

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Agency 103

Department of Commerce

Recommendation Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
2011-13 Expenditure Authority	256.0	124,671	464,032	588,703
Total Maintenance Level	275.9	144,564	390,858	535,422
Difference	19.9	19,893	(73,174)	(53,281)
Percent Change from Current Biennium	7.8%	16.0%	(15.8)%	(9.1)%
Performance Changes				
Growth Management Grants Fund Shift		(1,658)	1,658	
Growth Management Grants Increase			4,202	4,202
Re-Establish Foreign Sales Offices		1,000		1,000
Expand Business Recruitment Efforts		400		400
Port of Moses Lake Infrastructure		300		300
Eliminate Northwest Agriculture Business Center Grant		(549)		(549)
Eliminate Global Health Grant		(500)		(500)
Eliminate Microenterprise Grant		(328)		(328)
Eliminate Community Mobilization Grant	(1.9)	(1,786)		(1,786)
Eliminate Innovation Research Grant		(3,718)		(3,718)
Reduce State Energy Policy		(52)		(52)
Eliminate Economic Development Commission	(2.8)	(882)		(882)
Expand Trade Sector Support		500		500
Community Economic Revitalization Board Support	1.1		226	226
Modify Safety Net Programs #		25,339		25,339
Local Government Planning Support	6.5	1,675		1,675
New Step M for Classified Employees - Year 2 Implementation		11	18	29
Subtotal	3.0	19,752	6,104	25,856
Total Proposed Budget	278.8	164,316	396,962	561,278
Difference	22.8	39,645	(67,070)	(27,425)
Percent Change from Current Biennium	8.9%	31.8%	(14.5)%	(4.7)%
Total Proposed Budget by Activity				
Community Services Block Grant	9.4	3,211	14,166	17,377
Developmental Disabilities Council	10.0	288	2,801	3,089
Services to Crime Victims	14.3	20,321	22,576	42,897
Strengthening Criminal Justice Response to Victims of Crime	3.5	2,784	3,631	6,415
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program		1,617		1,617
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program	8.2		97,639	97,639
Train and Maintain Volunteers Supporting Community Capacity	7.5	1,600	13,921	15,521
Agency Administration	45.8	4,545	8,174	12,719

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	Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
Community Economic Revitalization Board and Program	3.7		847	847
State Energy Policy	8.3	759	4,252	5,011
Broadband Capacity Building	3.0		3,193	3,193
Lead-Based Paint Hazard Mitigation	4.1		3,194	3,194
Improve and Preserve the Affordability of Housing	19.0		42,179	42,179
Mobile Home Relocation Assistance	1.7		780	780
Bond Cap Allocation Program for Tax Exempt Financing Authorization	1.0		207	207
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	8.1	511	29,640	30,151
Community Mobilization Against Substance Abuse and Violence	.1	(90)	1,115	1,025
Drinking Water System Grants and Loans	1.3		458	458
Growth Management	20.9	3,949	6,770	10,719
Local Government Fiscal Notes	5.1	599		599
Public Works Infrastructure Grants and Loans	11.0		2,367	2,367
Farm Worker Housing			844	844
Homeless Housing and Assistance	17.0	106,338	45,372	151,710
Affordable Housing Development	34.4		37,612	37,612
Business Development	18.4	12,316	1,086	13,402
Asset Building for Working Families		467	39	506
Global Trade and Investment Services	10.6	3,200	627	3,827
Washington Economic Development Commission		(160)		(160)
Innovative Research Teams (Entrepreneurial Stars)		(92)		(92)
Criminal Justice Investments	3.3	1,250	8,260	9,510
New Americans	.1	394		394
American Recovery Act Funding			(392)	(392)
HERA - Neighborhood Stabilization Program Housing and Economic Revitalization Act	3.1		23,132	23,132
Economic Development - Business Loans	3.3	509	19,674	20,183
Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)	3.0		2,798	2,798
Total Proposed Budget	278.8	164,316	396,962	561,278

PERFORMANCE LEVEL CHANGE DESCRIPTIONS

Growth Management Grants Fund Shift

Funding for grants to local jurisdictions to update comprehensive growth management plans are shifted from the state General Fund to the Public Works Assistance Account. This includes funding for the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area grants to Skamania and Clark counties and for the Walla Walla Community College Water and Environment Center. (General Fund-State, Public Works Assistance Account-State)

Growth Management Grants Increase

Funding is increased for financial assistance to local governments to update their comprehensive plans under the Growth Management Act. (Public Works Assistance Account-State)

Re-Establish Foreign Sales Offices

Funding is increased for foreign sales offices to market Washington products abroad and attract inbound investment. Sales offices would be located in India, China, Brazil, and Mexico.

Expand Business Recruitment Efforts

Funding is increased to expand business recruitment by either targeting aerospace or other sector companies in states looking to expand or by developing a database of site selectors and directly marketing them.

Port of Moses Lake Infrastructure

Funding is provided for infrastructure improvements at the Port of Moses Lake Airport. These improvements will advance statewide aerospace strategy.

Eliminate Northwest Agriculture Business Center Grant

Pass-through funding for the Northwest Agricultural Business Center is eliminated. The Center provides northwest Washington farmers with the skills and resources required to profitably and efficiently supply their products to consumers, retailers, wholesalers, food service operators, and food manufacturers.

Eliminate Global Health Grant

Pass-through funding for the Washington Global Health Alliance is eliminated. This funding supports and advocates for Washington State's global health community as a nexus for research, education, training, commercialization, and delivery worldwide.

Eliminate Microenterprise Grant

Pass-through funding for the Washington State Microenterprise Association is eliminated. The association serves as the intermediary to assist microenterprises (businesses with five or fewer employees) in job creation by increasing training, technical assistance, and financial resources to the microenterprise development community.

Eliminate Community Mobilization Grant

Grants used by counties to help prevent and reduce substance abuse and violence are eliminated.

Eliminate Innovation Research Grant

The Strategically Targeted Academic Research team (STARS) program was established to bolster the state's innovation capacity in emerging technology fields. The Economic Development Commission's state funding for five STARS researchers at the University of Washington and Washington State University is eliminated.

Reduce State Energy Policy

Funding is reduced by 5 percent.

Eliminate Economic Development Commission

Funding for the Washington Economic Development Commission (EDC) is eliminated. The EDC is an independent state commission responsible for evaluating the state's economic development systems and developing long-term comprehensive strategic planning.

Expand Trade Sector Support

Trade sector support is expanded to increase exports from small and medium-sized firms who may have barriers to beginning or expanding their export opportunities.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Community Economic Revitalization Board Support

The Community Economic Revitalization Board anticipates up to a \$20 million increase of available loans and grants for the 2013-15 biennium. Funding is increased to provide an additional FTE staff to help prioritize funding awards that provide low-cost financing for local public facilities designed to recruit, retain, and expand industrial businesses and good jobs in Washington State. (Public Facilities Construction Loan Revolving-State)

Modify Safety Net Programs #

With the elimination of state-administered incapacity examinations and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) facilitation services, the Aged Blind and Disabled (ABD)/Pregnant Women (PW) Assistance Program and the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Program are modified. The ABD/PW Assistance Program, which currently provides up to a \$197 monthly cash benefit to about 31,500 eligible participants, will be reduced to provide cash benefits to only the aged population of approximately 3,500 per month. All other participants may still receive housing assistance, essential needs support, and/or SSI facilitation assistance through the HEN program administered by the Department of Commerce.

Local Government Planning Support

Additional technical assistance staff are provided to assist cities and counties with Growth Management Act comprehensive plan updates. (General Fund-State)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

Community Services Block Grant

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is authorized by the federal Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981 (PL 97 35, as amended) for the benefit of people with incomes at or below 125 percent of the poverty line. CSBG allows communities to develop and provide anti poverty services and community development activities that best meet their local needs. Funds can be used for direct services such as employment readiness and training, emergency services, and housing, to raise other funds, and to support certain capital investments. Commerce contracts with 30 community action agencies to fund social and economic challenges and provide ongoing training and technical assistance, board training and development, strategic planning, and problem solving with community action agency staff.

Developmental Disabilities Council

Conduct advocacy, systemic change and capacity building activities that lead to a comprehensive system of supports and services for people with developmental disabilities and their families that contribute to independence, inclusion and integration into all aspects of community life.

Services to Crime Victims

National data from the Department of Justice's crime victimization survey indicates 4.6 million incidents of crime in Washington in 2008, each resulting in at least one victim. The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) ensures that every county in Washington can provide services to help victims recover and return to normal life. Victim services include information and referral, crisis intervention, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, general advocacy and support, support groups, and therapy. OCVA provides funding to Community Sexual Assault programs and other community agencies so victims can access local services and resources during their recovery.

Strengthening Criminal Justice Response to Victims of Crime

Victims look to the criminal justice system to provide offender accountability and a sense of justice. The criminal justice system depends on the cooperation of crime victims for reporting, investigation, and sometimes prosecution and corrections. This interdependence has been recognized by both state and federal legislation and funding, resulting in specific programs within the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. These programs improve coordination and response to victims as they interact with law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and crime victim services. This activity also funds services that support victim safety and support victim participation in the criminal justice system.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

States are required by the federal Older Americans Act to have a Long-term Care Ombudsman Program. Commerce administers our state's program under Chapter 43.190 RCW using multiple funding sources, including an interagency agreement with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for Older Americans Act (Titles III B and VII) funds, State General Fund, and some local dollars. The Long-term Care Ombudsman Program ensures the safety and quality of care of long-term care facility residents by intervening when complaints and situations of possible abuse, neglect, or exploitation arise. Over 500 volunteer ombudsmen are trained, certified, and assigned to nursing homes, boarding homes, and adult family homes. Commerce contracts with a nonprofit organization to run the program, which subcontracts with 13 regional programs and two legal services contractors. Commerce's staff negotiates funding with DSHS, develops the statewide Long-term Care Ombudsman contract, monitors expenditures and performance, provides technical assistance, and approves plans and policies.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federal block grant program authorized by the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (Title XXVI of PL 97 35, as amended). LIHEAP helps households with incomes below 125 percent of the federal poverty level meet the cost of home heating, avoid utility shut off, and reduce the use of unsafe heating alternatives. Commerce contracts with 26 community based organizations and local governments to provide funds directly to utility companies on behalf of eligible households. Contractors also provide energy education, furnace repair or replacement, and referrals for other services. Commerce is required to create a LIHEAP State Plan with participation from nonprofit organizations, low-income representatives, utility companies, and other community members. The agency administers contracts, monitors compliance, reimburses expenditures, provides technical assistance, establishes policies and procedures, operates a secure website for on line data entry and reporting, and evaluates contractor performance.

Train and Maintain Volunteers Supporting Community Capacity

This activity supports organizations that recruit, train, and maintain volunteers, mediators, and counselors who provide free or low cost services to low-income communities, children, and homeowners. Volunteers, mediators, and counselors allow organizations to expand their capacity to reach more vulnerable citizens and improve individual and community well-being. The Washington State Foreclosure Fairness Act Mediation Program provides homeowner foreclosure mediation. Retired judges, employees and volunteers of dispute resolution centers, attorneys and experienced mediators approved through the Foreclosure Mediation Program mediate in-person discussions between homeowners and representatives of financial institutions to reach an agreeable resolution after a referral. Dispute resolution centers train volunteer mediators so that all citizens have access to low-cost alternatives to litigation regardless of the clients' ability to pay. Dispute resolution centers also provide training and education related to mediation, communication, conflict resolution, and negotiation. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) uses the talents and experience of volunteers over age 55 to help with diverse community needs. Local RSVP coordinators recruit, screen, and work with city, county, and nonprofit programs throughout the state to place volunteers where needed. State funds count toward the 30 percent match required to receive federal RSVP support.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Agency Administration

Agency Administration represents less than 2 percent of Commerce's total operating and capital budgets, and includes the services and costs which provide effective direction, management, and support of the agency. The Director's Office is responsible for the overall management and leadership of Commerce, including strategic policy development and research, communications, and government relations. Administrative Services provides information technology, human resources, facility management, purchasing/inventory, mail processing services, budgeting, accounting, contracting, and audit review services. Commerce's Agency Administration costs are supported by all programs and fund sources, through a combination of direct appropriation and indirect assessments. The agency negotiates an annual indirect cost rate with the cognizant federal agency.

Community Economic Revitalization Board and Program

The Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) makes strategic investments in local public infrastructure to foster high-wage job growth. CERB awards must generate either significant job creation or significant private investment. CERB provides local governments and federally recognized Indian tribes with financial assistance, primarily in the form of low-interest loans to achieve this. The infrastructure may be either basic, such as water, sewer, and roads, or more specialized, as in port facilities, energy, and telecommunications.

State Energy Policy

The Energy Office (EO) provides energy policy support, analysis, and information for the Governor, Legislature, Commerce, and other energy decision makers (Chapters 43.21F and 19.29A RCW). The Energy Office analyzes key energy issues including natural gas, alternative fuels, energy efficiency, renewable energy development, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy supply and price. The Energy Office also provides technical and policy support to Washington members of the NW Power and Conservation Council, other state agencies, and state congressional officials on federal and regional energy policies and legislation. Working with an advisory committee, stakeholders, and the public, EO develops and implements the State Energy Strategy. It also produces energy use, electricity, and other reports, and represents the state's policy interests in regional and national organizations. The Energy Office ensures statewide energy security and preparedness by protecting the state's energy infrastructure (especially electricity, petroleum, and natural gas). During energy supply or other energy emergencies, it provides assistance to the state emergency operations center, Governor's office, energy companies, utilities, local governments, and others. As needed, it implements emergency actions set forth in RCW 43.21G. The Energy Office also administers grants from the U.S. Department of Energy and others.

Broadband Capacity Building

Broadband capacity building supports Washington State's transition to a digitally-based economy. The program does this by collecting data and initiating activities that identify opportunities and issues in the broadband arena; monitoring, tracking and encouraging statewide broadband deployment; and supporting the creation of programs that effectively promote access and adoption of broadband services around the state. The program delivers services through a mix of contracts and direct engagement. Per statute, the program contracts with a private company (Sanborn) to provide data collection and mapping services. Reporting (annually to the legislature) and community outreach services are provided by program office staff. In FY13 the program staff will begin sub-grants or procurements to support 2 new activities: local/regional technology planning and an applications contest.

Lead-Based Paint Hazard Mitigation

The Lead-Based Paint Program provides services to ensure work performed in homes and buildings with young children will be done in a safe and healthy manner. The program is responsible for processing certification and accreditation applications, tracking licensees, reviewing training and program effectiveness, providing technical assistance, investigating potential violators, enforcing rules, conducting outreach, maintaining the lead-safe housing registry for low-income housing, and reporting to federal, state, and interested parties.

Improve and Preserve the Affordability of Housing

These programs improve and preserve affordability of housing through energy conservation investments (such as insulating attics, walls, and floors; air sealing the home diagnostically; modifying or replacing inefficient furnaces), health and safety actions (including indoor air quality, mold and lead paint hazard remediation), and other cost-effective and necessary repairs and retrofits (such as roof repair or replacement, plumbing and electrical fixes, ramp replacement). Program resources include federal Department of Energy, federal Department of Health and Human Services Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program, Bonneville Power Administration, and state capital funds. Private and other non-state resources are leveraged through utility companies, rental housing owners, federal and state resources, and private grants. Commerce provides technical assistance to local, public, and private nonprofit agencies that deliver these services and coordinates program and technical training to maintain a qualified workforce.

Mobile Home Relocation Assistance

The Mobile Home Relocation Assistance Program provides the only financial assistance available to homeowners forced to move their homes as a result of mobile home park closures. Reimbursement of actual, documented expenses, up to the published maximums, is paid directly to eligible homeowners.

Bond Cap Allocation Program for Tax Exempt Financing Authorization

The Bond Cap Allocation Program provides authorization for tax-exempt financing through private activity bond sales for environmental protection, low to middle-income housing, student loans, industrial development, job creation, and infrastructure facilities. The bond cap is the maximum level of tax-exempt Private Activity Bonds that can be issued in the state in a given year. Under federal tax law, the 2011 cap for Washington State was equal to \$90 per capita (based on resident population) to create a maximum amount of \$638,831,300. This ceiling is adjusted annually in response to changes in the state's population and the IRS's cost-of-living index. The Bond Users Clearinghouse program is mandated by RCW 39.44.210 to report on the municipal debt issued by jurisdictions throughout the state. The program produces the "Public Debt Update" twice a year.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CDBG program invests federal resources in communities through grants for planning, construction, facility upgrades, and services in the areas of housing, general infrastructure, community facilities, and economic development that benefit low and moderate-income households. The state CDBG program serves counties with populations under 200,000 and cities with populations under 50,000. The rest of the state receives direct funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Community Mobilization Against Substance Abuse and Violence

This activity provides grants to communities to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to reduce and prevent alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse, and violence. Community Mobilization implements the nationally recognized, evidence-based best practice Communities That Care (CTC) prevention system. According to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy and other studies, community mobilization programs demonstrate cost-benefit savings through life skills training, school-based interventions to prevent and reduce drug use, family-based programs that reduce behavior problems and substance abuse, and CTC. Communities determine which programs would be most helpful in addressing their specific violence and substance abuse challenges.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Drinking Water System Grants and Loans

The Public Works Board, in collaboration with the Department of Health, invests in public and private water systems to meet standards established by the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program provides low-interest loans and grants for capital improvements to water systems. This activity also includes technical assistance to water systems that do not have the managerial or financial capacity to adequately plan for or maintain the system. This assistance is provided through the Public Works Technical Assistance team and the Small Communities Initiative Program (SCI). SCI provides intense technical assistance to water and waste water systems that are under state order to upgrade their systems to comply with Department of Health or Ecology standards. Chapter 79.119A RCW pertains to the state drinking water program.

Growth Management

Growth Management Services (GMS) provides technical and financial assistance on growth management issues, as required by RCW 36.70A.190, so that 320 Washington cities and counties can effectively plan for future growth and economic development. It offers grants, data, training, technical publications, direct consultation, and guidance to help local governments plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and other planning statutes. GMS assistance helps reduce litigation over GMA compliance issues, avoiding costs to state and local governments. Staff also extensively supports other state priorities that depend on local land use planning, such as economic development strategies, infrastructure funding, affordable housing, the Puget Sound Action Agenda, and energy planning.

Local Government Fiscal Notes

The Local Government Fiscal Note Program produces objective analysis of the financial impacts of proposed state legislation on counties, cities, and all special purpose districts except for schools and courts. This program produces the largest number of fiscal notes of any state agency, 14 percent of total notes during the last decade. Local government fiscal notes cover a broad range of issues, such as taxes, criminal justice, natural resources, economic development, social services, energy, land use, and government operations. This program has been in operation for 32 years and is mandated by statute (Chapter 42.132 RCW).

Public Works Infrastructure Grants and Loans

The Public Works Trust Fund provides loans for the repair, replacement, rehabilitation, and expansion of local infrastructure systems to ensure public health and safety, preserve the environment, promote economic sustainability, and ensure proper system performance. In-depth technical assistance on funding acquisition, system management, and financial sustainability are provided by the Public Works Board staff (RCW 43 155.020).

Farm Worker Housing

This activity supports the development and preservation of affordable housing for low-income farm workers. Grants and loans are made available to nonprofit housing providers, public housing authorities and local governments using capital and operating resources from the Housing Trust Fund. Activities include capital investments in permanent (year-round) housing, capital and operating investments in seasonally-occupied housing, and emergency assistance for homeless migrant workers. Agricultural employers receive technical assistance to help them develop seasonal housing for migrant workers.

Homeless Housing and Assistance

This activity reduces homelessness and related social and economic costs, and helps people achieve their maximum level of employment and self-sufficiency. Homeless housing and assistance are provided through a range of services including short-term rent assistance to prevent evictions, emergency shelter, short-term rent assistance to move homeless and special needs people into housing, longer term transitional housing (up to two years), and permanent supportive housing. Local nonprofit organizations carry out this activity with funds that Commerce distributes through formula and competitive grants. Program resources include the state's Emergency Shelter and Homeless Prevention, Overnight Youth Shelter, Housing and Essential Needs funding, Homeless Families with Children, and Transitional Housing Operating and Rent Assistance programs, Homeless Grant Assistance program, Washington Families Fund, and Independent Youth Housing Program. Federal resources include the Emergency Shelter Grant and the Supportive Housing Program. Operating assistance for housing projects is available from the state Housing Assistance Program for the Mentally Ill and federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.

Affordable Housing Development

Low-income and special needs households benefit from housing that is developed or preserved through this activity. Capital resources from the Housing Trust Fund and the federal HOME program provide grants and loans to eligible organizations to construct, acquire, and rehabilitate affordable housing. Grants are also available for down payment assistance programs. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis and successful projects must be maintained as affordable housing for persons at or below 80 percent of area median income for a period of 40 years. Operating and maintenance (O&M) subsidies are also available to projects that serve households at or below 30 percent of area median income. Funds for O&M grants are generated through a surcharge on document recording fees.

Business Development

As the state's primary economic development agency, the Department of Commerce coordinates local economic development projects with state, federal, and private sector resources, proactively identifying and facilitating business recruitment, expansion, and retention opportunities to increase or preserve business investment. The department manages grants awarded to Associate Development Organizations (ADOs) and other economic development focused organizations and ensures grants meet legislative intent; funds, convenes, and facilitates the commercialization of technologies through Innovation Partnership Zones; develops and maintains a business website to promote Washington State as a place to do business; provides a branded platform for the state in communications, marketing, and online to consistently position Washington's innovative business environment; delivers support to ADO network through providing marketing tools, economic data, and access to capital; creates opportunities and forums for Washington companies to develop and promote their products and services; educates national site selectors on benefits of doing business in Washington; and provides marketing kits to third parties to promote Washington State.

Asset Building for Working Families

Asset building means improving financial education, planning, and outcomes for working families. Commerce is working with and helping fund the Washington Asset Building Coalition and local coalitions to promote savings and smart borrowing and spending by low and moderate-income residents. One program element is Individual Development Accounts, authorized by RCW 43.31.450 485, which contracts with providers and uses account matching funds to help low-income residents save and make major asset purchases like a home, higher education, or a small business. Additionally, Commerce promotes the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and use of volunteer tax preparation services to increase EITC filing.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Global Trade and Investment Services

Global Trade and Investment Services (GTIS) prepares companies to begin or expand exports, facilitates business introductions; identifies international business opportunities for Washington exporters, staffs high-level trade missions to identify key business opportunities for the state, actively pursues strategic foreign direct investment projects, and reports results against the statewide export initiative targets. Also, GTIS provides "new-to-export" training, assistance and support to Washington businesses to optimize their global supply chains, and a branded marketing platform for the state in print and online to consistently position Washington's innovative business environment globally.

Washington Economic Development Commission

The Economic Development Commission is charged with developing and maintaining a comprehensive statewide strategy for guiding policy and investments in economic development, infrastructure, workforce training, small business assistance, technology commercialization, and export assistance. The Commission provides leadership, guidance and direction on a long-term, systematic approach to economic development, with findings and recommendations in three areas that drive economic vitality, investments and entrepreneurship, and infrastructure. It is the intent of the Legislature to update biannually the state's economic development strategy and performance measures; provide advice and oversight of the Department of Commerce; provide planning, coordination, evaluation, monitoring, and policy analysis and development for the state economic development strategy as a whole and ongoing advice to the Governor and Legislature. The Commission's mandate also includes inventorying all state economic development programs, establishing standards for data collection, administering scientifically based outcome evaluations of the state economic development system, examining consistency of state programs to the Commission's economic development plan, considering the most appropriate regional and administrative structures for the provision of economic development, ensuring that the state's economic development efforts are organized around a clear central mission, and aligning the state's comprehensive plan with other agencies. The Commission, working through its Innovation Advisory Committee, oversees the strategy, criteria, and performance evaluation of the Innovative Research Teams (STARS), Entrepreneurs-in-Residence program, and Innovation Partnerships Zones.

Innovative Research Teams (Entrepreneurial Stars)

With emphasis on accelerated commercialization of public-owned research in Washington, the Commission works in conjunction with the statewide research institutions, and the private sector to recruit and retain high potential research teams (entrepreneurial stars) to lay the technological foundation of future industry clusters in Washington. Entrepreneurial STARS accelerate technical development in areas with high economic development potential. The Innovative Research Teams and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EIR) programs located in the research institutions (STARS Program) work with innovation partnership zones (IPZ) and public and private sectors across the state to support the development of at least ten viable emergent innovation partnership zones and facilitate linkages between IPZs to enhance or develop innovation. The Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EIR) program located at the higher education research institutions and external entrepreneurial assistance organizations networks entrepreneurs, business executives, angel and venture capital investors, attorneys, and others with researchers to promote commercialization in target markets based on real-world insight. The target outcome for both programs is to strengthen private investment, job creation, innovation, research, and commercialization capacity in areas identified as useful to strategic energy clusters. The Innovation Advisory Committee provides strategic guidance, selection criteria, and performance measures for the STARS, EIR, and IPZ programs.

Criminal Justice Investments

This activity provides federal funds for local crime prevention, crime investigation, and the prosecution of crime. These programs increase communication and cooperation between governments, businesses, and community organizations in order to increase public safety. The Justice Assistance Grant Program funds multi jurisdictional drug/gang task forces, drug courts, youth violence prevention, crime victim advocacy, criminal records improvements, and tribal law enforcement coordination. The Financial Fraud and Identity Theft Program provides funds to King, Pierce, and Spokane counties for task forces, prosecutors, law enforcement, and other support to reduce financial fraud and identity crimes. The Financial Fraud and Identity Theft Program's funds are matched dollar-for-dollar by private sector sources.

New Americans

The New Americans Program was created in 2008, consistent with the Governor's Executive Order 08 01 that affirmed the value new Americans bring to the workforce and state economy. The program provides naturalization assistance for the many legal permanent residents who come to Washington to work in high demand occupations in science and technology. This program funds U.S. citizenship preparation so the State of Washington can retain high demand workers. The program requires that participants are not receiving public assistance and meet all other U.S. citizenship requirements. This contract requires a 25 percent match of non-state funds.

American Recovery Act Funding

Commerce administers federal programs funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The purpose of these funds is to create and retain jobs, continue vital services at risk due to the economy's downgraded fiscal condition, and position the state's communities and workforce for economic recovery.

HERA - Neighborhood Stabilization Program Housing and Economic Revitalization Act

Commerce receives federal funding to assist communities with foreclosed and vacant properties. Funds are used to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed and abandoned homes, provide assistance for homeownership, demolish blight, and create or enhance land trusts.

Economic Development - Business Loans

This activity allows the state to provide direct financing to private businesses without violating the constitutional prohibition of lending the state's credit. Federally funded programs in this activity (Rural Washington Loan Fund, Brownfields Loan Fund, Coastal Loan Fund) assist businesses in rural communities each year with loans of up to \$1 million. The loans leverage substantial local resources from governments, banks, and the businesses receiving the loans. As a result of these investments, businesses are retained, able to expand, and/or move to Washington State. This activity also provides loans from the state-funded Manufacturing Innovation and Modernization and Hanford Economic Investment programs.

Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)

The Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (MRSC) is a private nonprofit agency that provides local government officials with research, information, and advice under a personal services contract with Commerce pursuant to RCW 43.110. MRSC responds to requests for information on municipal law, finance, growth management, public works, management, and operations from Washington's 281 cities and 39 counties. The MRSC's library holds the state's largest collection of municipal reference materials, with over 12,000 volumes. MRSC also publishes many research articles and operates a web site that receives over 3 million visits per year. These consolidated services reduce the need for local staff and are especially crucial to smaller units of local government. The MRSC is principally funded through a small portion of the cities' distributions of the state liquor profits and the counties' distribution of the liquor excise tax.