year implements recommendations from an ESD workgroup and legislative report, establishing a framework for how rideshare drivers access UI & PFML benefits (Bill 1570). This is a first in the nation approach and groundbreaking work. She expressed her pride that, this session, the House has passed a record number of bills. We discussed the remaining work from pandemic-era unemployment claims and compensation, and Rep. Berry is working to get a funding request through to address the backlog of UI overpayments. This would help make customers and ESD whole. In the conversation, I also had the opportunity to bring up our EC equity initiative to increase WorkSource services through the prison system to support re-entry customers and find options for guaranteed employment.

There are several bills moving through the process relating to our agency, impacting PFML rates and improving the UI customer experience. We are anticipating the first budget release this week, and we are eagerly awaiting the status of our poverty reduction priorities and funding for IT projects, such as the WIT Replacement.

If you are interested in future updates, our Government Relations Division has their updates archived on [Inside ESD](#). Updates are being provided through ESD NewsNet; and to listen in on the last March 9 session, you can access the [recording here](#). The next [Town Hall](#) is on Tuesday, April 4, from 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. and you are all encouraged to attend.

The Executive Leadership Team has started getting out to the regions. Our first visit was to Vancouver on January 24; and on March 16, the **North Sound Region** was second on the list with visits to WorkSource centers in Kitsap and Clallam. Our time was well spent and conversations productive.

The highlight of these trips for me and other members of ELT is the opportunity to hear directly from you in person in our centers. It helps us understand the need in our centers and helps us prioritize removing barriers for you.

Our next road trip is planned for mid-April when we'll visit WorkSource centers in WDA 2 (Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor/Aberdeen, and Lewis).



Caption: EC leadership visit to WS Clallam, March 16. Left to right: Jon “Doc” Ferguson, Kim McCardle, Michael Jacobson, Robin Moreau, Ed Looby, Eiko Preston, John Krouse, Gustavo Aviles (DATA), Marie Burrows ESD/HR, Ismaila Maidadi, EC director, and taking the photo: Nona Mallicoat, EC deputy director.



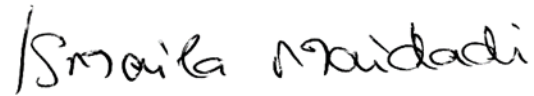
Caption: The silent participant in the room -- Professor, Doc Ferguson’s service dog, in “stealth mode” awaiting his next critical mission.

This is just the start; and in the coming weeks and months, I hope to get out and meet more of you in person. Our next **EC All -Staff Town Hall meetings** will be June 14 and June 21, when we will focus on [EC Playbook](#) and project updates and take a look at our new EC Scorecard. You only need to attend one of these meetings to get the full story. If for some reason, you don’t have this on your calendar, please contact Allyn.Schmidlkofer@esd.wa.gov and she’ll make sure you receive your invitation.

With that, I will close my March message and confirm I am steadfast in my duty to make sure you have what you need to be successful in your roles and that equity is at the center of our work – for you and for our customers. I am very proud to be part of this team as we implement change and make a difference for ourselves and our customers. Thank you for all the hard work you do every day.

My heartfelt appreciation goes out to you all,

Ismaila "Ish" Maidadi



Project updates

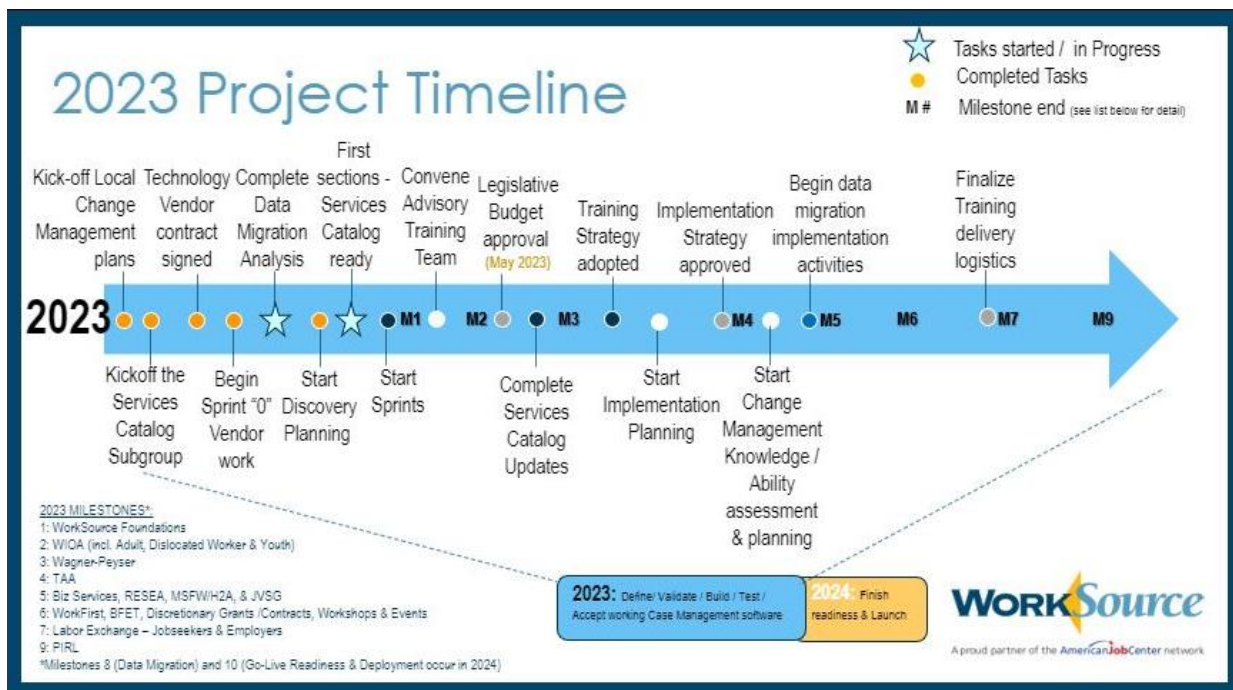


A little bit about WIT

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

Well, it's getting busy! Our vendor has jumped in the pool with both feet and is engaging with all types of people across the system. As an agile procurement, we are using sprints to move through each section of the build, with the first sprint kicking off next month. Currently, the team is in discovery mode and is meeting with Lead Development Partners (LDPs) multiple times a week to gather the information needed to set up for the next steps! It's truly exciting, and I want to thank everyone who is taking part.

Another big focus right now is the data migration. For anyone who was around when we moved from SKIES to ETO knows, having a clean data migration is key! We have a skilled team working on cleaning up the data, that way when it's ready to move to the new system, we are set up for success.



Speaking of the “new system,” we’ve been referring to this as the WIT Replacement, but we need a new name! Start thinking about what you would like to call it, as I believe there will be information coming out soon about a naming contest. 😊 (I think “Nona” or “Getting WITty Wit It” would be good names, but I’m sure you have better ideas?)

For those with current ETO and WorkSourceWA.com suggestions, we have stopped enhancements to both systems. They will sunset when WIT launches. Right now, all our resources are focused on WIT.

We want to hear your thoughts and ideas on the systems you work in daily. As always, you can provide feedback, ideas, questions (or you just give someone a Kudos!) by using the [input and questions form](#) located on the [Workforce Professional Center site](#). We review this information often.

Also, please don’t forget to regularly check out the [Workforce Professional Center](#). It’s the best place to get updates on the different facets of this project, and you can also find the most recent recordings from the town halls, Q & A, and project status updates.

Until next month ... that’s a little bit about WIT!

Strategic Initiative Update — Where we are headed.

Three primary goals are our guide.

Submitted by Anne Goranson, Acting Strategic Initiatives Manager, Employment Connections

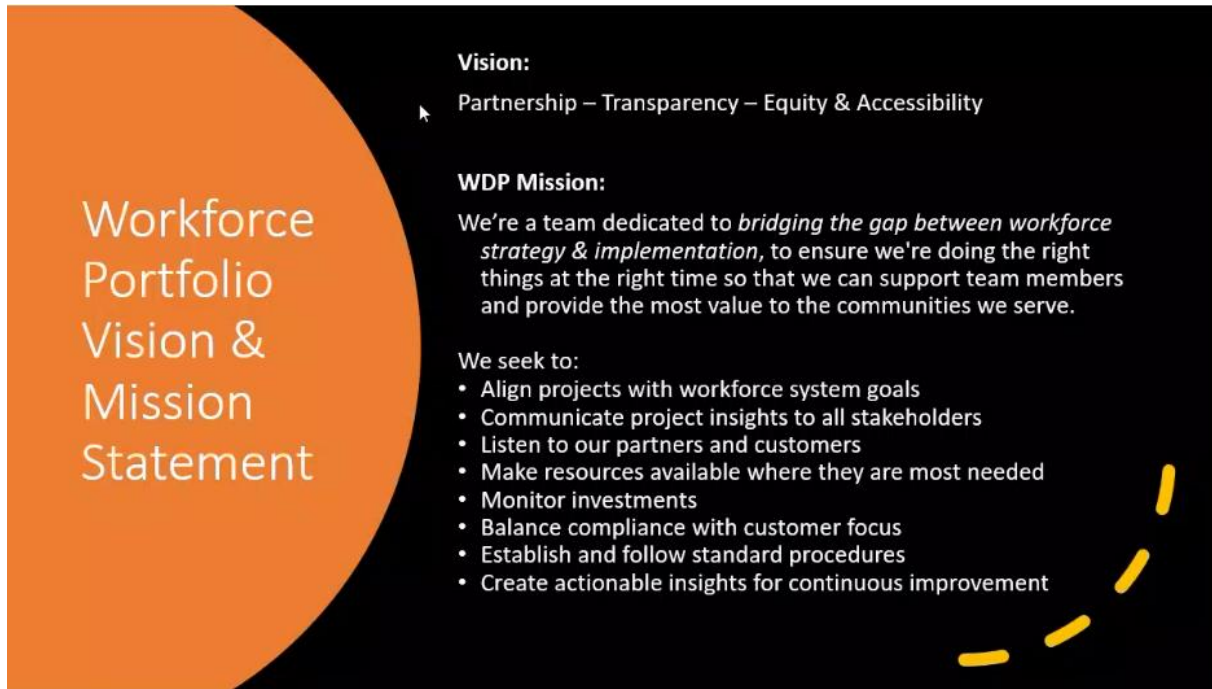
“Strategic” is a word that is thrown around casually in government and business. It’s just a fancy way to describe what we are planning for the long-term. At ESD, we have three primary goals that guide our long-term planning, and they are described below.



This is our North Star. We’ll keep coming back to these goals as we make decisions about where to focus our attention as a division. I hope you are as excited about this vision as I am! Making progress in these three areas is exactly what we believe will position us and our customers for success.

You may have noticed, we are using some new terms – Workforce Development Portfolio (WDP), Playbook, and Scorecard. These are tools that make up our strategic framework. They are our GPS and maps – resources that will inform our next steps and tell us how close we are to achieving our goals. Each ESD division has a playbook for 2023, and we rolled out the [EC Playbook](#) last month during our division all-staff town halls. A draft EC Scorecard is being developed. The scorecard is the performance management reporting tool that will track key data measures and projects. We will be providing more information and a preview as soon as it is ready.

This month, we want to share and explain more about the WDP, which is essentially a list of projects that will benefit the workforce system. This is a new tool for EC in 2023, but other ESD divisions started using a portfolio system last year. The WDP Leadership Team includes representatives from EC, PPP, DATA, ESPI, IT, and Communications. We’re a new team, and we recently finalized our Vision and Mission:

The graphic features a large orange circle on the left containing the text "Workforce Portfolio Vision & Mission Statement". To the right, on a black background, is the "Vision" statement: "Partnership – Transparency – Equity & Accessibility". Below that is the "WDP Mission": "We're a team dedicated to bridging the gap between workforce strategy & implementation, to ensure we're doing the right things at the right time so that we can support team members and provide the most value to the communities we serve." A list of goals follows: "We seek to:" followed by seven bullet points: "Align projects with workforce system goals", "Communicate project insights to all stakeholders", "Listen to our partners and customers", "Make resources available where they are most needed", "Monitor investments", "Balance compliance with customer focus", and "Establish and follow standard procedures". The final bullet point is "Create actionable insights for continuous improvement". A yellow dashed line curves in the bottom right corner of the black area.

**Workforce
Portfolio
Vision &
Mission
Statement**

Vision:
Partnership – Transparency – Equity & Accessibility

WDP Mission:
We're a team dedicated to *bridging the gap between workforce strategy & implementation*, to ensure we're doing the right things at the right time so that we can support team members and provide the most value to the communities we serve.

We seek to:

- Align projects with workforce system goals
- Communicate project insights to all stakeholders
- Listen to our partners and customers
- Make resources available where they are most needed
- Monitor investments
- Balance compliance with customer focus
- Establish and follow standard procedures
- Create actionable insights for continuous improvement

It will take time for the team to review our current list of projects and assess efforts and impacts. Once we've completed these tasks, we'll prioritize all our projects. In the meantime, we'll keep projects moving that have been on our radar. Stay tuned for information about a new strategic project intake process being developed!

Kudos

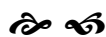


A little bit of sharing to honor and recognize EC's Nona H. Mallicoat.

We appreciate you. We know you do awesome work, and we will miss you.

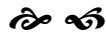
"As a member of the EC Leadership Team, Nona has to be known as the "can do" person. No matter what the challenge or opportunity has been, she is there and ready to give it her all. Her rapid thinking can move from subject to subject without hesitation so when working with Nona, be ready to run. She adapts to what will be needed by giving it all she has. Nona is truly outstanding!"

Jennie Weber, Eastern Regional Director, Employment Connections



“Wow! During my ESD 32-year career you have been one of our main Leaders. Did not ever expect an announcement like this! Congrats Nona and “Muchos” Best Wishes! I know you will be doing major, awesome things in your new position. Now go forth and Rock It!

Liz Leon, Employment Development Specialist, WS East Wenatchee



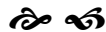
“Thank you, Nona, for your valued leadership in our division and for serving as our “go-to” problem solver. You have been their countless times to help move things forward when efforts appear stalled or almost lost. There is no doubt you will be missed. I can’t wait to hear more about your future adventures. Take care my friend.”

Alberto Isiordia, Program Integrity Manager, Employment Connections



“I wish you all the best to you and your family in your new endeavors. I was lucky to have the chance to work with you so closely with RISE. You are a great person. Take care.”

Erik Hontz, Strategies for Success Instructor, WS Auburn



“... I truly appreciate your friendship and support since I’ve come to the agency...in every move you’ve been there as an advocate, for hiring me as a DVOP, to bringing me to the Central Office. ... I can’t think of a major initiative that’s happened in the division where you weren’t either the mastermind or the one steering the ship ... your impacts will be long-lived!”

Sam Mitchell, WS Administrator for Military Bases, Employment Connections



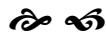
“Nona has been a mentor of mine for many years. She has been instrumental in making many positive changes over the years to how our division operates resulting in improved service to our external customers, but also in a significant way to our internal customers, the EC Division team. One of the best examples of this is because of the work that Nona was a major part of, many WorkSource employees were provided the opportunity to advance in their careers and become WSS4s; an opportunity that was not available to them in the past. Her voice within our division and the agency will be greatly missed.”

Craig Carroll, Business Operations Manager, Employment Connections



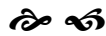
“You will be missed. It was an honor getting to know you.”

Jose Sandoval, Local Veterans Employment Representative, WS Columbia Basin



“I’m so sad you’re leaving the agency, but happy for you. I just wanted to say thank you for your work and commitment. You were one of the first people that I worked closely with here in WA and it was truly a pleasure ... You made space of many voices at the table. You also inspire me to travel more and live life through experiences. Good luck to you and keep centered on those values that have driven you to success at ESD.”

William Westmoreland, CEO, Pacific Mountain WDC, Olympia, WA



“A note of congratulations on your new position - I have no doubt you will rock it! I wanted to leave you with a note of gratitude. Gratitude for the enormous amounts of work you have done for this agency. I have observed the difference you have made in everyday work, and to this day would place all my bets on anyone ever coming close to keeping up with the workload you manage. And you handle all of it pretty flawlessly – Making it look easy. Thank you for all the support you have given, to me, this division, and ESD. Have a blast and Kick A--! Cheers to you!”

Kimberly Tickner, Supervisor, WS Auburn, Employment Connections



“Congrats, Nona! So proud of you and your accomplishments! Keep reaching for the stars!! It has been an honor! 😊”

Jeffery Flood, WorkSource Supervisor, WS Kitsap



“Congratulations on your new career adventure Nona! I want to thank you for all the support and encouragement you have given me through the years we have worked together. You have been such a rock and amazing leader for the EC Division Team. I am not quite sure how ESD EC Team will do without you. Best wishes for your new endeavors!”

Shannon Booth, Economic Mobility Programs Operator, Employment Connections

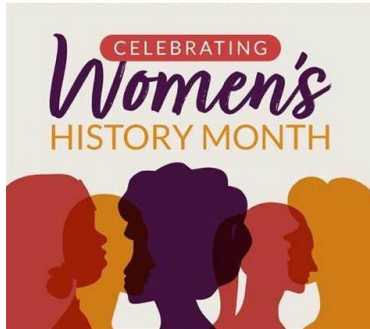


Women in History Month 2023

A little about Washington women in the legislature over the years ...

This year the [National Women’s History Alliance](#), which spearheaded the women’s history movement, has announced the theme for 2023 as “Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories.” With our Washington

State Legislature in full swing and the recent ESD Legislative Town Hall with Representative Liz Berry, it seems appropriate to focus on the story of Washington's leading women in politics and some of the "firsts" they have achieved.



As far back as 1854, when Washington was still a territory, there was support for suffrage for white women over the age of eighteen. During those early years, women were directly and indirectly involved building new communities and in developing the political process. It was only right they have the ability to participate in the policy decisions that impacted those communities and families. Washington was the third territory (following Wyoming and Utah) to initially approve suffrage in 1883. There were challenges along the way, and it took until 1910 before the state constitution was amended to guarantee women's

suffrage.

This year marks 110 years of [women in the Washington State Legislature](#) and recognizes when [Neda Jolidon Croake](#) and [Frances Axtell](#) were first elected to the State House of Representatives in 1912. It would take until 1920 for the 19th Amendment to be adopted to the U.S. Constitution and make it official at a federal level.



Over a century has passed and today, women still face challenges with realizing equal rights and full participation in political and public life. Proudly, Washington is helping break down those barriers. According to the [Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics](#), Washington State is ranked fourth in the nation for women in the legislature at 46.3 percent. Our state also ranks high in having both a woman President or President Pro Tem of the Senate (Karen Keiser) and a woman Speaker of the State House (Laurie Jinkins).

National milestones for Washington women came in 2001 when Senator Patty Murray (D) became the first woman to serve as chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and in 2011 when Margarita Prentice (D) was named Senate President Pro Tempore of the Washington Senate as the first Latina to lead either chamber of a state legislature. For more on the groundbreaking steps women have made in government, see [Milestones for Women in American Politics](#) and [Washington is one of the best states for women.](#)

We don't have the numbers to speak to how many women are currently serving in leadership positions in Washington State government agencies, but if we look at ESD senior leadership ranks, we have Commissioner Cami Feek leading the charge supported by well over 65 percent of the executive leadership team being women. There are still challenges in equality and equity to be gained across all forms of organizations and industries – public and private. One claim Washington and EC can be proud of is being at the forefront of doing what's right and fair for our employees and the customers we serve.

Contributed by Victoria Pruett, Communications Consultant, Employment Connections

Resources

Supervisors & Managers: New email process when offboarding staff.

Good news! Supervisors and managers are no longer required to review mailboxes of offboarded staff for retention labels.

That's correct, supervisors and managers no longer need to review offboarded staff email boxes for retention labels. The Administrative Services Division is happy to let you know they are taking this activity off your plate and that work is now being done for you!

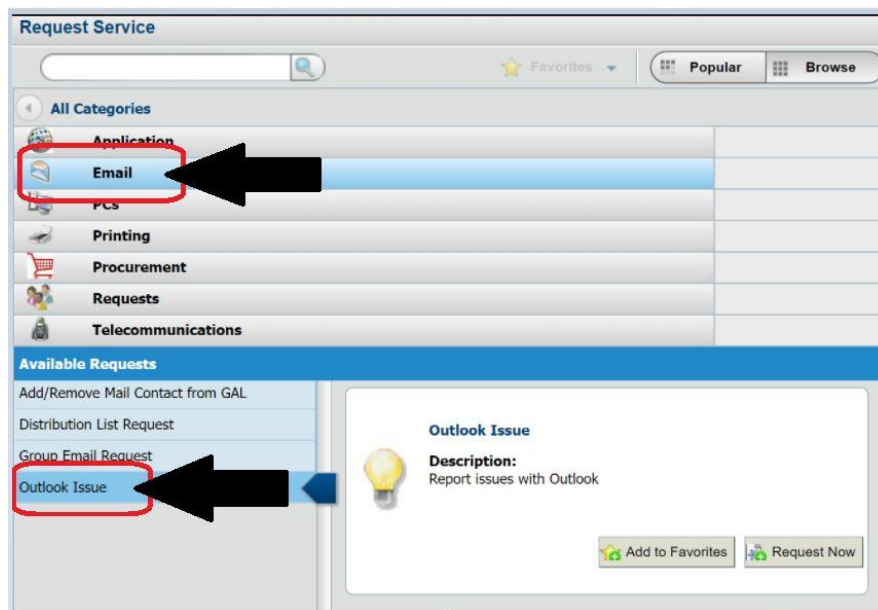
There is a new way to do this work, and you still need to make sure your staff do, in fact, apply retention labels to parent folders in Outlook. Check out the [records management page on InsideESD](#) for written and video guidance.

Why you still might want access to a staff member's active Outlook mailbox before they leave ESD.

Although you are no longer required to review offboarded staff Outlook mailboxes for retention labels, there may be other reasons you want to review someone's mailbox who you know is leaving ESD. The most common reason would be so you can capture contacts and status information for current projects to ensure continuity of activity and proper handoff to someone else on the team.

How to request access to a staff member's active Outlook mailbox who will be leaving ESD

- You need to submit a Remedy ticket **on or before** a staff member's last day to request access to that staff member's active mailbox.
 - Select **Email** and then **Outlook Issue**.



- You will receive an email when the offboarding staff's mailbox is at the bottom of the left-hand column in your Outlook mailbox – typically within 24 hours after you request access to it.

- The offboarding staff's mailbox will be available to you for 30 calendar days from the day you receive access to it.
- Remember, unless you request access to it, an offboarded staff's mailbox will be deleted the day after their last day.
 - **Requesting access to the mailbox is not possible once it has been deleted.**

Questions? Don't hesitate to email the records management team at AskRecords@esd.wa.gov.

Thank you for all you do for ESD! You are greatly appreciated!

Contributed by Emily Jitske Kok, Public Records Manager, ESD Administrative Services Division

Management Tips from Harvard Business Review and University of Washington.

Compassionate and versatile leaders are breaking the mold and impacting business outcomes.

With employee engagement waning, burnout on the rise, and employees quitting their jobs even in the middle of financial uncertainty, organizations are having to pay attention and take a hard look at employee retention.

Employment Connections recognizes and appreciates the value and loyalty it has in its tenured employees and the institutional knowledge they bring. While wages and benefits are important, lasting employee loyalty is usually something deeper. Loyalty isn't bought, it comes from a deeper connection to feeling valued and supported, and in our work, the altruistic nature of serving and changing lives for the better.



The University of Washington News (UW News) and Harvard Business Review (HBR) both have recent articles with supporting research showing that leaders who are versatile and lead with a compassionate and pro-social focus bring benefits in terms of decreased executive turnover, employee-friendly policies, increased customer satisfaction and greater engagement in socially responsible activities. Research from UW Foster School of Business found that leaders who engage in prosocial behavior – activities that primarily help others – are more likely to make decisions that benefit people and increase company value.



Harvard's behavioral research on compassionate leaders is supported by data that employee retention is based more on relationships than economics. A sense of belonging, feeling valued by leaders and having caring and trusting colleagues are the reasons employees stay.

Additional studies on versatility were conducted over the last three years looking at a range of leadership styles and capabilities. Cumulative data indicates that over the last 25 years, versatility has grown in importance, reaching a peak during the pandemic, and now, continues to be a stronger component of effective leadership than in pre-Covid times. The correlation between versatility and several leadership outcomes – employee engagement, team agility, productivity, and effectiveness – have all been strengthened.

For more information on how leaders are changing the face of business, check out the following:

[Prosocial CEOs increase company value, stakeholder satisfaction](#), UW NEWS, February 2023.

[Leading with Compassion has Research-Backed Benefits](#), HBR Behavioral Science, February 2023.

[It Takes Versatility to Lead in a Volatile World](#), HBR Management Styles, March 2023.

Contributed by Victoria Pruett, Communications Consultant, Employment Connections

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