



# Table of Contents

SUMMER GATHERINGS	2
WASHINGTON EMPLOYERS TAKE NOTE	3
REMINDERS	4
Q &A	4
HR BY THE NUMBERS	5
HR LINK	5
WORKING FROM WHERE?	5
GENDER PRONOUNS – OREGON	6
BACKGROUND CHECKS	7
CLIENT ACCOLADES	7
THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT	8
FOR YOUR CALENDAR	9
ON MY SOAPBOX	. 10

July 2019



#### SUMMER GATHERINGS

A popular summer activity for many organizations in the Employee Picnic. Out of office activities can be greatly rewarding but also require some structure and guidance to make ensure everyone's safety and appropriate behavior. Letting employees know what is likely to occur is helpful, especially to employees who have never attended one before. Employers may want to consider providing some expectation information along with the invitation to the Picnic or whatever other summer all employee event may be planned.

The following possible rules may be worth considering as you design your gathering:

- If you wish to drink something other than soft drinks and lemonade, then you will need to bring your own beverage. Please make sure you limit your alcoholic intake (if alcohol is going to be permitted – either way make sure the issue is addressed clearly so employees know the expectation regarding alcohol at your gathering) so that you are safe to drive after the picnic is over. If you feel that you shouldn't be behind the wheel, make sure other arrangements have been prepared to get you home safely. The organization will not knowingly allow participants to drink and drive from their events.
- Follow the rules of the park where we hold the picnic. We will send out the park's rules a week before the gathering for your review.
- Sign-up sheets will be located at (insert where) and we ask that employees help us out by volunteering to assist with some of the activities necessary to have a great time together.
- Remember that as an employee, you know many of the people that will be attending. Your significant other and kids will not know most of these people. Please make sure you introduce your family to others so that they do not feel left out or alone. We will have games for the kids (insert games that you know will be offered) and they will enjoy these more if they have met some other children. Make sure that you tell your family members what events will be taking place so that they can anticipate what they want to be involved with during our time together.
- Please dress appropriately for the weather and the day's events keeping in mind this is still a business function with your peers and coworkers.
- We will provide information about when the catered food will arrive. Please ensure that you are at the park by then so that you can share in the food provided.
- For those of you who usually take selfies and pictures of events like this, please make sure that anyone you are taking a picture is • OK with that. And please, no risqué pictures! Any organization employee and/or family pictures will be taken only with written permission. Those forms will be at the "registration table."
- Your family is welcome and we hope that you bring them, but please ensure that we know how many people are coming from your family.
- Please assist with clean up. Participation and collaboration is the whole point of the event! •

Very Important! Make sure that you have a plan in case there is an unexpected incident or emergency. Decide how or when you are going to communicate that to participants. Ask the venue for any information they can provide regarding safety at their location. Addressing this before the event will make it easier to respond should something awful occur. Best wishes, and have a great gathering!!

> Portland Office 7650 SW Beveland Street Suite 130 Tigard, OR 97223 (503) 885-9815

Willamette Valley Office 7287 Park Terrace Dr. NE Ste. 101 Keizer, OR 97303 (503) 463-7269

#### WASHINGTON EMPLOYERS TAKE NOTE

Effective **July 28, 2019**, the Washington Pay Equity Act requires employers to make some changes to their HR practices. Many of the required actions follow what is required by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Washington has had a Pay Equity Act previously, and the new law expands that. Following Title VII principles, the act defines "similarly employed" as jobs requiring "similar skill, effort, and responsibility ... performed under similar working conditions." Pay differences may be based on other job-related, *bona fide* factors, such as "education, training or experience; a seniority system; a merit system ... [or] regional differences in compensation levels." An employer must explain the *entire pay differential*.

The act replaced the term "sex" with "gender." Different than some Pay Equity Acts being enacted in states, Washington's law only speaks to gender of the employees, and does not extend to other protected classes. We, however, recommend that the analysis be done for all employees regardless of gender. This will protect employers from lawsuits that could come from members of other protected classes.

**Salary History.** Salary history is *not a defense* to a claim of inequitable pay. This new law states that employers may not seek salary history from the applicant nor from their previous places of employment. Setting pay, even in part, according to an applicant's salary history would leave an employer vulnerable to claims since the inquiry is illegal and pay history is not one of the exceptions that would allow for differences in pay levels.

Advancement Opportunities. Employers may not "limit or deprive" an employee of otherwise available advancement opportunities based on gender. An isolated incident is insufficient support for a claim. The employer must be found to have committed a pattern of violations as to the employee or committed a violation through application of a formal or informal employer policy or practice.

Elements of the Law's Revisions. Beginning, July 28, 2019, the following prohibitions and requirements will take effect for employees with 15 or more employees:

- Employers may not seek the wage or salary history of an applicant, either from the applicant or their former employer.
- Employers may confirm an applicant's wage or salary history only (1) if the applicant has voluntarily disclosed their wage or salary history, or (2) after the employer has negotiated and made a job offer, including the amount of compensation, to the applicant.
- After an applicant is offered a position or promotion, they can request the minimum wage or salary for that position. If the applicant makes that request, the employer must disclose the minimum wage or salary for the position offered.
- When no wage scale or salary range exists, the employer "must provide the minimum wage or salary expectation set by the employer prior to posting the position, making a position transfer, or making the promotion."

Employers that do not meet these requirements are subject to penalties under the Revised Code of Washington sections 49.58.060 and 49.58.070. Penalties for violating the law are similar to those imposed for violations of the other equal pay provisions. The penalties may include civil actions, fines, actual damages, statutory damages, interest going back four years prior to the complaint, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

Employers can prepare for these changes by ensuring that:

- Current job descriptions are up-to-date and reflect the responsibilities the employees in that job are expected to perform;
- Applicants are not asked to disclose their salary or wage history either on an application or otherwise;
- Interviewers are trained not to ask about prior wages or salaries;
- If an applicant states their previous pay level, interviewers should inform them that information will not be used to select the successful applicant;
- Any confirmation of prior wages or salaries only happens after an offer is made;
- Organizations update or establish salary ranges for all positions so that hiring rates can be identified for those who meet minimum qualifications and those who have more extensive experience worthy of additional pay;

Editor: Judy Clark, CPC, SPHR, IPMA-CP: Advantage is published monthly and is designed to provide information on regulations. HR practices and management ideas and concerns. The intended audience is managers, supervisors, business owners, human resource and employee relations professionals. If you have questions about the content, an opinion about the information, or questions about your subscription, please give us a call at (503) 885-9815 or e-mail info@hranswers.com.



- If you are promoting an employee, make sure the offer of increased pay is set based on the pay range of the new position without regard to the previous pay the employee received; and
- Consider having a pay audit done preferably by an outside party so that objectivity of the results will have greater credibility. Address any concerns that surface from the audit.

Additionally, employers may not:

- Require employees to enter any nondisclosure or waiver agreement preventing them from disclosing their pay.
- Retaliate against an employee who asks about, discloses, or discusses pay; asks the employee to explain their pay or lack of advancement opportunities, or aids or encourages another employee to pursue rights under the act.

The act does not apply to applicants who inquire about pay during the application process or ask current employees about their pay.

**Other Provisions and Penalties.** Employees may bring direct lawsuits against their employers. Suits must be brought within three years of an alleged violation. A violation occurs when a discriminatory decision is made, when an employee becomes subject to the decision, or when the employee is affected by the decision. Such violations occur "each time wages, benefits or other compensation is paid" as a result of a discriminatory decision or practice. Based on an employee complaint, the Department of Labor and Industries must investigate the complaint.

Whether the claim is brought directly by an individual employee or by the department, an employer may be liable for actual or statutory damages up to the greater of actual damages or \$5,000, plus 1 percent interest per month on all compensation owed, costs and reasonable attorney fees. Actual damages may date back to four years prior to the last violation prior to the filing of the lawsuit. The act also calls for civil penalties of up to \$500 for the first violation and the greater of \$1,000 or 10 percent of actual damages for each subsequent violation.

#### REMINDERS

We are going to start a new item each month that we are calling "Reminders." They are intended to be a little nudge about new law effective dates or employer responsibilities that need to be taken care of. We have a couple for you this month.

#### **EEOC Pay Information**

The portal for reporting the newly required pay data will open July 15, 2019. Every employer that is required to complete an annual EEO-1 report now must provide employee pay data as well. The detail and information about this reporting process will be available at that time and employers are encouraged to not wait too long before learning what information must be provided by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### New FLSA Threshold

We are currently at the end of the Public Comment timeframe for the new FLSA minimum for salaries of exempt employees. It is anticipated that we will hear soon about what pay level has been selected. The initial proposal suggested that the new pay level will be \$35,308. This is a sizable increase from the current level of \$23,660. There will be some additional changes, but until they are finalized, we just need to wait to see what the end results will be. We will be ready to address any questions and provide options for you once this has been decided.

#### Q&A

**Q:** We have an office of 30 employees; mostly office jobs. I had an employee tell me that her doctor recommended a standing desk for her. I told her that if she was asking for an accommodation, we would need certification. After proper certification, we bought the standing desk for less than \$100. There is now some talk in our office about requiring employees to pay for a portion of their standing desks that are provided after they have a certified ADA need. Has anyone ever heard of having employees pay for part of their ADA accommodation?

A: Employers cannot ask or require an employee pay for the cost of an accommodation under the ADA. It's the employer's obligation to provide the accommodation to the employee unless in doing so poses an undue hardship. This is defined as an "action requiring significant difficulty or expense" when considered in light of a number of factors. These factors include the nature and cost of the accommodation in relation to the size, resources, nature, and structure of the employer's operation. Otherwise, you're going to have an ADA violation on your hands.



### HR BY THE NUMBERS

The first numbers are in for 2020. According to **Mercer**, the average total budget increase including merit and promotional budgets is expected to be 3.4%. This is .5% higher than the estimate for 2019. And, according to **Betterup**, 90% of employees would forgo 23% of their earnings for more meaningful work. This last number suggests that employers would enhance employees' satisfaction by clearly communicating the value of each position and its contribution to the overall success of the employer.

A recent survey by the **Addison Group** found that more than 50% of employees research compensation online to see if their pay is commensurate with the market. Given that many of the online sources are filled with crowd-sourced pay numbers instead of data supplied by HR professionals can lead to employees believing that they are under paid. Educating employees about where the organization gets its salary data to make decisions about employee pay can be very helpful in orienting employees about good pay practices.

According to **PayScale**, 85% of Supervisors and Managers say they know how to explain pay decisions to their employees – only 36% of the organizations agree with that number.

\*\*\*\*

An increasing number of age discrimination examples are showing up in new lawsuits and in surveys results. A recent analysis done by the **Urban Institute and ProPublica** found that 54 million workers over 50 are facing "precarious financial circumstances." There is a new wave of age discrimination suits being filed. Older workers are much more likely to wrestle with prolonged joblessness than younger workers. The study results show that a worker at an average of 54 years of age will likely be out of work for an entire year before being hired.

#### HR LINK

A statement by **Gartner** says, "Our latest survey\* found that 23% of organizations who were already piloting or using AI, were doing so in the HR and recruiting domain." The article regarding the survey can be accessed by using this link <u>https://www.gartner.com/en/</u>newsroom/press-releases/2019-06-19-gartner-identifies-three-most-common-ai-use-cases-in-

#### WORKING FROM WHERE?

Working from home has become a broadly discussed topic. Remote working situations can be positive for both the employer and the employee. They can also be the advent of many issues and problems. It is critical that the employer have a good process of deciding whether this will be attempted or not for their staff. A great Infographic exists that helps the employer decide to take this risk. The Infographic can be found at <a href="https://visual.ly/community/infographic/business/decision-tree-should-you-let-your-employees-work-home">https://visual.ly/community/infographic/business/decision-tree-should-you-let-your-employees-work-home</a>

It is recommended that the employer first decide whether the position is something that can be done from home. Obviously, a receptionist that is expected to greet incoming customers, handle the mail delivery, and coordinate room usage for meetings and interviews is unlikely to be successful working from home.

The second decision is whether the individual employee is someone who can be counted on to work effectively from home. Has that individual demonstrated they can be productive, that they are sufficiently knowledgeable about the work to be able to work independently?

The third decision relates to the home work space and its suitability for working? This may entail assessing the computer equipment, internet capability, and the actual working space. This assessment must also consider employee safety and the potential for accidents.

A final question that often surfaces is what about potential distractions that may compromise productivity. It is usually suggested that working from home does not mean taking care of loved ones at the same time. Some jobs contain work that can be done at any hour so it may be possible to work when others are napping or asleep for the night. But other jobs need to be done during business hours. Taking care of loved one's needs during business hours may result in less work being accomplished.

Having written procedures for assessing the elements necessary for a good decision will ensure that each time the question of working from home is raised, the same considerations will be addressed. This should ensure that the right decision is made for each position and each employee when this surfaces.

#### GENDER PRONOUNS – OREGON

The following article appeared in the Portland Business Journal and is reprinted with permission from the original author Kelly Riggs, attorney with Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak, & Stewart In Portland, Oregon.

Oregon law has long prohibited discrimination in employment because of an individual's gender identity. Unfortunately, even some of the best-intentioned employers and employees may still struggle with what exactly that means or how to comply. Specifically, some may continue to struggle with the appropriate use of gender pronouns in the workplace.

What is the law when it comes to gender pronouns in the workplace? Oregon law prohibits discrimination and harassment in employment based on an individual's gender identity. Regulations implemented by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) define "gender identity" as "an individual's gender-related identity, whether or not that identity is different from that traditionally associated with the individual's assigned sex at birth, including, but not limited to, a gender identity that is transgender or androgynous."

An individual's "gender identity" also appears to include their "gender expression," which the regulations define as "the manner in which an individual's gender identity is expressed, including, but not limited to, through dress, appearance, manner, or speech, whether or not that expression is different from that traditionally associated with the individual's assigned sex at birth."

Simply put, an individual's "gender identity," or "gender," is part of who they are and how they identify themselves (for example, as male, female, or non-binary), regardless of their physical anatomy or sex at birth.

Oregon law does not currently include any express mandates or prohibitions with respect to pronoun usage in the employment context. However, BOLI recently issued guidance cautioning employers that "[u]sing pronouns incorrectly or refusing to use a transperson's chosen name on purpose may even be evidence of discrimination or harassment" and encouraging them to "try and get it right" by "[u] sing a person's desired name and pronouns."

In light of this guidance, it is more important than ever that Oregon employers consider whether the right pronouns are used to refer to employees and other individuals in the workplace.

**How can employers get it right?** The right pronouns are considered those that individuals use to identify themselves (e.g., he, him, his, himself, she, her, hers, herself, they, them, their, and themselves). This is true even if an employee's pronouns ordinarily would not be considered "grammatically correct"— for example, the use of "they" to refer to a single individual. Additionally, language and grammar can change over time; in fact, some grammatical authorities are beginning to recognize the use of "they" as a singular pronoun.

According to BOLI guidance, employers may ask employees which pronouns they use for themselves, but should do so in a consistent, respectful, and nondiscriminatory manner. Once employers are aware of the pronouns employees use for themselves, either because the employer asked or employees spontaneously shared their pronouns, BOLI guidance suggests that employers should refer to employees using those pronouns.

Employers will also want to take steps to ensure that other employees do the same, such as by implementing a policy requiring employees to use coworkers' desired pronouns and counseling or disciplining employees if they repeatedly or intentionally fail to respect a colleagues' pronouns.

Further, employers can promote an inclusive work environment by eliminating or limiting the use of gendered pronouns from general workplace communications. For example, instead of referring to a group of individuals as "ladies and gentlemen," a gender-neutral term or phrase can be used, such as "folks," "everyone," or "colleagues."

Similarly, employers can update language in employee handbooks and other policy documents to remove gendered pronouns such as "he or she" and "his or her," and instead use neutral terms, such as "employees" and "their."

Simple steps like these may not be legally required (at least not yet), but can go a long way in helping all employees to feel welcome and respected and also demonstrate an employer's commitment to nondiscrimination.

Kelly S. Riggs provides litigation and counseling services to healthcare and other public and private employers in all aspects of employment law in Oregon and Washington state and federal courts, as well as before various state and federal administrative agencies.



Editor's Note: This information may be used for other states, not just Oregon. Being sensitive to applicant and employee preferences goes a long way to increasing employer/employee relationships and employee appreciation.

Further, making sure that any employee who's chosen name does not match their legal name understands the necessity for the legal name to be on record. I-9 and income reporting have federal requirements that businesses must follow. Transparency that the legal name must recorded but does not impact their "known by" is necessary and respectful to the employee. Further, this practice has been in place for a long time, as "nicknames" (Jack for John, Kat for Katherine) or the utilization of a middle name are already commonplace.

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

There is disturbing news occurring almost every day regarding the background of some individual, sometimes in positions of authority. One has only to listen to the news to learn that someone has discovered domestic violence, criminal activity, and incidents of extremely poor judgment. Most organizations say that they conduct background checks prior to making employment offers, but that appears to be inaccurate; or the checks are done so poorly that the individual's history doesn't reveal all that it should.

There is a difference between a background check and a reference check. A reference check tries to learn about previous employment which usually entails the applicant's ability to generate positive relationships, meet work deadlines, act within the best interests of the employer, etc. With all the protected time away from work (sick leave, family or personal medical leave, and the other laws that give employees the right to be away), getting appropriate information about absences is much more difficult. Good reference checking would require making several calls to previous employers. One of the best ways to get reliable information is to make the applicant your partner in this endeavor. If the hiring organization asks the applicant who can be contacted that will provide information about previous employment, it is possible that more valuable data will be received.

A background check typically involves criminal history. But the accuracy of this depends on advising the agency doing the check of all the places the applicant has previously worked and lived. Checking only the records of the current County of residence may miss employment information that occurred prior to living in that County. The news has lately reported several high-profile individuals with troubled backgrounds where it appears the hiring entity was unaware of the pervious difficulties. This creates a turnstile for hiring and causes employees to wonder what criteria are really being used and what judgment is present.

A recent case highlighted in an Employee Benefits blog is a perfect case in point. A Grub Hub driver was caught stealing from a restaurant's tip jar. The police took a look at their criminal history and found multiple violations of theft, drug charges, assault and battery, and leaving the scene of a car accident. This employee was going to people's homes, in addition to the possible threat when they went to pick up food for delivery. The website for Grub Hub says that they conduct background checks prior to hiring; but it appears that several items were not revealed by whatever process they used. Some vetting processes seems to lack substance.

Employers are encouraged to invest in this critical aspect of the hiring decision. Employing someone who has a significant history of inappropriateness or criminal activity is not wise. If an applicant has such a background, and they tell the prospective employer about it and explain why that won't be a problem in their next job, they can be given the benefit of the doubt depending on the job being applied for. But when no information is given and the prospective employer discovers the issues through a comprehensive background check, it likely constitutes a reason for not hiring.

If you need help with conducting background checks, this is something HR Answers does. We encourage you to contact Jessica Louthan at our office or email her at <u>jlouthan@hranswers.com</u> to discuss your needs.

### CLIENT ACCOLADES

Each year the *Portland Business Journal* creates a list of the Fastest Growing Companies. This year is no exception, and we are pleased to see some of our clients on the list. Our congratulations and "hearty well done" goes to **Union Wine Company, R&H Construction, Pence Construction, Robertson and Olson Construction,** and **Edgelink.** One of the HR Answers friends of the firm, **The Partner Group,** was also on the list. We are really proud to be associated with all of you!

For our clients - We request that if something special is happening to you, awards, recognition, etc. that you let us know. We want to give you some visibility and acknowledgment for your accomplishments and honors. It is fun for us to learn what is occurring with you and we want to make special mention of it in this newsletter column. Don't be shy...let us know, please!!

Age is the price of wisdom.

### THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. *~ John F. Kennedy*What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness. *~ John Steinbeck*My patriotic heart beats red, white, and blue.

~Author unknown

~Proverb

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken. *~James Dent* Freedom lies in being bold. *~Robert Frost* Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability. *~Sam Keen* This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave. *~Elmer Davis* Live in the sunshine, swim the sea, drink the wild air.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson



### FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Open up your Daytimers, Outlook, and all those Smartphones. The following is a look at upcoming events and workshops, special days, and other diverse and fun activities you will want to be aware of and schedule. To register for our workshops, go to HR Answers Events, or email your registration form to info@hranswers.com.

#### JULY

National month of: Blueberries, Grilling, Hot Dog, Ice Cream, Picnics and Cell Phone Courtesy.

July 12	National Simplicity Day
July 13	National French Fry Day
July 15	National Give Something Away Day
July 17	HRA Webinar – Online / Teleconference <u>Oregon Leave Laws</u> 9:00am - 10:30am
	National Lottery Day
	National Hot Dog Day
July 18	HRA Webinar – Online / Teleconference <u>Washington Leave Laws</u> 9:00am - 10:30am
July 18	HRA Webinar – Online / Teleconference Job Search Support Workshop 11:00am - 1:00pm
	Get to Know Your Customers Day
July 20	Toss Away the "Could Haves" and "Should Haves" Day
July 21	National Junk Food Day
-	National Be Someone Day
	National Ice Cream Day
July 24	National Drive-Thru Day
	National Cousins Day
July 25	$HRA\ Workshop-HRA\ Office-Portland/Tigard$
	Implicit Bias – How Do We Address This Concern?
	8:30am - 10:30am
	National Hot Fudge Sundae Day
	National Hire a Veteran Day
	National Wine and Cheese Day
July 27	National Love is Kind Day
July 28	National Milk Chocolate Day
	National Parent's Day
July 29	National Lasagna Day
	National Lipstick Day
July 30	National Cheesecake Day
July 31	National Avocado Day
	National Raspberry Cake Day

#### **Coming Up:**

Aug. 7	HR Lunch Bunch Webinar –
	Online/Teleconference
	Flexible Schedules and Remote Working -
	are they a culture fit?
Aug. 22	HRA Webinar – Online / Teleconference Job Search Support Workshop 11:00am - 1:00pm

#### **Planning Ahead:**

Sept. 4	HR Lunch Bunch Webinar –
	Online / Teleconference
	Gender Identification (non-binary designations)
Sep. 10-	HRA Workshop Series - HRA Office - Portland/
	Tigard
Oct. 29	Supervisory Success 8 Part Series
	8:30am - 12:30pm

View more details and register for our workshops on our website at hranswers.com.

Information and advice offered through Advantage should not be construed as legal opinion. The material contained herein will not apply to all circumstances or to all organizations. Use it as a resource and reference. Should you feel legal advice is required, please consult with your corporate counsel. <u>i</u>R

### **ON MY SOAPBOX**

If you are like me, you receive numerous emails and snail mail offerings for attending workshops, seminars, and classes regarding business topics. I am certain that I get about five such invitations a day, and I assume that you do as well. Receiving these makes me think about two things.

First, are they worthwhile? How does one decide which ones to participate in and which ones get discarded? Every offering has carefully thought out objectives and the use of adjectives to describe the content is judiciously created. None of them say, "This program is designed for someone who doesn't care very much." The people behind them worked hard to make the offering interesting and high-powered. But many of them are a rehash of previous workshops and content that is now stale.

The second thing that comes to mind with each one that I read is how are ours different? Does the recipient have the same concerns about our workshops, webinars, and programming? How do we make the offering stand out from all the others that our clients and friends receive?

We pay particular attention to the feedback that we get from attendees. But we believe that other providers probably do the same thing so that may not be a differentiator. We use questions asked in previous sessions as a guide to including new or more detailed content. But we don't know if others do the same thing. We read and scan a tremendous amount of written and online postings and articles and make sure to include references and excepts from them in our presentations. But, again, if we ask ourselves, are we sure that this is something that other presenters do not do? The answer is we aren't sure if they do that as well.

So, what is our approach that is different and ensures that we are meeting the marketing words we use and the needs of our attendees? The answer to this question is that we do all of the above and more. I marvel at the materials that Deborah and Paul put together for our onsite classes, either at our office or the client's workplace. There is information they want to provide, and they are constantly updating it. Then they step away from presenting to exercises and activities that reinforce the content. If you are outside the training room, you hear laughter and conversation amongst the attendees; you hear silence as the attendees are working on a project to present to the rest of the room; and, you hear the questions and answers given throughout the workshop timeframe. Attendees say that their questions are taken seriously, even if it was a "stupid question" and answered thoroughly. And, after the session, there are frequently longer conversations between the trainers and the attendees to ensure that their specific concerns are addressed.

When Laurie is the Trainer, she is able to provide chapter and verse information about technical subjects, including new laws and regulations. It has been her privilege (is that really the right word?) to do over 150 presentations this last year about Oregon's Pay Equity law. Since she was on the Administrative Rules Committee for BOLI, she is considered an expert on the law, it's implications, and the methods that can be used by employers to achieve compliance. And, if an organization has questions about leave laws, wage and hour, or discharge situations, she is masterful in presenting options along with pros and cons of each.

Personally, I consider it a blessing to have such talented individuals to work with and to serve our clients. We believe that getting information to clients so that they can make reasonable, informed decisions to be one of our major responsibilities. Regardless of the technology used (webinars, Skype, etc.) or the in-person offerings, the goal of every training is to provide two things. The first is information that can be used by the attending organization, and the second is affirmation which tells attendees that they are doing something right. Walking away from a session with both information and affirmation is something that we intend to integrate with each training event.

Training is what helped us to be consultants and learn our profession. We believe we have the honor and responsibility to provide both to our clients. Let us know if you think we are meeting these obligations.



- Judy Clark, President

