

**RCW 82.04.540 Professional employer organizations—Taxable under RCW 82.04.290 (2)—Deduction.** (1) The provision of professional employer services by a professional employer organization is taxable under RCW 82.04.290(2).

(2) A professional employer organization is allowed a deduction from the gross income of the business derived from performing professional employer services that is equal to the portion of the fee charged to a client that represents the actual cost of wages and salaries, benefits, workers' compensation, payroll taxes, withholding, or other assessments paid to or on behalf of a covered employee by the professional employer organization under a professional employer agreement.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Client" means any person who enters into a professional employer agreement with a professional employer organization. For purposes of this subsection (3)(a), "person" has the same meaning as "buyer" in RCW 82.08.010.

(b) "Coemployer" means either a professional employer organization or a client.

(c) "Coemployment relationship" means a relationship which is intended to be an ongoing relationship rather than a temporary or project-specific one, wherein the rights, duties, and obligations of an employer which arise out of an employment relationship have been allocated between coemployers pursuant to a professional employer agreement and applicable state law. In such a coemployment relationship:

(i) The professional employer organization is entitled to enforce only such employer rights and is subject to only those obligations specifically allocated to the professional employer organization by the professional employer agreement or applicable state law;

(ii) The client is entitled to enforce those rights and obligated to provide and perform those employer obligations allocated to such client by the professional employer agreement and applicable state law; and

(iii) The client is entitled to enforce any right and obligated to perform any obligation of an employer not specifically allocated to the professional employer organization by the professional employer agreement or applicable state law.

(d) "Covered employee" means an individual having a coemployment relationship with a professional employer organization and a client who meets all of the following criteria: (i) The individual has received written notice of coemployment with the professional employer organization, and (ii) the individual's coemployment relationship is pursuant to a professional employer agreement. Individuals who are officers, directors, shareholders, partners, and managers of the client are covered employees to the extent the professional employer organization and the client have expressly agreed in the professional employer agreement that such individuals would be covered employees and provided such individuals meet the criteria of this subsection and act as operational managers or perform day-to-day operational services for the client.

(e) "Professional employer agreement" means a written contract by and between a client and a professional employer organization that provides:

(i) For the coemployment of covered employees; and

(ii) For the allocation of employer rights and obligations between the client and the professional employer organization with respect to the covered employees.

(f) "Professional employer organization" means any person engaged in the business of providing professional employer services. The following shall not be deemed to be professional employer organizations or the providing of professional employer services for purposes of this section:

(i) Arrangements wherein a person, whose principal business activity is not entering into professional employer arrangements and which does not hold itself out as a professional employer organization, shares employees with a commonly owned company within the meaning of section 414(b) and (c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

(ii) Independent contractor arrangements by which a person assumes responsibility for the product produced or service performed by such person or his or her agents and retains and exercises primary direction and control over the work performed by the individuals whose services are supplied under such arrangements; or

(iii) Providing staffing services.

(g) "Professional employer services" means the service of entering into a coemployment relationship with a client in which all or a majority of the employees providing services to a client or to a division or work unit of a client are covered employees.

(h) "Staffing services" means services consisting of a person:

(i) Recruiting and hiring its own employees;

(ii) Finding other organizations that need the services of those employees;

(iii) Assigning those employees on a temporary basis to perform work at or services for the other organizations to support or supplement the other organizations' workforces, or to provide assistance in special work situations such as, but not limited to, employee absences, skill shortages, seasonal workloads, or to perform special assignments or projects, all under the direction and supervision of the customer; and

(iv) Customarily attempting to reassign the employees to other organizations when they finish each assignment. [2006 c 301 § 1.]

**Effective date—Act does not affect application of Title 50 or 51 RCW—2006 c 301:** See notes following RCW 82.32.710.