

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!

Hands down, the highlight of my summer has been getting out to visit your offices. Thank you all for welcoming me and sharing insight about you and your communities. I've been inspired by your ideas, your dedication, and your customer focus. It's easy to find folks who can learn how to perform a job well. It's much more challenging to pull teams together who strive for continuous improvement, teamwork and service that exceeds expectations. I love seeing the examples of how we are developing just that within our division. I still have more visits to make, and I look

forward to each of them.

One of the key elements that successful teams use is data to help drive decisions. I'm a big believer in data and using it to support managing government just as if it were a business. We've had limitations around the availability of data and reports in the past, and that is leading us to create a vision for how we collect and report key information in the future.

This vision represents a return to solid, performance-based management practices. Data should lead to effective decision making that ensures we're using our resources as efficiently as possible. We will work toward an end state in which data is used regularly to support and improve business processes for our customers.

I've heard that during the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) days, leaders sometimes focused on corrective action of people rather than processes. For those of you who have been with ESD a while, you'll be happy to hear that this is not a return to GMAP. In a strong performance management environment, individual team members must feel safe to take risks and try new strategies, even before evidence supports those actions. What we learn from our mistakes is as important as what we learn from positive outcomes. Transparency, integrity, accountability, empowerment, and curiosity are all crucial components of the environment we are working to create and sustain. Collaboration will be recognized over competition, and we'll plan for incremental, targeted changes.

It's been a while since we've reviewed reports together. We'll be working together to find opportunities to support both statewide and regional approaches that will make a difference for our customers.

In this edition of "The Connection" you'll find more information below about the Labor Market Economic Analysis' (LMEA's) Workforce and Labor Market team. Tammi, Byron and Lucy have provided excellent support in the few months that this team has been coming together. As they develop new reports and resurrect old ones, they are already playing an important role as we develop our vision!

While we try out new habits, we'll have lots of opportunities for discussion. There are always stories that the reports can't tell us—but you can! I'm looking forward to those conversations.

Thank you for supporting each other and our customers.

Jairus Rice

Project updates

The Auburn Qtrac Experience

Since the Qtrac soft launch on June 30th, the Auburn WorkSource office has been a trailblazer in the rollout of this scheduling tool. Many other offices are slowly gaining a better understanding of what Qtrac can do for them and for their customers. We've asked some of the Auburn team members for feedback on their experience and want to share their story.

To read their story, click [here](#).

Thank you, WorkSource Auburn, for allowing us to learn from you!



Resources

Workforce and Labor Market Team

There is a new unit within the agency fully focused on supporting Employment Connections vision for data driven performance management. In collaboration with EC leadership, the team has been laser focused on leveraging a variety of existing data sets and exploring ways to display that data to help us tell our data story.

The Workforce and Labor Market team is led by one of our own! Tammi Leclerc served in Employment Connections at the Cowlitz/Wahkiakum WorkSource and transitioned into Human Resources, supporting our Professional Pathways Program.

She is a true advocate for our data needs and someone who “gets it” from our perspective.

“We are here to help the Employment Connections unit feel data empowered and data supported!” - Tammi Leclerc



The new unit currently has three dedicated team members. They are working on strategic dashboards, operational data extraction tools, program data visualizations and are working to support accessibility pathways, so Employment Connections can tap into even more data channels.

Introducing the Workforce and Labor Market Team!



Lucy Pick - Management Analyst

Lucy works with programs and EC leaders to develop business intelligence dashboards and support telling data stories. Her superpower is connecting the dots between the data and the story it's telling.



Byron Mukai - Economic Analyst

Byron works with pulling the data, supporting COVID grant reporting and is our data adhoc specialist. Byron's superpower is going into the depths of the data wells and finding usable data, which were never known to be an option.



Tammi Leclerc - Supervisor

Tammi Leclerc works to support all units with an outward mindset perspective, trying to understand and develop solutions aligned to meet the most amount of needs possible, while also creating a positive working environment. Her superpower is seeking to understand the real need and finding the paths to achieve it – the right way.

Kudos

Kudo submissions

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 newsletter. You can do so by emailing NewsNet@esd.wa.gov. To find all newsletter stories, go to the [NewsNet home page](#) on InsideESD.

A tip from the Harvard Business Review

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” – Plato

Empathy allows us to view life from a different angle and see things from other perspectives, which helps us understand people better. When we do this, we begin to understand where others are coming from, their motivations and aspirations. In uncertain times, it's important to remember this, so we are sharing this Harvard Business Review (HBR) article to help, if you're feeling in need of an additional sense of perspective.

Considering Your Privilege Makes You a Better Colleague

We all benefit from some degree of privilege — whether it's related to your race, gender, abilities, class, or other factors. These facets of our identity are part of our professional lives, whether we like it or not. Acknowledging your privilege can lower your defenses, demonstrate vulnerability, and set the tone for inclusive behaviors. Start by doing some reflecting. Which parts of your identity act as tailwinds in your day-to-day work life? These may be things you hardly ever think about because they rarely face resistance or scrutiny: for example, your education status if you went to college and work in an industry where the majority of your colleagues also went to college. Next, remind yourself that your privileges are not character flaws or reasons to feel ashamed; they're just a part of who you are. Finally, pay attention to what's happening around you. Who is speaking up? Who is not? Who is given the automatic benefit of the doubt? Who must work harder to prove themselves? Becoming more aware of these factors will help you become more empathetic and sets the tone for a more inclusive team culture.

This tip is adapted from “[Talk About Privilege at Work](#),” by Lee Jourdan