



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 the EC Communications email inbox - ESDGPECComms@esd.wa.gov.

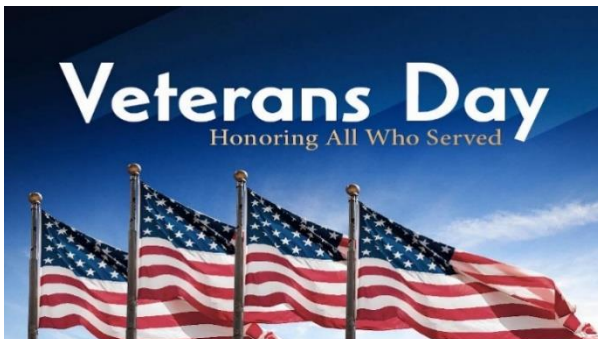
Message from the director

Greetings, Employment Connections team,



With each passing day, we are reminded that fall is in full swing. Clocks will be set back this weekend, and we're preparing for the upcoming holiday season. It's a time of giving thanks and celebrating, and it was exciting to share in the celebration and success of the Employment Connections staff as they completed Professional Pathways! It was a pleasure to participate in the recent graduation ceremony; and I loved seeing all the graduates, local office celebrations, and supporters. Congratulations once again!

November is not just a time of thanksgiving but is also a month in which we honor the brave members of the Armed Services on Veterans Day and respect the societal and cultural impacts of first Americans during Native American Heritage month. This year, it is also a chance to exercise our civic duty and have our voices heard on Election Day.



Since 1919, observed as Armistice Day, Congress officially designated November 11 as a day to honor American veterans of all wars on June 1, 1954. For all of those who have served, I want to extend a deep thank you for your patriotism, love of country, and willingness to sacrifice.



November is also Native American Heritage Month. In November 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a joint resolution designating the full month for recognition. This is an opportunity to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories of our first Americans. It is also a time to educate and raise awareness about the unique challenges Native people face.



Did you know, prior to 1845 there was no set federal election day? As communication technology advanced, the need to hold elections on the same day to avoid states influencing one another was apparent. Congress responded with our current system, designating the Tuesday after the first Monday of November as election day. This allowed farmers to have completed their harvest but was still early enough that severe winter storms wouldn't impact voter turnout.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention my favorite holiday of the year – the United States Marine Corps Birthday. This annual tradition celebrates the establishment of the organization on November 10, 1775, by the Second Continental Congress. On November 10, 2022, Marines across the globe will recognize and acknowledge 247 years of service to their country, the sacrifices made to defend democracy, and the Marine Corps' enduring legacy as America's premier fighting force. So, to all the Marines across ESD, Happy Birthday and Semper Fidelis!



To wrap up, I announced to you back on October 27 my last day with ESD will be on November 7. As I shared, it's been an honor to serve in each of the roles I've held with the agency, and alongside so many great public servants. Again, I want to thank each and every member of Employment Connections for your hard work and dedication to the communities you serve and to each other! You all are having a greater impact than you know, and I wish each of you and your families the very best.

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

Jairus

Jairus Rice

Project updates



A little bit about WIT

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

Such an exciting month! We completed the technical review on the top two candidates and moved one to the workshop phase. I want to once again thank all of the staff who have participated in not only the workshops (which included multiple 6-to-8-hour long meetings with the vendors) but everyone who has been a part of this process so far. It truly has helped us identify the best vendor to partner with moving forward into our new case management system.

We had a great meeting with another state that is very interested in how we set up this procurement, from the governance structure to the demos and workshops, as well as the agile methods we will be using throughout. Washington is definitely a pioneer in the workforce development arena.

I am MOST excited to share that we will hold a vote on the ASB (apparent successful bidder) at the WorkSource I&T Steering Committee meeting on November 7! Once an ASB is formally selected, there are just a few additional steps until we can sign a contract and get the work started. There will still be opportunities for staff to participate over the next year as we are gathering info, building, testing, etc., in an agile environment. For more information on agile – check out this [Agile 101 article](#) on the agilealliance.org website – they also have a lot of other great resources.

As always, if you have feedback, ideas, questions, (or you just want to give someone a Kudos!), please use the [input and questions form](#) located on the [Workforce Professional Center site](#). We review that information often. Also, please don't forget to regularly check out the [Workforce Professional Center](#), which is the best place to get updates on the different facets of this project including the most recent recordings from the town hall, Q&A documents, and project status updates. Until next month... that's a little bit about WIT!

Internal Only: Program Support Specialist - RESEA

Are you or someone you know passionate about supporting our colleagues as they work to get our customers back to work? Do you thrive working in a fast-paced, supportive environment? We are looking for someone that has experience working within the RESEA program and enjoys interpreting and reporting data (Excel). If you have excellent written and verbal communication, and the ability to problem-solve complex issues, we want you to apply! Please check out the full posting [RESEA Program Support Specialist](#). We have included some highlights about the position:

Remote work (with availability for in-person meetings, office visits, etc.)

Salary: \$54,492.00 - \$71,520.00 Annually

Project End Date: 12/31/23

Announcement closes: 11/6/2022

Duties:

1. Create and maintain program specific desk-aides, standard operating policies, and procedures.
2. Design and deliver training(s) for WorkSource staff.
3. Provide technical assistance to the field.
4. Coordinate with other Program Support Specialists to ensure integration across the statewide WorkSource System.
5. Meet regularly with other program support specialists to promote integration and ensure high-quality customer service to all WorkSource staff.
6. Work with area teams to establish or modify processes or procedures and resolve problems.

Submitted by RESEA Program Operator (Position Supervisor) Shellie Dunning

Important Open Positions for WIT Replacement Project

There have been several important positions that have recently been posted on Careers.wa.gov that will support our WIT Replacement Project. You are encouraged to check out the following new recruitments and help us find excellent candidates to lead this work.

New postings include:

- [Business Systems Analyst, Technical Lead](#) – The Senior Business Analyst position will be the lead Business Analyst (BA) in the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) replacement project. This remote position is open continuous with an initial review of applications on November 2.
- [WorkSource IT Architect \(IT Arch SS/ITSD\)](#) - This position serves as a senior technical expert supporting the WorkSource team and is responsible for architecting, engineering, designing, implementing technical solutions for WorkSource. This remote position is open continuous with an initial review of applications on November 3.
- Reminder: [Associate Product Manager](#) was highlighted in last week's weekly roll up and is open continuous.

Submitted by Deputy Director Nona H. Mallicoat

2022 Blueprint for Success

Monthly pillar wrap up

Great updates were shared at the Blueprint for Success Quarterly Town Hall held on October 5, 2022 by all the teams involved in projects in each pillar. Here is a summary of the updates shared:

Support Staff: Research carried out by this team birthed a formula that would guide managers in their decision to determine the ideal hybrid work model by office.

Focus on Equity: According to the data collected from the Top Manager Competencies Survey, the top 3 skills were: 1. Relationship Building and Maintaining 2. Communication 3. Flexibility and adaptability. ANT also shared updates on their inventory project on accessibility tools.

Boost Customer Service:

The team shared updates on the projects they were working on including the outreach strategy interviews and statewide Zoom licenses

Innovate & Adapt:

The Statewide VST were commended for offering significant support in TAA, WorkFirst, RESEA and more.

The new Veterans dashboards was highlighted, and the team talked about the continuing evolution of the data dashboards.

A big thank you to all of the pillar team members who are making movement happen! Reminder, you can find information on each pillar on InsideESD (Will need to update, unable to access InsideESD 11/2 at 14:26). The meeting recording can be found on [Blueprint for Success Quarterly Town Hall, October 5, 2022](#).

REMINDER:

Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) Open Enrollment is Coming November 1st

Open enrollment (OE) is November 1 through November 30, 2022 for the plan year starting January 1, 2023.

There are some actions that you can take to prepare for this time:

- Please make sure your account is active and you can access it at [PEBB My Account](#).
- If you have never logged into your account, please [register](#).
 - While you're there, check out your 'statement of insurance' located in the upper right corner, which will outline the current coverage you have.

Statement of Insurance

Tip: We recommend that you use your personal email address and not your work address in case you transfer to a different agency.

Enrollments, changes, and premiums are effective January 1, 2023.

Important note for supervisors & managers:

You will be receiving several e-mail communications about open enrollment. Please ensure that you forward those communications to your teams.

Submitted by Business Operations Manager Ashley Olson

A Tip from the Harvard Business Review

Use the Office to Rebuild Team Bonds

In today's hybrid world, work is more likely to be a thing you do, not a place you go. If you're looking to motivate employees to come into the office, new research from Microsoft suggests most people want to come in to connect with their colleagues. To make in-person time worthwhile, managers can foster an environment that prioritizes building—or rebuilding—the personal connections that fuel creativity and teamwork. To do this, start by stripping away in-office busywork where you can. Establish norms around expected email response times while in the office, or institute meeting-free days and encourage employees to use that time to catch up informally, face to face. Next, create new in-person rituals, such as catered lunches, workshops, or discussion groups to facilitate camaraderie. Finally, lead by example. When you're in the office, be real, open, and available. Schedule lunches and coffees with your employees. And communicate clearly that you're there to help people connect.

This tip is adapted from [“To Get People Back in the Office, Make It Social,”](#) by Chris Capossela