

# Workforce Services Division



— February 27, 2025 —

Welcome to Workforce Services Division (WSD) newsletter - *The Connection*! This newsletter focuses on sharing information to connect, engage, support and excel. You can read regular updates on projects and programs, and this month's message from Director Ismaila (Ish) Maidadi.

In 2025, we will look at how to improve our team communications and the newsletter name will be changing. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please send them to the [WSD Virtual Suggestion Box](#); and for newsletter article ideas and comments, you can share those by emailing the WSD Communications [inbox](#), and we'll be in touch with you!

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## Message from Ismaila (Ish) Maidadi



Greetings, Team!

This month, I will share my thoughts about performance. But first, I want to commemorate [Black History Month](#). It is important for us to honor and celebrate the amazing contributions and rich legacy of Black leaders and communities throughout history, and this year's theme is African Americans and Labor. Each February, we remember our collective responsibility to foster equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. Thank you for joining us to support belonging!

And now, on to performance!

Your leaders have been diving into critical performance metrics work. Most of you rightly focus on customers. While you hear and share great customer success stories (keep them coming, please!), our funders—whether legislative bodies, the U.S. Department of Labor, Congress, or our new governor—rely on performance metrics to assess our impact and success. I don't have to tell you how crucial that is in today's environment. Our performance data speaks volumes about our achievements.

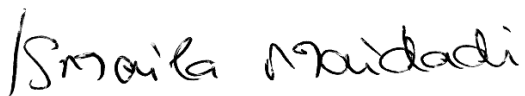
Rob Crow, Alberto Isiordia, John Dickson, and others have been diligently updating our reports to position us to highlight what truly matters. I want to express my deepest gratitude to them. We refer to these new measures as our "paramount measures," and you will be hearing about them regularly. Your hard work in ensuring these reports are accurate and relevant is deeply appreciated.

A few things to keep in mind about performance:

- Performance reports should start conversations. We don't make decisions solely on numbers. When used effectively, reports should spark curiosity and drive us to learn more.
- Stewardship is a core ESD value. Holding ourselves accountable, increasing efficiency and improving service to customers go hand in hand with stewardship.
- Red is not bad. When we aren't meeting performance, we have an opportunity to lean in with honesty and transparency. It's okay to miss the mark, especially when trying something new. This gives us a chance to adjust and try again.

All these elements were present during our Performance Review Team meeting at the end of January. It was great to hear how leaders across our division shared ideas to help each other. That's exactly our goal! I hope to see teams across our division expanding that spirit in new ways as we show everyone the importance of our service.

Thank you for your dedication!



Ismaila (Ish) Maidadi, Director  
Workforce Services Division (WSD)

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## Black History Month: African Americans and Labor



This year's theme highlights the significant contributions of African Americans in the workforce throughout history. Here are some resources on Black History Month — virtual and local:

- ESD LMS eLearning on Black History Month: Register for [Module 1](#), [Module 2](#) and [Module 3](#).
- Celebrations this month and into March, check [KNKX.org](#) and [The Seattle Times](#).
- [Smithsonian Institute: events and information](#)
- [Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#) (ASALH) and [BiM2025](#).

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## Leadership Highlight



### Leading with humility and strength

Submitted by Victoria Pruett, WSD communications consultant



In a recent conversation with Joe Vansyckle, WSD Southwest Coastal Region director, I had the opportunity to ask him about learning to lead and asked him to answer the question:

**What are the defining moments in your career that shaped your leadership style?**

Here is his response.

*Early in my career, when I was hired as a manager at Microsoft, my supervisor had the best executive corner office in the building. Surprisingly, she gave it to me so that I could have the experience and perspective that came with an important view. It was an incredible experience, and in time, I was able to pay it forward for another colleague. It was a gift to work for a leader that could identify people's strengths and play to everyone's natural abilities in building a team. It was a creative culture that provided the conditions to engage and collaborate.*

*In 2016, as chief learning officer for Washington, my assignment was to change the culture by overhauling trainings, designing a leadership development program and revamping learning. I had never led at that level — with a huge team, launching several big initiatives. At Microsoft, I worked in technology with unlimited support*

*and resources. Now, I had to create, direct and develop the culture to get the work done. My failure was in thinking it all rested on me. It was the most stressful time of my life.*

*During the first three months, I also had the hard task of laying off 33% of the staff. When we experience overwhelm, it's natural that we revert to old ways of doing things. Those stress responses can get in the way, and I made some decisions that I had to reflect on.*

*My defining moment was when one manager pulled me aside to let me know my stress was tangible and that I didn't need to do it alone... After the layoffs, another courageous person gave me feedback that my decisions weren't informed by sharing: "I don't think you made decisions based on what people do and who they are." In that moment, all the pressure seemed overwhelming...*

*My language was 'get it done.' I know now that I must acknowledge and be thoughtful of stress for myself and others and remind myself not to revert to command and control.*

*My gifts were that I had a great manager who could see that I had challenges and a staff member who was humble and could come to me... There was a lot of growth for me that came after that in applying and integrating those experiences. I'll never forget it, and it was transformational.*

*We are leading through difficult times. I remind myself daily to reflect on: What I am here for, Who I am doing it for, and I ask myself how it aligns with my values.*

Our conversation was heartfelt, and we closed on how Joe manages stress and stays centered. He loves being on the move and makes sure to have a life outside of work where he gets out and stays active. This season, he's teaching snowboarding and in summer it will be surfing. Joe admitted to always being the team mascot and cheerleader. He is a consummate team builder. Not surprising when you learn his [Clifton Strengths](#) are Strategic, Futuristic, Ideation, Communication and Connectedness.



**Joe in his element teaching snowboard mastery — Welcome to 7<sup>th</sup> Heaven, Stevens Pass, Wash.!**

Joe's addiction: [7<sup>th</sup> Heaven to Rock Garden to Little Tree](#), BrandonBoarder.

*"Joe is great at providing feedback and coaching and is always at the ready to help you develop whatever skills you need or want."*

*Em Hinkle*

*"Joe has an exceptional ability to inspire and guide the SWC team with his leadership and Outward Mindset, support. He always encourages us to think outside the box and supports our growth."*

*Sean Wiley*

*"Joe inspires his team daily to be their best self. His positive energy is contagious, he really lights up a room! Master cake maker... and he likes to share!!!"*

*Chad Sellers*

*"Some things about Joe..."*

***Kind, Thoughtful, and Caring:*** A constant pillar of support and compassion.

***Loyal and Protective:*** Always ready to stand up for his team without hesitation.

***Innovative and Forward-Thinking:*** Consistently challenges the status quo and advocates for new and better ways of doing things.

***Helpful and Growth-Oriented:*** Seeks out opportunities to assist others and foster development."

*Kendall King*

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## Project updates

### WIT is on the move and WA Works is coming!

*Contributed by WIT Replacement Project communications team, Latasha Hudson and Allison Mountjoy*

#### Introducing WA Works!

Say "Hello" to WA Works — the new case management solution for WorkSource professionals!



The new solution is being built with you in mind. That means better technology designed to make your work easier so you can spend more time on what is important - helping our customers. Get ready to say “Goodbye” to ETO and “Hello” to a new and improved experience.

**Help shape WA Works.** See the design process and [share your feedback at the next Sprint Review](#).

**Check out the new WIT Hub on Workforce Professionals Center**

Our main project page on WPC has gotten its own makeover! Renamed **The WIT Hub**, this page will be your go-to resource for all things WA Works and the new [WorkSourceWA](#) website.

Get the latest project updates, share feedback and find answers to frequently asked questions. Plus, you will get a first look at Ready. Set. Go! - your path to launch. We have you covered, so you can move toward launch with confidence.



Explore the [WIT Hub](#) and don't forget to [let us know what you think!](#)

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## Resources

### Washington Working Families Tax Credit

*Submitted by Victoria Pruett, WSD communications consultant*

#### Tax refund for Washington workers!

**Are you or your customers eligible for Washington’s Working Families Tax Credit?**

Low-to-moderate income individuals and families are eligible for Washington’s Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) if they meet certain requirements including age, residence, tax and income thresholds. For 2024, qualifying applicants may receive up to \$1,290 as a refund of a portion of state sales tax paid; and if you apply and are eligible, you can submit for prior years as well.

The income table below is adjusted each year increasing the maximum credit amount that is possible.



Number of qualifying children	Applicant must make less than the following		Maximum refund
	Single	Married (filing jointly)	
0	\$18,591	\$25,511	\$325
1	\$49,084	\$56,004	\$640
2	\$55,768	\$62,688	\$965
3 or more	\$59,899	\$66,819	\$1,290

Washington Dept. of Revenue, WFTC table for 2024 tax year.

There are three easy ways to apply, and applications are open year-round. For more information on how to apply, go to [WFTC.wa.gov/apply](https://wftc.wa.gov/apply).

### Getting the word out: Updated WorkSource information

Please share the WFTC information with family, friends, colleagues and customers. For each local WorkSource office, WSD has worked with the ITSD team to update the Resource Room **Helpful Links** (PDF desk reference) document installed on all Resource Room desktops for easy access for customers. These Helpful Links now include information and links to WFTC information and application resources.


WorkSource offices can also print off WFTC color flyers in English and Spanish to have available. For other languages, the WFTC website is translated into over twelve languages with the click of a button. These include Somali, Ukrainian and Marshallese, which is similar to Chuukese.

### Online WFTC resources and support

The Department of Revenue (DOR) Team is always happy to help in answering questions and supporting ESD customers with WFTC information. WSD will be scheduling some upcoming Q&A sessions with the DOR's Working Families Tax Credit team. Watch for that information coming soon!

For more information and to save to your online "Favorites," here is a list of WFTC helpful links:

- [Working Families Tax Credit – Home page](#)
- [Working Families Tax Credit - Resources](#)
- [Working Families Tax Credit flyer – multiple languages available](#)
- [Working Families Tax Credit - Get Help page](#)



WorkSource Vancouver  
204 SE Stonemill Drive, Suite 215, Vancouver, WA 98684

[English](#) | [Español](#)

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### Helpful Links

**Unemployment**

- Unemployment Benefits: [ESDWAGOV - Unemployment Benefits](#)
- Secure Access WA (SAW): [Secure Access WA – \(SAW\)](#)

**Job Search**

- Employment Security Department Website: <https://esd.wa.gov/>
- WorkSource Southwest Washington: [WorkSource SW Washington](#)
- WorkSourceWA: <https://worksourcewa.com>
- WorkFirst Career Scope: <https://esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/workfirst>
- CareerOneStop: [CareerOneStop](#)
- O\*net Online: [O\\*NET Online](#)

**Education**

- GCF Free Learning: <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en>
- Clark College: [Clark College](#)
- Lower Columbia College: [Lower Columbia College](#)

**Financial Support**

- Paid Leave: <https://paidleave.wa.gov/>
- Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) Home | Washington State Working Families Tax Credit

**Services for Injured or Disabled Job Seekers**

- Division of Services for the Blind: [Washington Division of Services for the Blind](#)



To access additional information or sign-up for updates, visit our website: [WFTC.wa.gov](https://WFTC.wa.gov) or call 360-763-7300.

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## Management tips

*Submitted by Victoria Pruett, WSD communications consultant*

Watching for burnout and staying focused in stressful times.

**Tools to empower us to be resilient, adaptable and keep moving forward.**



The current economic and workforce landscape is characterized by constant transformations occurring at what seems like an ever-increasing pace. These are unprecedented times that create distractions and uncertainty that contribute to stress.

As public servants supporting individuals and families during times of transition, employee burnout and compassion fatigue are real considerations. Recognizing the signs and symptoms, for ourselves and our coworkers, is important and valued by all.

**Here are some resources from Harvard Business Review (HBR)** to add perspective and minimize the impacts as we create an environment that builds resilience and fosters a culture to support our [ESD Core Values](#) of love, belonging, access, equity and stewardship.

- [How to Spot Burnout in a Remote Worker](#)
- [7 ways to Boost your Focus](#)
- [What Comes After DEI](#)

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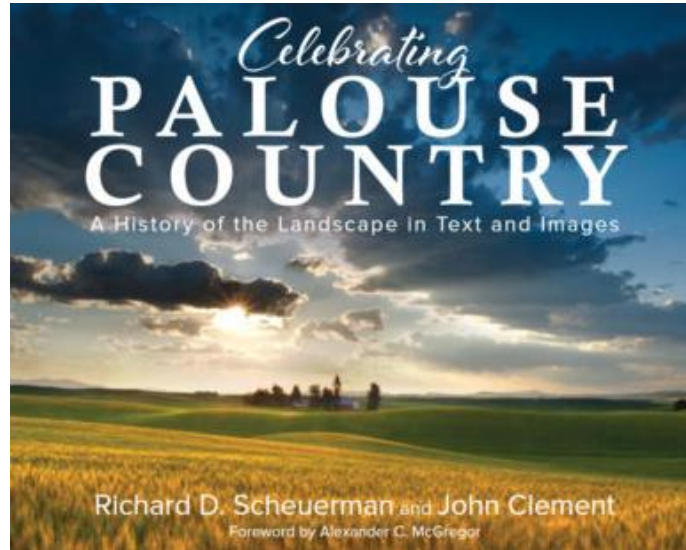
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## February – Celebrating Palouse!

**Recommended reading on Palouse Country — New book written by Palouse locals, Richard Scheuerman and John Clement.**

Go to [WSU Press Feb. 2025](#) to read highlights on a celebration of Palouse Country history and beauty.



Do you have a book recommendation to share with teammates, let us know!  
[ESDGPWSDComms@esd.wa.gov](mailto:ESDGPWSDComms@esd.wa.gov)

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