



Employment Security's Business Friendly Programs

Washington Pinnacle Award for Business Development Nomination: Employment Security's Business Friendly Programs

Contact Information of Individual Submitting Nomination

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Agency Name: Washington Employment Security Department

Employment Security's Business Friendly Programs

Business Friendly Programs at the Employment Security Department provides an innovative framework to assist businesses in Washington state. The project engages staff from the SharedWork program, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Bonding Program, the Employer Tax Unit, our Labor Market and Economic Analysis team and the Paid Family and Medical Leave project, and encourages collaboration with private, public, non-profits and association partners focused on business engagement.

The purpose is to delight Washington businesses and serve as co-partners with various state and local agencies, industry, associations, labor, workforce systems, and community and technical colleges to support businesses thriving in Washington. The program has high visibility, is of interest to the media, affects other agencies and/workforce system partners and is of interest to or impacts elected officials.

The primary focus is to shape business services to meet the demands of local and regional economies in a seamless manner—rather than in silos. This program is flexible to identify high volume requests to customize business outreach and to provide integrated business support.

Businesses have multiple points of entry for government services and Employment Security Department wants to expand where businesses can find their supportive programs. While we currently work together in an informal way, we hope to formalize an interagency agreement between ESD, Department of Revenue (DOR) and Department of Labor and Industries (LNI) to institutionalize the partnership of collaborative business outreach and engagement. In 2018, Employment Security Department's Business Friendly Programs demonstrated partnership development and provided facilitation services with the Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT), a constructive and information-sharing team comprised of the Governor's 27 cabinet level agencies. Agencies built a strategic plan to coordinate outreach, relationship building and regulatory requirements to streamline and reduce redundancy of similar efforts to engage employers. The result is a new website, [BUSINESS.WA.GOV](https://www.business.wa.gov), incorporating all SBLT member "trending" information for businesses and providing information about upcoming events and business support services. During 2018, Business Friendly Programs coordinated statewide workshops with the Washington State Labor Council, WIOA partners and layoff aversion strategy programs. Workshop audiences included WorkSource Business Engagement Teams and to Workforce Development Councils, who provide local business outreach. Presentations to business association leaders provided the opportunity to include newsletter articles to their constituents and assisted in the buildup of long-term partnerships.

This framework identifies the key components to a stabilized team, the Business Friendly Programs at Employment Security Department.

Statement of results, accomplishments, impacts and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts were an exceptional contribution.

ESD improved and better aligned communication with local WorkSource offices, Workforce Development Councils, other state agencies, associations and regional economic development partners, resulting in an increase in requests for workshop presentations and coordinated efforts with local jurisdictions to support combined economic initiatives. The Business Friendly Programs workshop trained ESD and Workforce business engagement teams and rapid response coordinators with a statewide live webcast for all WorkSource offices that provide business services to educate their staff and provide excellent customer service.

Business Friendly Programs hosted or shared exhibit tables at statewide conferences with more than 1,450 in attendance.

Approximately 181,000 businesses received the Business Friendly Programs mail insert/promotional information in their annual tax notice.

As noted in the U.S.DOL Promote & Enroll grant for SharedWork, we targeted 31,000 businesses in Washington in 2018 with a promotional campaign, based on their regional economic impacts of metal/aluminum and agricultural trade concerns. KOMO-AM Radio, which serves the I-5 corridor provided 15 days of 10-second live ads regarding SharedWork to target businesses impacted by the viaduct removal project in downtown Seattle. Social media campaign metrics (Facebook/Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter) showed increased levels of engagement through likes, clicks and shared content.

SharedWork approved 480 plans for 434 employers and 8,804 workers. This prevented nearly \$6.5 million in unemployment benefit payments.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit certifications increased in 2018 from 2017, based on ESD.WA.GOV webpage information, the fillable federal forms online and the promotion of the program statewide—resulting in an \$8 million dollar increase in federal tax credits.

Other significant contributions

Innovative Initiative: Rafael Colón and Shelley Ackroyd integrated their Business Friendly Programs initiative with the U.S. DOL Promote and Enroll STC grant to expand the outreach of both SharedWork and other ESD employer focused services and programs and develop an innovative initiative to support businesses during their job retention and layoff aversion efforts. They presented an overview on how all of the programs blend together at each two-hour workshop, providing businesses with valuable insight to state government resources, services and programs, without having to make the connection themselves. Qualitative feedback at the end of presentations was overwhelmingly positive.

National Impact: ESD researched each state's Employment Services department website and noted that there was not any specific combined program service delivery such as the Business Friendly Programs at ESD. This model is successful, because of the support of ESD and all of the 27 state agencies on the Small Business Liaison Team, mandated by executive order in 2013 by Governor Christine Gregoire. Rafael and Shelley have the profound expertise, knowledge, skills and communication abilities to work with any state who may want to combine delivery of services to businesses across state agencies, using the model they have demonstrated.

Examples of work

WA_Pinnacle_Biz_Documentation.docx

BusinessFriendlyPrograms-Mailinsert-SPANISH-181221.pdf

BusinessFriendlyPrograms-Mailinsert-181204.pdf

Business_Friendly_Programs_-_Leave_Behind_181109.pdf

SharedWork_Postcard-3up-20181101.pdf

leverage-tax-dollars.pdf