



Suzi Levine and Lissa Kissler with the state of Washington pose with award  
Submitted by [Deja' Morrison](#) on February 06, 2020

# Washington State Receives National Innovation Award for Information Technology

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## For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON – This week at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' (NASWA) 2020 Winter Policy Forum in Washington, D.C., the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) received the prestigious Merrill Baumgardner Innovation in Information Technology Award, presented by the NASWA Technology Committee. This award recognizes states demonstrating excellence and innovation in Information Technology.

Washington ESD received the award for its Paid Family and Medical Leave Technology Platform that was the first of its kind to be built outside a temporary disability system. Washington took an innovative approach building this platform by establishing a change-tolerant culture, adopting flexible methods and mindsets, and applying a process of prioritizing the work to align with technology industry standards instead of traditional government technology projects. The new program's launch was highly successful due to incorporating responsive systems and processes to coach individuals through change and to evaluate user experience, usability and accessibility.

"It is exciting to see states such as Washington develop innovative ways to serve individuals through the launch of new programs," said Scott B. Sanders, Executive Director of NASWA. "This new Paid Family and Medical Leave technology platform is an excellent example of this kind of new innovation as well as providing a model for other states to follow and adopt."

"The Employment Security Department is making Washington proud with its new Paid Family & Medical Leave program," said Commissioner Suzi LeVine. "All thanks go to my amazing staff always working to improve the lives of Washingtonians."

For more information about NASWA's Winter Policy Forum, visit <https://www.naswa.org/conferences/2020-winter-policy-forum>, and for more information about NASWA's Technology Committee, visit [www.naswa.org/about-policy-committees](http://www.naswa.org/about-policy-committees).