

Workforce Services Division



The Connection!

— June 9, 2025 —

Welcome to Workforce Services Division (WSD) newsletter - *The Connection!* This newsletter focuses on sharing information to connect, engage, support and excel. This month's message from Director Ismaila (Ish) Maidadi speaks to coming organizational changes for our division.

We are always looking at ways to keep communications flowing and how leadership can improve our team communications. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please send them to the [WSD Virtual Suggestion Box](#). You can leave your name, and someone will be in touch; or be anonymous -- we leave that up to you.

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Message from Ismaila (Ish) Maidadi



Hi WSD Team,

This month, I need to share some significant organizational changes within our division. The news I'm sharing affects our valued teammates, and I want to ensure you receive this information directly so you will understand the decisions being made.

With the approved 2025-2027 budget, our division, along with the entire agency, is implementing necessary adjustments and addressing the staffing changes that are part of the budget exercise our Commissioner and Chief Operations Officer have shared with you.

It is with deep regret I share that many of our valued colleagues have received at-risk notices as part of the layoff process. Each of these individuals has contributed significantly to our mission, and we are committed to supporting them through this transition.

With our proactive approach of holding positions vacant early in this process, WSD has thankfully managed to minimize the impact somewhat. However, these changes are still significant:

- We are eliminating a total of 17 permanent positions:
 - 12 vacant permanent positions across the state, and
 - Five permanent team member positions mentioned above.
- For WorkSource Spokane, changes to ESD's local Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) and local contracts will affect 9-12 team members as contracts conclude on June 30. These teammates are also experiencing the layoff process.

The [Governor's Office](#), the [Attorney General's Office](#) and several ESD leaders are closely monitoring and addressing the AmeriCorps situation. The sudden disruption to this program has affected 240 members and their host sites. Our 13 dedicated team members, who manage this program, are working diligently to support those impacted and working tirelessly to navigate the challenging circumstances.

On June 5, an injunction was approved by the Maryland District Court, which directed AmeriCorps to reinstate programming in the 24 states that were included in the lawsuit filed April 29. [Washington Service Corps](#) leadership is working closely with [Serve Washington](#) regarding the impacts of the injunction and are waiting guidance on next steps.

As part of our division's budget adjustments, we will be losing our internal communications role and will be pausing both our newsletter and the Friday rollup email. While I know many of you value these communications, we need to realign our resources with critical priorities. To ensure you stay informed, Workforce Services staff will continue to receive regular updates from me and our local leaders. And [Cami's weekly message](#) and the weekly *InsideScoop* all-staff messages are other valuable sources of information.

I want to acknowledge the profound impact of these changes on our colleagues and our organization. Every person affected by this decision is a valued team member with unique contributions to our mission. While we've worked to minimize the scope of these changes, I recognize that statistics offer no comfort to those facing career transitions or to the teams who will miss their colleagues.

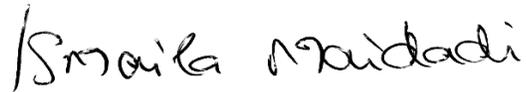
This moment calls for both compassion and action. We've established support resources for affected team members including dedicated HR support, our own job transition services and counseling is available through our [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#). For remaining team members, we

understand you may be experiencing uncertainty and concern for your teammates. EAP is a resource for all employees and your managers are available for one-on-one conversations.

This situation mirrors what many of our customers face daily, which makes our mission more relevant than ever. It's crucial that we come together as a team to support one another. We will be talking more about how we move forward, and I remain committed to keeping you informed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your supervisor with any questions or concerns and my door is always open.

With sincere appreciation,



Ismaila (Ish) Maidadi, WSD director

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Monthly themes and observances

PRIDE Month, Juneteenth and more

Submitted by Victoria Pruett, WSD communications consultant.

Time to celebrate and embrace our freedoms.

This month ESD Employee Resource Groups (ERG) [PRIDE](#) and [BEING](#) brought their game and delivered with inspiring panels of ESD speakers and heartfelt celebrations in recognition of diverse identities and freedom for PRIDE Month and Juneteenth.



For Washington Pride events and meaningful LGBTQ+ anniversaries, go to the [LGBTQ.wa.gov](https://www.lgbtq.wa.gov) calendar page; and for local celebrations later in June: [Gig Harbor](#), [Sequim](#), [Renton](#), [Everett](#), [Bellingham](#), and [Skamania](#).

As inspiration, here are some past words from BEING PRIDE members —

["Welcome to Pride Month,"](#) by Becca Vigoren

["All the colors of the rainbow,"](#) by Wendy Music and Ellen Richter

["Still defining,"](#) by Chuck Steinhilber

["WorkSource Everett shows up for Pride,"](#) by Michelle Cochran

Time to celebrate and embrace our freedoms.



Juneteenth is celebrated on **June 19** each year and commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. It marks the day in **1865** when enslaved people in Texas learned of their freedom, following the Emancipation Proclamation. The holiday is also known as **Black Independence Day** and is observed with various celebrations, including family gatherings, cultural events, and educational programs.

[BUILD](#), the statewide Blacks United in Leadership & Diversity, Business Resource Group (BRG), is holding a special Juneteenth Freedom Day celebration, June 13, from 1 to 4 p.m., in Tumwater at the LNI Building. Washington’s Attorney General Nick Brown will be the keynote speaker.



You can use the QR code or the link below to register.

[Register for BUILD Juneteenth Celebration — June 13!](#)

Questions? Just email Build@ofm.wa.gov.

For some additional inspiration, please read [the celebration and remembrance of Juneteenth](#), from Ayanna Colman, past ESD director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Graduations are fertile ground for inspired speeches and rich life stories.



Graduates completing high school, college, and advanced degrees, are stepping from one life stage to the next, and looking to a future that, for most, is unwritten. We serve and support our WSD customers – students of life – as they move from one milestone and life change to the next. Commencement speeches are akin to the Academy Awards in the college world with everyone from leaders of foreign wars, favorite celebrities, and respected politicians wielding wisdom.

We can find rich stories, humor and inspiration for ourselves, our loved ones, and our customers. For a quick inspirational take, watch [NPR’s video compilation of the best 2025 Words of Wisdom](#) (4:49); and for a deeper look at messages to the next generation, here are a couple links to the top favorites:

- [Top Commencement Speeches of 2025 and of All-Time Favorites](#), legacy-vault.com
- [Best Graduation Speeches](#), PioneerWomen.com

Celebrating Our Independence: Things to do and places to go.



The Fourth of July, also known as Independence Day, is a day when most of us get together with family and friends to celebrate this great country we live in and to celebrate each other. It is a day when the red, white, and blue of flags and banners of all sizes are displayed with pride.

It is a day where we can step outside to our sunny backyards, smell the fresh cut grass and be proud to live in a country where freedom is honored, and life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights.

There is power and unity in everyone celebrating the same ideal. Make it a day to honor your freedom to choose and have fun. Wherever you are, there is something for everyone. **Get out and celebrate!**

- [Seafair 2025 – Seattle’s Premier Summer Event series](#)
- [Kingston 4th of July, Kitsap](#)

- [4th of July in the South Sound, Tacoma, Pierce County](#)
- [Old-fashioned 4th of July Parade, Ocean Park](#)
- [Red, White & Kaboom – Puyallup, Washington State Fairgrounds](#)
- [Yakima July 4th Carnival & Community Celebration - State Fair Park](#)
- [Spokane – 4th of July 2025](#)
- [Columbia Gorge events – 2025-26](#)
- [4th of July FUN in Tri-Cities/Kennewick](#)



*Spokane riverfront - 4th of July fireworks.
Photo courtesy of spokane.org.*

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Management tips and resources

Submitted by Victoria Pruett, WSD communications consultant

Strategies for leading through uncertainty.

Managing change with a focus on stability and team strengths.



The current economic and workforce landscape is characterized by constant change. For our state, it has been a year of tough decisions leading to budget cuts. The impacts of those operational decisions are being implemented now and in the coming months. The federal outlook is tenuous and executive orders and cancelled grants have directly impacted our division.

In uncertain times, managers and supervisors often focus on managing the impacts of change. Another approach is to pay attention to core strengths that create a stable foundation. Embracing your team’s flexibility, ability to adapt to change, while focusing on what

can be controlled will foster a culture of psychological safety and collaboration. Leaders who prioritize clear communication and transparency will build trust for the long haul.

Effective leadership during uncertainty involves balancing short-term survival with long-term vision and growth. One strategy is to manage stability – focusing on what is constant, focusing on your teammates, what works and what ensures value in the work and the service delivered.

Recently, J.R. Richards, ESD’s director of insurance services, shared her tips on strategic leadership with a collection of questions that she uses to create clarity and work through inherent risks. Here is her rich list of [Strategic Thinking Questions](#).

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

- [6 Strategies for Leading Through Uncertainty](#)
- [Creating Stability Is Just as Important as Managing Change/article](#) and [video](#).
- [How to Lead an All-Hands After Delivering Bad News](#).

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Taking a pause

Our last issue for now

After many great editions, *The Connection* is signing off for now. We’ve loved keeping you informed, sharing stories, and staying connected through this newsletter.



Even as we pause, WSD leaders remain committed to ensuring you are informed and supported. We welcome your thoughts and ideas on the best ways to keep you engaged during challenging budgetary times. All ideas are encouraged—just drop them here in the [WSD Virtual Suggestion Box](#).

We appreciate your voice, and all shares are welcome!

As things settle and the future feels more predictable, keep an eye out—WSD’s newsletter may return with a fresh, new look and renewed energy.

Until then, thank you for being part of our journey/*alt: story*. We're grateful for your presence and plan to stay connected in new ways.

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