Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

Economic Services Administration | Office of the Assistance Secretary

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
STATE FOOD ASSISTANCE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
Updated March 23, 2026

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is accepting applications from qualified organizations interested in providing services through the State Food Assistance Employment and Training Program (FAP E&T). The application deadline is **5:00 PM, May 4, 2026.**

A. BACKGROUND & PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The State Food Assistance Program (FAP) in Washington state provides food assistance to those who are not eligible for the federally-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program, called Basic Food in Washington, due to federal law that limits participation based on immigration status.

The State Food Assistance Employment and Training (FAP E&T) program, established in 2023, provides employment readiness opportunities for these FAP customers, helping people prepare for work as well as obtain and maintain employment. Participation in FAP E&T is voluntary for FAP customers, and there is no participation hour requirement for individuals who are not subject to work requirements. For individuals who are subject to work requirements, FAP E&T serves as an approved participation option for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs).

Recent federal legislative changes under HR1 will impact eligibility for federal food assistance programs. Certain immigrants who were previously eligible for SNAP, including refugees, asylees, and other individuals with humanitarian immigration statuses, will no longer qualify for federal food benefits. As a result, beginning in May 2025, these individuals will also become ineligible for participation in the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program. Individuals affected by this change will instead transition to FAP. As participants in FAP, they will become newly eligible for the FAP E&T program. Applicants should anticipate serving an increased number of refugees, asylees, and other humanitarian immigrants through FAP E&T as these changes take effect.

B. FUNDING SOURCE

The Washington State Legislature has appropriated $560,000 to ORIA to support employment and training services for FAP participants. In addition, funding from the Washington Migrant and Asylum-Seeker Support (WA MASS) Project may be made available to support FAP E&T

participants who entered the United States for the first time on or after January 1, 2022, and who are not eligible for federal refugee services and benefits. Final funding amounts are subject to change.

C. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

Individuals may participate in the FAP E&T program if they are:

- At least 16 years old
- Receiving state FAP
- Not receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or State Family Assistance (SFA)

Households may receive a combination of FAP and SNAP benefits depending on each member's citizenship or immigration status; however, only individuals receiving FAP benefits are eligible to participate in FAP E&T.

Examples of immigrants who are eligible for FAP if they meet all other eligibility criteria for Basic Food include:

- Applicants for adjustment of status, asylum, cancellation of removal, suspension of deportation, or withholding of removal.
- Asylees.
- Refugees.
- Individuals paroled into the U.S., including certain Afghan and Ukrainian parolees.
- Individuals granted deferred action, temporary protected status (TPS), voluntary departure, or family unity.
- Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants (SIVs).
- Individuals with "K," "S," "U," or "V" visa statuses.
- Lawful temporary residents under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), including special agricultural workers (SAWs) and other Section 245A beneficiaries.

Undocumented immigrants, or persons who do not have lawful immigration status under federal immigration law (e.g. entered without inspection, entered lawfully but overstayed visa, etc.) are generally not eligible for FAP.

This list is a simplified list for illustrative purposes; it is not exhaustive. Additionally, this list is provided only to help applicants understand which immigrant populations receive FAP versus SNAP. It does not determine eligibility. Providers should focus solely on the eligibility criteria outlined above.

D. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND OUTCOMES

Intake and Assessment

An intake and assessment are required to determine whether the FAP E&T program is an appropriate service for the individual. Providers must complete and maintain all required intake documentation. The intake and assessment may be conducted before or after determining FAP E&T eligibility; however, they must be completed prior to enrolling an individual in a FAP E&T activity.

Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

Providers will need to complete an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with each participant after intake to assess their strengths and barriers to employment, as well as to determine an appropriate combination of FAP E&T services. The IEP should be used as an ongoing strategy to help participants achieve their employment goals. The IEP form will be made available to FAP E&T providers, and ORIA will review requests to alter the IEP on a case-by-case basis.

Service Activities

Example activities in FAP E&T include but are not limited to job readiness training, job search assistance, basic education, English language acquisition, nonpaid work experience, job retention services, self-employment training, and case management. Participants who lack employment-authorization may not receive job search assistance or job retention services. Applicants are not required to propose all of these service activities. ORIA is open to innovations within FAP E&T and encourages potential providers to propose other activities.

Job Readiness Training: Job readiness training improves the job readiness of participants by teaching job seeking techniques, setting goals, and providing information on specific career pathways. Work readiness activities and general skills building are part of job readiness training. Services may include but are not limited to job seeking skills instruction, resume writing, interview preparation, coaching, career and educational pathway exploration, financial literacy, and soft skills training (e.g. time management practices, professional communication, and networking). Providers may also consider incorporating information around documents, IDs, and workers' rights into job search training.

Job Search Assistance: Job search activities include activities in which a participant is actively searching for employment. Services may include but are not limited to searching job listings; job referrals; job applications; job clubs, in which participants search for jobs alongside their peers; and direct job placement assistance. Providers may also assist participants with completing onboarding paperwork.

Job Retention Services: Job retention services provide assistance and support to employed participants so they may achieve satisfactory job performance and increased earnings over time. Services may include but are not limited to counseling, coaching, conflict resolution, and mediation. Providers may also offer job advancement services, helping participants move on to a higher level of employment and/or increase their income. Providers may help participants accomplish this by identifying workplace opportunities for skill building, cross-training, or by referring to other resources (e.g. bridge program, industry certification, etc.).

Basic Education: Basic education includes education provided to participants to increase employability**.** Services may include but are not limited to High School Equivalency or GED preparation, education in basic computer skills, adult education, and literacy or math training.

English Language Acquisition (ELA): ELA assists individuals who are English language learners improve skills in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language that leads to:

- Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; or
- Transition to postsecondary education and training; or
- Improved employability; or
- Employment

Providers may also partner with an employer or a community-based organization to provide specialized and on-site work-based ELA. Work-based ELA should be tailored to the context in which participants work. It must provide participants with language skills that are necessary for success in their specific job role, company, and/or industry.

Nonpaid Work Experience: Nonpaid work experience is a nonpaid opportunity for participants to practice or expand their work skills in a supportive environment. Providers may partner with an educational, charitable, religious, or non-profit organization to create a structured, experiential learning opportunity for the participant. The experience should be part-time and suit the participant's career goals and interests. Providers will need to comply with the applicable state and federal employment laws related to nonpaid work opportunities.

Job Skills Training: Job skills training provides participants with the knowledge and abilities needed to begin a particular job through hands-on training and support. Providers may deliver skills training themselves in a simulated environment with specific training objectives, or partner with an employer. Training may cover hard skills, such as operations, safety procedures, equipment use; soft skills, such as effective communication, teamwork, and problem solving; or other work-related skills and situations.

Self-Employment Training: Self-employment training improves the employability of participants by training them to design and operate a small business or another self-employment venture. Services may include but are not limited to providing assistance in conducting market research and developing business plans, teaching participants how to access small business grants and other business support services, providing information around small business management and operation, and coaching. Self-employment training may also cover nontraditional paths, such as how to succeed as an independent contractor in the gig economy (e.g. rideshare services, food and grocery delivery, package delivery, handyman services, etc.). Workshop topics might include best practices for using the gig economy, how to find and maintain gig work through apps and other digital tools, how to pay taxes as an independent contractor, getting health insurance as a self-employed worker, and etcetera.

Support Services

Support services are designed to assist FAP E&T participants in overcoming barriers that prevent them from engaging in employment and/or FAP E&T service activities. **Support services are a required element of the FAP E&T program.** These services can include:

- Transportation
- Education expenses
- ID and licenses
- Computer equipment
- Tools
- Clothing
- Hygiene
- Medical (e.g. eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.)
- Phone and internet
- Housing and utilities

Support services are capped at $2,000 per participant per contract year. Providers must allocate at least 10% of their total FAP E&T program budget to support services.

Outcomes

The FAP E&T program uses a performance-based contracting model to measure the effectiveness of all providers. Performance measures include:

- The total number of unduplicated participants served.
- The number of participants served in each approved service activity.
- The percentage of participants achieving a completion, defined as:
    - Participants who complete one or more activity in their IEP, defined as the attainment of the activity's planned end date, required hours, and/or established completion criteria.
    - Participants leaving the program due to employment and/or job retention.
    - Participants who lose eligibility for FAP benefits, and therefore FAP E&T services, due to earned income.
- The percentage of employment-authorized participants who obtain employment during the contract period.
- The percentage of employment-authorized participants who retain employment for at least 90 days.

Entered employment and 90-day employment retention outcomes will be calculated only for participants who are employment-authorized or become employment-authorized during their participation period. Once they become employment-authorized, they become part of the population for whom employment is a measurable outcome. Participants without work authorization will not be included in these entered employment or retention performance measures.

E. APPLICANT MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To be qualified to have a contract with DSHS, all applicants and their subcontractors, if applicable, must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Have a current Washington state business license.
- Have at least two years of experience within the past five years providing services to refugees, asylum seekers, and/or noncitizen migrants.
- Have the requisite electronic hardware and software to communicate with DSHS and to provide invoices, participant data, supporting documentation and other information through DSHS' secure e-mail system. Minimum hardware requirements include a computer with internet access. Minimum software requirements include Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office.
- Have a service location and space that is accessible to individuals with disabilities and conveniently located near public transportation.
- Have interpretation and translation services to serve eligible participants in their primary language and in culturally appropriate ways. Qualified applicants must have the capacity to provide culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate services. Applicants are encouraged to have staff that reflect the populations they intend to serve.

F. APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE

- Application opens Tuesday, March 24, 2026.
- Information session on Wednesday, April 1, 2026.
- Application deadline on Monday, May 4, 2026
- Evaluation team reviews submitting applications from Tuesday May 5, 2026 to Tuesday, May 12, 2026.
- Successful applicants notified on Tuesday, May 19, 2026.
- Anticipated program/contract start date on Wednesday, July 1, 2026.

Posting of the Notice of Funding Opportunity Documents
ORIA will post this Notice of Funding Opportunity, and all documents and announcements relating to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, on the DSHS ORIA webpage at https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/csd-office-refugee-and-immigration-assistance/opportunities-funding.

Communications Regarding Notice of Funding Opportunity
Upon the posting of this Notice of Funding Opportunities, all communications concerning this request must be directed to this email address: orianofo@dshs.wa.gov. Please note in the email subject line that this is regarding the application. ORIA may disqualify any organization that communicates with anyone in DSHS in any other way regarding this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

ORIA considers all oral communications unofficial and non-binding on ORIA. Applicants should rely only on written statements issued by ORIA.

Questions and Answers
Applicants may send questions concerning this Notice of Funding Opportunity to ORIA at orianofo@dshs.wa.gov. ORIA will respond to all questions but may consolidate the questions as needed.

Minority & Women's Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises
In accordance with the legislative findings and policies set forth in RCW 39.19, 43.60A.200, 39.26.240 and 39.26.245, the state of Washington encourages participation by veteran-owned business enterprises and Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), either self-identified or certified by, respectively, the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). While the state does not give preferential treatment, it does seek equitable representation from veterans, minority and women's business communities.

Participation by veteran owned and MWBE contractors may be either on a direct basis in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity or as a subcontractor to a primary contractor. However, no preference will be given in the evaluation of Applications, no minimum level of MWBE or veteran-owned business participation shall be required, and Applications will not be evaluated, rejected, or considered non-responsive on the basis of veteran owned and MWBE contractor participation.

Applicants may contact the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) at http://omwbe.wa.gov/ and/or the Department of Veterans Affairs at http://www.dva.wa.gov/program/veteran-owned-business-certification to obtain information on certified firms for potential subcontracting arrangements or for information on how to become certified. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent or discourage participation from non-MWBE firms or non-veteran-owned businesses.

Auxiliary Aids and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Services
ORIA will provide access to this Notice of Funding Opportunity document to individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficient individuals. Please contact ORIA at orianofo@dshs.wa.gov to request more information and assistance.

If an individual believes that the Department has discriminated against them based on a protected status, please contact the DSHS Investigations Unit for the Nondiscrimination Policy Brochure and complaint process. The brochure can be found at https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Non discrim%2022-171.pdf

Cost to Prepare Application

ORIA will not be liable for any costs incurred by organizations in preparing, conducting a site assessment or submitting a response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Joint Proposals
Organizations submitting a joint application must designate a lead organization or primary applicant. The primary applicant will be the sole point of contact through the Notice of Funding Opportunity process. If selected as the successful applicant, the primary applicant shall sign the contract and any amendments and will be liable and responsible to ORIA for all performance under the contract.

Withdrawal of Applications
After an application has been submitted, applicants may withdraw their application by notifying ORIA at orianofo@dshs.wa.gov.

Ownership of Applications
All materials submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity become the property of ORIA, unless received after the deadline in which case the application shall be returned to the sender. ORIA shall have the right to use any of the ideas presented as part of the process in any manner as it deems appropriate or beneficial, regardless of whether it is contained in an application that results in selection for a contract.

Announcement of Successful Applicant(s)
ORIA shall notify the successful applicant(s) on or near May 19, 2026. All announcements of successful applicants are subject to satisfactory negotiation with ORIA. Applicants may request a debriefing conference to orianofo@dshs.wa.gov to discuss information regarding the review and/or evaluation of their application.

Ethics, Policies and Law
This Notice of Funding Opportunity, the evaluation of applications, and any resulting contract will be made in conformance with applicable Washington state laws and policies.

Specific restrictions apply to contracting with current or former state employees pursuant to RCW 42.52. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the requirements prior to applying. Applicants must include, in their application, information regarding any current or former state employees who are employed by, or subcontracted with, the applicant.

G. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants shall submit their application documents to ORIA at orianofo@dshs.wa.gov by **5:00 PM, May 4, 2026**. Each attachment represents a separate section of the application and should be submitted as a separate document when submitting the complete application. Failure to complete and submit all required documents, and to sign them if applicable, may result in the disqualification of an application. Applications should be typed in 12-point font and should be submitted in the following order with each section of the application clearly labeled.

Attachment A: Cover Sheet
All applicants must submit a completed Cover Sheet with the minimum contents, which include all of the required acknowledgments and information. The Cover Sheet must be signed by a legally authorized individual to bind the applicant contractually.

Attachment B: Applicant Narrative Form
Applicants must provide answers to all questions on the Applicant Narrative Form to demonstrate the satisfaction of administrative requirements qualifications, the proposed plan and budget to provide the services as outlined in this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The number of points allocated to each answer is indicated next to the question. The Applicant Narrative Form is posted separately from this document in Microsoft Word format. The total maximum page limit for the Applicant Narrative Form is 25 pages. Applicants should not submit brochures, white papers, testimonials, or other pre-prepared materials in response to any of the questions unless specifically requested. Applicants must submit complete, well-organized answers that address all the questions asked in the Applicant Narrative Form. Applicants should not assume that evaluators will be familiar with their businesses before conducting the evaluation. Use of Attachment B, Applicant Narrative Form, assures that the applicant responds to specific questions in the proper order. In awarding points, evaluators will not be obligated to search through the applicant's answers to questions other than the one being reviewed to locate text that is responsive to the question being reviewed.

Attachment C: Program Annual Budget Spreadsheet
Applicant must describe the annual costs for providing proposed services for one year using Attachment C.

Attachment D: Certifications and Assurances
All applicants must submit the Applicant Certifications and Assurances form included as Attachment D, signed by an individual legally authorized to bind the organization contractually. Applicants may not alter the Applicant Certifications and Assurances form in their application. Submitting altered terms or requirements in the application may result in disqualification.

Attachment E: Contractor Intake Form
All applicants must complete and sign the New Contractor Intake Form (Form 27-043) attached to this Notice of Funding Opportunity as Attachment E. This form can also be downloaded in Microsoft Word format for ease of completion at https://www.dshs.wa.gov/office-of-the-secretary/forms.

Submission of Applications
Applications must be saved in an acceptable electronic format and emailed directly to ORIA at orianofo@dshs.wa.gov. Applications must be received by ORIA in their entirety by **5:00 P.M. PST on May 4, 2026**. The applicant's completed version of each of the Attachments A, B, C, D and E should be included as separate attachments.

Applicants assume all risks for the timely submission of the application. Applicants are responsible to ensure timely electronic receipt of their application by ORIA. ORIA does not assume responsibility for problems with the applicant's email or network. However, if DSHS email is not working properly, appropriate allowances will be made.

ORIA will not accept late applications, nor grant time extensions for individual applicants. ORIA will disqualify any applications and withdraw it from consideration if it is received after the application submission due date and time.

Acceptable Electronic Formats for Submission of Applications
Attachments A, D, E (Cover Sheet, Certification & Assurances, Applicant Narrative and Contractor Intake form) may be submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format. Attachment B, Applicant Narrative Form, must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Attachment C, Program Annual Budget, must be submitted in Microsoft Excel as an unprotected file.

NOTE: DSHS cannot receive emails that are larger than 30MB. To keep file sizes to a minimum, applicants are cautioned not to use unnecessary graphics in their applications.

H. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Administrative Review
Applications will be accepted from the posting of this Notice of Funding Opportunity until **5:00 PM, May 4, 2026**. Any application received after that date and time will not be reviewed.

All applications will be reviewed by ORIA to determine compliance with administrative and minimum qualification requirements and instructions specified in this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

ORIA may reject an application as nonresponsive at any time for any of the following reasons:

- Incomplete application.
- Submission of an application that proposes services that deviate from the scope and technical requirements set forth in this document.
- Failure to meet the minimum applicant qualifications or to comply with any requirement set forth in this Notice of Funding Opportunity document, including attachments.
- Submission of incorrect, misleading, or false information.

Applicants are responsible for all errors or omissions contained in their applications. Applicants will not be allowed to alter application documents after the deadline for application submissions. ORIA reserves the right to contact any applicant for clarification of application contents. ORIA reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities contained in any application. ORIA may contact any applicant for clarification of the application.

If an application is deemed non-responsive, it shall be removed from further consideration. ORIA shall notify non-responsive applicant(s) of this determination and the supporting reasons. Applications found to be nonresponsive will be disqualified from further evaluation and applicants shall be notified electronically in writing.

If an applicant meets all administrative and applicant qualification requirements and submittal instructions, ORIA shall continue with the evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of Applications
Following the administrative review, applications shall be evaluated, and points shall be awarded for the management and budget components of the application as applicable, based upon applicant's responses to the questions set forth in Attachment B, Applicant Narrative Form and Attachment C, Program Annual Budget Spreadsheet.

The maximum number of points available for each applicant is 100. The maximum number of points that may be assigned with respect to specific questions is set forth on Attachment B, Applicant Narrative form.

Application Evaluation Process
ORIA shall designate an evaluation team of at least three evaluators to review, evaluate and score the written question responses. These evaluators will be selected based on their qualifications, experience, capability, and background.

Evaluators shall assign scores up to the maximum points available. The applicant's points earned for each question will be added together to determine the applicant's total written evaluation points. Individual evaluator points will be totaled and the average points for each applicant will be calculated.

Evaluation Points to Small and Veteran-Own Businesses
In accordance with DES Policy 090-060 Supplier Diversity, ORIA shall consider awarding evaluation points to Veteran-Owned and/or Washington Small Businesses.

ORIA will evaluate applications for best value and provide an application preference point in the amount set forth in Attachment B, Applicant Narrative Form, to any applicant who certifies that they are Small Business (as defined in RCW 39.26.010(22)) or Veteran-Owned Business.

Applicant's References
Once the evaluations are completed, ORIA may request references from applicants to review past performance and validate information submitted in the application.

Selection of Successful Applicants
Applicants that receive the highest total number of points from evaluators will be presented to ORIA for consideration for a contract. ORIA will consider total funding available, and the funds requested by successful applicants to determine the total number of final contracts awarded.

Selection of the successful applicants depends upon ORIA's assessment of multiple factors, including the applicant's qualifications, proven experience, reliability, quality of proposed services and deliverables, timeliness, cost, and potential impact.

ORIA may consider the following criteria in making final determinations:

- Ensuring services in diverse and/or underserved geographic areas in Washington state.
- Ability to serve diverse language and cultural groups.
- Realistic cost estimates that demonstrate efficiencies.

ORIA may also consider the past performance on prior contracts and may reject an application from any organization that has failed to perform satisfactorily under any previous contract with the state or another party. ORIA reserves the right to select an applicant whose application is deemed to offer the best overall value, and that is in the best interests of serving the immigrant and refugee community in Washington state.

ORIA will make the final determination as to which applicant(s), will be designated as apparently successful applicants by May 19, 2026. ORIA will notify successful applicants and unsuccessful applicants of its determination via email on May 19, 2026.

ORIA's decision will be subject to the execution of a contract satisfactory to ORIA within a reasonable period following the announcement of the successful applicant. In the event the parties are unable to reach agreement on the final details of a contract, ORIA shall have the option of negotiating with the next highest-ranked applicant.

Debriefing Conferences

No later than 5:00 P.M. on the third business day following the announcement of successful applicants, applicants may send an email to orianofo@dshs.wa.gov to request a debriefing conference. Discussion at the debriefing conference will be limited to the following:

- If the applicant's proposal was rejected, the reason for its rejection.
- Evaluation and scoring of the application.
- Critique of the application based on the evaluation.
- Review of applicant's final score in comparison with the other final scores.

No comparisons between applications will be allowed during the debriefing conference, which shall be conducted by telephone and shall last for a maximum period of 30 minutes.

I. CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

Contract Execution

The successful applicant is expected to sign a contract with ORIA and to enter any subsequent contract amendments that may be required to address specific work or services.

ORIA reserves the right to negotiate the specific wording of the Statement of Work, based on the requirements of this Notice of Funding Opportunity and the terms of the application submitted by the successful applicant.

Electronic Payment

The State utilizes electronic payment in its transactions. The successful applicant will be required to register in the Statewide Vendor Payment system, prior to submitting a request for payment under their contract. No payment shall be made until the registration is completed.