



EMPLOYER ESSENTIALS

Services and Information for Today's Business

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JULY 15, 2010

Upcoming Training Events

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER!

July 20 11:00 a.m. OR 2:00 p.m. **DOL Wage and Hour Inspections– The Family Farm Exemption**

July 27 11:00 a.m. **Introduction to Social Media – FREE**

July 29 11:00 a.m. **Unemployment Insurance: Understanding the Claimant Separation Statement** (*Part One of Two Part Series*)

August 5 11:00 a.m. **Unemployment Insurance: Understanding the Notice to Base Year Employer** (*Part Two of Two Part Series*)

For more information go to <http://www.wsfb.com/educationtraining>.

DOL to Resume Inspections in Yakima Area on July 27

The department of labor's controversial wage and hour inspection program will resume for tree fruit growers in the Selah and Naches area during the week of July 26 – 30. In response, Farm Bureau will conduct a *webinar* on July 20 (see above), and an in-person review of forms for growers who have received an inspection notice on Monday, July 26. The agency typically provides a week or more notice of inspections – **you should not agree to an inspection unless you have reasonable time to prepare for it.**

This agency – the DOL Wage and Hour division – has seen a 30 percent increase in staffing in the past two years, so Farm Bureau members should attend the *webinar on July 20-* and plan on more inspections as the tree fruit harvest continues through the fall.

Employers Will Speak Out for Immigration Reform

Farmers and other seasonal employers are joining with high tech, restaurants, the retail industry and other employers at a **regional immigration forum for employers that is being held August 12 in Seattle.**

Immigration reform will happen – maybe during the lame duck session this year. Your attendance at this summit is necessary to make sure that you are getting what you need from this once in a generation reform.

The summit is sponsored by Immigration-Works USA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – Farm Bureau is a sponsoring association. The conference will unite employers from across the northwest and from all the economic sectors that rely on immigrant workers - high-tech, service-sector, agricultural and seasonal employers. The program includes panels, speeches and strategy sessions, including remarks by Washington Senator Patty Murray. Governor Gregoire, who spoke out recently [for immigration reform](#), has been invited.

Please take a minute to check out the [flyer](#) and the [agenda](#), and then register.

Save the Date

August 10 Tues. Webinar-**Wage and Hour: Understanding Non-Exempt vs. Exempt Workers (Hourly vs. Salary)**

August 24 Tues. Webinar-**Wage and Hour: Overtime in Agriculture - Federal and State Rules**

For more information go to <http://www.wsfb.com/educationtraining>.

Unemployment Insurance Benefits - And Premiums - To Increase

The Employment Security Department (ESD) reports that the loss of thousands of low-paying jobs caused an increase in the average wage in Washington in 2009. The average wage is used to compute the maximum and minimum unemployment insurance benefits for jobless workers as well as the premiums that employers pay. Employers will pay unemployment taxes on the first \$37,300 paid to each employee in 2011, up from \$36,800 in 2010.

Most workers receive an unemployment payment that is 50 percent of their average weekly wage in their two highest quarters of earning during the year or so preceding the claim. In addition, workers who were laid off in 2009 are receiving an extra \$70 each week. As an example, if a worker who averages a wage of \$500 per week was laid off in December 2009, the weekly unemployment payment is \$320 per week.

Normally, a laid off worker is eligible for benefits for six months, but for the past two years Congress has extended that time period to 99 weeks, nearly two years of payments. Although most of the extended benefits are simply being paid by running up more federal deficits, government unemployment trust fund balances are falling and need to be replenished. Farm Bureau predicts that the result of the government largesse will be higher U/I premiums for businesses in the next several years.

Farm Bureau offers a claims management program to help reduce unemployment insurance costs for members. Check it out at <http://wsfb.com/UIClaimsMgmtProgram>. We are also offering a series of webinars to explain the importance of responding to ESD forms – please see www.wsfb.com/UISeries to register.

EEO-1 Reports Due September 30 for Some

The EEO-1, or Employer Information Report, is a government-mandated report that must be submitted each year by September 30 to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). It requires certain employers to collect information about workers by job category, sex, race/ethnicity, and other information.

You are required to file a report if you are a private employer with 100 or more employees or 50 or more employees *and* a federal contract of over \$50,000. Employment data must include ALL full-time and part-time employees using employment figures from any pay period in the third quarter of this year.

Notification letters for the 2010 survey are being mailed to employers this month. If you don't receive the letter you still need to complete the report. We are unaware of any fines being assessed for failure to file this report.

Once you receive the notification letter, the first step is offering employees the opportunity to voluntarily self-identify their racial/ethnic identities. Self-identification forms are available at <http://wsfb.com/EmployerResources> under the "Forms and Posters" heading. If employees decline to self-identify, you may use visual observation to obtain race/ethnicity information. Keep this data away from personnel files and individuals who make employment decisions to avoid the appearance that protected information was considered in employment decisions.

A web based form and other information about the program, can be found at <http://eeoc.gov/employers/eo1survey/index.cfm>. You may contact the EEO-1 Joint Reporting Committee by telephone during business hours (Eastern Time) at (866) 286-6440. Our question – why is the U.S. government still collecting data about race and ethnicity in the 21st century?