



Innovate The State

Issue #1

The Productivity Board is In Business! by Greg Mennegar

January 2024 marked the relaunch of the state's employee suggestion program, the [Productivity Board](#). Did you know that if your suggestion is adopted and saves your agency money, you can receive a cash award of up to \$10,000? To date, we've received more than 60 suggestions from over a dozen agencies.

With the program now operational, our highest priority is raising awareness. We've made presentations to 33 agencies and would appreciate an opportunity to reach out to your staff. We are available to present in person or virtually and welcome opportunities to attend agency events. We also have promotional and informational items that we can provide to your agency. Please let us know how we can support you.

Meet the Team! Pictured left to right are:



Kirk Kirkland, Program Specialist

Kirk is the resident expert in policy and data analysis. He graduated from North Carolina State University with a bachelor's in political science. He previously worked as an alpine mountain guide on Kulshan and supervised the ski safety program at Keystone Resort in Colorado. He likes to lift weights, climb rocks, and play PC games. Contact Kirk at Kirk.Kirkland@sos.wa.gov.

Elizabeth Morris, Program Coordinator

Elizabeth brings ten years of board experience and governance expertise from her time with the Department of Defense. She develops and implements strategies and priorities aimed at improving Washington's innovation and productivity. She holds a master's degree in interdisciplinary study with a specialty in organizational behavioral studies. Contact Elizabeth at Elizabeth.Morris@sos.wa.gov.

Greg Mennegar, Productivity Board Manager

Greg has over 25 years of management, sales, and marketing experience. He is excited about the opportunity to help state agencies reduce costs and recognize employees for their cost-saving ideas. In his spare time, he is a photographer and listens to vinyl records with his trusty dog Goober. Contact Greg at Greg.Mennegar@sos.wa.gov.

David Junius, Marketing Specialist

David supports agencies with collateral materials, communications, and promotional opportunities. His career includes work with the Washington State Library, the American Red Cross, the University of California, and Northwest Harvest. Contact David at David.Junius@sos.wa.gov.

Our [Board Members](#) include agency heads from the Office of Financial Management and the Department of Enterprise Services, and members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, House Speaker, and Secretary of State's Office. Secretary of State Steve Hobbs chairs the Board.

Agency Spotlight: Department of Corrections

We would like to spotlight the Department of Corrections and Ann Green, Deputy Director of Human Resources, for their collaborative effort in supporting our program. Corrections employees have proposed 25 suggestions since January 2024. This number represents over a third of all suggestions received by our office. Ann's secret sauce includes adding Productivity Board communications in her all-agency newsletter and highlighting a separate tab on her agency's Intranet site. These simple efforts are paying off.

The Productivity Board thanks Ann and the Department of Corrections employees for engaging in our program and continuing to promote efficiency within Washington state government. We are excited about the strong partnership we have built with the Department of Corrections and look forward to forming similar partnerships with other state agencies.

Building Innovative Cultures by Liz Morris

Effective innovators know how to manage polarities. They can hold a bold vision and deliver short-term results. They realize it's possible to have their head in the clouds and their feet firmly planted on the ground. And they are able to maintain stability while embracing change. Building an innovative culture requires active participation within your team and between departments. Encouraging creative thinking is essential to avoid missing out on important perspectives. Check out this insightful video, [What Is Innovation?](#) by David Brier that hits the nail on the head.