

RCW 50.13.060 Access to records or information by governmental agencies. (1) Unless otherwise required by federal law, only state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes as defined in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 3306(u) of the federal unemployment tax act may have access to information or records deemed private and confidential under this chapter if the information or records are needed by the agency for official purposes and:

(a) The agency submits an application in a manner specified by the employment security department for the records or information containing a statement of the official purposes for which the information or records are needed and specific identification of the records or information sought from the employment security department; and

(b) The director, commissioner, chief executive, or other official of the agency requesting records or information has verified the need for the specific information; and

(c) The agency requesting access has served a copy of the application for records or information on the individual or employing unit whose records or information are sought and has provided the employment security department with proof of service. Service shall be made in a manner which conforms to the civil rules for superior court. The requesting agency shall include with the copy of the application a statement to the effect that the individual or employing unit may contact the public records officer of the employment security department to state any objections to the release of the records or information. The employment security department shall not act upon the application of the requesting agency until at least five days after service on the concerned individual or employing unit. The employment security department shall consider any objections raised by the concerned individual or employing unit in deciding whether the requesting agency needs the information or records for official purposes.

(2) The requirements of subsection (1) of this section shall not apply to the state legislative branch. The state legislature may have access to information or records deemed private and confidential under this chapter, if the legislature or a legislative committee finds that the information or records are necessary and for official purposes.

(3) In cases of emergency the governmental agency requesting access shall not be required to formally comply with the provisions of subsection (1) of this section at the time of the request if the procedures required by subsection (1) of this section are complied with by the requesting agency following the receipt of any records or information deemed private and confidential under this chapter. An emergency is defined as a situation in which irreparable harm or damage could occur if records or information are not released immediately.

(4) The requirements of subsection (1)(c) of this section shall not apply to state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes as defined in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 3306(u) of the federal unemployment tax act where the procedures would frustrate the investigation of possible violations of criminal laws or to the release of employing unit names, addresses, number of employees, and aggregate employer wage data for the purpose of state governmental agencies preparing small business economic impact statements under chapter 19.85 RCW or preparing cost-benefit analyses under RCW 34.05.328(1) (c) and (d).

(5) State and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes as defined in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 3306(u) of the federal unemployment tax act may have access to certain records or information deemed private and confidential under this chapter for comparison purposes with records or information possessed by the requesting agency to detect improper or fraudulent claims, to determine potential tax liability or employer compliance with registration and licensing requirements, or for reasons otherwise within the discharge of their official duties. In those cases the state or local governmental agency or federally recognized Indian tribe as defined in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 3306(u) of the federal unemployment tax act shall not be required to comply with subsection (1)(c) of this section, but the requirements of subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this section must be satisfied.

(6) Governmental agencies may have access to certain records and information, limited to employer information possessed by the employment security department for purposes authorized in chapter 50.38 RCW. Access to these records and information is limited to only those individuals conducting authorized statistical analysis, research, and evaluation studies. Only in cases consistent with the purposes of chapter 50.38 RCW are governmental agencies not required to comply with subsection (1)(c) of this section, but the requirements of subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this section must be satisfied.

(7) Disclosure to governmental agencies of information or records obtained by the employment security department from the federal government shall be governed by any applicable federal law or any agreement between the federal government and the employment security department where so required by federal law. When federal law does not apply to the records or information state law shall control.

(8) The employment security department may provide information for purposes of statistical analysis and evaluation of the WorkFirst program or any successor state welfare program to the department of social and health services, the office of financial management, and other governmental entities with oversight or evaluation responsibilities for the program in accordance with RCW 43.20A.080. The confidential information provided by the employment security department shall remain the property of the employment security department and may be used by the authorized requesting agencies only for statistical analysis, research, and evaluation purposes as provided in RCW 74.08A.410 and 74.08A.420. The department of social and health services, the office of financial management, or other governmental entities with oversight or evaluation responsibilities for the program are not required to comply with subsection (1)(c) of this section, but the requirements of the remainder of subsection (1) of this section and applicable federal laws and regulations must be satisfied. The confidential information used for evaluation and analysis of welfare reform supplied to the authorized requesting entities with regard to the WorkFirst program or any successor state welfare program are exempt from public inspection and copying under chapter 42.56 RCW.

(9) In conducting periodic salary or fringe benefit studies pursuant to law, the office of financial management shall have access to records of the employment security department as may be required for such studies. For such purposes, the requirements of subsection (1)(c) of this section need not apply.

(10)(a) To promote the reemployment of job seekers, the commissioner may enter into data-sharing contracts with partners of

the one-stop system established by P.L. 113-128 or its successor and identified as signatories of local memoranda of understanding. The contracts shall provide for the transfer of data only to the extent that the transfer is necessary for the efficient provisions of workforce programs, including but not limited to public labor exchange, unemployment insurance, worker training and retraining, vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, adult education, transition from public assistance, and support services. The transfer of information under contracts with one-stop partners is exempt from subsection (1)(c) of this section.

(b) An individual who applies for services from the employment security department and whose information will be shared under (a) of this subsection must be notified that his or her private and confidential information in the employment security department's records will be shared among the one-stop partners to facilitate the delivery of one-stop services to the individual. The notice must advise the individual that he or she may request that private and confidential information not be shared among the one-stop partners and the employment security department must honor the request. In addition, the notice must:

(i) Advise the individual that if he or she requests that private and confidential information not be shared among one-stop partners, the request will in no way affect eligibility for services;

(ii) Describe the nature of the information to be shared, the general use of the information by one-stop partner representatives, and among whom the information will be shared;

(iii) Inform the individual that shared information will be used only for the purpose of delivering one-stop services and that further disclosure of the information is prohibited under contract and is not subject to disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW; and

(iv) Be provided in English and an alternative language selected by the one-stop center or job service center as appropriate for the community where the center is located.

If the notice is provided in-person, the individual who does not want private and confidential information shared among the one-stop partners must immediately advise the one-stop partner representative of that decision. The notice must be provided to an individual who applies for services telephonically, electronically, or by mail, in a suitable format and within a reasonable time after applying for services, which shall be no later than ten working days from the employment security department's receipt of the application for services. Information describing the nature, extent, and purpose for which the information may be shared must be available upon request.

(11) To facilitate improved operation and evaluation of state programs, the commissioner may enter into data-sharing contracts with other state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes as defined in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 3306(u) of the federal unemployment tax act, and by extension their agents, only to the extent that such transfer is necessary for the efficient operation or evaluation of outcomes for those programs. The transfer of information by contract under this subsection is exempt from subsection (1)(c) of this section. [2019 c 81 § 4; 2011 1st sp.s. c 43 § 466; 2008 c 120 § 6; 2005 c 274 § 322; 2003 c 165 § 3; 2000 c 134 § 2. Prior: 1997 c 409 § 605; 1997 c 58 § 1004; 1996 c 79 § 1; 1993 c 281 § 59; 1981 c 177 § 1; 1979 ex.s. c 177 § 1; 1977 ex.s. c 153 § 6.]

Effective date—Purpose—2011 1st sp.s. c 43: See notes following RCW 43.19.003.

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—2008 c 120: See notes following RCW 18.27.030.

Findings—2000 c 134: "The legislature finds that individuals in need of employment and related services would be better served by integrating employment and training services to form a comprehensive network of state and local programs, called a one-stop career development system. Successful integration of employment and training services demands prompt and efficient exchange of information among service providers. The legislature further finds that efficient operation of state programs and their evaluation demand at times information held by the employment security department. Current restrictions on information exchange hamper this coordination, resulting in increased administrative costs, reduced levels of service, and fewer positive outcomes than could otherwise be achieved." [2000 c 134 § 1.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2000 c 134: "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state or the eligibility of employers in this state for federal unemployment tax credits, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict, and the finding or determination does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state or the granting of federal unemployment tax credits to employers in this state." [2000 c 134 § 4.]

Severability—2000 c 134: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2000 c 134 § 5.]

Effective date—1997 c 409 § 605: "Section 605 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 19, 1997]." [1997 c 409 § 608.]

Part headings—Severability—1997 c 409: See notes following RCW 43.22.051.

Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58: See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

Conflict with federal requirements—1996 c 79: "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state or the eligibility of employers in this state for federal unemployment tax credits, the conflicting part of this act is hereby declared to be

inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict, and such finding or determination shall not affect the operation of the remainder of this act. The rules under this act shall meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state or the granting of federal unemployment tax credits to employers in this state." [1996 c 79 § 3.]

Effective date—1996 c 79: "This act shall take effect July 1, 1996." [1996 c 79 § 4.]

Effective date—1993 c 281: See note following RCW 41.06.022.