



MULTI-CITY BUSINESS LICENSE & TAX PORTAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *How will the portal work?*

The portal will make it easy to register a business, get a license, and compute and pay local B&O taxes for a large number of Washington State businesses.

For those companies that work in just one of the five participating cities, the business portal will simplify getting or renewing their business licenses and how they pay their B&O taxes. Many companies, though, conduct business across the region. With the new business portal they will no longer have to deal individually with the paperwork and requirements of each city. The portal will allow them to enter basic information just once, offer an easy-to-use online form for reporting revenues and then calculate the amount they owe in each city.

Paying the B&O taxes due will now be easy. First, companies will enter how they wish to pay: credit card or bank transfer. The portal will then show them the charges for each city and allow the business to pay those charges with one click of the mouse.

The portal web site will make it far simpler for companies to get answers to questions. There will be easy-to-find information on the site about what might be required in each city. Customers also will have the option to speak with a city representative by phone or through a live online chat feature.

2. *Why do we need a Multi-City Business License & Tax Portal?*

Getting or renewing a business license, then calculating and paying taxes can be time consuming. Businesses must fill out separate forms, file separate tax returns, calculate B&O taxes for each city in which they do business, and make separate payments to each city. The new portal will make this process easier and faster than ever before.

3. *How many businesses will benefit from the portal?*

The number of businesses that will benefit of the Multi-City Business License & Tax portal will be significant. More than 100,000 businesses are registered and pay local B&O taxes in the five partner cities. Together they represent 90 percent of all local B&O taxes collected in Washington State.

4. *Why can't the portal housed with the state Department of Revenue (DOR)?*

The Multi-City Business License & Tax Portal will address the local needs of businesses more effectively than the state system. City officials know their

community and the local economic conditions and are in the best position to provide tax incentives to help businesses grow and encourage new industries.

In addition, local businesses want to deal with city representatives when they have a local tax or licensing issue. The portal will ensure quick, direct contact with city staff to answer questions from taxpayers.

While the Multi-City Business License & Tax Portal will be operated and maintained by the five cities, our plan is to coordinate with the State DOR, use the state UBI number as the primary identifier, and create a link to the portal from the State DOR web site. This will make it even easier for businesses to access state B&O tax information.

5. *Are you talking to the business community about the portal?*

Yes. We are focusing first on the companies that conduct business in multiple cities. We have already conducted focus groups with affected businesses and have presented the portal to business organizations, such as Association of Washington Businesses, local Chambers of Commerce, the Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants, American Society of Women Accountants, and many others.

6. *How will the oversight of the portal work?*

The cities are working with the portal project team, and their consultants, on an oversight structure. They are currently operating under a Memorandum of Understanding and are developing a formalized structure that will be in place prior to implementation.

7. *Can the Portal be expanded to other cities?*

Yes. The portal will have the capacity to add other B&O taxing cities.

8. *When will the portal be launched?*

We plan to have it up and running in early 2014.

9. *Will businesses be able to pay other taxes from the portal?*

The portal will focus initially on license registration and B&O taxes, but it will be designed to add other types of business tax payments such as utility taxes in the future.

10. *What kind of customer support will the portal provide?*

The portal will offer complete information about the business license requirements of each partner city, as well as B&O tax payment rules and options, all available through an onsite search function. In addition, customers will be able to connect to a representative from a specific city by phone or through an online chat service. Customers will also be able to post questions for the cities to answer or comments for the public to review.

11. Will the portal help me calculate my B&O taxes?

Yes. If you do business in more than one of the partner cities, the site will not only calculate your B&O taxes by city, but will allow you to make one, easy payment that will be dispersed to the appropriate cities.

12. I'm already registered in one, or more, of the portal cities. Will I have to do it all over again when the portal is launched?

No. You will be able to use your current on-line registration information to access the new business portal.

13. What about confidentiality protection?

The portal will utilize the stringent data confidentiality rules and procedures currently used by the partner cities.

14. If I calculate my own taxes using software can it be uploaded to the portal so I can make the payment online?

The system requirements developed by the cities will include this feature as an option.