

A photograph showing the silhouettes of several people standing in a room with large windows. The sun is shining through the windows, creating a bright, hazy light. The people appear to be in a meeting or collaborative work environment.

Unemployment Insurance ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Agenda



- I. Approval of April 30, 2025 meeting minutes
- II. Grant funding updates
- III. Legislation implementation updates
- IV. Regulatory review introduction
- V. Rulemaking
- VI. Public comment
- VII. Adjourn

Grant funding updates



**Employment
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WASHINGTON STATE

JR Richards, Insurance Services Division Director, ESD

Steve Ruggles, Business Products Manager, ESD

Stephanie Sams, Policy & Legislative Implementation, ESD



Grant funding update: ARPA funding



U.S. Dept of Labor terminated all UI American Rescue Plan Act grants effective May 22

- Equity Grant – period of performance previously ran through March 31, 2026
- UI Integrity Grant – period of performance previously ran through December 31, 2025
- Tiger Team Grant – period of performance previously ran through December 31, 2025
- UI Navigator – period of performance previously ran through June 14, 2025

Grant Name	Total Award	Expenditures through 5/22	Balance as of 5/22
Equity	\$ 6,840,000	\$ 5,720,448	\$ 1,119,552
FY23 Tiger Teams	\$ 432,797	\$ 392,020	\$ 40,777
FY24 Tiger Teams	\$ 4,040,753	\$ 1,513,499	\$ 2,527,254
Integrity	\$ 2,609,000	\$ 1,068,845	\$ 1,540,155
Navigator	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 2,707,007	\$ 292,993
Total	\$ 16,922,550	\$ 11,401,819	\$ 5,520,731



Grant funding update: ARPA funding



Projects impacts

- Equity Grant
 - Website modernization: modernizing ESD website; funds were to continue customer facing website optimization
 - Adverse impact and analysis: tested and analyzed impact of sending letters to claimants to increase applications; funds were to complete the analysis
- UI Integrity Grant
 - Integrity trainings: trained staff to improve working knowledge of techniques to ensure integrity of UI Program; funds were for additional trainings in Summer 2025
 - UI fraud prevention: For building or procuring a case management system for managing UI fraud cases (was also partially funded through Tiger Teams)



Grant funding update – Tiger Team projects



Tiger Team project impacts

- Intake standard work: designed to modernize and migrate "standard work" documents for the UI Intake team. Project is complete
- UI Handbook updates: update both the unemployed worker and the employer handbooks
- Customer journey mapping: ESD contracted with external entity to conduct customer journey mapping exercise to identify efficiencies and improvements
- How to videos: create "how to" videos to help unemployment claimants navigate the process and requirements to access benefits
- UI Fraud prevention: For building or procuring a case management system for managing UI fraud cases (was also partially funded through Integrity grant)



Grant funding update – Tiger Team projects Handbooks



Unemployed Worker Handbook

- ✓ Reduced to 36 pages
- ✓ Available in English, Spanish, Amharic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese
- ✓ Estimated completion is September 1, 2025

Employer Tax Handbook

- ✓ Reduced to approximately 41 pages
- ✓ Available in English and Spanish
- ✓ Estimated completion is October 1, 2025



Grant funding update – Tiger Team projects

How-to videos



How to videos project information:

- All videos are recorded in English and Spanish
 - Closed captioning is available in multiple languages
- All videos also have a one-page written instruction, in both English and Spanish
- All videos are posted to ESD's YouTube channel, are strategically placed on our website and placed within our eServices application

How to videos created:

- ✓ Apprenticeship: When to apply
- ✓ Apprenticeship: How to apply
- ✓ Apprenticeship: Support tips for managing your benefits
- ✓ Job search requirements
- ✓ Separations – Correctly reporting why you stopped working
- ✓ What you need to know about the adjudication process
- ✓ When to apply for benefits
- ✓ How to file a weekly claim



Grant funding update – Navigator funding



Navigator impacts

ESD used these funds to contract with nine community-based organizations to improve access to unemployment benefits for eligible customers.

2025 Operating budget provided \$1 million to continue this program for one year beginning July 1, 2025.

Legislation Implementation updates



**Employment
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Matt LaPalm, Product Manager, ESD
Marypat Meuli, Product Manager, ESD



Legislation Implementation updates

ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking & lockout workers



- Modifies UI disqualification for striking/lockout workers
- Strike/lockout must be allowed by state or federal law
- No benefits paid for up to the first three weeks of a strike/lockout
 - One to two weeks: strike/lockout start date up to the 2nd Sunday after the start
 - Then, one waiting week
- Benefits paid up to the next six weeks of strike/lockout
- If retroactive wages are paid, ESD must issue an overpayment to recover benefits
- ESD must notify the separating employer of mediation services available through [PERC](#)
- ESD will determine a separating employer's eligibility to make a voluntary contribution
- ESD must submit 10 annual strike/lockout reports to the Legislature, Dec. 2026 – Dec. 2035
- Effective January 1, 2026
- Expiration December 31, 2035
- [Final bill](#)
- [Final bill report](#)



ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking & lockout workers Implementation Plan



- Implementation has five main components
 - Rule making
 - Community & stakeholder engagement
 - Software updates
 - External communication (letting workers and employers know what to expect)
 - Internal communication and training (helping staff successfully support customers)
- Current status
 - Work is prioritized in our Unemployment Insurance Portfolio
 - Project team formed
 - Scoping the work to be done
- Effective date Jan 1, 2026



ESSB 5041: UI benefits for striking & lockout workers Engagement Plan



- Rulemaking
 - Public Comment
- Community Engagement
 - UIAC
 - Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- Targeted & Mass Communications
 - Website updates
 - Employer email campaign
 - Alerts in product(s)



Legislation Implementation update

ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures



- Employers with 50 or more employees cannot order business closing or mass layoffs without giving 60 days notice.
 - Written notice to ESD, impacted employees and their bargaining representative.
- Provides limited exceptions to notification requirement
 - Seeking capital or business to prevent a layoff, unforeseen business circumstances and natural disasters.
 - Exceptions may apply to all or part of the 60-day notice requirement
- Creates financial liability for employers not meeting notification requirement
 - Includes potential backpay and benefits for each day of violation up to 60 days, and can be reduced by paid wages and benefits during the 60 day period.
 - Employer may be subject to civil penalty of not more than \$500 for each day of violation unless employee wages and benefits are paid.
- Effective July 27, 2025



ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures Implementation Plan



- Implementation underway
- Project Objectives:
 - Communicate new requirements to employers & workers
 - Make updates to the existing WARN tracking system to support compliance and operations
 - Establish process for exceptions and for handling potential violations



ESSB 5525: Mass layoffs and business closures Engagement Plan



- Rulemaking
 - Public Comment
- Community Engagement
 - UIAC
 - Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- Targeted & Mass Communications
 - Website updates
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Legislation Implementation updates Comprehensive UI Technology Roadmap



ESSB 5167 (25-27 Operating Budget) proviso provides \$500,000 for ESD to produce a comprehensive Unemployment Insurance technology roadmap that:

- Addresses IT system challenges
- Makes recommendations for future enhancements
- Identifies costs associated with the recommendations

Regulatory Review Introduction



**Employment
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WASHINGTON STATE

JR Richards, Insurance Services Division Director, ESD



Regulatory Review Introduction



What: Systematically review, analyze, stakeholder and update regulations (statutes, rules, policies)

Why: Create an inclusive, efficient, and collaborative regulatory environment that ensures equitable access to ESD services, supports business operations, and aligns with broader jurisdictional standards.

What's Next: Regulatory Review team established and working to create internal capacity to conduct reviews; created a high-level process; will be begin reviewing prioritized topics

Rulemaking



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Stephanie Frazee, Legislation and Rules Coordinator, ESD



Rulemaking



- **Address Change Requirement** – We are adding an explicit requirement that employers provide their new address to the Department within 30 days after an address change. The final rule was adopted on June 6 and will become effective July 7.
- **CRO Filing** – We are amending our rules to clarify filing requirements with the Commissioner's Review Office. CR 101 has been filed and published. Draft rules will be published soon.
- **Transportation Network Companies** – We are working on rules on quitting for reduction of hours or compensation of 25% or more for TNC drivers and adding a rule on relief of benefit charges for employers who offer part-time work. We are working on the CR 102.

Public Comment



- If you would like to make public comment, please state your name and spell it so we can capture it correctly for the minutes, as well as the organization you represent if any.
- **Reminder:** Your comments are being recorded.
- If you would like your comments to be included in the meeting minutes, please submit them in writing via email to Camille Galeno at camille.galeno@esd.wa.gov. *(Camille's email will be posted in the chat)*
- Please limit your comments to **two minutes**.

Thank you

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**Break
Return at ()**