



Small Business Liaison Team Annual Report

2016

WASHINGTON STATE

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Questions or Comments

Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance

Information Center

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Executive Summary

The Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT) consists of representatives from 27 agencies. Our mission is to listen to businesses, then drive action to make it easier to do business in Washington state. A primary goal of the SBLT is to have an informed small business community capable of understanding and ultimately complying with the state's licensing and regulatory requirements.

Our team's work is aligned with two Governor's Executive Orders: [10-05](#)¹ which resulted in the creation of the [Small Business Guide](#)² and [12-01](#)³ which formally established the SBLT. The SBLT is led by the Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) and meets once per month to discuss small business topics (e.g., small business events, agency legislative rule or law changes and updates, Small Business Guide updates and agency presentations). The SBLT is working to streamline regulations, especially those that impact multiple agencies. Some of the early work done by the team was focused on this as directed by [RCW 43.330.440](#)⁴.

In 2016, the SBLT accomplishments included:

- Updating, maintaining, and increasing the visibility of the Small Business Guide;
- Maintaining the [Calendar of Events](#)⁵;
- Hosting 15 presentations from state agencies and outside sources that provide services in support of small businesses; and,
- Continued support for [RestaurantSuccess](#)⁶ and [Washington BusinessHub](#)⁷.

A few of the past SBLT accomplishments include:

- [Roadmap to Register and License Your Business in Washington State](#)⁸;
- Translations in PDF form of the comprehensive Small Business Guide (Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese); and,
- Participation in statewide business forums.

Additionally, the team has collaborated with local and regional small business assistance centers and invited business owners to provide direct feedback to the SBLT on their experience working with state agencies.

¹ **Executive Order 10-05:** http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_10-05.pdf

² **Small Business Guide:** http://www.oria.wa.gov/site/alias_oria/345/our_business_services.aspx

³ **Executive Order 12-01:** http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_12-01.pdf

⁴ **RCW 43.330.440:** <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.330.440>

⁵ **Calendar of Events:** http://www.oria.wa.gov/site/alias_oria/734/calendar_of_events.aspx

⁶ **RestaurantSuccess:** <http://growseattle.com/restaurant>

⁷ **Washington BusinessHub:** <http://business.wa.gov/>

⁸ **Roadmap to Register and License Your Business in Washington State:**
<http://dor.wa.gov/Docs/Pubs/BusReg/Roadmap.pdf>

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Background

Mission

We listen to businesses, then drive action to make it easier to do business in Washington state.

Vision

Making Washington state the best place to do business.

Small Business Liaison Team Members

Currently 27 agencies have small business liaisons:

1. Commission on African American Affairs
2. Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
3. Commission on Hispanic Affairs
4. Department of Agriculture
5. Department of Commerce
6. Department of Ecology
7. Department of Emergency Management
8. Department of Enterprise Services
9. Department of Fish and Wildlife
10. Department of Health
11. Department of Labor and Industries
12. Department of Licensing
13. Department of Natural Resources
14. Department of Revenue
15. Department of Social and Health Services
16. Department of Veterans' Affairs
17. Employment Security Department
18. Internal Revenue Service
19. Liquor and Cannabis Board
20. Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises
21. Office of the Insurance Commissioner
22. Office of the Attorney General
23. Office of the Secretary of State
24. Washington State Department of Transportation
25. Washington State Lottery
26. Washington Technology Solutions
27. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board



Background and Purpose

Our team's work is aligned with two Governor's Executive Orders: [10-05](#)¹ and [12-01](#)² which formally established the Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT). Some of the early work done by the team was focused on streamlining regulations that impact multiple agencies as directed by [RCW 43.330.440](#)³.

In 2006, the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) started a successful Small Business Liaison program to provide personal attention to inquiries. Small business owners attending the 2007 small business roundtable requested that other agencies copy L&I's liaison program. By the summer of 2008 the Departments of Revenue, Employment Security, Community, Trade & Economic Development (now Department of Commerce), Department of Licensing, Office of the Secretary of State, and the Office of Women & Minority Business Enterprises each identified a Small Business Liaison.

In January of 2012, Governor Gregoire formalized the SBLT through her Executive Order 12-01. Now the SBLT is led by the Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) and consists of 27 agencies whose role is to listen to businesses, then drive action to make it easier to do business in Washington State.

The purpose of the SBLT is to support the small business community by providing them with the information needed to comply with the state's licensing and regulatory requirements in a reasonable and straightforward manner.

To achieve this, the SBLT is directed to do the following:

1. Improve regulatory processes that are duplicative or have conflicting requirements, decisions or inspections across state and/or local government agencies.
2. Coordinate with agency technology departments to improve websites and online assistance for small businesses.
3. Maintain a consolidated online [Small Business Guide](#)⁴ that provides direction to prospective and existing businesses.
4. Plan and collaborate on small business outreach.
5. Provide routine and consistent responses to questions and requests from small business owners.
6. Map current processes and find ways to reduce steps required for regulatory processes without compromising the environment and maintaining health and safety.
7. Collaborate to streamline regulatory processes when possible.

Steps to Desired Outcome

- Developing resources and support tools.
- Agency collaboration to streamline regulatory processes.
- Increase effective outreach to small businesses and non-profit organizations with 50 or fewer employees and \$7 million or less in gross revenue.
- Stronger collaboration with industry associations and Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) across Washington.
- Small business owners receive information they need because SBLT uses a “No wrong door” approach which encourages referrals to right resources.
- Make customer service to small business owners more relevant, informed, and empathetic.



Responsibilities of the SBLT members

- Understand your agency's regulatory requirements and processes that affect businesses so you can provide or coordinate consistent responses to small business owners.
- Act as single point of contact for businesses with questions about your agency.
- Engage agency experts to maintain highly-responsive and effective customer service to small business customers.
- Educate agency customer service staff about tools and resources to assist small business owners (e.g., online Small Business Guide, tax, and audit videos, etc.).
- Develop relationships with leaders of business organizations.
- Learn about other agencies' regulatory requirements and know who to contact with questions for each agency.
- Be a resource for other liaisons when they receive questions about your agency. Collaborate with other Small Business Liaisons to coordinate answers so small business owners experience integrated assistance that helps them understand and complete their regulatory requirements.
- Plan and deliver outreach to small businesses statewide.
- Through outreach, learn about pain points for small businesses and develop ways to reduce challenges.
- Coordinate agency materials for outreach activities.
- Monitor recurring questions and issues and find ways to eliminate or reduce these questions and issues (e.g., plain-talked guidance, training, etc.).
- Participate in regulatory Lean process improvements that are focused on small businesses and invite your agency experts to become involved with process and technology changes.
- Be committed to keeping the Small Business Guide up to date and accurate by working closely with your agency Subject Matter Experts to review the Small Business Guide in support of regular updates.
- Market the services and tools provided by the SBLT member agencies in support of small businesses (e.g., links to relevant resources on your agency website, handout materials such as the Small Business Guide at outreach events, etc.).
- Have a representative attend each of the SBLT meetings.

Highlights of Accomplishments in 2016

One of the greatest benefits of a cross agency approach is the team work and cooperation among the small business liaisons. The liaisons provide a single point of contact for small businesses to receive assistance. In addition, monthly meetings offer a forum for presenting issues and receiving feedback from across the agencies. Listed below are some specific accomplishments of the Small Business Liaison Team:

Small Business Guide

- The Small Business Guide is updated and maintained on a quarterly basis by agency Subject Matter Experts.
- Updated Small Business Guide rack card to include the Payroll and Open chapters.
- Worked with agencies to improve the location of the Small Business Guide link on their website to increase visibility.
- Added “Closure due to Death” section into the Close chapter of the Small Business Guide.
- The Small Business Guide is available on the ORIA website in both HTML and PDF formats; the Small Business Guide HTML pages were viewed and the PDF version was downloaded a combined total of 179,430 times in 2016. (See the [2016 Web Traffic Report](#) located in the [Appendix](#) for details)

Calendar of Events

- [The Calendar of Events](#)⁵ provides upcoming events (e.g. trainings, workshops, etc.) hosted by state and federal agencies for small businesses which allowed state agencies to coordinate their outreach efforts to avoid duplication of effort.
- Made available to the public on June 16, 2015, and continues to be discussed and updated during the monthly SBLT meetings.

Agency Presentations

At our monthly meetings, the SBLT hosts presentations from outside sources and state agencies that provide services in support of small businesses. These presentations help to keep the SBLT informed about resources that are available to small businesses, which can then be passed on to the business community when they contact the SBLT member agencies for assistance. These presentations also help the SBLT members to better understand the needs of the small business community that they serve.

January

- Edmon Lee, Liquor and Cannabis Board – Presented on agency and legislative updates

February

- No Speakers presented

March

- Celia Nightingale, Center for Business & Innovation – Presented on program updates

April

- Rhonda Polidori, Elizabeth Wheat, and Mark Bailey, Washington Technology Solutions – Provided an Agency Presentation on the Washington BusinessHub
- Kari Qvigstad, Department of Enterprise Services – Provided an Agency Presentation on Moving from Event Driven Outreach Programming to a Results Approach based on Marketing Principles

May

- Cheryl Smith, Cezanne Murphy-Levesque, Department of Commerce – Provided updates on manufacturing and RestaurantSuccess
- Gloria Y. Pitkin De La Rosa, Commission of Hispanic Affairs – presented on recent department survey

June

- Meg Ryan, Highline College – presented on the Highline College’s recently released Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) funded export assistance site – [Washington Export Resource Center \(WERC\)](#)⁶
- Grant Pfeifer, Carrie Sessions, Department of Ecology – presented on the Department of Ecology’s recent customer service survey
- Marilou Doerflinger, Vince Ynzunza, Department of Labor and Industries – The Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) “S” Team provided an agency presentation on a fun way to do educational videos

July

- Jennifer Tam, City of Seattle – Office of Economic Development Restaurant Success – Presented on RestaurantSuccess updates
- Patrick Reed, Office of the Secretary of State – Presented on agency updates

Agency Presentations (continued)

August

- The Small Business Advisors with the Thurston County Economic Development Center provided program updates:
 - Celia Nightingale, Center for Business and Innovation
 - Daryl Murrow, ScaleUp Thurston
 - Liz Jamieson, Washington Center for Women in Business
 - Maureen Mortlock, Washington Center for Women in Business
 - Noel Rubadue, South Puget Sound Community College
 - Ron Nielson, Small Business Development Center
 - Ryan Norskog, Thurston County Economic Development Council
 - Steve Hager, SCORE
 - Tiffany Scroggs, Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center

September

- Carolyn McKinnon, Department of Commerce – Presented on the Small Business Retirement Marketplace

October

- Ashley Miller, Department of Revenue – Business Licensing Services– Presented on new the licensing system that was implemented on June 6, 2016

November

- No SBLT Meeting

December

- Korey Twombly, Thurston County Chamber – Presented on coordinating a joint outreach event with SBLT

Support for Other Programs

- [RestaurantSuccess](#)⁷: The SBLT continues to partner with the City of Seattle, Office of Economic Development to ensure the Restaurant Guide remains updated regarding state related details.
- [Washington BusinessHub](#)⁸: The SBLT provides support for the Washington BusinessHub and explored different ways of working with the Washington BusinessHub which now links to the Small Business Guide.

Outreach Events

Members of the Small Business Liaison Team hosted and attended the following outreach events to support Washington state businesses.

Business Partnership Forum

- On June 1, 2016, the Department of Enterprise Services hosted a Business Partnership Forum at the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center.
- This second annual forum helped businesses take steps in doing business and networking with the public sector (i.e. state agencies, local governments, cities, counties, high education institutions, and school districts).



Washington Small Business Forum

- On June 15, 2016, the Internal Revenue Service Stakeholder Liaison and the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries hosted the Washington Small Business Forum at the Labor and Industries office in Tukwila.
- The purpose of the Small Business Forum was to assemble representatives from business and industry organizations, along with representatives of various federal and state government agencies.
- They provided presentations on rising issues and have roundtable discussion on contemporary topics. The Small Business Forum is held twice a year.

Washington Small Business Fair

- On September 24, 2016, the annual Small Business Fair was hosted by the Internal Revenue Service at the Renton Technical College.
- The purpose of the Small Business Fair is to provide an opportunity for new and prospective small business owners to get all the information they need in one place.
- Business owners or potential business owners can sharpen their skills by attending seminars presented by state agencies that cover important, up-to-date topics for all stages of business ownership.
- Savvy business experts share their knowledge and real-life experiences.



Connecting with our Customers

To help make business easier for small businesses, the Small Business Liaisons (SBL) connect with customers in a variety of different ways. Below are different ways the SBLs helped with making the regulatory process easier for customers.

“Working with a talented team of Small Business Liaisons is exciting and empowering, especially when we can serve our customers’ various needs through coordinating our response across agencies. Being connected with our counter-parts at the Small Business Administration at the federal level further multiplies our impact.”

Labor and Industries – SBLT Customer

“I went into the Labor and Industries Office and the lady behind the counter was very helpful too. She caught an error in my documentation and it was resolved on the spot. In my brief experience with government office in the State of Washington, the people have been very helpful. I do not know of anything that can be done to improve the service I have received. And your assistance has been outstanding. Above and beyond what I am accustom to from a gov’t office. Thank you very much! I really appreciate your support.

Labor and Industries – SBLT Customer

“You were great and got all of the questions answered by Employment Security Department.”

Employment Security Department – SBLT Customer

“Yes, everyone that I have contacted in Washington has been very helpful and have usually followed-up by sending me links to more helpful information. Very much appreciated!”

Labor and Industries & Employment Security Department – SBLT Customer

“Thank you. Everyone did a great job! I was impressed by how quickly I received a response after the referral.”

Office of the Secretary of State & Department of Revenue – SBLT Customer

“You were very helpful and my co-worker also worked with someone else from Washington. Both of us were quite happy with the service we received while registering our employee and business in Washington. We don’t always get really pleasant people and clear information from some states, so it was a pleasure.”

ORIA Information Center – SBLT Customer

Highlights of Accomplishments Prior to 2016

Small Business Guide

- Added new Small Business Guide Section – Closure due to Death.
- Small Business Liaison Team members helped with development, testing and research to create the multi-agency, online one-stop business portal (forerunner to today's Washington BusinessHub). The SBLT has remained involved with ongoing continuous process improvement activities.
- Online publication of the Small Business Guide.
- Translation of the Small Business Guide into:
 - Chinese
 - Korean
 - Spanish
 - Vietnamese

Business Roadmap

- Updating the [Roadmap to Register and License Your Business in Washington State](#)⁹ to continue to show the simplest pathway to getting state licenses.

Outreach

- Participation in statewide business forums attended by agency leaders.
- Collaboration with local and regional small business assistance centers and inviting business owners and Small Business Advisors to provide direct feedback on their experience working with state agencies.

Process Improvements

- Streamlining processes impacting the restaurant industry.



Acknowledgements

We recognize not all member agencies have the resources or the time to participate at the same level so we would like to thank the agencies and other organizations that were able to participate at the meetings in 2016, they are:

- Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Ecology
- Department of Enterprise Services
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Department of Health
- Department of Labor and Industries
- Department of Licensing
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Revenue
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Department of Transportation
- Employment Security Department
- Internal Revenue Service
- Liquor and Cannabis Board
- Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Office of the Insurance Commissioner
- Office of the Secretary of State
- SCORE
- Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Small Business Development Center
- South Puget Sound Community College
- Thurston County Chamber
- Thurston County Economic Development Council – Center for Business and Innovation
- Thurston County Economic Development Council – Washington Center for Women in Business

Appendix

2016 Web Traffic Report: Small Business Guide

Table 1 – Small Business Guide Page Views

Web Page Views													
Page	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Landing	7,820	6,899	7,577	6,517	6,515	6,041	5,140	5,532	5,052	5,109	4,464	4,170	70,836
Plan	2,147	1,787	2,016	1,693	1,793	1,477	1,020	1,066	890	941	901	740	16,471
Start	3,041	2,844	3,108	2,783	2,729	2,177	1,770	1,861	1,595	1,553	1,305	1202	25,968
Payroll	2,530	2,500	2,967	3,202	2,874	2,206	2,695	2,609	3,042	3,352	2,864	3,075	33,916
Open	873	853	922	872	778	705	564	638	582	569	623	537	8,516
Run	1,196	997	1,044	964	835	705	505	550	441	562	414	402	8,615
Grow	335	305	389	356	407	366	229	250	225	212	208	139	3,421
Close	192	193	211	184	188	219	166	141	97	203	156	206	2,156
Loan	304	244	286	287	250	248	237	212	207	172	200	182	2,829
Calendar	124	129	138	127	141	210	105	83	85	67	89	62	1,360
Total	18,562	16,751	18,658	16,985	16,510	14,354	12,431	12,942	12,216	12,740	11,224	10,715	174,088

Table 2 – Guides and Chapters Downloaded

PDF Downloads													
Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Plan	7	0	7	9	2	0	4	6	3	4	11	4	57
Start	10	0	47	68	6	0	37	17	27	20	20	19	271
Payroll	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
Open	2	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	13
Run	8	0	10	14	6	0	6	8	15	12	12	8	99
Grow	1	0	66	91	6	0	12	4	3	10	6	5	204
Close	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	14
Loan	10	4	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	24
English (Full)	447	355	415	362	327	348	316	333	241	248	213	228	3,833
Chinese	29	24	25	24	17	7	8	12	17	15	16	10	204
Korean	9	10	14	8	5	5	12	10	4	6	7	30	120
Spanish	42	34	57	40	30	31	52	44	26	31	27	26	440
Vietnamese	3	3	9	2	4	1	8	12	2	1	6	7	58
Total	573	430	654	627	403	393	468	447	338	350	321	338	5,342

Referenced Hyperlinks

- 1 **Executive Order 10-05:** http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_10-05.pdf
- 2 **Executive Order 12-01:** http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_12-01.pdf
- 3 **RCW 43.330.440:** <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.330.440>
- 4 **Small Business Guide:** http://www.oria.wa.gov/site/alias_oria/345/our_business_services.aspx
- 5 **The Calendar of Events:** http://www.oria.wa.gov/site/alias_oria/734/calendar_of_events.aspx
- 6 **Washington Export Resource Center (WERC):** <http://www.waexports.com/>
- 7 **RestaurantSuccess:** <http://growseattle.com/restaurant>
- 8 **Washington BusinessHub:** <http://business.wa.gov/>
- 9 **Roadmap to Register and License Your Business in Washington State:**
<http://dor.wa.gov/Docs/Pubs/BusReg/Roadmap.pdf>