

# The Connection

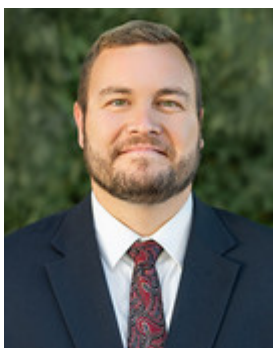
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Welcome to the Employment Connections (EC) Division's newsletter - The Connection! This newsletter focuses on sharing information to support, connect, engage and excel.

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



Hello, Employment Connections team!

During the last few months, we've experienced even more unexpected change. This week we've had a particularly emotional impact with the loss of some of our teammates. I know that you are experiencing a grieving process. I'm feeling it too and want you to know that your leadership team and I want to do everything we can to support you.

It's hard to remember the days when I could send a message out that didn't reference change. This new environment isn't unique to our agency or our division. Our ability to shift quickly and stay focused on what is most important is what is keeping us grounded and relevant. It hasn't been easy, but I see many signs that we are adapting to a new way of doing business. I greatly appreciate your willingness to try new approaches and learn from each other. It has never been more important to work together as a team.

With our division's growth in mind, I'm pleased to share with you some organizational changes that I am making effective today to align our division's structure with our priority needs. For those of you who work in our WorkSource centers, you might not notice the impact of these changes right away, but I am confident that, over time, you will see great positive impacts.

You all are familiar with the four pillars of the Employment Connections Recovery Plan from earlier messages. Today I want to focus on two additional areas that are central to our success. The first is the **WIT (ETO) Replacement Project** and the second is the development of a more structured **Hybrid Service-Delivery Model**.

### **WIT (ETO) Replacement Project**

There is no getting around the fact that our current Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) system is a pain point—for us, for our partners and for those who fund our programs. We must have the right business focus and leadership over the project if we want to

ensure the next system will meet our business needs. Nona Mallicoat understands our business, our programs, and our agency's requirements better than most. She has demonstrated a great ability to work under pressure and deliver solid outcomes throughout the pandemic. For this reason, I have asked Nona to serve as the Deputy Director of Employment Connections and I am appointing Nona as the WIT Replacement Project Owner. Many of you will be involved in supporting this project and Nona is looking forward to working closely with you and on your behalf. Nona will continue to be responsible for her overseeing Central Operations work, the WIT Replacement Project and serve as my primary back-up in EC in her new role as Deputy Director.

The next organizational change which is related to supporting the WIT Replacement Project involves the Program Integrity Office that previously reported to Nona. Elizabeth Court has hit the ground running since she joined us as the Program Integrity Manager in August. This is a great fit for her! She is an essential part of our EC strategic leadership team and as such will now report directly to me. This will allow me to work more closely with the Program Integrity Office and provide Nona more bandwidth to focus on the WIT Replacement project.

In addition, the Washington Service Corps (WSC) will join the Program Integrity Office. While the scope of the WSC extends beyond the WorkSource system, it is absolutely aligned with our division's values and goals. Elizabeth has a strong history of supporting WSC and is one of their greatest fans. This team has done an amazing job pivoting to promote their members in new ways, and I'm looking forward to watching them continue to innovate and transform.

### **Hybrid Service-Delivery Model**

A year and a half ago, our shift to 100% telework prompted us to quickly adopt a virtual service delivery model. While we did an outstanding job adapting in this way to keep serving some of our customers, this was also challenging for the many customers who depend on our in-person staffing support and access to technology. Now that we're serving customers in our physical offices, we have an opportunity to serve customers who need in-person services while maintaining virtual services to those who prefer them. I am committed to finding the best balance of in-person and virtual service delivery to meet both our staff and our customers' needs. I've asked Anne Goranson to champion this work by serving as EC's Virtual Services Manager. She and our Regional Directors will work together to design a hybrid service delivery model that builds on the gains we have already made. Anne has a passion for virtual work and during the pandemic has led multiple virtual projects from a customer-centered perspective. She will work with Mary Zavala and David Gutierrez to connect the Labor and Industries Reemployment, Live Chat, and Virtual Trade Act teams with local WorkSource activities to meet customer needs. To be clear, the virtual services team's focus will be on partnering with local offices to enhance service delivery efficiency and effectiveness to the benefit of the customer.

Each of these changes provides us with the right structure to focus on these priorities. If you're feeling the swirl of continuous change starting to get you down, I hope you'll join me in finding ways to ground yourself in what is most important, focusing on supporting each other and doing everything we can to serve our communities.

Thank you for supporting each other and our customers.

*Jairus Rice*

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## Employment services

With so many transitions happening, our Programs team put together a consolidated training schedule to help staff and supervisors more quickly identify dates and times for upcoming Program trainings.

[Here](#) you'll find the consolidated schedule of EC Program Trainings currently available through January 2022. If you have any questions, please reach out to [Sandy Crews](#).

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## What's happening

### ***Referral help needed!***

Do you know someone who would be a great fit for our team? We're hiring and need your help!

Employment Connections is hiring across all regions in support of the work we do within the WorkSource partnership and we need your help in finding talented people with great customer service skills to join us.

This is a great time to reach out to individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills sets and life experiences. The ESD values lens prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. We're looking for new team members who encompass our values, reflects the communities that we serve, and are ready to be part of the meaningful work that you do!

Great people know great people – so if you know someone you think would meet these requirements and enhance our agency, please share the following link to the job listing and encourage them to apply.

[Employment Development Specialist | Job Details tab | Career Pages \(governmentjobs.com\)](#)

OR

Have them [Register here for our Virtual Q & A Session to learn more about working at your local WorkSource Center as one of our Employment Development Associates.](#)

In return you will receive a \$50 Amazon gift card if someone you refer is hired into any role in Employment Connections! Make sure they indicate that they are an employee referral and include your name in the supplemental questions section of the application.

Applications must be received by November 20th and include the name of the referrer. Applicants cannot be a current ESD employee. Limit one \$50 gift card award per employee; \$50 is only awarded when referral is hired.

HR is not staffed to provide updates on your referrals, but we will thank you via email for every referral and you will be notified if a referral is hired. If you have questions, you can contact our recruiting team.

### ***National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2021***

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month! The theme for this year is “America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion.” This theme aims to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to employment and community involvement during this period of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking for ways to commemorate National Disability Employment Awareness Month? Browse the [DOL website](#) for ideas and resources for employers, community organizations, state and local governments, advocacy groups and schools.

EC’s own Ed Looby offered important perspective in [this week’s NewsNet Top Story](#). Understanding how people with disabilities are impacted is important so that we can meet their needs. Thank you, Ed!

You can also find the President’s Proclamation on National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2021, [here](#).

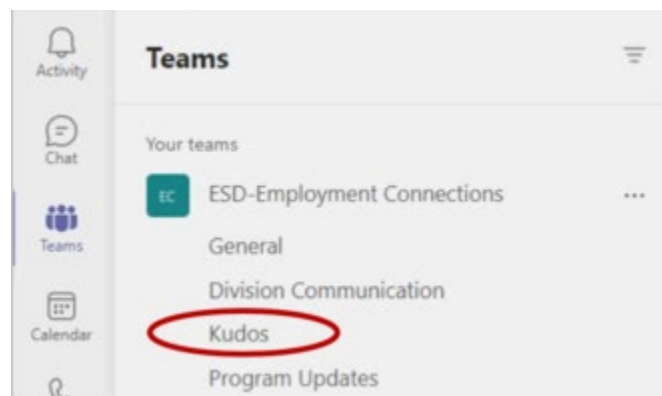


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## Kudos

### ***Kudo submissions***

With the creation of the Employment Connections Teams channel, we want to remind you that there is an exciting Kudos feature! Give your coworkers kudos on an open canvas, utilizing this new channel as a fun virtual recognition board! Share stories, comments, your appreciation and even a GIF or emoji to help share your kudo 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.

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