

**The State of Washington's
Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET)
Program and Its Results**

**Report for the
Annie E. Casey Foundation**



**White Center
Community
Development
Association**

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The State of Washington's Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET) Program and Its Results

Executive Summary

The State of Washington's Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) 50/50 reimbursement program with third party match, established in 2005, provides recipients of Basic Food (the state's name for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly food stamps) employment, education, and training services, with the goal of helping them enhance their employability, secure employment, and become economically self-sufficient. Funding comes from a mix of federal, state, local, and private dollars.

Key outcomes of the state's BFET program include:

- An estimated 14,000 people served.
- Almost 11,000 Basic Food recipients and BFET participants receiving education and training services from community colleges, including vocational education, from short term training to one year certificate programs; basic education; and high school completion/GED preparation.
- Over 6,400 participants receiving wrap around supports and support services—and in some instances, vocational education and training—from community based organizations.
- An estimated 70 to 80 percent education and training completion rate.
- An overall entered employment rate of 57 percent.
- Median hourly wages of between \$10.20 an hour and \$10.63 an hour.
- Over \$12.5 million in federal reimbursement funding brought into the state to support the employment, education, and training services provided by community colleges and CBOs to Basic Food recipients participating in the BFET program, with an equal amount coming from state, local, and other sources.

(The full report provides a detailed analysis of these and other outcomes, including their calculation and data sources.)

BFET partners report that the state's BFET program has made it possible to serve people they would not otherwise have been able to serve. For community colleges such as South Seattle Community College and Bellevue College, it has meant being able to provide education and training services to those who would not otherwise have been able to attend because of lack of resources to pay for tuition, books, and fees. It has also meant being able to provide them services and supports that are key to their success. Likewise, for community based organizations such as FareStart, which provides homeless men and women and those at risk of becoming homeless with culinary job training and placement, the state's BFET program has meant being able to expand their capacity to serve additional participants.

In addition to expanding employment, education, and training services, the state's BFET program has also helped enhance services. For example, participating community colleges are now providing BFET participants services and supports aimed at increasing their success rate, including help navigating the college system, enhanced student advising, and career services. And through community college and CBO partnerships, BFET participants receive not only education and training services, but also wrap around supports and support services.

Introduction

The Annie E. Casey Foundation and its Making Connections Initiative in Seattle/White Center—now managed locally by the White Center Community Development Association (CDA)—have worked over the last decade to expand and enhance employment, education, and training services provided to residents of low income communities such as White Center, one of the Seattle area’s most diverse and impoverished neighborhoods; and to create job pipelines that connect them to family supporting jobs.

The Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) 50/50 reimbursement program with third party match—which provides employment, education, and training services to Basic Food recipients and is funded through a mix of federal, state, local, and private dollars—was seen as one way to advance these goals.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation and its Making Connections Initiative in Seattle/White Center helped to catalyze efforts around launching a BFET program in Washington State and provided technical support to the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and its community college and community based organization (CBO) partners in developing and implementing the initial BFET plan.

Since its start in 2005 as a pilot focusing on White Center and surrounding low income neighborhoods, the State of Washington’s BFET program has grown substantially, serving an estimated 14,000 participants over the last five years, including 2,450 from White Center.

This report explores three key questions:

- To what extent has the State of Washington’s BFET program expanded and enhanced employment, education, and training opportunities for low income people – specifically, Basic Food recipients?
- Has the state’s BFET program improved the employment and earnings of Basic Food recipients participating in the program?
- What services and supports are key to improving their employment and earnings?

After providing a brief overview of the State of Washington’s BFET program, the report examines BFET participants, including numbers served and populations targeted; BFET employment, education, and training services, including numbers receiving various services and providers of these services; BFET partners and their BFET programs; BFET funding; and the employment and earnings outcomes of BFET participants, as well as education and training outcomes. It also profiles several BFET participants.

The report draws largely on data from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and participating community colleges and CBOs. Interviews were also conducted with selected community colleges and CBOs.

The State of Washington’s BFET Program

BFET Program Overview

The State of Washington’s Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) 50/50 reimbursement program with third party match, established in 2005, provides recipients of Basic Food (the state’s name for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly food stamps) employment, education, and training services, with the goal of helping them enhance their employability, secure employment, and become economically self-sufficient. Funding comes from a mix of federal, state, local, and private dollars.

The state’s BFET program uses an innovative third party match in which community colleges and community based organizations receive a 50 percent federal reimbursement for nonfederal funds spent providing employment, education, and training services to Basic Food recipients. Sources of nonfederal funds include state, local, and private dollars.

The program is administered by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, which submits an annual BFET plan to the federal Food and Nutrition Services, and contracts with community colleges and CBOs to provide Basic Food recipients employment, education and training services.

BFET Participants

Since 2005, the State of Washington’s BFET program has served an estimated 14,000 people. (This figure may include some double counting because BFET participants can leave and re-enter the program.)

From the 4th Quarter of 2007 through the 4th Quarter of 2009—the time period for which more detailed information on cohorts of BFET participants is available—there were 8,557 BFET participants. During this time period, the number of BFET participants grew steadily, from 381 in the 2007 Quarter 4 cohort to 1,582 in the 2009 Quarter 3 cohort. The 2009 Quarter 4 cohort, however, had 747 participants.

Number of BFET Participants

Cohort	Number
2007 Quarter 4	381
2008 Quarter 1	750
2008 Quarter 2	505
2008 Quarter 3	995
2008 Quarter 4	735
2009 Quarter 1	1,577
2009 Quarter 2	1,285
2009 Quarter 3	1,582
2009 Quarter 4	747

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

BFET participants are all low income adults – those with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, the income eligibility requirement for Basic Food in Washington State. Specific groups served include

low skill adults; people of color; immigrants and refugees; the homeless; women and families with barriers; and ex-offenders. (For more information on the demographics of BFET participants, see the BFET Program Profiles section below.)

BFET Employment, Education & Training Services

Employment, education, and training services provided as part of the state's BFET program include:

- Assessment
- Case management
- Job readiness training
- Basic education, including literacy, math, English as a Second Language (ESL) , and GED preparation
- Vocational education
- Job search assistance
- Job placement
- Support services (e.g., transportation, child care, housing, and clothing)
- Skill and wage progression

Of the 8,557 BFET participants in the 2007 Quarter 4 through 2009 Quarter 4 cohorts, 2,083 (or 24 percent) received job search assistance; 4,594 (or 54 percent) received basic education, GED preparation, job readiness training, or vocational education alone; and 1,880 (or 22 percent) received multiple services.

Number of BFET Participants by Employment, Education & Training Services Provided

Cohort	Job Search	Basic Ed, GED Prep Job Readiness Training, Voc Ed Alone	Multiple Services	Total
2007 Quarter 4	113	164	104	381
2008 Quarter 1	171	409	170	750
2008 Quarter 2	150	213	142	505
2008 Quarter 3	184	588	223	995
2008 Quarter 4	203	338	194	735
2009 Quarter 1	317	947	313	1,577
2009 Quarter 2	393	616	276	1,285
2009 Quarter 3	299	1,008	275	1,582
2009 Quarter 4	253	311	183	747

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

Of the 4,594 receiving education and training services, 519 (or 11 percent) participated in basic education, 152 (or 3 percent) participated in GED preparation, 70 (or 2 percent) participated in job readiness training, and 3,853 (or 84 percent) participated in vocational education.

BFET services are provided by community and technical colleges, and community based organizations. Community and technical colleges provide BFET participants education and training, along with assistance with enrollment and financial aid, advising, and student support services. Currently, there are 12 participating community and technical colleges. State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) data from a sample of three participating community colleges show the highest enrollments are in vocational preparatory programs (37 percent), followed by vocational supplemental or upgrading job skills (17 percent), developmental education (15 percent), and high school diploma/GED (12 percent).

Some CBOs provide wrap around supports and case management in partnership with community colleges that provide the education and training, while others operate stand alone programs. Currently, there are six participating CBOs.

(For more information on the BFET programs of community and technical colleges and CBOs, see the BFET Program Profiles section below.)

Number of BFET Participants by Community College & Community Based Organization, 2005 - 2010

BFET Partner	Number of BFET Participants
Community Colleges	
Bellevue Community College	948
Bellingham Technical College	1,111
Edmonds Community College	866
Everett Community College	244
Green River Community College	972
Highline Community College	798
North Seattle Community College	1,264
Renton Technical College	304
Shoreline Community College	503
Skagit Valley Community College	400
South Seattle Community College	3,356
Seattle Central Community College	99
Community College Total	10,865
CBOs	
Cares of Washington	171
FareStart	389
Port Jobs	3,118
Refugee Federation Service Center	238
Seattle Jobs Initiative	1,739
YWCA of Seattle-King County-Snohomish County	757
CBO Total	6,412

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, April 29, 2010

BFET Program Profiles

BFET partner agencies and their BFET programs include:

- Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) – SJI’s BFET program offers participants different routes to employment, including direct job placement and sector training. As part of direct job placement, SJI’s CBO partners provide BFET participants wrap around supports: recruitment, assessment, job readiness training, barrier removal, case management, job placement, and retention services. They also receive needed support services, including transportation, housing, child care, and medical related assistance. As part of sector training, they have access to community college education and training—lasting 11 to 22 weeks—as well as instruction in soft/success skills, interviewing, job search and resume writing, in addition to wrap around supports and support services.

In addition to being a BFET partner, SJI also conducts Basic Food outreach, helping people enroll in Basic Food. SJI has helped at least 45 percent of its BFET participants enroll in Basic Food (prior to their enrollment in BFET), thus helping to increase the take up rate for Basic Food.

Demographics of SJI’s BFET participants include:

- Race/Ethnicity – People of color make up almost three quarters of SJI BFET participants. African Americans/Blacks make up about 47 percent of all participants, followed by whites, 26 percent; Asians/Pacific Islanders/Filipinos, 13 percent; Latinos, five percent; multi-ethnic, four percent; and American Indians/Alaskan Natives, two percent.
- Gender – Men make up 69 percent of SJ BFET participants and women, 31 percent.
- Age – The average is 37 years of age.
- Educational Attainment – 27 percent have less than a high school diploma; 23 percent have a high school diploma; 14 percent have a GED certificate; 21 percent have some postsecondary education and training, but no certificate or degree; eight percent have a vocational/technical certificate; four percent have an associate’s degree; and four percent have a bachelor’s degree or more.
- Marital Status – 61 percent are single; 14 percent live with a spouse or partner; and 18 percent are widowed, divorced, or separated.
- Children – 79 percent have no children in the household; 11 percent have one child in the household; six percent have two children in the household; and three percent have three children in the household.
- Language proficiency – 12 percent have difficulty with English.
- Housing – 17 percent are homeless; 12 percent are in transitional housing; 11 percent are living with someone temporarily; seven percent live in public housing or receive government housing assistance; 44 percent rent a house or apartment; and nine percent own a home.
- Conviction – 59 percent have no prior convictions; 41 percent have prior convictions.

- Income – The median family income is \$6,000 a year. Almost three quarters report incomes of less than \$12,000 a year. 30 percent report incomes of less than \$3,000 a year.

About 68 percent of SJI BFET participants enroll in sector training, which includes manufacturing, office occupations, construction, automotive, and weatherization. About 31 percent enroll in direct job placement.

Cumulatively, SJI has served 1,739 BFET participants, according to DSHS' data.

SJI's BFET reimbursement dollars are City of Seattle general revenue dollars and foundation grants.

- YWCA of Seattle-King County-Snohomish County – The YWCA operates two BFET programs. One is a stand alone program that provides BFET participants assessment, job readiness training, job search assistance, career planning and development, job placement, case management, and support services. The other is a partnership with community colleges in which community colleges provide education and training, and the YWCA provides case management, job search assistance, and support services such as transportation, child care, housing, and medical related assistance. All of which is designed to help increase college attainment.

The YWCA's target population includes women and families with barriers, immigrants and refugees, and public housing residents. The target population varies from one geographic area to another. For example, in White Center, it's largely immigrants and refugees; in South King County, it's largely Latino families; and on the Eastside, it's more those who have recently lost their jobs and are on Basic Food for the first time.

With changes in the economy and labor market, the YWCA has seen a shift toward its community college partnership program.

The YWCA has three case managers dedicated to serving BFET participants.

Cumulatively, the YWCA has served 757 BFET participants, according to DSHS' data.

The YWCA's BFET reimbursement dollars are city dollars (Bellevue and Redmond), foundation grants, and the YWCA's own funds.

- FareStart – FareStart is a culinary job training and placement program for homeless men and women, and those at risk of becoming homeless. Its 16 week comprehensive training program includes:
 - Culinary training taught through a combination of classroom instruction and hands on training in the FareStart kitchen that produces meals for its restaurant, catering service, and contract meals program that serves shelters and child care centers. (The revenue generated through these enterprises goes directly to support the FareStart job training and placement program.)
 - Case management and support services that help participants with the complexities of day to day life, including advising on how to organize and manage issues such as transportation, health care, and housing.

- Life skills training that teaches participants how to set goals, work as part of a team, and make positive choices. Training focuses on workplace essentials such as conflict resolution, stress and anger management, time management, and personal presentation.
- Job placement and retention services that help participants find and retain jobs, and achieve wage progression.

Overall, FareStart has a training completion rate of 58 percent, a job placement rate of 80 percent, and a six month job retention rate of 80 percent.

BFET has enabled FareStart to expand its training and job placement program, so that it can serve more homeless men and women as well as those at risk of being homeless. Virtually all are BFET eligible.

Cumulatively, FareStart has served 389 BFET participants, according to DSHS' data.

FareStart's BFET reimbursement dollars are private dollars.

- South Seattle Community College – South Seattle Community College was the first community college to participate in the state's BFET program. In the fall of 2005, South Seattle Community College had fewer than 20 BFET participants. Now, it has about 650 a quarter.

BFET has enabled South Seattle Community College to expand educational access to these participants who would not otherwise have been able to attend because of their lack of resources to pay for tuition, books, and fees, according to the college. And it would have lacked the resources to provide them the services and supports they need to be successful.

In addition to education and training, South Seattle Community College provides BFET participants assistance with enrollment and financial aid, advising, and student support services. Some of its BFET participants also receive wrap around supports and case management from SJI and other CBOs that are part of the state's BFET program. The community college has found that wrap around supports and case management make a difference to a low income, nontraditional student population.

Cumulatively, South Seattle Community College has served 3,356 BFET participants, according to DSHS' data.

South Seattle Community College's BFET reimbursement dollars are from state, local, and foundation sources.

- Bellevue College – Bellevue College provides BFET participants access to education and training, along with help navigating the college's internal systems. This includes assistance with enrollment and financial aid; strong student advising; help assessing skills and abilities and tying them to the labor market and educational goals; career planning; and help with college success skills such as problem solving and time management. The college has found that—to be successful—a lot of low income, first generation students need such help at the front end. And BFET makes this possible by funding 1.5 FTEs to provide this help.

While Bellevue College provides help navigating the college's internal systems, it partners with CBOs that are also part of the state's BFET program to help BFET participants navigate external systems. This includes providing case management, support services, and job placement. The YWCA, for example, has a case manager on campus two days a week.

Bellevue College is serving a population that otherwise would not have been served, according to the college. Without BFET, they would not have had the resources for tuition, fees, and books. And they would not have had access to help navigating internal and external systems.

Through BFET and the relationships it's helped develop, Bellevue College has learned how to better serve low income, first generation students, according to the college.

Cumulatively, Bellevue College has served 948 BFET participants, according to DSHS' data. This year, the college projects it will serve 400 BFET participants.

Bellevue College's BFET reimbursement dollars are from state and local sources.

- Port Jobs – Port Jobs, through its Airport Jobs center located at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, provides BFET participants help getting jobs at the airport, including job search assistance, interview preparation training, job placement, intensive case management, and access to support services such as transportation, child care, housing, and health care assistance, as well as free tax preparation and financial coaching.

Most of those served by Airport Jobs live in the low income communities surrounding the airport, including White Center. Many are immigrants and refugees.

Cumulatively, Port Jobs has served 3,118 BFET participants, according to DSHS's data.

Port Jobs' BFET reimbursement dollars are from local, state, and foundation sources.

BFET Funding

Since the start of the state's BFET program in the fall of 2005 through March 2010, over \$12.5 million in federal reimbursement funding has been brought into the state to support the employment, education, and training services provided by CBOs and community colleges to Basic Food recipients participating in the BFET program. An equal amount of funding has come from state, local, and other sources.

BFET 50/50 Reimbursement Program Funding, Federal Fiscal Years 2006-2010

FFY	State, Local & Other Funds	Federal Reimbursement	Total
2006	\$ 704,548	\$ 704,548	\$ 1,409,096
2007	\$ 1,436,158	\$ 1,436,158	\$ 2,872,316
2008	\$ 3,116,156	\$ 3,116,156	\$ 6,232,312
2009	\$ 5,597,897	\$ 5,597,897	\$ 11,195,794
2010 (projected)	\$ 8,399,669	\$ 8,399,669	\$ 16,799,338

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, 2010

BFET Outcomes

Employment & Earnings Outcomes

Four thousand two hundred and eleven BFET participants in the 2007 Quarter 4 through the 2009 Quarter 4 cohorts have gotten jobs to date. BFET participants in the 2007 Quarter 4 through 2008 Quarter 4 cohorts—those for which employment data are available for four quarters after their initial quarter of participation—have an overall entered employment rate of 57 percent.* Median wages range from \$10.20 an hour to \$10.63 an hour.

Currently, data on job retention are not available. However, plans call for measuring job retention one year after completion.

BFET Entered Employment Rates & Median Hourly Wages

Cohort	Number in Cohort	Number Employed	Entered Employment Rate	Median Hourly Wage
2007 Quarter 4	381	235	62%	\$10.53
2008 Quarter 1	750	454	61%	\$10.25
2008 Quarter 2	505	259	51%	\$10.63
2008 Quarter 3	995	536	54%	\$10.20
2008 Quarter 4	735	435	59%	\$10.33
2009 Quarter 1	1,577	847	54% (prelim)	\$10.31
2009 Quarter 2	1,285	655	-	-
2009 Quarter 3	1,582	649 (to date)	-	-
2009 Quarter 4	747	141 (to date)	-	-

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

Two year follow up data on BFET participants in the 2007 Quarter 4 cohort show an entered employment rate of 67 percent, with a median hourly wage of \$10.89 an hour. (The 2007 Quarter 4 cohort is the only cohort for which such data are currently available.)

* The entered employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of cohort participants employed in any of the four quarters after their initial quarter of participation by the total number of cohort participants.

Breaking down employment and earnings by services provided to BFET participants in the 2007 Quarter 4 through 2008 Quarter 4 cohorts shows that those receiving job search assistance have the highest entered employment rate in the four quarters after initial participation at 68 percent. This is followed by those receiving multiple services, 57 percent; vocational education alone, 52 percent; and basic education alone, 48 percent. Wages also vary, with those receiving vocational education having somewhat higher median hourly wages.

(Data on the employment and earnings of BFET participants receiving GED preparation alone and job readiness training alone are not presented because of the small number of participants receiving these services alone.)

Employment and earnings by specific employment, education, and training service provided are:

- Job Search – BFET participants receiving job search assistance have an overall entered employment rate of 68 percent. Median wages range from \$10 an hour to \$10.95 an hour.

**BFET Entered Employment &
Median Hourly Wage – Job Search**

Cohort	Number in Cohort	Number Employed	Entered Employment Rate	Median Hourly Wage
2007 Quarter 4	113	80	71%	\$10.51
2008 Quarter 1	171	123	72%	\$10.12
2008 Quarter 2	150	95	63%	\$10.95
2008 Quarter 3	184	125	68%	\$10.00
2008 Quarter 4	203	139	69%	\$10.00

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

- Basic Education – BFET participants receiving basic education instruction have an overall entered employment rate of 48 percent. Median wages range from \$8.81 an hour to \$12.27 an hour.

**BFET Entered Employment &
Median Hourly Wage – Basic Education**

Cohort	Number in Cohort	Number Employed	Entered Employment Rate	Median Hourly Wage
2007 Quarter 4	16	9	56%	\$8.81
2008 Quarter 1	61	21	34%	\$9.82
2008 Quarter 2	24	11	46%	\$12.27
2008 Quarter 3	50	32	64%	\$10.48
2008 Quarter 4	23	10	44%	\$11.97

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

- Vocational Education – BFET participants receiving vocational education have an overall entered employment rate of 52 percent. Median wages range from \$10.50 an hour to \$11.17 an hour.

**BFET Entered Employment &
Median Hourly Wage – Vocational Education**

Cohort	Number in Cohort	Number Employed	Entered Employment Rate	Median Hourly Wage
2007 Quarter 4	129	76	59%	\$11.17
2008 Quarter 1	316	177	56%	\$10.52
2008 Quarter 2	174	77	44%	\$10.98
2008 Quarter 3	515	245	48%	\$10.50
2008 Quarter 4	293	169	58%	\$10.95

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

- Multiple services – BFET participants receiving multiple services have an overall entered employment rate of 57 percent. Median wages range from \$9.99 an hour to \$10.15 an hour.

**BFET Entered Employment &
Median Hourly Wage – Multiple Services**

Cohort	Number in Cohort	Number Employed	Entered Employment Rate	Median Hourly Wage
2007 Quarter 4	104	67	64%	\$10.15
2008 Quarter 1	170	113	67%	\$10.12
2008 Quarter 2	142	68	48%	\$9.99
2008 Quarter 3	223	122	55%	\$10.03
2008 Quarter 4	194	108	56%	\$10.08

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, May 26, 2010

Data on employment and earnings are also available from the Seattle Jobs Initiative on BFET participants it has served. Since 2005, SJI has helped place 347 BFET participants in jobs, with a median hourly wage of \$11.44 an hour. (It should be noted that many SJI BFET participants are still in training, as part of its sector training strategy.) Of those placed in jobs, 12 month retention rates range from a high of 56 percent in 2006 to a low of 41 percent in 2008.

Broken down by strategy, SJI BFET participants in direct job placement tend to have higher initial job placement rates, while those in sector training tend to have higher median hourly wages.

SJI BFET participants register wage gains when comparing their pre-SJI wage to their placement wage. Those participating in sector training had a placement wage of \$12.00 an hour, compared to a pre-SJI wage of \$10.00 an hour – an annual gain of \$4,160. Those participating in direct job placement had a placement wage of \$10.65 an hour, compared to a pre-SJI wage of \$10.00 an hour – an annual gain of \$1,352. (All hourly wage figures are medians.)

**Seattle Jobs Initiative
BFET Job Placements, Median Hourly Wages & Retention Rates**

	Number of Participants	Job Placements*	Median Hourly Wage Rate	1 year Retention
2005	11	10	\$11.00	50%
2006	183	77	\$12.00	56%
2007	258	79	\$11.00	46%
2008	231	76	\$11.83	41%
2009	472	87	\$11.00	-**
2010 (YTD)	151	18	\$10.00	-**

Source: Seattle Jobs Initiative, 2010

* SJl data capture only full time jobs paying at least \$10 an hour

** Most have yet to reach this milestone

Education & Training Outcomes

Since its establishment in 2005, the state's BFET program has made it possible for almost 11,000 Basic Food recipients to participate in education and training.

From 2005 to 2010, 566 BFET participants have completed or are in the process of completing training as part of SJl's sector training strategy in which SJl's community college partners such as South Seattle Community College provide training and SJl's CBO partners provide wrap around supports and support services. The overall completion/in progress rate is 77 percent.

**Seattle Jobs Initiative
BFET Sector Training Enrollments & Completions/In Progress**

	Enrollments	Completions/ In Progress
2005	10	9 (90%)
2006	111	85 (77%)
2007	147	94 (64%)
2008	120	89 (74%)
2009	256	209 (82%)
2010	89	80 (90%)

Source: Seattle Jobs Initiative, 2010

BFET participants at South Seattle Community College have education and training completion rates of more than 70 percent. For example, in the 2008-09 academic year, BFET participants enrolled in vocational education (which includes short term, one quarter training as well as longer term programs of up to one year) had a 76 percent completion rate; those enrolled in education programs had a 79 percent completion rate.

South Seattle Community College BFET Enrollments & Completions

	Education		Vocational Education	
	Enrollments	Completions	Enrollments	Completions
2006-07	192	104 (54%)	201	145 (72%)
2007-08	88	62 (70%)	466	350 (75%)
2008-09	219	172 (79%)	768	585 (76%)
2009-10 YTD	164	135 (82%)	505	399 (79%)

Source: South Seattle Community College, 2010

BFET participants enrolled at community colleges are also reaching critical student achievement points on the way to the “tipping point” – the completion of at least one year of postsecondary education (or 45 college level credits) and a credential, which research has shown to be key to substantial earnings gains. During the 2008-09 academic year, 78 percent of BFET participants at a sample of three participating community colleges achieved basic skills gains. Thirty four percent reached pre-college points; 20 percent earned their first 15 college credits and another 17 percent their first 30 college credits; and eight percent reached the tipping point. The low portion of BFET participants reaching the tipping point is, in part, a function of time. Not enough time has elapsed for many to reach this point.

BFET Student Achievement Points

Student Achievement Points	Percent
Basic Skills Gains	78%
College Ready	34%
15 College Level Credits	20%
30 College Level Credits	17%
Quantitative Course	7%
Tipping Point	8%

Source: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2010

Additional data on the longer term education, employment and earnings outcomes of BFET participants—including those completing at least one year of postsecondary education and earning a credential—will be available next year.

BFET Participant Profiles

The stories of BFET participants help put a human face on the numbers.

- Casper is a 20 year old who enrolled in SJI's program after finding it difficult to make ends meet from his temporary laborer job. Casper, who has a GED certificate, found out about the SJI welding program at South Seattle Community College through a friend. Casper enrolled in Basic Food and then BFET. An SJI case manager helped him develop an employment plan, educational goals, and skills for maintaining employment. The case manager also helped him access support services such as transportation and medical related assistance.

Casper earned 20 college credits from the welding program. Shortly after graduating, he got a full time, permanent job as a welder at \$13 an hour. Six months later, he got a raise to \$14 an hour. He has successfully retained his job for 12 months.

- Christopher is a 30 year old homeless BFET participant who heard about SJI at a drug and alcohol treatment facility. Prior to enrolling in SJI's welding program at South Seattle Community College, Christopher attended college for two years, but did not receive a credential. He worked at a sheet metal company, but was laid off after six months. Christopher had many barriers to employment, including his criminal background: he was convicted for first degree burglary. To help participants with criminal backgrounds such as Christopher have a better chance at getting a job, SJI works with employers to showcase participants in a positive light and with participants to develop soft skills such as showing up on time, following instruction, and being personable.

With the help of his case manager, Christopher received housing and transportation assistance. Two months after graduating from the welding program, Christopher was hired as a welder at \$15 an hour. He has successfully retained his job for 12 months.

- Margaret was homeless when the YWCA began working with her, having recently relocated to Seattle with her husband. An initial assessment revealed Margaret's husband was abusive and she requested the YWCA's assistance in leaving him and receiving domestic violence services. She moved into one of the YWCA's shelters and later into transitional housing. During an initial employment skills and interest assessment, Margaret expressed interest in working in the dental field. The YWCA helped her research her options and she identified Seattle Vocational Institute's dental assistant program as the one best able to give her economic security, a career pathway, and a path to self-sufficiency

Margaret was co-enrolled in the YWCA BFET program to help pay for school needs. She also received case management, focusing on housing issues, domestic violence, and job readiness; and later job search assistance.

Margaret successfully completed her dental assistant program and an externship. She then secured—and has retained—a full time job as a periodontal assistant paying \$14.50 an hour to start, plus benefits. She also reached the tipping point, completing at least 45 college level credits and obtaining a certificate.

- Di was enrolled in Bellevue College's electroneurodiagnostic technician program when the YWCA began working with her. One of the YWCA's BFET case managers provided Di job search assistance and one on one coaching. She also attended the YWCA's monthly job club meetings held on campus.

Di completed her training and is now employed full time as an electroneurodiagnostic technician at a local hospital, paying \$20.80 an hour – enough to support herself and her daughter.

- Gary was living on the street with a history of alcohol abuse and a negative job history in construction, and had no income when he enrolled at FareStart. FareStart helped him apply for Basic Food and enroll in BFET. Because of BFET, FareStart was able to provide Gary with stable shelter, transportation assistance, and training related supports as he began the 16 week culinary job training and placement program.

After graduation, Gary secured a job as a prep cook and upgraded to transitional housing. Today, Gary has moved into permanent supported housing, has been promoted to assistant manager, and is saving money to move into his own apartment.

- Patricia is a 27 year old mother of two who lives in White Center, having moved to the area in the last year. The move put her in debt; she used her credit cards for food, gas, and lodging during the transition. A friend who said he would help her while she settled in didn't come through. She was running out of money and having difficulty finding a permanent home because she didn't have a job. A landlord finally agreed to rent her a place.

Patricia applied for Basic Food and found out about BFET and the services and supports available through the YWCA, a BFET partner. The YWCA provided her job search assistance and support services, including rental assistance, gift cards to pay for necessities, and gas vouchers. Patricia also enrolled in an Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) business technology class offered by Highline Community College at the YWCA's learning center in White Center. (Funding for the class came from other sources.) In addition to learning about computers, the class helped Patricia with her confidence. And the certificate she earned gives her more options when looking for a job.

Patricia is now working at the White Center CDA as a parent ambassador as part of Family Connections, a school based program that promotes social networking, brings families together, and connects them to resources and supports, as well as opportunities to become engaged in the community.

- Mike was released from prison after having served a sentence for a violent crime. He grew up surrounded by violence and became immersed in the environment until he eventually offended and became incarcerated. Upon his release, Mike was referred to South Seattle Community College's Life-Skills-to-Work program. During the six week program, Mike's attitude slowly began to change. After completing it, he decided to pursue welding. This was made possible through the BFET program.

During the one quarter welding program, Mike completed his Dual Shield and MIG certificates and became WABO certified. He also got job coaching from the college. Mike now has two job offers to choose from, one from a company that would like to start him at \$13.50 to \$15 an hour and another, at \$17 to \$18 an hour.

The opportunity to enroll in the welding program has opened doors for Mike that he didn't believe were possible. With this opportunity, Mike has surprised many with his commitment, follow through and persistence. Even his community corrections officer said, "This guy has changed. I don't know what you guys did, but I didn't think he'd make it." As a result of the BFET program, Mike has been transformed. The success he has achieved and the confidence he has gained, in addition to the

livable wage he will be earning, will be significant in his efforts to stay off the streets, out of the correctional system, and self-sufficient.

Conclusion

The State of Washington's BFET program has helped expand and enhance employment, education, and training opportunities for low income people – specifically, Basic Food recipients. Since its start in 2005, the state's BFET program has served an estimated 14,000 participants. It has made it possible for almost 11,000 Basic Food recipients to receive education and training services from community colleges, including vocational education, from short term training to one year certificate programs; basic education; and high school completion/GED preparation. And over 6,400 have received wrap around supports and support services—and in some instances, vocational education and training—from community based organizations.

BFET partners report that the state's BFET program has made it possible to serve people they would not otherwise have been able to serve. For community colleges such as South Seattle Community College and Bellevue College, it has meant being able to provide education and training services to those who would not otherwise have been able to attend because of lack of resources to pay for tuition, books, and fees. It has also meant being able to provide them services and supports that are key to their success. Likewise, for community based organizations such as FareStart, which provides homeless men and women and those at risk of becoming homeless with culinary job training and placement, the state's BFET program has meant being able to expand their capacity to serve additional participants.

In addition to expanding employment, education, and training services, the state's BFET program has also helped enhance services. For example, participating community colleges are now providing BFET participants services and supports aimed at increasing their success rate, including help navigating the college system, enhanced student advising, and career services. And through community college and CBO partnerships, BFET participants receive not only education and training services, but also wrap around supports and support services.

The state's BFET program has also helped improve the employment and earnings of Basic Food recipients participating in the program. BFET participants have an entered employment rate of 57 percent, with median hourly wages of between \$10.20 an hour and \$10.63 an hour.

Among the questions to be explored next are:

- What are the longer term employment and earnings—as well as educational—outcomes for Basic Food recipients participating in the BFET program?
- What impact does participation in the BFET program have on Basic Food recipients' economic self-sufficiency? What is the effect on Basic Food benefits and other public assistance?
- What are the costs and benefits of BFET? What is the return on investment? Which investments work better?

A Note on Data & Sources

Data in this report have been provided primarily by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. This includes employment and earnings data drawn from Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage files, provided by the Washington State Employment Security Department. Other data have been provided by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and BFET partner agencies, including the Seattle Jobs Initiative and South Seattle Community College. Interviews were also conducted with selected BFET partner agencies.

Specific reports drawn from include:

Seattle Jobs Initiative. *Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSE&T): An 18-Month Review of the King County Third-Party Match Pilot Project*, April 31, 2007.

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. "Basic Food Employment & Training Project, Region 3 and Region 4 Service Areas, Monthly Report," April 29, 2010.

_____. FSET Client Follow-Up Report, May 26, 2010.

_____. "Washington State Basic Food Employment and Training Plan: Federal Fiscal Year 2010," August 15, 2009