

RIPE FOR BUSINESS: RYP LABS FLOURISHES THANKS TO WASHINGTON STATE INCUMBENT WORKER PROGRAM WITH THE HELP OF IMPACT WASHINGTON

ABOUT RYP LABS (STIXFRESH). RYP Labs, an award-winning company based in Seattle suburb Bothell, Washington was founded in 2017. RYP Labs is on a mission to reduce food waste; its original patent-pending technology, called StixFresh®, is a sticker coated with a food-safe formulation that helps slow the ripening process of produce. The all-natural formulation helps boost the shelf life of produce by 50-100%, according to the company. So far RYP Labs' focus in biomimicry has mostly been on fruits and veggies, but it's also on track to extend life and eliminate waste in other areas, including eggs, meat, seafood, poultry, dairy, and plants and flowers.

THE CHALLENGE. RYP Labs needed support in several areas, including technical product development. It lacked a formal human resources program in which to onboard staff that could be reviewed by L&I. RYP also was challenged to develop a food-safety and quality program (cGMPs and SOPs) to comply with current good manufacturing practices and preventive controls for human food. The company turned to Impact Washington, part of the MEP National Network™, for help.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. RYP connected with Impact Washington's Chief Food Scientist Craig Doan via LinkedIn and the partnership transformed into a two-year JSP Grant. The solution, in a nutshell, was a lot of training, including technical product development training, human resources program training, and food safety and quality training. The employee training program was led by Michael Johnson, who helped RYP with the successful development of new products and processing techniques and technical workforce product-development training. Training also included gap analysis, instruction on the development of required safety records, and training on procedures, site compliance, and leadership led by Kevin Proctor. Jolene Cram and Craig Doan, chief food scientist with Impact Washington, led the food and safety and quality training to help RYP Labs employees understand the food safety requirements under CFR 21 117 – good manufacturing practices and preventive controls for human food. The team will continue to receive annualized food safety training. RYP Labs has since moved from a cubicle-style office to a larger office in Bothell that also has lab space and has successfully sold that developed product to Walmart.

"The training program offered through the job skills grant provided key, foundational product development, operational, and business elements that were critical for setting our company up for success. We are an early-stage AgTech startup and without this type of quality training from Impact Washington, and support from the job skills program, I can honestly say that our ability to successfully build a company, raise equity, attract talented employees, and launch a commercial product that is safe and effective would have been severely diminished, if not impossible."

-Steve Hulteng, COO and Co-Founder

RESULTS



10 new or retained jobs



\$345,000 in new investment



\$250,000 in cost savings



Improved office layout



Development of annual training plan for employees

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