

PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018 – 2019



Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance

P.O. Box 43125 Olympia, WA 98504

www.oria.wa.gov

800-917-0043 or 360-725-0628

To access this document electronically, visit:

<http://www.oria.wa.gov/PerformanceReportFY1718.pdf>

To obtain this document in an alternate format, contact the
Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance

September 2019

ORIA- 19- 001

Table of Contents

Director's Message	1
Executive Summary	2
Assisting Customers	3
Information Center	3
Types of Inquiries Received	3
Increasing Number of Inquiries	5
The Impact of Online Chat	5
What Our Customers are Saying	6
Regulatory Innovation Center	8
Improving Systems	10
Small Business Liaison Team	10
Small Business Guide	10
Road Map for Starting a Business	11
Outreach through Business.wa.gov	12
Coordinated Outreach	13
Technology Services	14
Customer Relations Management (CRM) Software	14
ORIA.wa.gov	14
Business.wa.gov	15
Regulatory Handbook	16
EZview	17
Regulatory Fairness Act	18
Permit Timeliness	20

Director's Message

In last biennium's report, I pledged that our organization would seek out partnerships with people who share the innovative, entrepreneurial spirit of our state to make a positive difference for the outcomes from its government. With that goal in mind, I restructured the priorities of our small organization and existing budget to make investments that align with those results.

I am pleased to report that our team has now tripled the number of people and businesses who make use of our on-call regulatory assistance services. We have launched not one, but two, first-class websites which are proving to be vastly more effective communications platforms for reaching people who need help, in the right moment when they need it. We are pioneering the use of cutting-edge technology to weave ordinarily disparate and confusing regulatory processes and communications channels together. We are reinvigorating and refocusing the work of the state's Small Business Liaison Team. And we are leveraging each of these initiatives to create an integrated network of government and business development entities that share a vision for a thriving small business environment.

One of our more challenging responsibilities is to improve state regulatory programs at a system-wide level. Here, we have again restructured the team and its work priorities. Helping agencies improve their Regulatory Fairness Act performance and following through on what we have learned from the first full cycle of Permit Timeliness data are both showing great promise. ORIA also has a largely untapped well of data about how regulatory programs are working in the form of the thousands of assistance requests our Information Center receives annually. Data-based performance improvements are an underpinning of each of the preceding focus areas. Therefore, we have added strong quantitative skills to the team to help us pursue these opportunities.

These efforts reflect the priorities I hear in ongoing conversations with individual entrepreneurs and business organizations. They want to know their government supports their success. They want their interactions with government to be timely, clear, coordinated and businesslike. They want us to come join them in the current technological century.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our organization and our accomplishments. I am proud to present our performance report for the 2017-19 biennium. I thank the members of our team for their dedication to helping the people of our great state.

Aaron Everett
Director

Executive Summary

Assisting Customers

One of ORIA's core services is a free Information Center that helps citizens and businesses understand and navigate Washington's regulatory processes. The Information Center responded to 7,654 inquiries during the biennium – a more than threefold increase over the previous two-year period. Redesigned websites, a broader awareness of our services within the business community and the popularity of online chat technology deployed in 2017 have driven the increase. ORIA has added an additional team member to assist with responding to this increased request volume.

In 2019, ORIA also added a dedicated Small Business Liaison to lead the state's Small Business Liaison Team and to coordinate multi-agency outreach. ORIA continues to maintain the Small Business Guide and has now re-launched the [Business.wa.gov](https://www.business.wa.gov) website as well as a redesigned [ORIA.wa.gov](https://www.oriamn.gov) site. The revamped websites offer a better customer focus, including easier access to the most-requested information about permitting and business regulations.

ORIA's Regulatory Innovation Center (RIC) helps people with complex problems and projects, usually involving multi-jurisdictional permitting. The RIC team worked on dozens of projects ranging in size from Vigor's nearly billion-dollar contract to build the U.S. Army's new amphibious landing craft, to helping business owners navigate permitting issues for business expansion, to developing a world-class recreational surf pool facility. In all, ORIA contributed to nine ongoing or larger scale projects and provided technical assistance on 29 multi-jurisdictional permitting assistance requests.

Improving Systems

Beyond the information and communication benefits achieved in re-launching [Business.wa.gov](https://www.business.wa.gov), ORIA is working to test new technologies like Robotic Process Automation and Artificial Intelligence to achieve modernized service delivery and coordinated communications – not just across state government, but extending to local government business regulators and business development organizations. Imagine if doing business with government was as easy as ordering from Amazon.com.

The RIC is changing its approach to system-wide improvements by focusing on agency implementation of the Regulatory Fairness Act, which requires that mitigating small business impacts is considered in the rulemaking process. In addition, there is much to learn from agencies' performance data and process improvements resulting from legislative direction on Permit Timeliness.

Assisting Customers

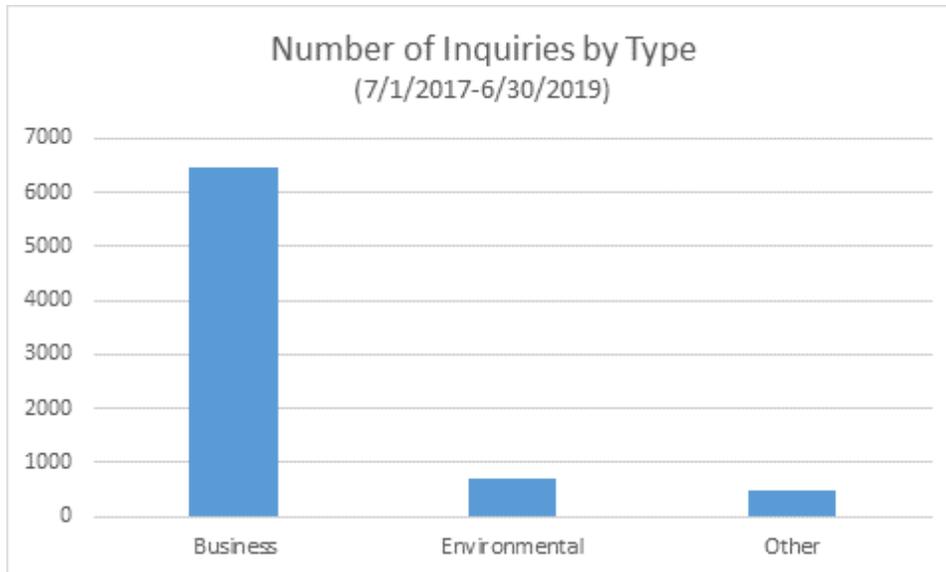
Information Center

The ORIA Information Center provides free help for citizens and businesses to understand and navigate Washington’s regulatory processes. The Information Center answers questions about local, state and federal permits and regulatory requirements and researches project-specific questions. The Information Center also connects customers to the experts at regulatory agencies, or refers more complex projects to the Regulatory Innovation Center for additional assistance.

In Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017, ORIA responded to 2,384 inquiries about environmental, regulatory, licensing, and business requirements. ORIA’s responses required researching the questions, connecting the customer with the right subject matter expert, and following through to ensure the customer was satisfied with the assistance received. The most common questions received were about basic permit requirements, such as “which permit do I need for...”. More specifically, people trying to start a new business or who have questions about business regulations and environmental permits, were the most frequent customer inquiries. The word cloud below displays some of the most common questions ORIA helps people answer.

Types of Inquiries Received

During the two-year reporting period of this report (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019), ORIA responded to 7,654 inquiries about business, environmental, and other regulatory requirements. ORIA’s responses required researching the questions, connecting the customer with the right subject matter expert, and following through to ensure the customer was satisfied with the assistance received.



The most common questions received were business-related (85% of all inquiries). Here are some of the typical business questions we received:

- As an employer (often an out of state employer), how do I open employee accounts for workers compensation and unemployment insurance so I can make the required contributions?
- When setting up a business as an entity (i.e., a corporation of some form as opposed to a sole-proprietor), people will often start by using the online business licensing service (BLS) and get partway through the process when the system indicates they need a UBI number. At this point, they sometimes contact ORIA asking, “How do I obtain a UBI number?”
- I am an out of state business, and, I want to do business in WA, what are the registration requirements?
- Other questions we receive related to businesses include:
 - Choosing a business structure;
 - Registering and licensing a business;
 - Where to apply for a business license;
 - Where to register a corporate entity; and,
 - Renewing a business license.

ORIA tracks patterns in the questions that are trending and maintains a “Frequently Asked Questions” on the oria.wa.gov website as well as the re-released business.wa.gov website, now hosted by ORIA. We have also created informational checklists on these topics that allow us to respond quickly with accurate and detailed responses. Additionally, we share this report with other agencies through the Small Business Liaison Team, which includes over two dozen state agencies. In sharing this

information, we hope that regulating agencies can improve instructions and tools they provide to address these common questions.

Increasing Number of Inquiries

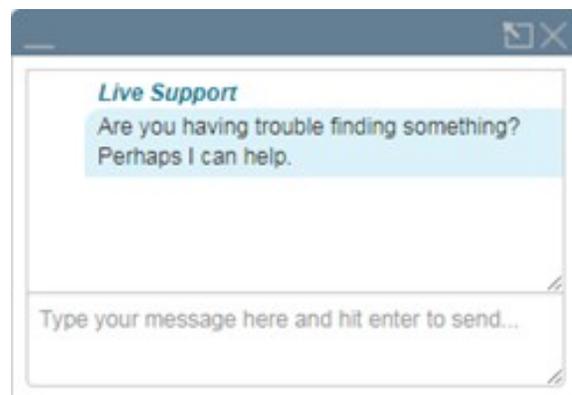
The total number of inquiries ORIA received in this two-year reporting period (7,654) represents an increase of more than threefold over the previous two-year period. ORIA attributes this increase to both a broader awareness of our services following the re-release of business.wa.gov as well as the use of online chat technology.

In June of 2018, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) transferred the business.wa.gov website to ORIA. At that time, the site consisted primarily of content from the Washington State Small Business Guide – a document maintained by ORIA and reviewed quarterly by the Small Business Liaison Team. ORIA updated the website design, added an HTML version of the “Road Map to Starting a Business,” and re-released the site in late September of 2018. The Small Business Guide is still an essential part of the website. Part of the redesign was to include various modes of contact information for the ORIA Information Center on the front page of the website. In doing so, ORIA provides support to the business community using SMS text messaging, online chat, email, and live phone support at no cost to businesses. By adding this contact information to the website, ORIA significantly increased awareness about the services provided by the Information Center, and subsequently the number of inquiries began to rise.

Adding SMS text messaging to the Information Center’s mix of technologies has been an experiment. Use of SMS as a means of submitting a question to ORIA has been limited, only 57 inquiries from September 2018, through June 2019, but it is slowly increasing – this is similar to the number of responses we receive from online surveys (61).

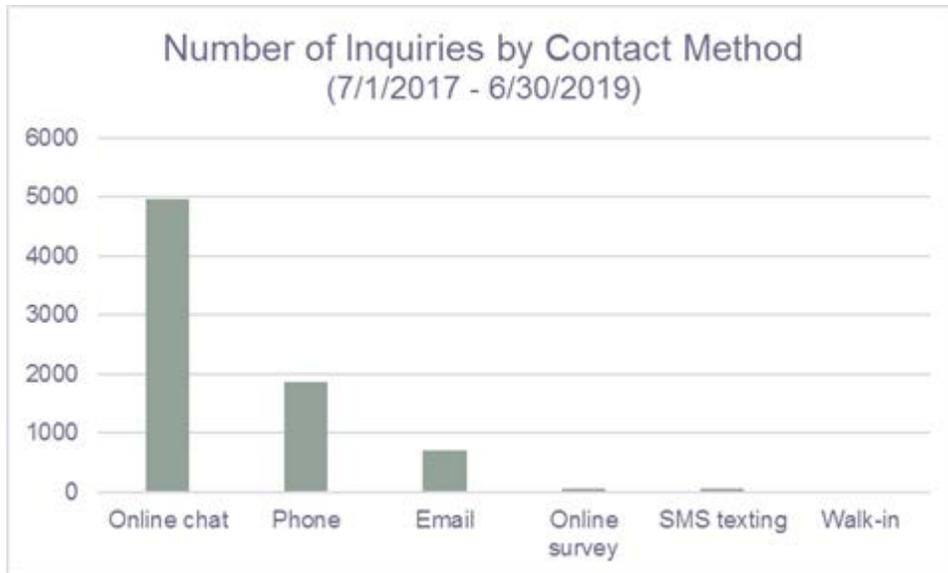
The Impact of Online Chat

In addition to responding to phone calls, email inquiries, and the new SMS text service, the Information Center also uses online chat to engage our customers. ORIA implemented a live chat service on the ORIA website in the spring of 2017 and, when business.wa.gov was re-released in September of 2018, online chat was added to that website as well. Using a technology called “Robotic Process Automation (RPA),” customers that are lingering on the website for more than 30 seconds are automatically identified and engage with a popup message “Are you having trouble finding something? Perhaps I can help?” The



customer can choose to ignore the Chat request or respond with a question. Engaging the customer while they are actively browsing the ORIA website has been very successful. In the short time, this has been implemented, it has quickly become the most popular way for customers to ask questions.

In response to the increasing number of assistance requests, ORIA has restructured positions within its existing budget resources to place an additional team member in the Information Center.



What Our Customers are Saying

ORIA is committed to providing support and assistance to business owners during all stages of business development so they can pursue their dream. The following stories are just a few examples of the assistance recently provided by ORIA.

Cannon Companies JARPA Application



“I was able to submit a JARPA, and, your guidance helped out a lot. The app itself had a lot of help itself as well, and I was able to complete it with no problem. I really appreciate your help through the submittal process! Thanks”, Michael Kaiwi, Engineer/Drafter, Cannon Companies, cannonconstructioninc.com. Cannon Companies is a nationwide utility contractor specializing in Electrical, Telecommunications and Civil Infrastructure. Their corporate headquarters is located in Milton, Washington.

Stantec Fiber Optic Cable Project

"...thank you, Sonya, all my questions were answered. I appreciated your quick reply and breadth of response.", Kacy Hillman, stantec.com, Stantec is a worldwide architectural and engineering design firm with Washington state locations in Seattle, Bellevue, Lynnwood, and Spokane.

Gerber Life Insurance Co. Setting Up Employee Accounts

"All of our questions were answered. You were very helpful and patient with describing what was needed to complete the project. The answers we received were detailed so that we knew how to complete the task at hand. Thank you", Jean Eggleston, Accounts Payable Supervisor, Gerber Life Insurance Company.

Premium Brands Holdings Corporation

"Thank you for following up. All my questions were answered from our discussion. My experience with ORIA was great as I found you very helpful and the resources very informative. Your help exceeded my expectations! Thank you", Jay Sidhu, Operations Analysis Manager, Premium Brands Holdings Corporation.

Mooring Buoy Permit

"I want to thank you for your VERY complete response to my questions about obtaining a permit for an anchoring buoy. Your response gave me the names of each agency I needed to contact, and their contact person and phone numbers. From there, it was easy to contact the agencies and obtain the information I needed. Thanks again for all your help. Cheers", Vince Streano, resident of Washington State.



Regulatory Innovation Center

The ORIA Regulatory Innovation Center helps an extensive range of people and industries to navigate Washington’s environmental and business regulatory systems. They provide technical assistance on complex permitting issues, rules, and regulations. In addition, the Regulatory Innovation Center facilitates workgroups and coordinates across agencies and governments. The Regulatory Innovation Center works with agencies to improve or simplify regulatory processes so government can work better for citizens.

The Regulatory Innovation Center provided technical assistance on 29 permitting assistance requests all requiring different levels of complex research, analysis, and engagement with the customer. These requests ranged from helping a local jurisdiction understand state and federal spill response authorities to permit assistance for the construction of a world-class recreational surf pool facility.

Additionally, the following table lists nine ongoing or larger-scale projects that the Regulatory Innovation Center helped with during the last biennium:

Customer	Regulatory Innovation Center Activity
Affordable housing policy work	Through research and outreach to relevant regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and policymakers, ORIA developed options for regulatory improvements to state affordable housing policy.
JARPA workgroup	ORIA continued to work jointly across local, state, and federal agencies to maintain Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) form.
North Pacific Paper Corporation (NORPAC)	ORIA helped NORPAC navigate permitting requirements to expand its recycling facility. NORPAC delivers a broad range of high-quality papers to customers worldwide.
PacWest Silicon (a subsidiary of HiTest Sands)	ORIA monitored project status pending resolution of various legal challenges and completion of SEPA EIS.
<u>Permit Timeliness</u>	ORIA continued to work jointly across 14 state agencies to collaborate on Permit Timeliness implementation.
Quincy Wastewater Resolution	ORIA participated in ongoing meetings with the City of Quincy, consultants, and regulatory agencies as the city looked to integrate residential and industrial water management for sustainable water supplies.

<p><u>Regulatory Fairness Act support</u></p>	<p>ORIA coordinated tools and guidance, as well as led collaboration to share best practices and identify information needs, to improve state agency implementation of the Regulatory Fairness Act.</p>
<p>Significant Legislative Rules</p>	<p>ORIA continued to work jointly across ten state agencies to report on the effects of Significant Legislative Rules.</p>
<p>Vigor</p>	<p>ORIA coordinated for Vigor pre-application meetings with state and federal partners and facilitated dialogue with DNR personnel on resolving aquatic lands ownership and use issues. Vigor was awarded a nearly billion-dollar contract to build the U.S. Army’s new landing craft over the next ten years. Vigor selected Vancouver, Washington as the site for a state-of-the-art, all-aluminum fabrication facility.</p>

Improving Systems

Small Business Liaison Team

[Executive Order 12-01](#) formalized and expanded the Small Business Liaison Team (SBLT). The SBLT is comprised of representatives from more than two dozen state and federal agencies lead by ORIA and collaborating to make it easier to do business in Washington State.

Small Business Guide

The Washington Small Business Guide (SBG) is a work product of the SBLT that is maintained and published by ORIA (business.wa.gov/guide). The SBG provides helpful information, links to valuable resources, and outlines the steps for starting and operating a business in Washington State. The SBG is available in English, Spanish, Russian, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The SBG includes sections that will help you plan, run, grow, or close a business in Washington State.

Subject matter experts from the SBLT member agencies improve the Washington Small Business Guide (SBG) by reviewing and updating the guide quarterly. ORIA coordinates the revision process, integrates the changes, and publishes the SBG in [HTML](#) and as a [PDF](#) for download and offline viewing or printing.

ORIA publishes the HTML version of the SBG using an Application Programming Interface (API) technology. This approach makes the SBG available to multiple websites using a single source kept current by ORIA. The SBG is available in HTML on the following sites:

business.wa.gov

oria.wa.gov

omwbe.wa.gov

First written in 2012, and now available in six different languages, the SBG has become a mainstay of knowledge and information for business in Washington State. The SBLT member agencies included links to the SBG on their websites.

"I used the Payroll Your Business, and it was excellent, and I plan on checking out the



rest because I'm sure there is more useful information.", "I just wanted to say THANK YOU so much for your amazing website, if you only knew how much this helped me, I wish every state did this. five-plus stars!!!"

Dee Dee Hauptmann, HR Director, IllFonic,

<https://www.illfonic.com>. IllFonic (IllFonic,

LLC) is an independent video game developer with studios in Tacoma, Washington and, Golden, Colorado.

Road Map for Starting a Business

A companion document to the SBG is the “Road Map for Starting a Business” (business.wa.gov/roadmap); this is an eight-step road map intended to lead entrepreneurs through the basic regulatory steps necessary to start a business. Initially available only in PDF format, ORIA converted this into HTML in September of 2018 when business.wa.gov was re-released, and now the Road Map is a part of business.wa.gov.

“The roadmap is excellent for someone coming from out of state. Especially the bullets as they break up the information and make it easier to follow and understand the instructions. This website allows me to take a more disciplined and efficient approach to starting my business in Washington; it has saved me 40-50 hours of searching for information on what is needed to file the proper documents and with which agency and mail time with filings.”

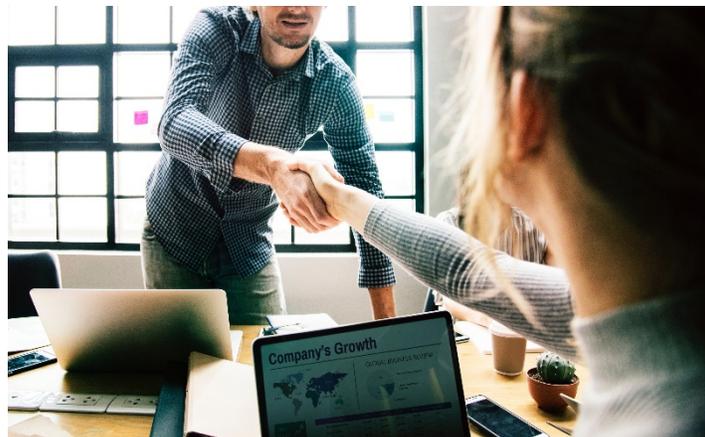
- Lee Stevens, Business Consultant, Kingport Corporation, <https://www.kingportcorporation.com>, currently located in Coronado, California with plans to move to Bellevue, Washington.



Outreach through Business.wa.gov

In June of 2018, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) transferred the business.wa.gov website to ORIA. At that time, the site consisted primarily of content from the Washington State Small Business Guide – a document maintained by ORIA and reviewed quarterly by the Small Business Liaison Team. ORIA updated the website design, added an HTML version of the “Road Map to Starting a Business,” and re-released the site in late September of 2018. The Small Business Guide is still an essential part of the website.

Website traffic to business.wa.gov continues to grow as it has done since its re-release in the fall of 2018. In the first six months of 2019, the website has had over 150K page views and has been visited by more than 60,000 people making this website the most effective form of outreach the SBLT has participated in to date. For current analytics, live reports of traffic on business.wa.gov can be viewed by visiting business.wa.gov/analytics. At the time of writing this report, the “Small Business Guide” main page is the most popular page on the website followed by the “Start” section of the guide, then the “Run” section and “Payroll” section. The “Road Map”, “Grow”, and “Plan” sections fill-out the other top slots for most popular pages on the website.



"The business.wa.gov website is very user-friendly and does not look like a government site. Love the pictures (very trendy) and the overall design of the website which is very inviting to business owners. The landing page is simple and makes it easy to navigate to the next pages.

The roadmap is excellent for someone coming from out of state.

Especially the bullets as they break up the information and make it easier to follow and understand the instructions. This website allows me to take a more disciplined and efficient approach to starting my business in Washington; it has saved me 40-50 hours of searching for

information on what is needed to file the proper documents and with which agency and mail time with filings. Everything is at your fingertip on this user-friendly website. The links to the agencies where you obtain register and get licenses work very well and save a lot of time as you can apply and pay for everything online. From this website, you can move seamlessly to the SOS and DOR websites for instance. Then, you can find your way to the city you will need a license from. The best part of this experience was that everyone I have spoken with has been so helpful and answered my questions clearly and with genuine interest in keeping things simple. This website is more CUSTOMER-FOCUSED than many commercial websites. I was able to register my new business and obtain a license in less than a month. That fact that your agency encourages feedback is wonderful and makes it very obvious that Washington wants businesses to grow and flourish...”

*Lee Stevens, Business Consultant, Kingport Corporation,
<https://www.kingportcorporation.com>, currently located in Coronado,
California with plans to move to Bellevue, Washington.*

Coordinated Outreach

The SBLT continues to participate in multiple outreach events, including the annual BizFair in Renton, hosted by the Internal Revenue Service, and the annual Business Partnership Forum hosted by the Department of Enterprise Services. At the 2018 BizFair, ORIA facilitated a session that included Department of Revenue, Labor and Industries, Employment Security, Secretary of State, and Liquor and Cannabis Board. The format was a panel of agency representatives answering questions from the audience. The conversation was spurred on by the use of a Jeopardy game board. The Business Partnership Forum helps businesses understand steps needed to do business and to network with the public sector. These connections translate into concrete assistance for Washington business owners – ORIA and several other SBLT agencies attended.

Technology Services

ORIA's team is increasingly seeking to work on the cutting edge of technology to demonstrate how state government can enhance its service to citizens and businesses. In some cases, the technology itself is innovative, and in other cases, ORIA is deploying somewhat typical technology in an innovative way.

First, nearly every technology solution ORIA has deployed is web-based, meaning it is always accessed using an Internet browser. Open Source tools are utilized to the maximum practical extent, which reduces overall costs and enables other organizations to freely adopt the technology.

ORIA was an early adopter of cloud-based services, Web servers are all hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS), which has been inexpensive and very reliable – ORIA's sites have never experienced a service interruption and have only been taken offline to perform basic software maintenance.

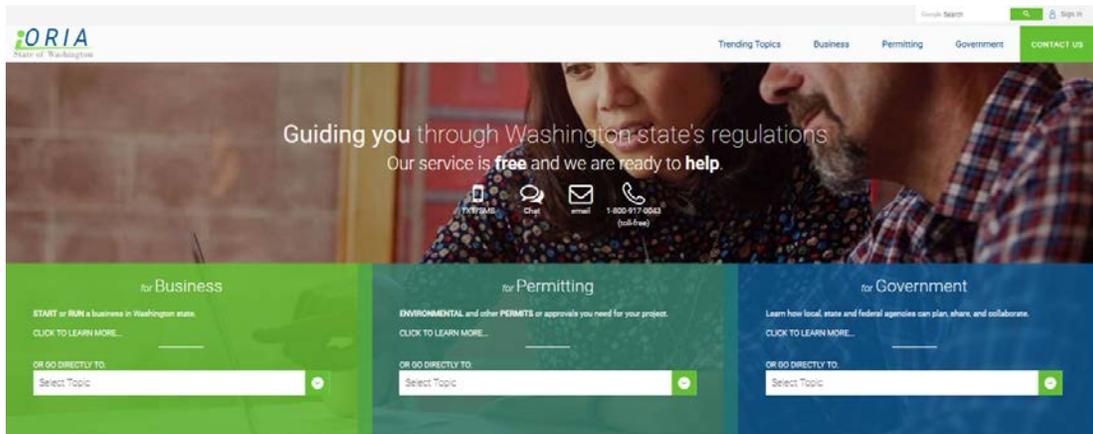
Customer Relations Management (CRM) Software

ORIA uses CRM software to maintain a record of all inquiries received through the Information Center. This includes contact information for the customer for follow-up purposes as well as a record of the full dialogue with the. Not only does this aid in managing communications with the customer it allows easy quality assurance and improvement analysis for achieving continually better service. The FAQ's on ORIA's website and business.wa.gov are also derived directly from CMS data – By using an Application Programming Interface (API), our website and the CRM communicate directly with each other. ORIA.wa.gov

The ORIA website (oria.wa.gov) was fully redesigned in 2018 with the primary objective of focusing its structure around ORIA's main customer groups: individual citizens seeking help with a regulatory question; businesses needing assistance with starting or growing their enterprise; and government professionals searching for assistance with best practices. The ORIA team set out to create a site that looked like nothing else in state government and to modernize the site's accessibility from mobile devices. The visual design and layout were contracted from a private firm, and the ORIA team built the content internally within the selected design framework. This investment proved doubly valuable because the same basic design concept was then utilized in redeploying Business.wa.gov.

During the reporting period of this report (7/1/2017 – 6/30/2019), there were over 350 thousand page views on this website. Most of this traffic came from customers viewing the [Small Business Guide](#) This figure is slightly lower than the same period in the

previous biennium, however much of the Small Business Guide traffic is now coming into the Business.wa.gov site.



Business.wa.gov

Other sections of this report, describe how business.wa.gov has connected customers to ORIA’s Information Center and how ORIA has supported the Small Business Liaison Team’s goals of outreach and regulatory compliance support. This section describes the technology innovations we use to keep the website running reliably, cost-effectively, and responsively. The servers are cloud-based, as are all of ORIA’s web servers. The core system used to manage the website was Open Source when ORIA first started using it many years ago; now it is uniquely ours. The system was built on the Microsoft Windows platform using industry-standard programming tools and database software – Over its years in use it has proven to be reliable, responsive, and secure.

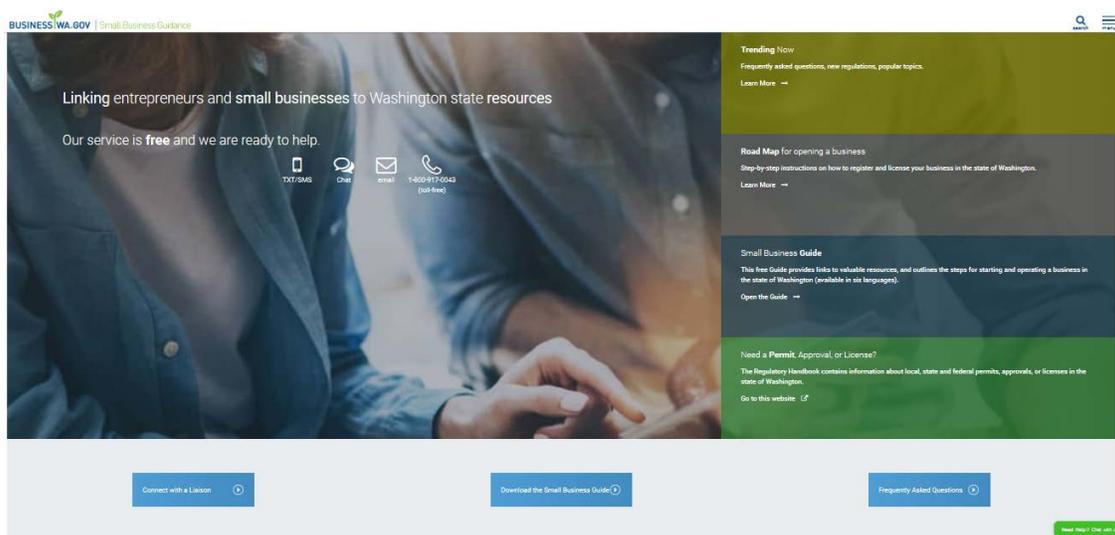
The website’s user interface is also worth mentioning. A Responsive Framework – called “Bootstrap” – was used to create a great looking website that works well for all devices. Responsive Framework web design is a technique that uses specific technologies such as Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and HTML, to resize, hide, shrink, enlarge, or move the content on a webpage to make it look good on any screen (e.g., Computer Screen, Mobile Phone, Tablet, or a Screen Reader for visually impaired users). This means the website looks good no matter what size the browser window is or what sort of a device you are using to view it. It even works well for screen readers used by people with visual disabilities.

"[A friend] recently mentioned this web site www.business.wa.gov and asked me if I would take a look at it from a screen readers users prospective. I am very happy to say I found it very easy to navigate to links, headings, and forms. Generally, I found it to be very accessible and easy to use which is not always the case. Overall, I rate it as A+ by

the way, I use Job Access with Speech (JAWS) and am certified as a user, therefore, I am not your average user. With all of that being said, my grade that I give is based on my experience and what I would say about any level of a JAWS user going into your site."

- Brian Horst, Program Administrator, Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Child Support

As ORIA's team continues to expand the capabilities of this website, new technologies like "Robotic Processes Automation" (RPA) are being explored to help deliver even more innovative solutions. What if the state could achieve an integrated, technology-based network – across multiple levels of government and in partnership with economic development organizations – that linked small businesses with location-specific assistance and resources to help improve their success? What if this type of network could ultimately be expanded to provide businesses with the elusive one-stop-shop for doing business with state regulatory agencies? Stay tuned.



Regulatory Handbook

The Regulatory Handbook contains information about local, state and federal permits, approvals, and licenses for Washington State. Although not a complete list, this list does provide in-depth information on most environmental permits. The Regulatory Handbook also contains performance data on timeliness for specific permits per Chapter 43.42A. This permit timeliness performance data is also accessible in ORIA's Central Repository on data.wa.gov.

EZview

EZview is a cloud-based software system ORIA developed and maintains. EZview was first made available in the spring of 2013 with support from the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC). EZview provides local governments and state agencies with easy to manage websites dedicated to specific projects. These dedicated websites, or “portals,” provide stakeholder communities with current, accurate, and up-to-date project information. All of this is done in the interest of providing transparency and keeping stakeholders informed.



Interest and utilization of ORIA’s EZview continues, and the site now hosts dozens of projects. Projects range from the Department of Commerce’s Housing Affordability Response Team to numerous flood hazard mitigation projects in the Chehalis Basin, shoreline master program updates, transportation and infrastructure projects, and watershed strategies.

Regulatory Fairness Act

Legislation from the 2017 session, [House Bill 1120](#), charged ORIA to collaborate with state agencies and business associations in developing resources to support better implementation of the Regulatory Fairness Act.

By Dec. 2017, ORIA posted examples of small business economic impact statements, guidance documents, checklists, FAQs, and templates on the website. Several agencies have told ORIA that the FAQ created by the Attorney General's Office contained especially helpful guidance. As part of its 2016 performance audit, [Assessing Implementation of the Regulatory Fairness Act](#), the State Auditor's Office created a minor-cost threshold calculator. ORIA has maintained a copy on its website so that agencies could readily determine minor cost threshold calculations for SBEIS preparation. These tools and guidance aimed to help agencies meet the requirements of the RFA and did not represent the only methods for achieving compliance with the law.

Small and mid-sized agencies can have a particularly difficult time implementing the Act successfully because they lack in-house staff with economic experts who can properly analyze potential impacts. Additionally, the importance of this gap in expertise may not become evident until the latter stages of rulemaking when the agency has already committed significant resources to the process and has built expectations for meeting firm implementation timelines. Therefore, as an initial step toward on-demand assistance for this area of consistent difficulty for agencies, ORIA crafted a roster of qualified economic analysis firms, conducted a competitive bid process and retained the successful firms on an ongoing basis so that agencies could call upon this resource as needed. This way, an agency that becomes aware that they need assistance can put together a scope of work, evaluate bids, and have the contractor working on their project within about one week – rather than the several months-long process they would ordinarily undergo to secure a contractor on their own.

"I learned a lot when working with Industrial Economics on economic analysis. I learned how and where to glean information, where there are data gaps, and how to present data for an industry without precedent. We're setting the precedent. That's a pretty exciting place to be. And, ORIA helped us get there. From start to finish, ORIA has been a great resource, and I look forward to the opportunity to engage again. Regulatory work can be challenging at best, and unforgiving at worst.

ORIA offers great service, support, and facilitates connections to innovative regulatory partners. Thank you, ORIA!”

Kathy Hoffman, Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board



Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

The Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board was the first agency to contract through ORIA for help on SBEIS preparation. Specifically, on how adding additional requirements for marijuana quality assurance testing would affect marijuana processors and producers, and indirectly, marijuana testing labs in Washington state.

In 2018, ORIA was able to restructure its staffing so that a permanent employee could more proactively reach out to agencies about their RFA implementation practices. ORIA will have begun meeting with state agencies to understand better the successes and unique challenges each may face implementing RFA, as well as facilitate the sharing of best practices between agencies. Through this process ORIA will determine what additional tools or guidance is needed to support agencies in preparation for the SAO conducting another performance review in 2020.

To view the tools and guidance to support better implementation of the RFA, visit: [Regulatory Fairness Act Support](#)

Permit Timeliness

ORIA, in partnership with 14 state agencies, continued to implement [Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2192](#) from the 2014 legislative session. This year marked the fourth annual tracking of permits for timeliness of issuance. State agencies reported performance data for more than 1 million permit applications across more than 150 different permit types during the most recent two-year implementation period.

To prepare the most recent comprehensive progress report published in Sept. 2018, ORIA compared annual results from over 1 million permit applications tracked by agencies between 2016 and 2017 against agency baseline data from 2015. During that reporting period, 29 out of a total of 153 permit types tracked improved in timeliness. From among the top 10 most improved permit types, nearly all were the result of agency improvement efforts designed to gain efficiency, which resulted in improvements such as technology modernization, easier-to-deliver service, and more efficient processing.

From among the 14 reporting agencies, three agencies — the Department of Health, Department of Revenue, and Department of Labor and Industries — had no increases in processing time for any permit type. Eleven agencies did report permits with some degree of increase in processing time. Overall, 42 out of a total of 153 permit types tracked did not improve in timeliness.

ORIA discussed with agencies all permit types that did not improve and identified 12 permit types as most in need of improvement. Agencies continue to make meaningful efforts to improve timeliness, and ORIA continues to explore opportunities to refine and learn more from the data. This was a sunset bill, so data collection ends in 2020 with the publication of a final comprehensive progress report.

For the most recent comprehensive progress report or more project information, visit: [Permit Timeliness](#)

ORIA Director, Aaron Everett, presenting on permit timeliness for the House Innovation, Technology & Economic Development Committee on Mar. 28, 2019.



"It is exciting to see government improvement through the use of good data. Using one million permit applications to improve processes across state government is the way to not only help residents of Washington with improved services but use and target limited and valuable tax dollars in the most efficient way possible."

Rep. Zack Hudgins, Washington State Legislature

"I commend the Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance for its efforts to transform the state's regulatory climate into one that's friendlier to job creators and other agency customers. Continuing to increase transparency and accountability, while providing better assistance and improved permit processing times will help spur further economic growth and open up more job opportunities across the state."

Rep. Norma Smith, Washington State Legislature
