
Few things are as impactful as the power of a job. Jobs lift up individuals of all skill levels and place them on a track to success. Jobs inspire youth to engage in career-connected learning and apprenticeships. And jobs power our businesses and spur our economy to success. In 2017, the Employment Security Department's Customer First focus continued to support our mission to connect employers and job seekers—supporting transitions to new jobs and empowering careers.

We launched a new, more secure unemployment insurance eServices system to help people access their benefits and other services online 24/7. We began work to implement Washington's new Paid Family and Medical Leave program to help families and employers weather life's changes. We also continued to improve information technology, facilities and customer service to businesses and job seekers across Washington.

Power of a Job spotlights job seeker and employer successes

In fall 2017, as Congress contemplated completing eliminating funding for state employment services, workforce leaders, governors and others rallied to demonstrate the tremendous value these grants deliver to our communities, state and nation. Since 1933, these grants have supported states' ability to support a wide range of workers and industries, helping veterans and their families find jobs, providing employers with recruiting assistance and job-readiness training for employees, and supporting innovative job training and apprenticeship programs.

In Washington, WorkSource staff help thousands of employers fill hundreds of thousands of jobs, working with individuals or larger groups like the Washington Hospitality and Retail associations.

Decimating employment services grants would mean a \$15 million reduction to Washington, threatening to close more than half of the state's nearly 60 WorkSource centers, eliminating as many as 150 WorkSource staff positions, curtailing partner services and resulting in 50,000 Washington workers not finding jobs.

To help tell our story, ESD launched our weekly series #PowerofaJob, spotlighting individuals and businesses who benefit from our workforce development system. Video testimonials of WorkSource staff and all the customers they've helped poignantly showcase our many successes. Find us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter using the hashtag #powerofajob.

Governor's Career Connect Washington provides millions in grants to help local youth

Job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships are just a few of the career connections that will become available to 29,000 students by September 2019-- thanks to \$6.4 million in new Career Connect Washington federal grant funding distributed by the ESD this fall.

Grantees expect to provide STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning experiences and job shadowing with local employers. They'll also offer career planning and over 4,800 new internships, pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships in fields like advanced manufacturing, health care, agricultural irrigation systems, building trades, IT and maritime manufacturing.

The grants support the Career Connect Washington initiative Gov. Inslee launched May 31 at the Governor's Summit on Career Connected Learning, which attracted more than 1,200 participants from 27 sites around the state. The initiative's goal is to connect 100,000 students during the next five years with employer internships, registered apprenticeships, and other career connected learning to prepare them for high-demand jobs.

New Paid Family and Medical Leave program on fast track to reality

Starting in 2020, Washington will be the fifth state in the nation to offer paid family and medical leave benefits to workers and employers. ESD will administer the program and employees and employers share the cost of the premiums. This insurance program will allow workers to take necessary time to welcome a new child into their family, for an extended illness or injury, or to care for an ill or ailing relative. As directed by the Legislature, **premium assessment begins on Jan. 1, 2019, and benefits will be available on Jan. 1, 2020.** This was an amazing bipartisan effort, supported by business and labor.

ESD has hired a top-notch team to develop this new state program. Rulemaking and system development are well underway, on schedule and within budget. Public meetings are held at every stage of the rulemaking process, and online feedback is being accepted as well. Statewide public information outreach efforts will get underway in 2018.

Employee engagement at ESD soars, building better customer service for Washingtonians

ESD trained more than 600 employees in human-centered customer service, introduced new leadership and respect training, and continued to emphasize a Lean culture of continuous improvement—and our [2017 State Employee Survey](#) results improved in every area—on every single question. Year over year, we saw:

- A 13-point increase in those who say they “have opportunities to learn and grow”—a 22-point increase since 2013.
- A 12-point increase in those who say they are “encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things”—another 22-point increase since 2013.
- A 9-point increase in those who say they’re “satisfied with their jobs”—a 19-point jump from 2014.

WorkSource JBLM is first on a Washington military installation, one of the first in the nation

Transitioning military service members and their families, civilian contractors and members of the National Guard now have more robust job search, training and transition resources on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Gov. Jay Inslee, Maj. Gen. Mark R. Stammer and Col. Dan Morgan joined ESD and other state, local and Workforce Development Council leaders from Pierce and Thurston counties to cut the ribbon for the first fully integrated WorkSource One Stop American Job Center facility on a military installation in Washington—and one of the first in the nation.

ESD upgrades facilities and improves services for customers

In an effort to continuously improve the workplace for staff, partners and customers, ESD’s facilities unit remodeled eight facilities to provide new modern workspaces for our customers and employees. The unit also transitioned 22 facilities to a new centralized security access system, installed panic alarm systems in every office statewide, and transitioned more than 900 staff and partners to electric adjustable sit-stand desks. ESD’s Facilities and Information Technology units completed Wi-Fi installation at all major WorkSource centers, added wireless printing capability for our customers and started upgrading phones to VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) to reduce the cost of phone service in our offices.

Unemployment drops to lowest recorded level, more than 95,000 jobs added in all 13 industry sectors

State economy remains strong: Unemployment in Washington dropped from 5.1 percent in December 2016 to 4.5 percent in December 2017 as the state experienced the lowest unemployment in recent history. Washington added an estimated 95,500 new jobs from December 2016 to December 2017, not seasonally adjusted. The private sector grew by 84,100 jobs, and the public sector increased by 11,400 jobs. All of the state’s 13 industry sectors added jobs. The three industry sectors with the largest employment gains were professional and business services (14,300), construction (14,000) and education and health services (12,700). L
WorkSource: For the latest reporting period (CY2016 Q2-CY2017 Q1), WorkSource helped 129,667 job seekers find jobs. Since WorkSourceWA.com launched in 2016, 11,722 employers have posted 393,521 jobs and 272,936 job seekers have registered to post their resumes, apply for jobs and more.

Veteran hiring remains strong: Washington’s YesVets initiative continues to attract new businesses interested in hiring veterans. Since the initiative launched in February 2016, more than 580 businesses have hired nearly 2,250 veterans. Check out: www.yesvets.org

UI Fraud Prevention: In 2017, the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) investigated roughly 26,000 cases of possible fraud and prevented the loss of \$2.9 million in unemployment insurance benefits. They turned \$9 million more over to ESD’s collections division to recover.

New eServices give unemployed workers and businesses 24/7 access to information

In January 2017, ESD unveiled an upgraded online system to serve workers and businesses. Unemployment claimants previously enjoyed some self-service capability, but they now can apply for benefits, submit weekly claims and find information. They also have an easier way to ask questions and get answers about benefits, including how much they’ll be paid and whether ESD has processed their payment. They can update account information like email addresses, mailing addresses and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) for our phone system—and more! Unemployment benefits are now also available via debit card for those wishing to eliminate the hassle of paper checks. More than 270,000 claimants have registered for eServices accounts and we’ve made more than 2.5 million payments totaling more than \$1.13 billion.

ESD/WDCs help challenging populations find jobs

In 2014, Gov. Jay Inslee and the U.S. Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, met with ESD staff and asked us to help those left behind by the economic recovery. ESD built three innovative initiatives to help the long-term unemployed, military veterans and older workers find jobs. The Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant, the last of the three still in effect, surpassed its goal of helping 835 people and moved 854 people into employment: another example of ESD and WDCs taking on a difficult challenge and succeeding!