

Workforce & Career Development Division

Director's Corner

As we turn the page on 2014, I would like to take a moment and reflect on where we've been.

This past year has been chaotic and turbulent at time. If it felt crazy to you, it's because, often, it was crazy. From WIOA's authorization, impending implementation and the unknowns about what that will mean for the system, to transition of SKIES from one system to another and all of the training and support that went with it, through another difficult budget year and the loss of more staff to reduction activities, staff in the field have really stepped up to the many challenges.

It's safe to say that change is a constant. We do our best to flex and adapt, and in doing so, some of our best ideas—YOUR best ideas—come to light. In my recent visits to field offices, I continue to marvel at the innovative work you're doing to meet the needs of our customers and challenges of the system.

The coming year will have its share of new projects and initiatives, new opportunities to practice our flexibility and learn new things. Key among them:

- *Replacing Go2WorkSource.com and SKIES (launching in 2016)

- *Planning for the 2016 WIOA implementation

- *The continuation of Service Delivery Redesign efforts, changing the way we do business all around the state.

Thank you for all of your amazing work and support, for remaining true to the heart of our work despite the challenges of the year. I look forward to seeing what 2015 will bring us.

Happy New Year to you and yours!
~Sandy Miller

State Legislative Session Preparing to Commence

The 2015 regular session of the Washington State Legislature is set to get underway on January 12, 2015 for a 105-day session that ends on April 26, 2015. This year's session is a "long session" because it involves development of the state's 2015-2017 biennial operating budget. Of note to those who follow workforce development, the House Labor and Workforce Development Committee was renamed the Labor Committee and will focus on issues like collective bargaining, unemployment, family leave, and wage laws. Workforce development issues will now be taken up by the Higher Education Committee, which is chaired by Rep. Larry Seaquist (D-26). In the Senate, the Commerce & Labor Committee will continue to take up workforce development issues, though the committee will be chaired by Sen. Michael Baumgartner (R-6), who replaces former Sen. Janéa Holmquist Newbry (R-13).

WIA Monitoring Schedule Released

The WIA Monitoring team has released its monitoring schedule for calendar year 2015. Visits will occur each month during the year. You can view the calendar, the team's organizational chart and monitoring FAQs on the [Inside WorkSource website](#). To contact team members, please refer to the [Technical Assistance Directory](#).

Amy Smith Joins NASWA

Early December marked the departure of Amy Smith from her position as ESD's Director of Employment System Administration and Policy. Amy has accepted a position with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), where she will serve as a Project Manager for a contract funded by the U.S. Department of Labor through New York's Center of Excellence for Unemployment Insurance Integrity. Under the newly awarded contract, Amy will oversee development of the Unemployment Insurance National Integrity Academy and development of a grant program designed to support states' efforts to implement UI integrity strategies and promising practices. While her position is based in Washington, D.C., Amy will continue to reside in Washington and travel around the country and commute to D.C. as needed. She looks forward to maintaining a close connection with Washington's workforce system to both inform her new work and to watch how WIOA implementation unfolds in the state. She can be contacted by e-mail at amy.smith@naswa.org.

Program Highlight: AmeriCorps "Navigators" Make a Difference to Customers

The Washington Service Corps (WSC) kicked off its 2014-15 program year in September, enrolling a total of 723 AmeriCorps members who serve at 426 different locations across the state - including 28 WorkSource offices. WSC AmeriCorps members placed in WorkSource Resource Rooms serve the role of "Technology and Resource Navigators", providing assistance to job seekers who need help with incorporating today's technology with the task of finding employment. Visitors to the Resource Rooms come with varying skill levels with computers and the online world of job-search databases, résumés and job applications; some have had very little exposure to basic computer navigation, while others just need a better understanding of how to use today's online resources.

No matter the skill level, as "Navigators", AmeriCorps members interact with everyone, sometimes sitting next to a customer in front of a computer walking them step-by-step through a process, and other times leading training workshops for several people at a time. Just in the first quarter alone (Sept. - Nov.), members in WorkSource offices served 325 participants in basic computer literacy classes. Of these participants, 90 percent indicated their computer literacy skills increased!

The impact that AmeriCorps members can have on WorkSource clients can be profound, in terms of an individual finally finding a job and turning their life around. As shared by AmeriCorps member Rob Steed, who serves at WorkSource Pierce, "I decided to go outside...during my afternoon break. I looked across the street [and] there was a guy I had As he got closer, I could see he was grinning from ear to ear. He yelled out, "I got a job!" He came up and shook my hand, then told me how he was getting out of the transitional housing he had been in. He said he felt much better about himself, his future, and the world as a whole. That was when it came to me: what I do in that Resource Room really does positively impact people."

Conversely, the impact that individuals have upon our AmeriCorps members can be just as remarkable. As stated by Bucky Collins, who serves at WorkSource Kitsap, "In my service thus far, I have found that the opportunity to help people understand technology has been very humbling and enjoyable. I can safely say that I have become very proud of my service, and have become a proud AmeriCorps member."

For more information on this and other WSC programs, contact [Eric Kindvall](#), Director of Programs and Operations, or visit [WSC's website](#).

Career Bridge Tip of the Month

Be sure to check the [Eligible Training Provider \(ETP\) list](#) daily on Career Bridge for ETP-approved programs to ensure you and your customers have up-to-date information. This online list changes frequently, and some programs may have been removed or added.

New Policy Guidance

None this month.

January 2015 Featured Events

How to Connect Customers to the Free Microsoft IT Academy

Jan. 15, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Register through the [Staff Development Calendar](#)



Lorraine Coots, WSC Program Coordinator (bottom left), with WorkSource AmeriCorps members.



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