Meeting Notes
Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT)
Thursday, January 26, 2017 1:00-2:30 pm

Please send corrections, edits or additional information to help@oria.wa.gov.

Location  Department of Commerce Building
Floor 4, Large Room 407
Sunrise Room

Purpose  2017 Outreach Plan & Workgroups; Agency Presentations: Office of the Attorney General and US Small Business Administration

Attendees  • Linda Alongi • Mike Brennan • Kayla Burr • Mark Costello • Lynn Fetch •
• Kari Gilje • Rose Gundersen • Scott Hitchcock • Kim Johnson • Edmon Lee •
• Ryan Leisinger • Rachael Lindstedt • Eric Moss • Servando Patlan •
• Grant Pfeifer • Patrick Reed • Janet Shimabukuro • Jovi Swanson •
• Korey Twombly • Peter Vernie • Margeret Warner •

Agenda Highlights
• Welcome and Agenda Overview
• Calendar of Events & Web Traffic Report
• 2017 Outreach Plan & Workgroups
• Agency Presentations:
  o Office of the Attorney General – Business Scams and Fraud on Business, Tax and Consumer Related Topics
  o US Small Business Administration – Overview of Small Business Association

Welcome and Agenda Overview
Scott Hitchcock, Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance
• Quick overview of the agenda – Introductions
• Update: Thurston County Chamber outreach – spoke to Korey in December regarding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) content for their website
  o Action: Brittany Wilson, ORIA: Will be creating an initial draft by pulling information from each agency website of commonly asked questions
  o Action: Scott is planning to attend the next meeting (February)

Calendar of Events – Updates to the Calendar
Rachael Lindstedt, Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance
• Presented on the Small Business Events Calendar

http://www.oria.wa.gov  (360) 725-0628  (800) 917-0043  help@oria.wa.gov
**Web Traffic Report**

**Rachael Lindstedt, Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance**

- Presented the [Web Traffic Report](http://www.oria.wa.gov) for October 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016:
  - Calendar of Events
  - Small Business Guide agency referrals
  - Small Business Guide HTML
  - Small Business Guide PDF
  - United States and Country page views
- A quarterly web traffic report is presented to the Small Business Liaison Team each month; next month’s report will include data from November 1, 2016 to January 31, 2017.

**2017 Outreach Plan & Workgroups**

**Scott Hitchcock, Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance**

- Working towards creating workgroups based on the results of the [2017 Outreach Survey](http://www.oria.wa.gov):
  - Still need to develop the purpose and goal of each workgroup, and determine ORIA’s role in supporting each of the workgroup teams
  - Currently limiting workgroup members to one to two members per workgroup – this will help minimize burden and workload across the board. Members can choose to add their names to additional work groups.
  - More information to follow during February 23 meeting.
- The 2016 SBLT Annual Report is almost complete. Goal is to circulate final report next week.

**Agency Presentations**

**Office of the Attorney General: Business Scams and Fraud on Business, Tax and Consumer Related Topics**

**Eric Moss, Attorney General Office (ATG)**

- Works in the Consumer protection division and outreach for ATG
  - Outreach documents are in a few other languages (Russian, Spanish, etc.), but mostly we work with community leaders to translate press releases into the language of their community
  - **Action:** Edmon Lee will connect Eric Moss with Korean businesses
The ATG is the State’s law firm: If you work for the state then the ATG will represent your agency.

Purpose: maintain a marketplace free of deception and unfair practices; this is handled 3 ways:

- **Informal (voluntary) dispute resolution**: Complaints are provided to businesses; businesses are given 30-days to resolve and if they do not respond then a letter is sent to the consumer informing them of their options. A majority of businesses respond to the consumer directly.

- **Litigation**: Specific criteria needs to be met to go this route, i.e. it has to affect a majority of consumers (Comcast).

- **Public Policy**: Recommending legislation to improve consumer protection (e.g. student lending, vulnerable adults, etc.)

Who are consumers: anyone who spends money in Washington (residents, non-residents, small businesses, etc.)

- **How is internet commerce handled?** If the transaction is completed in Washington, then ATG can assist; however, if the transaction is completed in another state, they recommend contacting that state for complaints.

Better Business Bureau (BBB) vs Attorney General Office (ATG): the BBB is a private organization with no legal enforcement; however, they can use media to help keep businesses in line. The BBB also provides information to ATG.

Information received from the customer is shared with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) using their complaint systems – Catalyst / Consumer Sentinel

- Conversation around developing a better referral process for other agencies (such as Department of Revenue)
  - Civil Rights are sent to Human Rights Commission
  - Some complaints are sent to Department of Labor and Industries and Secretary Of State
  - Landlord/Tenant complaints are not considered a consumer complaint and they recommend contacting tenant union(s)

- Is there a way to share the data in their database with other state agencies through an API or is there a way to get a data sharing agreement?
  - **Action**: Eric Moss will research this and get back to Scott Hitchcock, ORIA.

Presented PowerPoint presentation on **Small Business Scams**

- Key takeaways
  - No legitimate collection agencies are aggressive (there are legal protections against that type of tactic)
You never have to make a decision quickly

Trust, but verify – trust that there are good people, but verify that they are who they claim to be and are from the agency they represent

Complain often and complain everywhere

- **Action:** A copy of the presentation will be e-mailed to the SBLT members for their information.

- Information on safeguarding consumers for businesses can be found at: [http://www.atg.wa.gov/business-resources](http://www.atg.wa.gov/business-resources).

- If you have any questions/complaints, feel free to e-mail Eric Moss directly at eric.moss@atg.wa.gov; he will make sure the information is passed on to the appropriate agencies or individuals.

**US Small Business Administration**

**Mark Costello, Small Business Administration (SBA)**

- Presented PowerPoint presentation on the: [Overview of SBA](http://www.atg.wa.gov/)
  
  - The SBA is a relatively small federal government agency (around 3,000 employees) with 68 offices throughout the United States.
  
  - Seattle district covers most of Washington and parts of Idaho.
  
  - Pending administrator Linda McMann, spoke regarding the goals and vision of the new administration for the Small Business Administration:
    
    - Assured them that the SBA will not be consolidated with other agencies
    - Enhancing SBA’s role for assistance small businesses
    - Government agencies will be focused on developing better rules, regulations, and laws to help small businesses in the United States
  
- Three essential components of assisting small businesses:
  
  - Capital (Funding)
  - Counseling (Technical Assistance)
  
  - Counseling done through partnership model (they do not counsel owners directly)
    
    - SCORE – volunteer business advisors work one-on-one with new small businesses and provide business resources on their website, such as: business plan templates, cash flow templates, etc.
    
    - Small Business Development Centers – 50% funded by the SBA and the rest by Washington State University and various Economic Development Councils (EDC); they focus on working with established businesses looking to raise money or expand their businesses
Women’s Business Center; Washington Center for Women in Business; Washington Women’s Business Center – Focuses on providing counseling and training to Women (SNAP in Spokane and Business Impact NW also provide these services)

VBOC – Focuses on providing counseling and training to Veterans

The SBA provides workshops every Thursday

Reserved room can fit up to 35 attendees

The SBA often partners with other governmental organizations (i.e. Secretary of State – Patrick Reed) to provide information to small business owners.

Workshops sometimes focus on specific business types, such as: online businesses, exporting businesses, etc.

Work with Library Systems – such as King and Snohomish to provide outreach opportunities

Website provides a lot of information for small businesses, including a business plan builder and templates

Contracting (Facilitating Access to Government Contracting)

Goal of 23% of government contracts going to Small Businesses reached last year

8a program: provides access to small businesses that are economically disadvantaged

Partners with Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC to provide these services

Complaints regarding government contracts can be referred to either SBA or PTAC (Tiffany Scroggs)

Action: Scott, ORIA will connect with Mark to make sure that the SBA and SBLT are continually working together and what it looks like.
Referenced Hyperlinks

a  Small Business Events Calendar: http://www.oria.wa.gov/BizEvents

b  Web Traffic Report:

c  2017 Outreach Survey:


e  SBA Overview for SBLT Meeting:
https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1729/Documents/Presentations/SBA%20Overview%20for%20SBLT%20Meeting%201-26.pdf