



WBARS IMPROVEMENTS

JULY 2018 UPDATE AND FAQ

COMING MARCH 2019: THE NEW AND IMPROVED WBARS

We have shifted the go-live date to March 2019, giving our team time to perfect the new functions and features that you requested. Our developers are building the new report creation module, enabling Excel downloads for all Tables, fine-tuning the expanded search capability, revising the User Guide, and locking in other key features that will make your WBARS experience simpler and more streamlined. Each new feature will be thoroughly tested to ensure that the system is bug-free and ready to go.

In January 2019, we will begin final user testing. If you'd like to help test the new WBARS, keep an eye out for our emails — we will be seeking volunteer test users around the beginning of the year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Why does WBARS need an upgrade?

WBARS was built more than 10 years ago. The system has outgrown the original technology, and unfortunately, that makes it challenging to adjust or improve. Over the past few years, more sophisticated coding technology has been developed. By making this upgrade, we can make WBARS more intuitive and flexible, and more capable of meeting the needs of our users.

How did Commerce and the Commission decide what to change?

As you may have noticed, over the past few years we have been collecting suggestions from our users on how to improve WBARS. In November 2017, our team of developers visited the Seattle area and met with several housing agencies in the Puget Sound region and in Eastern Washington. They spent a week observing these staff using WBARS and collected focused feedback about what elements were working and what could be enhanced. Based on that information, we've assembled a list of items to improve or add to the system.

Did you get user feedback on what to change?

Earlier this year, we offered a brief survey for WBARS users, to ensure that we gave precedence to changes that will have the most positive impact on the greatest number of users. Now we would like your comments on the new and improved design. To get a sneak preview of the new WBARS, [click here](#).

Will the new WBARS include all the changes that stakeholders requested?

We value all feedback from our stakeholders. However, given limited resources, we have prioritized changes that were requested by the largest number of users, and which provide the most significant benefits to everyone.



What is the timeline for this upgrade?

Over the past six months, WSHFC and the Department of Commerce have been working closely with our developers to plan the improvements to the new WBARS, design the look and feel of each page, and translate stakeholder feedback into action. Our developers are now busily working on these upgrades, and making excellent progress. The go-live date is set for the first week of **March 2019**.

Why has the go-live date been delayed?

Our development team needs the extra time to perfect and test the new features and functionality that you requested. We feel confident that it will be worth the wait! Keep checking [this web page](#) for updates.

Can I still use the current WBARS system while you are making the upgrade?

Yes! WBARS is not changing during this time. You will use the current system until we activate the upgraded version. You will not have to worry about transferring data to the upgraded version – all of that will happen behind the scenes.

Can I help test the upgraded system before it goes live?

Yes! We will need beta testers to help ensure that the new WBARS works, and that all new features are running smoothly. Keep an eye out for requests for test users in January 2019.

How will I find everything I need once the upgrade is live?

When we go live the first week of March, we will offer a weekly training program for WBARS users. These remote training webinars will run throughout 2019, helping you to navigate the new layout, test out new tools, and generally get oriented within the new system so that you're comfortable and ready for the 2020 report submission period.

I'm a property owner/regional funder – will you charge a fee for me to use WBARS?

No. Commerce and the Commission will be paying for the upgrade, and will continue to pay for the ongoing maintenance of the system.

How can I keep up with news about the upgrade?

Bookmark the Commission's WBARS web page at www.wshfc.org/managers/WBARS.htm so you can check in periodically and get the latest news. You can also easily access this page from www.WBARS.com. We will also send out email updates to let you know about significant milestones in the process.

Whom do I contact if I need more information?

At the Department of Commerce, please contact Nona White at nona.white@commerce.wa.gov.

At the Commission, please contact Melissa Donahue at melissa.donahue@wshfc.org.