



EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT

Legislative

2026

Priorities





About the Employment Security Department

When life events disrupt employment, we provide economic security to the people of Washington state

The Employment Security Department helps people find jobs, bridges gaps in employment, provides paid family and medical leave, supports the state's long-term care fund and more.

Bridging gaps in employment

We run the state's Unemployment Insurance program, providing financial stability for workers and contributing to economic stability for businesses and the broader community during difficult economic times.

Providing paid family and medical leave

We run the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave program, providing workers peace of mind when they need to care for themselves or a loved one while ensuring employers remain stable.

Supporting the state's long-term care fund

In partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services, the Health Care Authority, and the State Actuary, we ensure all working Washingtonians can earn access to long-term care by collecting premiums and administering exemptions.

Helping people find jobs and employers find workers

We work with local partners throughout the state to provide services to job seekers and employers so that individuals and businesses in Washington can flourish and reach their full potential.

More information:

esd.wa.gov | paidleave.wa.gov | wacaresfund.wa.gov | worksourceWA.com

Our opportunities and challenges



More than half of the funding our agency receives is federal, but that funding has declined in real terms over many years as costs have risen. We utilize state funding sources to make up the difference, but the gap continues to widen.

Employment Security's 2024-28 Strategic Plan outlines our intent to better serve Washingtonians, particularly marginalized communities. The pandemic highlighted the need to improve the customer experience and modernize our systems to drive better outcomes.

Our Unemployment Insurance program faces challenges with customer wait times, as well as sophisticated fraud attacks. Caseloads in Paid Family and Medical Leave are rapidly growing. Governor Inslee's proposed 25-27 budget provides resources to improve customer service, access, and program integrity.

Our priorities

Protecting workers' personal information

In 2025, the Legislature adopted ESSB 5525 (2025), providing certain notification requirements for businesses regarding mass layoffs. While the state law closely mirrors provisions in the federal WARN Act, it introduced a few distinctions including requiring employers include employee names and addresses in business closure and mass layoff notifications submitted prior to layoffs or closures.

Unlike federal WARN notices, ESSB 5525 does not excluded personally identifiable information (PII) or Tribes from the definition of employer. Employment Security is pursuing agency request legislation to clarify that personal information may be held confidential by the department and that Tribes are exempt from the notice requirements.



Paid Family Medical Leave premium rate contributions

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a rule advising states on the taxability of Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits. This guidance creates a poor user experience for claimants and employers, additional tax burdens, is difficult to implement, and would be an ongoing administrative burden for Employment Security and employers.

Employment Security is pursuing agency request legislation to provide a better customer experience, alleviate additional federal tax burdens, and reduce administrative burden for both employers and the agency.

Leveraging federal funding

Employment Security is requesting authorization to use federal Reed Act funding. This funding will allow the agency to bridge the shortfall in federal funding for the unemployment insurance and workforce programs.

Updating the WorkSource Integrated Technology system

The WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) system will serve Employment Security and other WorkSource partners to provide and track employment services to job seekers and employers across Washington. The agency is working with the Legislature to leverage funding to include replacement of WorkSourceWA.com, the state's externally facing job seeking platform, with a new tool.



Cami Feek was reappointed commissioner for the Employment Security Department (ESD) by Governor Bob Ferguson in December 2024. She was first appointed Commissioner by Gov. Jay Inslee in June 2021. Prior to that, she served as ESD's acting commissioner, deputy commissioner and chief operating officer. Cami understands that achievement comes from cooperation and a shared vision. She translates these principles to her professional leadership, focusing her career on strategic systems design and innovative and effective operations. She knows first-hand that good government is key to bringing about quality services that Washingtonians deserve and expect.