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

## Message from the Director

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| Jairus Rice 2Greetings, Employment Connections team,Back to school has passed, summer has officially ended and we welcome fall season. It’s even starting to feel like fall too!  This is one of my favorite times of year (I feel like I say that about every time of year 😊).  Football season is officially here, Go Hawks!  You probably don’t know that I’m also an avid archery hunter and this is that time of year also.  Plus, who doesn’t love the smell of pumpkin spice and the slightly crisper morning air on your face when you leave the house.  This month, we want to honor a few different things. Hispanic Heritage month runs from September 15th to October 15th and all of October is National Disability Employment Awareness month.The poster is rectangular in shape with a black colored chalkboard background overlaid with mathematical equations. In the center of the poster, on a diagonal, is a black rectangle bordered by small teal, yellow and red rectangles. It features the 2022 NDEAM theme, (Disability: Part of the Equity Equation,) along with an equation composed of several graphics: a circular photo of a woman in a wheelchair working at a computer with colleagues, followed by a plus sign, followed by a square image of a woman who uses crutches viewing a document with a colleague, followed by an equal sign, followed by a light bulb icon. Across the top of the rectangle in small, white letters are the words National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Along the bottom in small white letters is the hashtag “NDEAM” followed by ODEP’s website address, dol.gov/ODEP. In the lower right corner in white lettering is the DOL seal followed by the words (Office of Disability Employment Policy United States Department of Labor.)National Hispanic Heritage Month is a time for celebrating the culture, art, and achievements of Hispanic people.  As we also celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness month, we recognize the important role people with disabilities play in a diverse and inclusive American workforce. This last week, our Program Operators provided program performance updates across many of our programs including TAA, RESEA, VETS, WorkFirst, and Wagner-Peyser to our EC leaders.   While they all did a spectacular job highlighting important pieces, I wanted to highlight a couple of my takeaways:* The WorkFirst and RESEA actual outcomes are right in line with our contract and grant targets.  Way To Go!!!  Thank you to all of you working so hard to serve customers in these areas.  We also learned that we are undercharging our RESEA grant based on how many customers we’ve served so please…please…please make sure you’re charging all the time you should be for the RESEA work you’re doing.
* In TAA, as we continue to transition from really high enrollment needs to more ongoing case management maintenance, we have opportunities to strengthen our partnership with our Title I partners to ensure the right co-enrollments are happening to meet this shared requirement between TAA and WIOA Dislocated Worker programs.  If you’re working TAA, please ensure you’re making those Title I referrals for your Trade customers and we’d love to hear your ideas on how we might boost co-enrollment.
* In VETS, we’re trending in the right direction for both increasing VET staff caseloads and reducing our percentage of services to non-VETs.  Keep those Veteran referrals coming to your local VET reps.
* From the Wagner-Peyser team, Juan Martinez did an excellent job shepherding a discussion over our Special Population Dashboards.  If you aren’t aware of these dashboards, we now have data dashboards that can help us better understand how we’re serving people with disabilities, people in poverty, BIPOC, and more.  Ask your local leaders how they are using these dashboards to make business decisions in your office.  It’s critical that we continue to deepen our understanding of utilization of this data as we strive to serve equitably.

Last note, the third quarter Blueprint for Success Townhall is live from Kennewick today! All of the EC Strategic Leadership Team, Administrators, Site Managers, Regional Operations Managers, Program Operators and Change Agents are gathered in Kennewick this week for the first in person leadership meeting since the pandemic. Make sure to join us at 1pm. See you there!Thank you all for supporting each other, our customers, and our communities. |



## Project updates



**A little bit about WIT**

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

Well, I am writing this month’s column from lovely Chicago, Illinois, where I am attending the NASWA (National Association of State Workforce Agency) Summit. While here, I have been asked by many other states how our WIT procurement is going, as they are watching the status, interested in the process, and excited to see who we finally select!

Thank you to all of you who were able to attend the demos and provide feedback. I hope you were as thrilled as I was to see what the top three bidders had to share. It’s so nice to see the models…it feels like there is an end in sight! After the demos, the top two bidders were invited to technical reviews. This is where they will sit down with our IT team (and some other interested parties) to discuss how the programs would interact with our current technical systems. Those were scheduled for the last week of September.

If you missed the demos, or if you are just interested in the whole process, there is another opportunity in October to participate. Workshops are being scheduled with the top scoring bidder. These will be interactive sessions, and information will be shared on how to register. Of course, there are still other ways for you to be involved - if you have feedback you want to make sure the WIT replacement team gets, questions you want answered, (or you just want to give someone a Kudos!) please use the [input and questions form](https://forms.office.com/g/i0Svkcfphx) located on the [Workforce Professional Center site](https://wpc.wa.gov/wswa/wit-replacement-project). We review that information often.

Our next WIT town hall is coming up on Friday, October 28th, and we hope to see you at either the morning or afternoon session for the latest updates. By then, we should be wrapping up the workshop process, and will hopefully be able to share next steps!

As always, we encourage you to continue interacting in the WIT replacement process – don’t forget to check out the [Workforce Professional Center](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjA0MDYuNTYwMjcyNjEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3dwYy53YS5nb3Yvd3N3YS93aXQtcmVwbGFjZW1lbnQtcHJvamVjdD91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkifQ.7vm0LsP07UJ5Ehg_yyUUdWdGWZpSYPdky_CsOQS1iS4/s/950343166/br/129425649844-l), which is 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 hall, Q&A documents, project status updates, and the link to submit ideas and questions. Until next month…that’s a little bit about WIT!

**Coming Soon – A Statewide Accessibility Survey from your Accessibility Navigator Team (ANT)!**

Submitted by the Accessibility Navigator Team (ANT)

The secret to any organization’s growth is an environment that motivates and encourages all employees, no matter their abilities or strengths. When we create a level playing field for all, we benefit by attracting skilled professionals and participants and we retain top talent that will foster innovation and loyalty.

Are we being as inclusive as we can be? Are we providing our clients the necessary equipment and resources they really need? Do we know how to communicate effectively with differently abled individuals? Are we approaching equity? Are we actively building our culture with continuous improvement?

Please watch your inbox for more information from Jairus and your regional director or ROM. Your feedback is important!

## 2022 Blueprint for Success

**Monthly pillar wrap up**

We concluded the fifth month of rotating updates on our four pillars in the Weekly Update Rollup! Although this month was quieter, there was still great information shared! Here’s the summary of this last month’s pillar movement.

* Hiring managers were encouraged to leverage 5 different tools that were developed by the Focus on Equity team in upcoming recruitments
* Hiring managers were also encouraged to give feedback on those tools
* The ANT team began research on the “current state” to figure out what resources and support is available within the division, to identify potential gaps and possible solutions
* The ANT team started interviewing EC division leaders and stakeholders that can influence processes, resources, and support

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 - EC Blueprint for Success](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjA4MTAuNjIwNTk2MzEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vaW5zaWRlZXNkLndhLmdvdi91aS13cy9ibHVlcHJpbnQtZm9yLXN1Y2Nlc3M_dXRtX21lZGl1bT1lbWFpbCZ1dG1fc291cmNlPWdvdmRlbGl2ZXJ5In0.ZUdPg26-DghQgMTaey_y04SVlaJbqRf3qdiILOTo854/s/950343166/br/142374657572-l).

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## ****A management tip from the Harvard Business Review****

***Turn a Simple “Hi” into a Fruitful Relationship at Work***

Building relationships at work is more complex than simply “putting yourself out there.” It takes real work. Start by breaking the silence. If you’re working in an office, try placing yourself in a high-traffic area, where you’re more likely to have impromptu conversations with colleagues from across the organization. Or, try showing up a few minutes early to meetings, using that informal time to chat and get to know people. Next, turn your acquaintances into allies by turning one-off conversations into a recurring rapport—following up on whatever you discussed or simply saying “Hi again!” in the hallway. Finally, get proactive about turning rapport into a relationship by scheduling time to chat or grabbing coffee. Eventually, you’ll find yourself benefiting from fruitful mentorships and peer relationships that could ultimately change the course of your career.

**This tip is adapted from “**[**How to Build Real Relationships at Work**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhbr.org%2F2022%2F08%2Fhow-to-build-real-relationships-at-work%3Futm_medium%3Demail%26utm_source%3Dnewsletter_daily%26utm_campaign%3Dmtod_notactsubs&data=05%7C01%7Cjordyn.johnsen%40esd.wa.gov%7Cf8404cf6874c4091ca9d08da9cc90be9%7C11d0e217264e400a8ba057dcc127d72d%7C0%7C0%7C637994684746362401%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=GIrWS0YQIbXora5%2FOjkXf5d5f2jtAGRGXHClQ3yREkw%3D&reserved=0)**,”** by Gorick Ng