

Introduction

People Served by the Economic Services Administration (ESA)

Nearly one out of every four Washington residents turns to the Economic Services Administration (ESA) in the Department of Social and Health Services for assistance with cash, food, child support, child care, disability determination, transition to employment, and other services. Each day, more than 4,000 ESA employees provide families and individuals across the state with the resources and support they need to build better lives. In SFY 2013, ESA served more than 1.5 million people – representing approximately 22 percent of all Washington State residents.

ESA's core services focus on:

- **Poverty Reduction & Self-Sufficiency** – Helping low-income people meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food, and medical assistance; employment-focused services; and subsidized child care. Major programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and WorkFirst (Washington's Welfare to Work program); Basic Food (formerly the Food Stamp Program); Aged, Blind, or Disabled; Pregnant Women's Assistance; Refugee Cash Assistance; Working Connections Child Care; and medical assistance.
- **Child Support Enforcement & Financial Recovery** – Ensuring parents live up to the responsibility of supporting their children and improving the self-sufficiency of families through increased financial and medical support. In addition to child support, the administration's collection of other debts owed to the Department protects taxpayers, while helping programs meet current expenditures and provide financial assistance, medical care and other benefits and services to those in need.
- **Disability Determination** – Determining whether individuals applying for Social Security disability benefits have a disability that prevents them from working. Under contract with the Social Security Administration, Disability Determination Services determines whether individuals qualify for benefits from the Social Security Administration and for medical assistance.

ESA Offices

ESA's Community Services Division (CSD) provides direct client services to the public through a network of 52 local Community Services Offices – 38 full service offices and 14 branch offices. Services are also provided through a variety of out stationed staff in different communities, two Mobile Community Services Offices and a single statewide Customer Service Contact Center.

ESA's Division of Child Support (DCS) consists of a headquarters office and nine district offices around the state.

A map of ESA's three service delivery regions can be found in Appendix 2.

ESA Partnerships

ESA works collaboratively with community partners to carry out programs and initiatives that help vulnerable adults, children and families meet their basic needs and achieve economic self-sufficiency. For example:

- Employment and training services are provided by a combination of staff from the Employment Security Department, colleges, community action agencies, and nonprofit agencies.
- To ensure eligible individuals are connected to food benefits, local Community Services Offices work with a variety of community-based organizations, such as food banks, Basic Food outreach contractors, and other organizations that advocate for children and families.

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- WorkFirst services are provided through regional contracts with community-based organizations, including agencies that offer services to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- ESA clients use their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to access their cash and food assistance benefits through ATMs and point of sale machines at participating retailers/businesses across the state.
- ESA staff work with Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis consistent with the principles of Tribal self-governance embodied in the Centennial Accord and DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01.
- People can apply online for a variety of state and federal benefit programs through the Washington Connection website, with portal access available at the sites of more than 850 community partners around the state.

How to Access ESA Services

Local telephone books list the Community Services Offices (CSOs) and the Child Support Offices in the Government Section (look under State, Social and Health Services Departments). A list of services and contact information is available at: www.dshs.wa.gov or www.access.wa.gov.

Community Services Division (CSD)

- Most client-related services can be accomplished by phone at 1-877-501-2233, or online at: www.washingtonconnection.org. These services include obtaining benefit status information, conducting an interview for food or cash benefits, renewing program benefits, reporting changes and accessing the Answer Phone system.
- If you want to do business in person, you can locate an office or get additional contact information at: www.dshs.wa.gov/onlinecso.
- Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) applications can be completed by phone at 1-877-501-2233, or online at: www.washingtonconnection.org. CSOs will refer WCCC applications received at the office (over the counter, by mail, etc.) to the unit processing these applications.
- Constituent-related services are available by phone at 1-800-865-7801.

Division of Child Support (DCS)

- You can locate your local DCS office, get additional information, pay your child support, and download an application for child support services at www.childsupportonline.wa.gov.
- Most client-related services are available by phone at 1-800-442-5437.
- Constituent-related services are available by phone at 1-800-457-6202.