

Wenatchee Small Business Roundtable Notes May 29, 2008

What's Working

Agency	Topic
*ALL	Small Business Roundtables
*ALL	Too much info at wrong times.
*ALL	Small Business Roundtables
ALL	Roundtables, like these forums and are very positive
ALL	More local interaction.
ALL	More online filing options available. Would like that to continue.
ALL	Local state agency representatives are great!
ALL	It is easy to start a business in WA
ALL	On line services are good
ALL	Willingness to listen to feedback
ALL	Help for new business assistance especially for larger businesses
ALL	Work well with employers to establish payment plans
ALL/SBDC	New business registration process(UBI) Small Business Development Center works well in helping with business plans
ESD	Good job training programs, responsive to businesses closing down, and has good partnerships (WorkSource)
ESD	WorkSource – finding good employees
ESD	Posting job openings on the web-site.
ESD	U I claims verification; On-line UCC1 filing
ESD	Web sites good.
ESD	The system to report your taxes is working well
ESD	Employment Security Dept. did great audit / survey
L&I	Handling of claims, responsive service to claimants, good/regular physician status updates on injured employees
L&I	Online access to permitting is easy and helps with time-management (return on industrial insurance)
L&I	Return on industrial insurance (RETRO) program – Love it!
L&I	Ease to work with the Agency
L&I	Unemployment taxes are stable in economic down turns
L&I	The on line registered contractor lookup & verification system
L&I	Holding down medical costs
L&I	COHBE program
L&I	Electronic Web site. (claims)
L&I	COHE is a positive program
L&I	Info flow works well between MD, L&I, and insured worker.
L&I	Consulting services
L&I	Online resources are good.
L&I	Small Business Liaison office is very good
L&I	Web claim tracking
L&I	Contractor training.

L&I	Web sites good.
L&I	Consulting services
L&I	Online resources are good
L&I	Small Business Liaison office is very good
L&I	Web claim tracking
L&I	Contractor training
CTED	Regional offices – have good access to their community and understand their needs.
CTED	Providing resources to start a new business
DOR	Doing a good job overall
DOR	1-800 # - responded to a question within 1 hour
DOR	Streamlined Sales Tax Information Distribution
DOR	on-line, 1-800 #. Local office all helpful
DOR	Web sites good.
WSP/DOL	Good job on cracking down on those who rebuild and sell salvage only vehicles
DOL	Licensing portal works well
ORA	Online Business Registration (Business Portal)
ORA	Pretty helpful.
LCB	Liquor Control Board – it took 2 years to get their attention. When did get attention, they were helpful
	Few hassles. No constant change
	On-line assistance
	Loves internet
	Tax Office – helpful with quarterly reporting
	Tax Report. Has helpful files on-line
	Often have right person in right place
	Great housing market in Wenatchee. Huge retirement community

Wenatchee Small Business Roundtable Notes

What's Not Working

Agency	Topic
*ALL	Track most frequent rule violations and focus on training businesses in these areas.
*ALL	Better access to English as a Second Language in remote / rural areas.
*ALL	Bridge the language barrier.
*ALL	L&I and other agencies need to clearly communicate about interpretation and enforcement of rules and laws and be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible • Consistent • Provide effective approaches to the problem and methods for dealing with it
ALL	Too much information at wrong time

ALL	Rules & Regs: New regulations should consider rural vs. urban areas, “ No one-size fits all. ”
ALL	Outreach: Agencies should do more of these roundtables, more often, need more agencies to participate (i.e. DOE), so they can better understand how rules made in Olympia impact constituents
ALL	Outreach: Need to improve focus in industry clusters (similar to roundtable format), more outreach to localized areas
ALL	Outreach: Better outreach using speakers for educational purposes, particularly to prospective and new Latino business owners, so they can receive information on licensing, taxes, etc.
ALL	Need more flexibility in processes and requirements for different size and types of businesses. Also recognize difference between East and West sides of the state and North and South regions of Eastern Washington when it comes to regulations. One size does not fit all.
ALL	Need more assistance for small business startup
ALL	Cost to provide benefits to employees – Look at offering pooled resources such as small business co-op’s for insurance, tax credits, etc.
ALL	Rules & Regs: Provide tax incentives to small businesses to relocate, to grow
ALL	Anticipate problems (economic) and be more open with strategies to deal with those problems
ALL	Compliance should be a competitive advantage not a disadvantage
ALL	Many small business owners are not computer savvy nor are they Agency savvy
ALL	Answer the telephone
ALL	Create a small business owner advocate – or cross agency ambassador/mentor program; within existing revenues; to assist business to be successful. As an alternative we could reduce regulation.
ALL	Need a way to get help with new rules and laws.
ALL	General assistance for businesses on compliance to rules.
ALL	Consultation will be helpful when new rules and laws are drafted.
ALL	Agencies need to take the lead in legislative improvements.
ALL	Assistance from all Agencies at the local level.
ALL	Need a way to get help with new rules and laws.
ALL	Consultation will be helpful when new rules and laws are drafted.
ALL	Agencies need to take the lead in legislative improvements.
ALL	General assistance for businesses on compliance to rules.
ALL	Assistance from all Agencies at the local level.
ALL	Master Application – Agencies send too much info. (All agencies send new business a welcome packet with info that may not be germane to their business.)
ALL	Large Spanish speaking community – need to ensure prospective business owners have trust and confidence in government agencies
ESD	U I Claims process needs to be scrutinized better. Too many people working and drawing benefits. Also the system needs to be more

	flexible for people who draw every year due to season work.
ESD	Resources for success: On-going budget cuts (WIA, Wagner-Peyser) limits vital services to businesses
ESD	Poor luck with employee referrals. Of about 10, none showed up for interviews
ESD	Advertise services available and what you do better
ESD	Confusion with LLC
ESD	Who are the clients that utilize Worksource – perception is that they are less educated workers
ESD	Need to create a process for corporate officers to opt out
ESD	Web address is not a good one. Difficult to remember.
ESD	Quarterly visits to Work Source that re bi-lingual to check in on how businesses are doing
DOE	Miscellaneous: Water issues – feels like DOE is in partnership with a ‘hard core’ environmental group; they threaten well-drillers’ livelihood (e.g. head of DOE is speaker at an upcoming exempt well workshop sponsored by environmental group)
DOE	Outreach: Not responsive, reactive agency (Knee-jerk response); run customers in circles and no decisions are made.
DOE	Rules & Regs: 72 hr rule – No local DOE in Wenatchee (the closest is Yakima); the system in place is cumbersome; Need online access!! Also, can we eliminate this 72 hr rule? Why is this in place? Stressful on small businesses.
DOE	Don’t put business through the wringer on water quality issues
DOE L&I, DOL,	Rules: Well-drillers need 4 licenses; this is crazy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed electrician; • Licensed plumber; • Licensed well-driller; and • Class “A” CDL license, which is more stringent now; need local testing site
DOE, L&I	Rules & Regs: Getting a water-well driller license is difficult; regulatory process too stringent; requires too many hours (4000 hrs) to qualify, which hurts small businesses wanting to bring in trainees
*L&I	Wait time on the 1-800 physician hotline is long; however, once connected the service is good.
*L&I	Heat stress rule.
*L&I	Loss of claim-free discount due to one incident.
*L&I	Better network for disability issues and guardianship.
*L&I	Employer is powerless in the claims process.
L&I	Rules & Regs: Electrical and plumbing requirements, continuing education requirements hard to get and maintain (CEUs)
L&I	Liability insurance requirements (rates are too high for small businesses).
L&I	Rates are disproportionate (more should be paid by the employee and less should be paid by the employer.

L&I	On the job injury claims process needs to be scrutinized better. Too many people working the system.
L&I	Allow for tip credit with regards to minimum wage
L&I	Exceptions appear to out weigh the rules now
L&I	Brinks Decision (Washington State Supreme Court) – work time vs. commute time
L&I	If insurance is required for employees is it now cost prohibitive to operate
L&I	Provide major medical stop-gap insurance
L&I	Lag time (six weeks) is too long for provider payment.
L&I	Ways to help firms get into retro.
L&I	It is costly for employers to fight claims. Would like help from Attorney General's office.
L&I	Percentage of fee for attorney's representing employees in their claim is too high.
L&I	Claims process is strongly favors the person making the claim.
L&I	Risk Classes – Can't classify according to the work actually being performed.
L&I	Small business needs more flexibility in the risk classes.
L&I	Anti fraud mentality actually punishes small businesses
L&I	Rates are a factor when businesses are determining if they should locate in Washington or choose another State.
L&I	Drywall workers comp. reporting s complicated and there is a lot of fraud.
L&I	Suggestion: Workers comp. should be paid by the percentage of payroll.
L&I	Revised independent contractor law interpretation is unclear.
L&I	Gives conflicting answers.
L&I	Classification of independent contractors as covered workers. This forces potential sub contractors to become employees.
L&I	The key for defining an independent contractor should be "financial risk". (IRS definition of independent contractor is good.)
L&I	Heavy burden on business owners to verify independent contractor status.
L&I	Independent contractor requirement to verify IRS tax status
L&I, DOR	Resources for success: Inconsistency in answers when constituents call for assistance (help lines)
*DOR	Difficult to get clarification on rule and law changes. Web site is not good for clarification and calls to DOR result in conflicting answers.
DOR	B & O tax – why does it exist and where does it go
DOR	New sales tax change (effective 7/1/08) is more confusing
DOR	Redundancy of the syrup tax credit, cost to account for out weighs the actual credit
DOR	SST – need to sort out the local B&O nexus issues with the Cities
DOR	Revenue cycle – pay taxes before receive cash for sale of it
DOR	Exempt taxes – B&O – but get forms anyway. If pay, refunds limited to 3 years, Owner's liability is for 7 years. Waste everyone's time

	and businesses money
*CTED	Getting in Kittitas Co. – Tourism promotion needed.
CTED	Resources for success: Access to capital
CTED	Community block grant – difficult for small businesses to qualify and is not flexible.
CTED	Need to take each inquiry serious (from different individuals).
CTED	Assistance with finances or regulations for affordable housing projects.
CTED	Create incentives for low to mid income housing development.
CTED	Growth Management Act is contributing to the problem of limited affordable housing.
CTED	Assistance with finances or regulations for affordable housing projects.
CTED	Create incentives for low to mid income housing development.
CTED	Growth Management Act is contributing to the problem of limited affordable housing.
*LCB	Liquor Control – Hard to get clear interpretation of rules and laws.
LCB	lost money since partner's wife won't sign papers – had to restructure to corporation. L.B unsympathetic, wouldn't help
LCB	Hard to get clear interpretation of rules and laws.
EPA	Lack of ability to burn in addition to higher costs to dump
ORA	Use of technology: Create a feature on Business.wa.gov that small businesses can leave feedback for improvements, suggestions for industry cluster forums/roundtables with a cc: to local legislators
Local Gov	Local planning commission, county commissioners obnoxious and unreasonable. State won't move forward until local agencies happy and issues resolved and agencies. Too long a process. Example: adult group home
SCORE	Need more volunteers for SCORE. They are very helpful
SCORE	SCORE needs more money
Roundtable Team	Publicity for event – what is the benefit –need to improve attendance at roundtables and meetings. Follow-up with an e-mail to those who did attend
Roundtable Team	Flyers and brochures for Small Business Roundtables need to be much cleaner and simpler. Send them with quarterly reports so that lots of business know about them.
Roundtable Team	Better advertising of Round Table events
	Businesses need help with change in ownership structure
	Feds and state do not work together.
	Reams of paper / legalese
	Didn't know about all resources available
	Barriers to non-English and fear of bureaucracy
	Older staff of businesses not computer savvy
	Need to know what and where on an agency site to go to. Need better search engines.
	Adding employees is cumbersome

	Too many hurdles compared to setting up a business in Mexico
	English – too much English needed and so many forms to fill out
	Support and education of prospective and actual business planning
	WAC / RCWE very difficult. Example: start group home: facility, license, regs
	Startup is difficult
	Business owner doesn't speak Spanish but referrals are all to people who speak no English
	Intro into Business – an intro in Columbus Ohio was great but when person moved to WA at a loss as to what to do
	If chose "wrong" business structure and need to change, can't move info from old category to new category and now a big tax burden
	Need – guide and questions to help on-line and hard copy – to help decide on how to register your business – corp. or other Need Way to recover / get credit if change business classification (within 1 year?) Need More detail about business structure – Turbo Tax ??? / would like SCORE to help advise
	Gas prices and taxes too high
	Gap between localities and state level – state could do better in communicating to local government importance of issues (e.g., water quality issues).
	Lack of effectively communicating info for new businesses. (This was also evident with Hispanic businesses the previous night.)
	Businesses want to comply but don't know the process.

* = items table identified as most important