Meeting Notes
Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT)
Thursday, April 27, 2017, 1:00-2:30 pm

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

Purpose
Presentation: Program Overview: Department of Services for the Blind

Attendees
- Mark Adreon
- Linda Alongi
- Jeff Baughman
- Doug Cheney
- Kari Gilje
- Scott Hitchcock
- Kim Johnson
- Edmon Lee
- Rachael Lindstedt
- Erin Lopez
- Janet Shimabukuro
- Jovi Swanson
- Peter Vernie
- Brittany Wilson

Agenda Highlights
- Welcome and Agenda Overview
  - Upcoming Events
  - Web Traffic Report
- Presentation:
  - Program Overview: Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)
- Roundtable

Welcome and Agenda Overview
Scott Hitchcock, Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance
- Reviewed Agenda and Introductions

Upcoming Agency Event
**Department of Commerce**
- [Business Partnership Forum](#): June 1, 2017, Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, 1500 Broadway, Tacoma WA 98402

**Department of Homeland Security**
- EB-5 Program Informational Session: May 22-26, Seattle; see email from Scott Hitchcock

**Department of Commerce**
Meeting Notes: Small Business Liaison Team  Thursday, April 27, 2017

- PNDC/PNAA Aerospace Defense Symposium: May 4, 2017, Joint Base Lewis McChord
- The San Juan County Economic Development Council - Annual Economics Luncheon: June 7, 2017, Friday Harbor
- Government Contracting Essentials: June 21, 2017, Seattle;
- CleanTech Showcase 2017: June 26, 2017, Seattle
- NASA Small Business Industry Day: September 26, 2017, Seattle

Other Events
- SBCTC Offers Spring Lunchtime Accessibility Webinar Series see email from Janet Shimabukuro
- Global Accessibility Awareness Day: May 18, 2017 (2-4 pm), 1500 Jefferson Street SE, Olympia WA, room 1213

Web Traffic Report
Rachael Lindstedt, Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance
- Presented the Web Traffic Report for January 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017:
  - 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 February 1, 2017 to April 30, 2017.

Presentation
Program Overview: Washington State Department of Services for the Blind
Mark Adreon, Department of Services for the Blind
- Scott Hitchcock, ORIA: Cyrus Habib, Lt. Governor, spoke highly of the services provided by the services for the blind during the OFM Employee Recognition Breakfast on Wednesday, April 26, 2017
- Services provided by the Department of Services for the Blind, includes:
  - Vocation rehabilitation: provides alternative skills, vocational goals, and training to help people become employable
- Child and family program: helps support families with blind children
- Transition youth: 15% of funds help with youth transitioning from school to college and beyond
- Older blind program: provides training to older people (past employment age) with the goal of keeping them independent
- The funding they receive is 80% federal and 20% state (match)
- The Vocational Skills, Self-employment program provides people with the opportunity to grow their businesses; goal is to make it easy to understand and help get people funded
  - Dreams and Reality Workshop offered by the program is a two week program:
    - First week they focus on the 25 characteristics of successful entrepreneurs
    - Second week is a “Shark Tank” type workshop where they break up into groups, come up with business ideas, plan and present their ideas to the funding team
    - Three measures of success:
      ✓ Going to pursue self-employment;
      ✓ Self-employment is not for me;
      ✓ Not ready for either self-employment or regular employment – need further help
  - Customers provide a blueprint for a three year business plan and funding request (vendors often help customers)
  - Self-Employment receives successful pitches to the team for funding (14-18 business a year gets funded for $14k-$16k)
    - Success story: customer in Eastern Washington submitted a business plan requesting $25k for surplus pallets of supplies to be sold on Ebay; team determined the requested funds did not fit with the Fiscal Expenditure and instead approved $20k worth of packing tape; customer sold the packing tape to delivery company and made not only the original borrowed $20k but and additional $20k
  - Division of Vocational Rehab works together with Self-Employment program
- They are working towards establishing a certification similar to the one offered by OMWBE and WVDA for Disability Owned Business in Washington;
  - USBLN and National Chamber of Commerce is also working with them – goal is to build an inclusive work environment for those with disabilities and determine what type of certification makes sense for disability owned businesses
  - Pennsylvania and Massachusetts already have rules in place for disability owned business certification
Goal is to make Washington state the third state have the disability owned certification

- Self-Employment program (as it is now) was started 2 ½ years ago with the help of AvitaBiz which is based in Portland Oregon
  - 80 customers have gone through the training
  - 40-50 businesses have kicked off
  - Not mandatory to go through the workshops – marketing to work with the counselor to look for people that have a hard time finding employment

- How many businesses have succeeded? Currently looking at the numbers now to determine whether they need to adjust the programs

- How do you stay engaged? We work with customers to establish a self-employment hourly rate as the goal; it can take up to two years to reach their goal
  - **Success Story:** Entrepreneur in Spokane wrote and submitted her a business plan for horse massage (3 pages in length); they had worked in the horse industry for years already invested in the equipment, certification and licensing. They approved funding for $19k. The entrepreneur is very successful and started to develop their own clothing line along with a school teaching horse massage. They are famous nationwide and it took four years to get to this point.

- What can we do to make the Small Business Guide more accessible? I would love to help out and the best way is to agree to make an accessible website
  - HTML is more accessible version than PDF
  - WaTech provides agency assistance with accessibility (Ryan Lessinger)

- We want to become an economic engine through:
  - Educating the businesses and the state
  - Establish disability owned business status

- **Erin Lopez, DES:** we are working with OMWBE and WDVA to go through the rules – DES manages WEBS and Contract Policy and are willing to work with DSB to determine best practices for state contracts

- Will work with Scott to update our website and tools to make it more accessible
Roundtable

- **Scott Hitchcock, ORIA:** Events Workgroup is on track. Meeting with the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce May 3 (DOR, ESD, LNI, SOS, ORIA and CBI – Celia Nightingale). This is the first step towards building a relationship with the Economic Development Councils and they are working towards a Fall Event.
  
  - Conversation originally started in December with the Thurston Chamber of Commerce when SBLT team members attended meeting.
  
  - We have been researching other chambers to establish a relationship with; however, most of those contact do not look like a good match at this point (i.e. we can attend but not present)
  
  - **Janet Shimabukuro, DOR:** Rose and I attended Thurston county chamber meeting and brought a stack of business cards. Was surprised at the number of people that are unaware of the resources available (i.e. DOR can answer tax questions)

- **Brittany Wilson, ORIA:** Communication workgroup met last week and is on track. I had been working on the FAQ provided by the SBLT team and presented it to the workgroup. Team decided to tackle the roadmap, make it more in to a checklist, and compare the information to the FAQ.

- **Linda Alongi, COM:** Cheryl Smith who has been working on the regulatory roadmap wanted to announce that the Lynnwood manufacturing roadmap is now up and good to go

- **Erin Lopez, DES:** passed out the announcement for the Business Partnership Forum occurring on June 1, 2017. Thank you to the sponsors this year we are focusing on IT / green environmental preferred purchases.
  
  - Will be surveying businesses monthly for a year to determine success of the forum (goal: 200 business attend; 50 connections with state agencies and 12 contracts)
  
  - **Janet Shimabukuro, DOR:** If we are attending the late afternoon forum, do you need staff at the table the whole time? Yes, that would be preferable so questions are answered

- **Scott, Hitchcock, ORIA:** Shout out to Milani Conn who did a great job of showing ORIA staff (Rachael, Brittany and Scott) the MyDOR system
Referenced Hyperlinks

a. Business Partnership Forum

   http://www.cleantechalliance.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=847203&group

c. Doing Business with Defense Logistics Agency
   https://www.eventbrite.com/e/selling-to-the-defense-logistics-agency-tickets-31544657921

d. Government Contracting Essentials
   https://www.eventbrite.com/e/government-contracting-essentials-tickets-31544588714

e. CleanTech Showcase 2017
   http://www.cleantechalliance.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=926107

f. Global Accessibility Awareness Day
   https://olygaad.wordpress.com/

g. Web Traffic Report