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## 2014 Service Organization Meeting

Recently the Secretary of State had another opportunity to meet with Service Organizations that represent a large amount of filings with the Corporations and Charities Division.

These regular meetings serve as an excellent opportunity to share information about changes to filings or processes, and to hear feedback from our "professional-users" on things they would like to see changed or improved in the services we provide.



This year's meeting covered topics such as:

- Fee changes
- E-checks on profit annual reports
- Filing requirements for Business Licensing Service
- Changes to annual report notices
- New conversion laws
- New system progress, and
- A question and answer session with attendees

If you would like to participate in future Service Organization Meetings please contact Patrick Reed and you will be added to the group for future invitations:

[Patrick.Reed@sos.wa.gov](mailto:Patrick.Reed@sos.wa.gov)

## the BUZZ

### 2014 quarterly statistics:

January 1—  
March 31, 2014

New formations/  
registrations:

**14,685**

Total active  
businesses:

**434,530**

Annual reports filed:

**104,639**

Received mail:

**18,757**

Scanned  
documents:

**269,051**

Phone calls:

**40,527**

Average time to  
answer calls:

**2 minutes, 21 seconds**

## HAPPENINGS

### Charities and Nonprofit Education Opportunities!

These programs deliver valuable information to nonprofit corporation volunteer boards, charities, faith based organizations, home owners associations, and people considering volunteering for a nonprofit board position. Attend an event in your area!

Location	Session	Date/Time
Yakima	<a href="#">What Nonprofit Volunteer Boards Need to Know</a>	05/16/2014 9:00 AM
Tumwater	<a href="#">Symposium: Governance &amp; Compliance for Charities and Nonprofits</a>	06/02/2014 8:30 AM
Spokane	<a href="#">Symposium: Governance &amp; Compliance for Charities and Nonprofits</a>	06/04/2014 8:30 AM
Friday Harbor	<a href="#">Charity &amp; Nonprofit Education Symposium</a>	06/20/2014 9:00 AM
Tumwater	<a href="#">Faith-Based Nonprofits: Governance and More</a>	06/27/2014 10:00 AM

### Filing changes at Business Licensing Service (BLS)

April 1, 2014 Business Licensing Service (BLS) automated the notice to business license applicants reminding them to register with the Secretary of State, Corporations and Charities Division.

If a business indicates they are a domestic (Washington) entity like a corporation, LLC, nonprofit corporation, or limited partnership, but they have not registered with the Secretary of State, the completion of the business license will be held pending verification of filing with the Secretary of State. This notice will come in the form of a letter to the applicant explaining what steps to take to complete the process.

Also changing in June, profit corporation and LLC annual report notices will be in the form of a letter with instructions to file online. Business Licensing Service will no longer be mailing the paper annual report form. Should a paper annual report be needed, there will be instructions how to obtain one through an automated phone system.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### 2014 Corporations for Communities Awards

Now is the time to start thinking about businesses you interact with and the great things they are doing in their communities.

It's noteworthy when companies make it a priority to give back to their community. That's the point behind the Corporations for Communities program that began in 2009 as a way to honor those Washington businesses that make community a priority.

Beginning July 14 through August 31 you can nominate any profit company registered with the Secretary of State that you have witnessed giving back to the communities they serve.

In September, one large and one small business will be selected from the nominations to receive the Corporations for Communities award, which honors exceptional Washington businesses that make community a priority. Award recipients will be presented with the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) Medallion, the highest civic award provided at the state level.

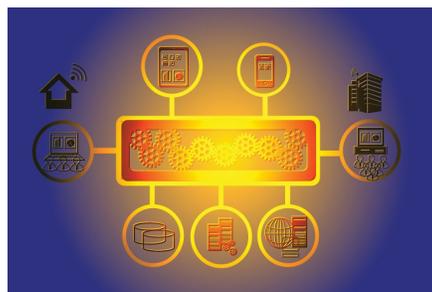
<http://sos.wa.gov/corps/corpsforcommunities/>



### New System Update

Here is a brief status update of our replacement system progress. We look forward to enhancing our services and delivering what customers want most.

- Business analysis completed December 2013
- State Office of the Chief Information Officer approved OSOS user centered 2-year project plan March 2014
- System Design (backend) to begin fall of 2014
- System Development to begin winter 2014
- Quality Assurance and Independent Validation and Verification to occur throughout timeline
- Expected new system go-live January 2016



### Tips & Tidbits

#### How do I get copies?

You may order Last Filed Annual Reports (regular or certified), Original Formation Records (regular or certified), Certificates of Incorporation/Formation/Authority, and Certificates of Existence/Authorization online by visiting the [online copy store](#). Fees vary by the type and quantity of copies being ordered. If you need copies in a hurry (2 business days) expedited service is available for \$50 per entity. Regular orders are produced within two weeks. Regular copies can be delivered by email if selected and certified copies must be delivered through mail or ordered in-person. All other copies requests can be made by [mail or in-person](#). Be sure to include required fee's found at the bottom of the [fee schedule](#).

**NOTE: Corporation bylaws and LLC operating agreements are not filed in this office;** they are internal documents kept on file with the businesses. The Secretary of State's Office does not regulate how bylaws or operating agreements are to be obtained. You must follow up directly with the businesses to obtain this information.

Copies of your Business License or the Annual Legal Entity Registration can be ordered with the Business Licensing Service [www.bls.wa.gov](http://www.bls.wa.gov) or 1-800-451-7985.

## Notice regarding domestic partnerships conversions

On June 30, 2014, many, but not all, state registered domestic partnerships will be converted to marriage.

While the Secretary of State's Office is responsible for filing state registered domestic partnerships, it is the Department of Health that is responsible for the conversion to marriage. Here are some facts that may help you understand which partnerships are being converted and which are not:

- If you are a **same-sex couple and both of you are under 62**, you **will** be converted to marriage.
- If you filed a domestic partnership in a city, county, or other state or country, at any time, it will **NOT** be converted. Only Washington **state registered domestic partnerships** will be converted.
- If you are a **heterosexual couple under 62** and you filed a state registered domestic partnership, **it is an invalid partnership**, as the law did not allow you to do so. To file it, you signed an affidavit that at least one of you was 62 or over. Our office may have taken you at your affirmed word and filed the document, but it does not make your partnership valid by law. If you know that you have done this, please contact our office before June 30, 2014.

• If you are a **heterosexual or same-sex couple and one of you is 62 or over**, the law will **NOT** allow you to convert a state registered domestic partnership to marriage. You may not "opt in" or "allow" the state to convert you. The law specifically says that partnerships in which one person is 62 or over will not be converted. However, you may marry at any time of your choosing. If you **dissolved** your state registered domestic partnership in court **in another state or country**, or **if you are in the process** of dissolving it, call us at 360.725.0377, or send a copy of the court filed document to [corps@sos.wa.gov](mailto:corps@sos.wa.gov).

If you dissolved your state registered domestic partnership in Washington, our office should have received notice of the dissolution. You may check your state registered domestic partnership status at <http://sos.wa.gov/corps/domesticpartnerships/>. Please contact us if the information does not look correct.

- If you are **in the process of dissolving** your state registered domestic partnership in a Washington County, you should call us at 360.725.0377 and let us know. In process dissolutions will not be converted to marriage if we are aware of them.
- A couple should send in a copy of their marriage certificate to SOS if they marry before June 30.
- A couple should send a copy of their dissolution court proceedings to SOS if they enter into the 90 day waiting period prior to June 30.

If you have any questions regarding your state registered domestic partnership, please see our frequently asked questions at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/domesticpartnerships/faq-2014.aspx> or give us a call at 360.725.0377 and we'll be happy to help you.

We recognize that couples may have questions about how the new law applies to their specific circumstances. If you have any questions or concerns about these changes, please contact us at [corps@sos.wa.gov](mailto:corps@sos.wa.gov) or 360-725-0377.

For copies of marriage certificates, divorce certificates and frequently asked questions please visit the [Washington State Department of Health](http://www.wa.gov/departmentofhealth) or call 360-236-4300.