



WEDA 2025 Summer Conference Agenda

– preliminary, will be regularly updated

ART OF THE POSSIBLE: *Shaping Cutting-Edge Economic Opportunity for Washington's Future*

August 11-13, 2025 – Tacoma, WA – as of 7/2/2025 7:21 PM

Monday, August 11

- 3:00-5:00 pm **Economic Development Highlights Tours – *pre-registration required through WEDA's online conference platform, Swapcard – will open by August 6***
- 7:30-9:00 pm ***Reconnecting & Exploring Possibilities: Social Welcome Gathering (non-hosted, light hors d'oeuvres) – Lobby Bar, Hotel Murano***
- Meet new colleagues from across the state and reengage with old friends.*

Tuesday, August 12

- 9:30-11:15 am **WEDA Q3 Board Meeting – Board Members & WEDA Staff only**
– Lido Boardroom, 3rd Floor - Hotel Murano
- 10:00-11:00 am ***Upping Our Game for Economic Opportunity: Pre-Conference Professional Development Workshops***
- 11:30 am Registration, Buffet Lunch & Networking – Pavilion Ballroom Lobby
- 11:50 am-2:00 pm **Opening General Session: *Defining the "ART OF THE POSSIBLE" for Economic Development in Washington* – Pavilion Ballroom (AGD)**
- Land Acknowledgment**
- Local Government Welcome: Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards**
- Opening Remarks from WEDA Leadership & Sponsors
- Keynote Speaker TBA**
- Fireside Chat: *Economic Impact & Possibilities of Washington's Tribal Enterprises***
- 2:00-2:15 pm Networking Break

2:15-3:15 pm	<p>Breakouts 1: <i>Building Blocks for Shaping Economic Opportunity</i> (choose 1):</p> <p><i>Building Sustainable Food Systems & Growing Local Economies</i> – Pavilion Room F</p> <p><i>Staying the Course on Critical Infrastructure Projects for Washington’s Future</i> – Pavilion Room C</p> <p><i>Shaping Economic Possibilities in Rural Washington</i> – Pavilion Ballroom</p>
3:15-3:30 pm	Networking & Snack Break
3:30-4:30 pm	<p>Breakouts 2: <i>Talent & Creative Partnerships for Washington’s Future</i> (choose 1):</p> <p><i>Reflections on Working for Economic Possibilities from Our Emerging Leaders</i> Featuring: A Panel of WEDA’s Emerging Leaders & Information about Getting Involved – Pavilion Room F</p> <p><i>Shaping Economic Opportunity in Our Workforce during Complex Times</i> – Pavilion Room C</p> <p>ART OF THE POSSIBLE <i>for Washington’s Creative Industries</i> – Pavilion Ballroom</p>
5:30-7:30 pm	<p><i>Celebrating Tacoma-Pierce County, Our Creative Economy & All of Washington State’s Economic Possibilities - Networking Reception</i> Museum of Glass, 1801 Dock Street, Tacoma, WA 98402</p> <p><i>Join us for a special reception at the Museum of Glass, a premier contemporary art museum dedicated to glass and glassmaking in the West Coast’s largest and most active museum glass studio. The Museum has established a reputation for hosting impactful and engaging artist residencies, organizing and exhibiting nationally traveling exhibitions, and creating unique programs for visitors, all while building a growing permanent collection chronicling the development of modern and contemporary glass. Since opening in 2002, the Museum has served as a catalyst for change in Tacoma. The iconic building was erected on a Superfund site which started the restoration of the Thea Foss Waterway. Today, you will find a thriving arts and culture center, including six museums all within walking distance.</i></p> <p><i>Dress code: business casual -- WEDA conference registrants must wear their nametags, please. There will be a brief speaking program at approximately 6:15 pm. Heavy hors d’oeuvres and beverages will be served.</i></p> <p>Local Government Welcome: Hon. Ryan Mello, Pierce County Executive</p>
8:00-9:00 pm	<p>ART OF THE POSSIBLE <i>for Economic Development Talent: Emerging Leaders Gathering</i> – <i>pre-registration requested through Swapcard</i> Odd Otter Brewing Company, 716 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma WA 98402</p>
8:30 pm on. . .	<p><i>Continuing to Build Connections: After Hours No-Host Get Together</i> Odd Otter Brewing Company, 716 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma WA 98402</p>

Wednesday, August 13

8:00-8:40 am	Breakfast & Networking Activities (Affinity Groupings) – Pavilion Ballroom
8:40-9:45 am	<p>Morning General Session: <i>Cutting-Edge Success Stories & Economic Development Resources for the “ART OF THE POSSIBLE”</i></p> <p>Local Government Welcome: Port of Tacoma Commission President John McCarthy</p> <p>TIF for Jobs Update: <i>Shaping Economic Possibilities through Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</i></p> <p>Keynote Speaker <i>TBA</i></p>
9:45-10:00 am	Networking Break
10:00-11:00 am	<p>Breakouts 3: <i>Fostering Cutting-Edge Economic Possibilities for the Future</i> (choose 1):</p> <p><i>Navigating Global Complexities & Possibilities: Capturing Foreign Investment, Understanding Tariffs and Growing Exports</i> – Pavilion Room F</p> <p><i>Possibilities & Cutting-Edge Solutions for Workforce & Attainable Housing</i> – Pavilion Room C</p> <p>Innovation in Economic Development Presentations – Pavilion Ballroom</p>
11:00-11:15 am	Networking Break
11:15 am-12:00 pm	<p>General Session: <i>Finding the Economic Possibilities in Complex Times – Assessing Our Progress & Forecasting Washington’s Future</i></p> <p>Featured Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anneliese Vance-Sherman, PhD, Chief Labor Economist, Washington State Employment Security Department• Chris Mefford, President & CEO, Community Attributes, Inc.
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch
12:15-1:30 pm	Closing General Session: <i>Moving Forward on the “ART OF THE POSSIBLE” for Washington’s Future</i>

Fireside Chat: Shaping Cutting-Edge Economic Opportunity through Sustainable Aviation Fuel

Panelists:

- Port of Seattle Commissioner Ryan Calkins
- Ryan Spies, Managing Director, Sustainability, Alaska Airlines
- Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers
- *Additional Speaker TBA*

1:10-1:30 pm

WEDA Annual Meeting, Board & Officer Elections, Action Items & Next Steps

Led by: Betty Capestany, Economic Development Director, Pierce County & WEDA Board Chair

Looking Ahead to Future Opportunities: Preparing for the 2026 FIFA World Cup

All conference attendees are encouraged to stay for this brief but important Annual Meeting & Closing Session.