

Welcome to our electronic newsletter, which is based on the printed version we mail each month.

****Special Note**** Due to measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, *Teamwork* is only being distributed electronically. Our print edition will resume when appropriate.

Diversity, equity and inclusion: Moving beyond words

We want to make the South Sound the best place to do business in Washington State. But we can only do that if we fix the inequities we have today.

If you tuned in June 29 for the [COVID-19 Business Information and Resources Webinar](#), you heard some powerful and honest words from Tamar Jackson, Director of Community Engagement for [WorkForce Central](#). Jackson addressed the unexpected challenges organizations are facing with the COVID-19 pandemic and **Black Lives Matter** movement, and discussed his organization's work to build best practices and collaborations, and ensure equity for all Pierce County communities.

He also made clear there's much more to be done beyond reacting to the events over the last several months. While there's been a lot talk about diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, there needs to be more than words. We need to make certain Pierce County organizations truly are diverse.

DEI starts at the top

If your business or organization is looking for help with diversity, equity and inclusion, there's a great resource right here in Pierce County. The [Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force](#) is a 72-member coalition made up of 46 organizations dedicated to fostering the economic mobility of individuals and families. When the task force came together within the last year to look at where inequities exist, they realized they were within Pierce County businesses and organizations.

"DEI needs to start at the top-with your board, leadership and management-and work its way down," said Jackson, who heads the group's leadership team. "Right now, DEI is being fought for from the bottom, and it's hard to get to the top."

In collaboration with the taskforce, WorkForce Central has created a survey for organizations to determine what their internal structure really looks like. The survey is completed by the organization-versus the top brass or a company's equity manager-and management needs to be open to hearing the response.

"It won't be easy," Jackson said. "But you can't be afraid to open those wounds, accept them and be willing to change if we truly want to our organizations to be as diverse as we say we do."

BRIEFS

COVID-19 resources

What's the latest on COVID-19 and businesses resources? The EDB continually updates our website to reflect the most current [COVID-19 information and resources](#).

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Jackson feels diversity, equity and inclusion have become buzzwords, and diluted ones at that. "It's what everyone thinks they should be doing right now," he said. "Anti-racism is a conversation. Anti-racism work is actually doing the work. It's not something done overnight, and it's not something that should end after COVID-19. Organizations have to be ok having these conversations in order to do what that they want to do."

The Pierce County Community Engagement Task Force meets the first Wednesday of each month. The virtual meetings are open to the public, and businesses and organizations are encouraged to participate. "Join us," Jackson said. "Be a part of this so you know what's going on and how you, your organization or your platform can best serve this community."

If your business or organization is ready to put words into action, Jackson is happy to help you navigate the process and provide guidance to put you on the right track to make changes. You can reach him at TJackson@workforce-central.org.

Note: Want to hear more? Listen to a recording of the [June 29 webinar](#).

Reopening help for Pierce County businesses

For many, making changes to align with Governor Inslee's [Safe Start Washington](#) comes at a price. The [Pierce County COVID-19 Adaptation Grant Program](#) can help offset some of the costs of reopening and adapting to a new normal.

To be eligible for a reimbursement grant, businesses and organizations must:

- Have a written plan for operating safely under new guidelines related to COVID-19. The [Reopening Toolkit for Businesses](#), created by the [Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department](#), is a great resource. Along with a safety plan template, the toolkit includes guidelines around PPE, health screenings, handwashing, physical distancing and more.
- Provide documentation of COVID-19-related expenditures (dollars already spent) based on itemized receipts and workplace photos.
- Be actively operating and physically located in Pierce County.

If you qualify, up to 50 percent of approved expenses related to COVID-19 safety practices may be reimbursed. One-time grants will be awarded to a maximum amount of \$8,000, with the exception of skilled nursing facilities, long-term care facilities and adult family homes that may receive grant amounts up to \$10,000. Corporate chains and corporate franchises are generally not eligible for a grant under this program.

For more information, visit piercecountywa.gov/adaptgrant or contact the **Pierce County Economic Development Department** at PCAdaptGrant@piercecountywa.gov.

More great business resources

Additional resources are available to help Pierce County business cope with the challenges of reopening and recovering from the impact of COVID-19.

- **[Pierce County CARES free PPE](#)**. Pierce County offers free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to businesses physically located in Pierce County. To receive free PPE, eligible businesses must complete a [PPE Request Form](#) and indicate the type of PPE needed.
- **[City of Lakewood COVID-19 loan program](#)** The City's assistance program supports small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Loans range from \$2,500 to \$10,000. Application review begins July 10, 2020. The program will remain open until funds are exhausted.
- **[Manufacturer recovery assistance funds](#)** Small- to medium-sized U.S. manufacturers based in Washington can apply for [CARES Act](#) recovery assistance funds. These funds provide services that directly support a manufacturer's ability to recover from the impact of COVID-19.
- **[Federal assistance for Northwest manufacturers](#)** The [Northwest Trade Adjustment Assistance Center](#) administers federal funds to support regional manufacturing companies hurt by imports. Eligible companies can receive up to \$75,000 in matching funds to implement projects aimed to improve sales growth, new market development, efficiencies and more.
- **[Washington State Job Skills Program grants](#)**. Washington State awards funds to companies that need customized worker training and development through Pierce County community and technical colleges. [Invista Performance Solutions](#) can help with the grant process.

If you need assistance or would like more information about any of the above resources, contact Maddie Merton, EDB vice president of Business Retention and Expansion, at maddie@edbtacomapierce.org or 253.284.5891.

Grants boost small businesses

In the June issue of Teamwork, we shared the good news that 76 (very) small Pierce County received emergency grants through the [Working Washington Small Business Emergency Grant \(WWSBEG\)](#) program. The companies that received awards employ no more than 10 people and were drawn from a pool of more than 4,000 Pierce County applications.

Businesses that received emergency funds represent 16 cities and unincorporated Pierce County and a wide span of industries. Here are just a few:

- **[Grant Spangle Physical Therapy](#)**, Gig Harbor. "This grant was a lifesaver towards keeping our business open during these trying times," said Lara Carter, office manager. "We have been able to tend to patients' pain needs and keep them healthy, active and out of overtaxed medical facilities."
- **[Spindle Dynamics](#)**, University Place. "Our company provides machine tool spindle repair for printed circuit board manufacturers, so as a niche small business we were surprised and honored to receive this grant," said co-owner Trish Long. "Thank you for supporting small businesses throughout Pierce County at such a critical time!"
- **[Bricks 4 Kidz Tacoma](#)**. "Thanks to the WWSBEG, our STEM-based child-enrichment program was able to bring instructors back to provide virtual child enrichment classes, participate in a day camp for children of first responders and health care workers, and move forward with much-needed, in-person and virtual summer camps," said director Kristi Walker.

Major Employers List 2020



It's that time again. Each year, the EDB compiles and publishes its **Major Employers List** of companies with 100 or more full-time employees working in Pierce County. The list also includes "companies to watch" organizations with 50 to 99 employees that are on the verge of crossing over the 100-employee threshold.

In July, the EDB will begin reaching out to companies to request employment numbers. And as usual, we'll make it as easy as possible to submit your information.

More information is available on the [EDB website](#). If you have questions, contact Jacqueline Moffo, EDB Vice President of Business Development, at 253.383.5889 or Jacqueline@edbtacomapierce.org.

Condit takes wheel at WorkForce Central

The EDB welcomes and congratulates Katie Condit, new Chief Executive Officer for **WorkForce Central**. Condit stepped into her new role July 6, succeeding longtime CEO Linda Nguyen and interim CEO Helen McGovern-Pilant.

Condit was most recently executive director for **Better Together Central Oregon** and has served as a member of several boards, including **Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council**, **Central Oregon Latino Partnership Program** and **Central Oregon STEM Hub**.



A graduate of the [University of Puget Sound](#), Condit looks forward to bringing her experience and leadership into the community to lead Pierce County toward a common vision.

"The rich diversity of industry, civic partnership, cultures and lived experiences in Pierce County are strong assets to build on," Condit said. "I look forward to contributing my experience and working alongside an incredible team of staff and community partners towards greater economic vitality for all across the region."

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Teamwork is a service of the EDB, a non-profit corporation focused on recruitment and retention of primary businesses in Tacoma and Pierce County. Telephone: 253-383-4726. Website: edbtacomapierce.org