

Washington Export Outreach Team Team Member Bios

Andrew Crowder is an international trade specialist with the Washington Department of Commerce, and is responsible for promoting Washington companies in the clean technology and maritime sectors in Washington's key overseas markets.

Before joining Commerce in July 2003, Andrew worked as a buyer for a leading Japanese food processing company that procured agricultural and marine products from Washington, Oregon and Idaho. His work frequently took him to rural areas of the US Northwest, as well as on trips to Mexico and Ecuador. Prior to that, Andrew taught English for three years in Hyogo prefecture, Washington's sister state in Japan, and helped establish the ongoing sister-city relationship between Sequim, Washington and Shiso City, Hyogo.

Andrew holds undergraduate degrees in International Studies and Economics, and an MBA with an emphasis on International Business, all from the University of Washington in Seattle. He speaks Japanese, and enjoys traveling to Japan to visit family and friends there.

Jeff Peterson is a Business Program Specialist with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Jeff is a 1991 graduate of Washington State University and holds a B.A. in Business Administration. Jeff began his USDA career with Farmers Home Administration in 1991. He worked as a Farm Loan Officer for Farm Service Agency for more than 17 years prior to his current position with Rural Development/USDA. Jeff joined Rural Development's Business-Cooperative Program team in January of this year as a Business Program Specialist in the Olympia State Office. In his free time he enjoys fishing, hunting, and mountain biking with his family and friends.

Diane Mooney is the Director of the U.S. Commercial Service - Seattle, U.S. Department of Commerce. With a staff of 4 International Trade Specialists, CS – Seattle is responsible for providing export promotion services to small and medium companies in western Washington State in a variety of sectors: healthcare, value – added wood products, information and communication technology, marine technology, energy, food products and education. Specifically, Diane works with the aerospace and defense community to assist companies in exporting their products, services and technologies. She has been with the Department for 22 years.

Diane received her BA in International Affairs and German at the University of Puget Sound, and studied in Germany at the Goethe Institute in both Munich and Freiburg. She received her MA in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College.

Ian Hizzey is the Ocean Export Manager for Expeditors. He has worked for Expeditors for 17 years, the first ten years in Air Export in the Seattle market. Then he moved over to Spokane in a Sales and Account Management role for six years. A little over a year ago he moved back to the Seattle area to head up the Ocean Export department. He is IATA/FIATA certified, as well as dangerous goods certified for both air and ocean.

John Brislin joined the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM Bank) as Director of the Seattle Regional Office in August 2012. He supports Exporters, Delegated Lenders and Registered Brokers in Washington State, Idaho, Alaska. EXIM Bank is an independent, self-sustaining federal agency that exists to support American jobs by facilitating the export of U.S. goods and services – at no cost to U.S. taxpayers.

He was previously President and CEO of the Export Finance Assistance Center of Washington (EFACW). During his tenure, EFACW won the EXIM Bank City / State Partner of Year Award for 2012. John also served on the National Advisory Committee for the Export-Import Bank of the United States in 2012. John has over 23 years of international banking experience. He first worked for the Bank of Boston / Bank of America in their International Trade Operations in Boston, Massachusetts. After moving to Washington State, John joined the Bank of California / MUFG Union Bank in International Trade Operations ascending to the role of International Operations Manager. He managed Trade Payment Operations in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington supporting Pacific Northwest clients. John transitioned over to a Global Trade Sales Officer covering Trade Finance and EXIM Bank Programs for the Pacific Northwest Region at Union Bank.

John participates in the Washington Export Outreach Team (WEOT) which is a group of Local, State, Regional and Federal agencies who work cooperatively together across Washington State to support Washington Exporters.

John who is originally from Syracuse, New York has resided in Washington State for the past 24 years. John has a degree in Business Administration from Boston University's Questrom School of Business. John brings his significant private sector banking experience and more recent public sector experience at EFACW and EXIM Bank to assist Pacific Northwest businesses to export goods and services internationally.

Julie Johnson is the Export Development Trade Specialist for the Washington State Department of Agriculture's International Marketing Program based in Olympia, WA. In this capacity Julie covers the state in working with new-to-export and new-to-market companies. As the Trade Specialist, Julie assists small to medium-sized companies become export-ready and then refers them to the International Trade Specialists who specialize in the foreign markets. She also works to facilitate contacts between Washington State companies and international buyers.

Julie joined the program in July 2012. She has worked over 25 years at the Washington State Department of Agriculture in various programs which includes eight years working in the Director's Office as the legislative coordinator. Julie attended Western Washington University.

Lee Gibbs is the Export Finance Manager for the SBA Office of International Trade covering the Washington, Alaska, and North Idaho areas; he joined the SBA in January of 2016. Prior to that Lee had been with Zions bank for the past 17 years utilizing the SBA International Finance Programs and was at one time the Export Lender of the year nationally and received the SBA Export Financing Pioneer Award. He has over 38 years of experience in Agricultural, Commercial, and SBA lending and he has a strong understanding of the practical application and use of all the SBA Export Loan Programs.

Lee earned a bachelor's of science degree from Brigham Young University. He has served on various "District Export Council's" and presently serves on the advisory board for the University of Idaho's College of Business. He has also traveled to many places around the world helping to promote the sale and export of US Goods and Services.

Mark Costello is the District Deputy Director for the Seattle District U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). He has been with the SBA since 1987, and until recently served as the agency's Supervisory Lender Relations Specialist for the Seattle District. In this capacity he is responsible for working with nearly 100 lenders and Certified Development Companies to deliver SBA guaranteed financing to small businesses throughout the State of Washington and Northern Idaho. Mark graduated from Washington State University with a degree in finance.

Sharon Sappington is the International Trade Advisor with Washington State University's Western Washington SBDC Export Center. She advises and provides guidance to businesses that are new to exporting or want to expand their existing exports.

Sharon's expertise comes from 20 years in International Trade, including living and working abroad. Her business activities have spanned many geographic locations including Asia, The Americas, Western/Eastern Europe and the Middle East. She has worked with various company types and sizes from startup to mature, small to large, and public and private. Some of her industries have included food and beverage, consumer goods, hospitality, wine, international aid and development, wood products, furniture, agribusiness, nonprofit, technology, industrial measurement instrumentation, renewable energy, building energy efficiency, and international residential resort development. Sharon's work has been hands on as well as in a consulting and advising capacity, including foreign assignments with the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) where she helped companies in other countries to develop their exports.

Sharon is a Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP) accredited by NASBITE International as well as a Certified NASBITE Trainer.