

COMMUNITY PARTNER CONNECTION

Transforming Lives

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017

Work to support and strengthen families in Washington state

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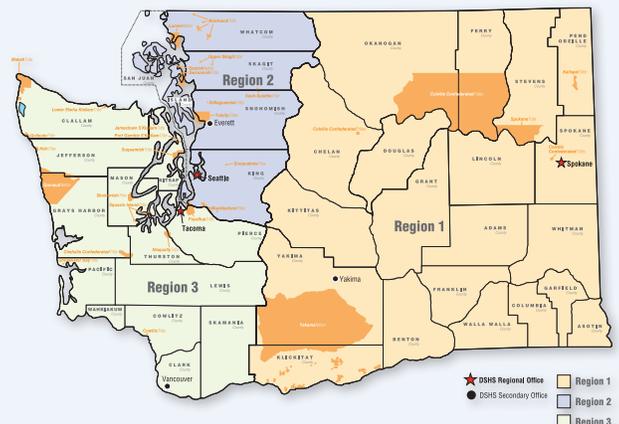
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Investing in Intergenerational Opportunity and Economic Success: *Work to Support and Strengthen Families in Washington State*

The Economic Services Administration has a unifying strategic goal to reduce poverty among Washingtonians in half by 2025. To help achieve this bold goal, Community Services Division (CSD) is transforming the way we work with families and individuals to ensure that economic success passes from one generation to the next. One of the many ways we are doing this is by investing in efforts that strengthen the ability of families with low incomes to manage the complexities of working and raising children so they can achieve financial independence and get ahead.

In collaboration with Department of Early Learning (DEL), Thrive Washington, and local organizations, CSD is connecting more families with home visiting and parenting education programs. Models include Parents as Teachers and Nurse Family Partnership that are proven to achieve positive results for kids and families – including reduced incidence of child abuse and neglect, increased school readiness, improved child health, and increased maternal employment. Participating families benefit from trained staff that spend 45-90 minutes each week or month in their homes, often for several years. Home visitors build coaching relationships with the parents, assisting them with skills, knowledge to and resources to help their children learn and grow.

In 2014, Community Services Division (CSD) began expanding access to evidence-based home visiting services for families receiving TANF/WorkFirst. By creating referral pathways from CSOs to community organizations offering home visiting and investing TANF funds to increase the number of families served, we now have expanded capacity for home visiting and referral pathways at 20 CSOs in Spokane, Yakima, Clallam, King, Pierce, Thurston, and Grays Harbor counties. From May 2015 through of March 2017, CSD referred 763 families to home visiting and parent education, and 262 families are currently enrolled in home visiting services.

CSD and DEL are also braiding TANF, SNAP Education and



Community Based Child Abuse Prevention funds to build capacity for parenting education and support groups. Parent education and support groups increase knowledge about child development, and help build social connections among parents working to get out of poverty. New group-based parenting education began spring 2017 in Stevens, Snohomish, Skagit, Okanogan and Yakima counties. And in King County, CSD works with Within Reach – a non-profit organization that serves as a coordinated-entry portal, helping connect families to a variety of health and social services, including home visiting and parenting education.

CSD continues to explore additional opportunities to expand access to family strengthening supports as we work to build intergenerational opportunity and achieve the 2025 poverty reduction goal. If you have ideas to share, please contact Spring Benson, Children and Family Support Program Manager, at Springkj@dshs.wa.gov.

REGION 1 update

You Can Make a Difference!

Spokane's Night Out Against Crime is an opportunity for individual neighborhoods to renew their commitment to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime programs; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

Join the Spokane Police and Fire

Department and Other Community Officials for a free barbeque, games and activities to celebrate the national "A Night Out Against Crime Day". Festivities will be at the Richard Allen Apartments Pavilion August 1, 2017 from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm.

Thank you to Neighborhood Networks South Perry Learning Center, Summer Teen Work Force Development, Richard Allen residents and Open Doors volunteers for making this event possible.



2-1-1 Providing Tax Assistance Information and Referral to Washington State Residents

Article submitted by: Stacy Kellogg, M.Ed., Director of Social Services People For People

The 2016 Tax Filing Season is now over and many Washington State residents were successful in receiving free tax assistance with the support of 2-1-1 information and referral services. Regional 2-1-1 Call Centers kept all tax sites listed and up to date with changes in the 2-1-1 statewide database while information and referral specialists informed callers about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) benefit and referred or scheduled appointments with their nearest AARP or VITA free tax filing site.

During this year's filing period, 6,446 persons called 2-1-1 and 581 searched win211.org to seek free tax assistance. Follow up



calls made to clients showed that 99% of clients were satisfied with the service. One caller said she was able to have her taxes prepared after calling 2-1-1 and would use it again. Caller Lynn commented: "it's so nice to be able to call 2-1-1 and there ya go!". A disabled caller was going to have to cancel her tax appointment due to transportation problems, but 2-1-1 connected her with a local transportation agency that was able to pick her up from her home and drop her off at the tax appointment. The caller was delighted.

For more information on 2-1-1 services visit: <http://win211.org/>

Yakama Nation Treaty Days Celebration

Article submitted by: Francesca Naccarato, DSHS Region 1 Community Access Consultant

The theme for this year's Treaty Day celebration held in Toppenish, Washington on June 8 was "Water is Life (Chüsh iwa wak'ishwit)". This celebration marks the Treaty of 1855 between the Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and the United States of America, which resulted in the Yakama Nation becoming a federally recognized tribe and sovereign nation. To kick-off the celebration, a Yakama Warriors flag raising ceremony was conducted followed by a parade.

Coinciding with the Treaty Day celebration, the Yakama Nation Museum recognized their 37th anniversary. In honor of this event, the Yakama Nation Museum hosted a "Native Artists Market" featuring handmade art and artist demonstrations. Attendees were graciously provided a free salmon lunch.

The weekend long festivities were filled with many other festivities like the Treaty Day Pow Wow, men's and women's softball, golf and youth basketball tournaments. The celebration closed with a Yakama Nation Treaty Day Rodeo held in White Swan.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) staff from the Toppenish CSO, Mobile CSO, Region 1 Headquarters and the Washington Connection Consultant participated in the parade and hosted an informational table on Social Service Benefits and Washington Connection. DSHS was thrilled to contribute in this fantastic celebration!

Yakama Nation Website: <http://www.yakamanation.org/index.php>

Yakama Nation Cultural Museum: <http://www.yakamamuseum.com/home.php>



DSHS Staff from left to right:
Josefina Mendoza, Cary Campbell,
Gina Garza, Malcolm Hinchley,
Maria Morfin and Oscar Olney.

Orion Industries Recognized for Excellence

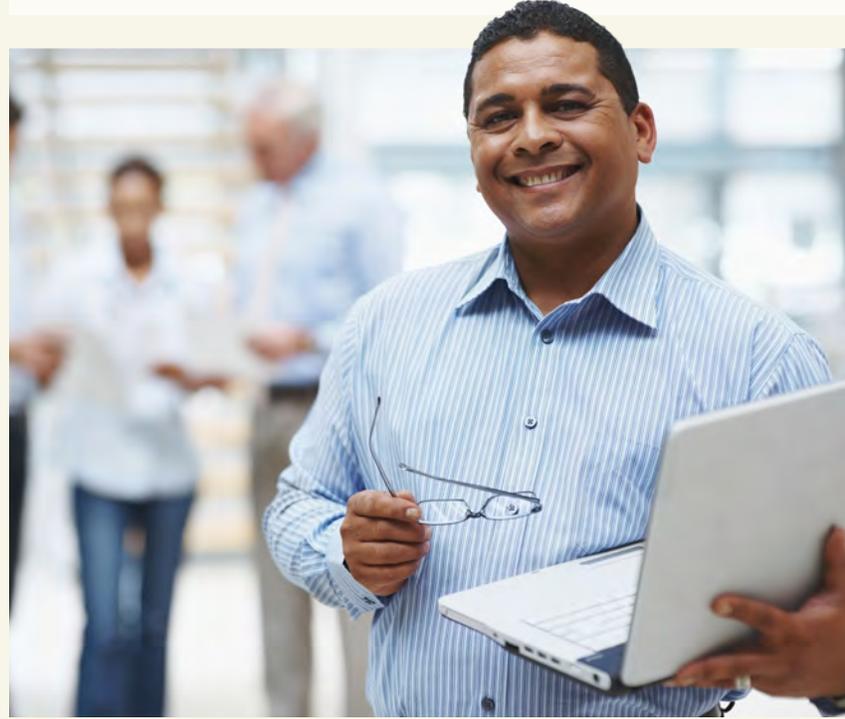
Since its inception 60 years ago, Orion Industries continues the mission of helping those with barriers to employment. Its aerospace manufacturing division and contact center services division serve as training platforms to teach job skills and employment readiness traits. Individuals are supported to achieve their goals through mentorship, job placement and job retention services.

During the first half of 2017, Orion was recognized for excellence, receiving several awards. These included:

- 2016 The Boeing Company's Global Supplier of the Year in the Community Engagement category. This award recognizes Orion's execution of its mission of helping those with barriers to employment through training, mentorship and job placement services. This is Orion's third Supplier of the Year selection, having received Supplier of the Year designations from Boeing in 2011 in the Outside Manufacturing category and in 2015 in the Corporate Citizenship category.
- 2017 Microsoft Supplier Program (MSP) Excellence Award for Impact Sourcing Leadership. Orion was recognized for establishing the Consumer Disability Answer Desk, which supports customers utilizing American Sign Language via live video chat.
- 2017 Puget Sound Business Journal (PSBJ) Innovation Award in the Non-profit category. Orion is proud to be recognized by the PSBJ as a company that is driving innovation in the Puget Sound region.



To learn more information about Orion and its programs, please visit www.orionworks.org.



Bergman Travel Donations Help Those in Need

The 3rd annual Briggs & Riley event "A Case for Giving," was held February 9 through February 28, 2017. The charity luggage trade-in event started two years ago after a conversation with foster care leaders. At this year's Seattle event - 3 bags were traded in while 5 were donated. This was the first year Bergman Travel has had customers just donate a bag without a purchase. Previously, the luggage donations were sent to Children's Hospital; however, due to extenuating circumstances Bergman Travel needed to locate a new partner.

"Two years ago, we began our partnership with DSHS and I am glad to say, I enjoy hearing that the next day our bags go to help others in need", said a Bergman Travel representative. "Gone the day they get them. It may not be much of a donation. But to know we can help out is powerful and we hope to continue to grow our donations and partnership for years to come as Briggs & Riley continues to sponsor this event."



Briggs & Riley, known for their innovation and dependable durable luggage, realized a wonderful opportunity existed after speaking with foster care leaders. This realization sparked the nationwide charity luggage trade-in event designed to help those who need luggage and reward customers for doing their part.

During the two-week-long event, gently used luggage is traded-in for credit on new Briggs & Riley bags. The gently used luggage is then immediately placed in the hands of local communities around the country to help those in need.

"Many of our clients are homeless and have very few belongings. Our WorkFirst clients are often fleeing domestic violence and have had to leave most of their belongings behind and need not only clothes for themselves, but also baby clothes and diapers", said Scott Christofersen, DSHS Belltown CSO Administrator. "We have been able to provide some clothing for clients from the Belltown Boutique and the addition of some luggage pieces has allowed us to give them something other than a paper bag."

Bellevue Students to Access Better Health for Better Learning

ICHS puts counseling and health services in easy reach at Highland MS

An International Community Health Services (ICHS) clinic offered in partnership with Youth Eastside Services (YES) and the Bellevue School District is opening at Highland Middle School this fall. The school-based clinic promises to improve Bellevue teens' school attendance, graduation rates and achievement, as it puts counseling and health services right in students' midst.

Students will be able to see an ICHS health provider for treatment of illnesses, injuries and ongoing health problems; as well as for well child checkups and immunizations. YES' therapists will help students with issues such as depression, anxiety, family stress and substance abuse.

"In bringing clinical services to students, ICHS, the Bellevue School District and YES are effectively removing barriers to care and creating greater health equity," said Teresita Batayola, ICHS CEO. "This is especially important for Bellevue's diverse community. When we take care of students' social, emotional and physical wellbeing they are more focused and present for learning. Ultimately, students' better health leads to better educational outcomes."

These are fraught times for parents and teens. Netflix's 13 Reasons Why, a TV-series depicting teen suicide, a distracted driving bill recently approved by Washington state, and a report in February from the American Academy of Pediatrics that warns against early marijuana use, underscore the rise in teen health risks. East King County is no exception.

According to the 2016 Healthy Youth Survey, nearly one in four of 6th and 8th graders in the Bellevue School District reported having been bullied in the past 30 days, and 29% of 10th graders reported feeling depressed within the past year. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among teens between 15 and 24 years old in Washington.

"YES is eager to further deepen our long-term relationship with the Bellevue School District, forge our first formal partnership with ICHS, and integrate our work to meet the physical, mental health, and wellness needs of Eastside youth," said David Downing, YES associate director. "Following a 10-year national trend, we have seen the same increase in stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts among the youth we serve. Through this partnership at Highland Middle School, we will provide critical support for student success with an onsite, full-time and integrated team that will prevent and intervene with the many challenges students face today."

Greater health equity keeps kids in school

Bellevue is a diverse city with large Asian and Hispanic populations, and with areas of high poverty. Highland

Middle School reflects this diversity. More than 40% of the school's students are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

ICHS' multilingual and culturally aware staff and providers will help address acute challenges that include disproportionately high dropout and truancy rates among Highland Middle School's Hispanic students.

In some areas of Bellevue, ethnic minorities make up more than 60% of the population. Asians represent the largest ethnic minority group, at 29% of the population, followed by Hispanics and Latinos, a group that increased nearly 50% between 2000 and 2010. One-third of Highland Middle School students speak a language other than English as their primary language.



About ICHS

Founded in 1973, ICHS is a non-profit community health center offering affordable primary medical and dental care, acupuncture, laboratory, pharmacy, behavioral health WIC, and health education services. ICHS' four full-service medical and dental clinics – located in Seattle's International District and Holly Park neighborhoods; and in the cities of Bellevue and Shoreline – serve nearly 29,000 patients each year. As the only community health center in Washington primarily serving Asians and Pacific Islanders, ICHS provides care in over 50 languages and dialects annually. ICHS is committed to improving the health of medically-underserved communities by providing affordable and in-language health care. For more information, please visit: www.ichs.com.



Skagit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services Hosts Annual Auction

The Roaring Twenties are calling you to enjoy a night of fun, frivolity and glamour to benefit programs and services for victims of violence through Skagit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services.

This agency's auction has a reputation of fun and this year's event will be held on September 30, 2017, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Swinomish Casino & Lodge Walton Events Center.

Tickets are \$70 per person or \$500 for a table of 8 and are available now at: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2895387>.



FareStart Launches Foodservice Apprenticeship Program

In June FareStart kicked off an exciting new venture, our Foodservice Apprenticeship Program, which arose out of the need to help both our graduates and local foodservice workers move from entry-level wages to living wage careers. Low-income workers with at least six months of foodservice experience can take their basic skills and passion and rise to the next level in a foodservice career.

Program Goal

The Apprenticeship Program aims to increase apprentice's wages by 25% within two years of program completion – moving them further from homelessness and closer to a living wage and self-sufficiency. This program will work with local employers to prepare 75-125 individuals annually to move toward and into middle wage jobs through effective competency-based skills training.

Who We Serve

FareStart Adult Culinary, Youth Barista, Youth Culinary graduates and community members who are: at least 18 years old, low income, have at least six months of hospitality employment and are committed to their skill and career development. Participants must also have a history of barriers to employment advancement which may include chemical dependency, mental and physical health challenges, incarceration, homelessness, gender and racial inequity.

Career Tracks Offer Options

Apprentices will work in a "real-life" paid position for up to six months as they gain hands-on experience in one of three career tracks: culinary, service, or management.

Each apprentice will have an Individual Apprenticeship Plan developed with their Career Development Specialist to map out their career path. FareStart will provide coaching and evaluations, as apprentices work towards learning the skills identified to reach their goal and move to the next level.

As apprentices near completion of the program, FareStart will work with them to find a job suited to their new skill level. We will support apprentices for two years after they leave the program and will continue to be a resource for them. One final advantage of the program is that apprentices will not only advance their technical skills, but they will be coached and practice professional development skills, which often make the difference in whom an employer hires. That is the ultimate goal - the opportunity for a living wage job.

Employer Advisory Council

FareStart enlisted the expertise of foodservice industry professionals from 20 local restaurants, food markets, hospitality companies and convention centers to establish an Employer Advisory Council for the Foodservice Apprentice Program. Some of the council members include Tom Douglas Restaurants, PCC Natural Markets, Ivar's and Marination. "The Council's feedback has been instrumental in determining key competencies and the types of training they look for in the employees they hire," said Molly Hancock, Vice President of FareStart Programs. "All see the exploding potential of the hospitality industry as a great career path and are thinking about how the program can benefit the region's hospitality industry, while also helping people move towards a living wage job."



Learn more about the Foodservice Apprenticeship Program at www.farestart.org/foodservice-apprenticeship-program.

Changing Careers? Think Clean Tech at Shoreline Community College – Tuition Assistance Available

After 15 years in the retail industry, Wendy Wenrick lost her job due to a layoff. Shortly after, she was presented with two options: search for work or go to school using the Workforce Education grants to pay for tuition. Wenrick learned that Workforce Education grants could pay tuition for eligible low-income and unemployed individuals. “It was a huge step for me. I was 34 or 35. I was terrified to go back to school. At the same time, looking at my situation, [retail] was not something I wanted to do anymore,” said Wenrick. Clean Energy Technology and Entrepreneurship (CETE) graduates, Dan Harp and Julie Wilcox, had similar experiences. Harp said, “I didn’t want to go to another dead end job, so I decided to go back to college.” Despite the strong job economy, many people found themselves in the same position, unemployed, having to decide between work and education.

While choosing education may seem

like a difficult decision, the choice could lead to greater career success. This is especially true for those attending the CETE program at Shoreline Community College (SCC). Harp, went from working a low-wage job at a pipe company to becoming a Senior Solar Design Consultant. Wendy, who now works as a project manager for a solar company said, “[I ended up] exactly where I was aiming to go. I don’t think I would have gotten here without SCC.”

A combination of support services from Workforce Education and hands-on-training the CETE program helped Wenrick, and others, complete their education and start their careers. “The Workforce Education Office was awesome the whole time. They told me everything I needed to do for funding, unemployment and my schedule,” said Wilcox. In the classroom, Wilcox found dedicated faculty with industry experience. The Clean Energy

Technology and Entrepreneurship program prepares students, to enter careers that manage, design, build, market and operated clean energy technology. “The program opened my eyes to a lot of new concepts. That, combined with volunteering and my previous degree helped me get a job afterwards,” said Wilcox.

For those considering attending college, Wilcox suggests, “Meet with someone at the college as soon as possible and then go from there. It’s not that scary, after 20 years, to do something else.” The Clean Technology Program and Workforce Education Office understands the needs of adult learners and is dedicated to student success. If you are interested in changing careers to the Clean Energy Technology Program while using Workforce Education grants to pay for tuition, you can contact workforce@shoreline.edu for more information.

El Centro de la Raza

A voice and a hub of the Latino community in Seattle and King County

El Centro de la Raza piloted a new young adult workforce development program in January 2017. The Young Adults in Tech program provides training and support for young adults with barriers to employment to gain certification in a high-demand industry and access living wage tech jobs. The target population is young adults ages 16-24 who are out of school and out of work, primarily low-income Latinos, including homeless youth and English Language Learners. The program consists of an intensive skills training course in Salesforce database administration, an exam for a professional Salesforce certification, internship placement, employment assistance, and referral to supportive services. As a result of participation in Young Adults in Tech, young adults increase employable technology skills, gain work experience and access living-wage jobs.

Samantha (name changed for privacy), initially heard about the Young Adults in Tech program from a flier at the Jackson Street YouthCare shelter, where she was staying. At the time, she was homeless and described herself as desperate before hearing about the Young Adults in Tech program. During

her time in class with Young Adults in Tech, Samantha worked diligently to learn Salesforce and create a stand-out resume and cover letter, while also proactively participating in money management and culturally competent social justice training to increase her knowledge in both areas. One month after enrolling in the program, she was selected for an internship doing data entry and clean-up in Salesforce at the Millionaire Club Charity, one of our partner organizations.

Upon completion of the 60 hour internship, Samantha was hired as a Data Entry Assistant. She is currently working 30 hours per week and being paid \$17 per hour, with the chance to move up to full time after six months of employment.

During her time in the program, Samantha also accessed the financial counseling and smoking cessation services at El Centro de la Raza. Financial counseling has helped her to understand her debt and the steps she can

take to pay it off and improve her credit, while the smoking cessation program has given her a plan to quit smoking. We are excited to watch Samantha grow as a professional and to continue to support her as she progresses in her career.

All students from the first Young Adults in Tech cohort are now placed in internships or employment. The second cohort began training in April.



Seattle Jobs Initiative Launches **CareerConnect**

On July 1, Seattle Jobs Initiative launched **CareerConnect**, a new pilot program serving Basic Food recipients and low-income adults in the Seattle Area. Providing rapid training, performance skills coaching and job placement assistance combined with upskilling opportunities including college credentials, **CareerConnect** puts participants on a path to career growth. Offering training tracks in both manufacturing and healthcare, SJI is excited to work in partnership with community based organizations, local employers and the Seattle College District to continue to help move low-income individuals to self-sufficiency through living-wage careers. For more information on the **CareerConnect** program's offerings, visit SJI's website at www.seattlejobsinitiative.com.



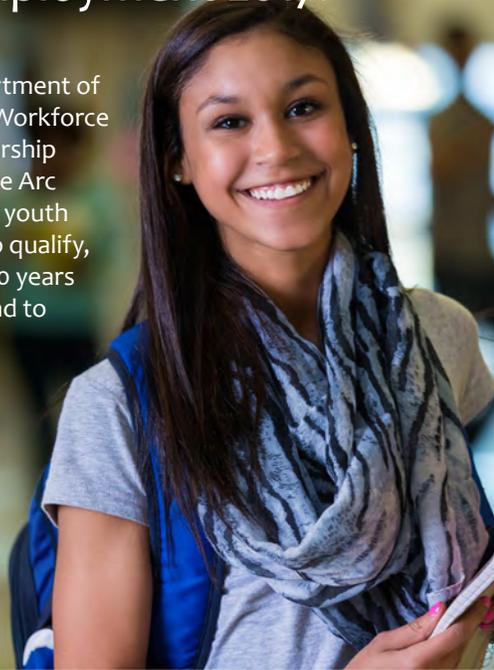
REGION 3 update

Summer youth employment 2017!

By: Jeff Meeks, The Arc Grays Harbor

Thanks to the support of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, PacMtn Workforce Development Council and in partnership with Grays Harbor Youth Works, The Arc of Grays Harbor is offering summer youth employment to 12 area students. To qualify, participants must be students, 16-20 years of age, with an active IEP who intend to return to high school in the fall.

This is a great opportunity, students will get to take advantage of Pac Mountain's excellent Uplift! Curriculum, and get 55 hours of paid employment with job supports as necessary, at one of many workplaces in the Grays Harbor.



Washington Connection

Tips & Hints

1. Do you assist applicants with submitting applications, reviews and change of circumstance forms on Washington Connection? Are you a Washington Connection Community Partner? Did you answer yes to these first two questions? Great! Here's a tricky question – Do you know if your User ID is linked to your organizations' Washington Connection Partner Account? If you don't know or perhaps your answer is no, contact your supervisor or Community Access Consultant immediately. To assist applicants submit forms online, you are required to use a SAW User ID which MUST be linked to your organizations' partner account. Find your Communication Access Consultant's contact information here: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-partnership-program/washington-connection-community-partnership-program>.



2. Did you know that an applicant (client) can find pending applications on their Washington Connection Summary page? To resume data entry, the applicant simply clicks on the appropriate tracking ID. See example below:



3. Did you know that some internet browsers are not compatible with Washington Connection? That’s right, you may experience various types of error messages when using Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Edge browsers; however, the website works best using Google Chrome and Internet Explorer. At this time, Washington Connection is not “mobile friendly” and hasn’t been designed for mobile devices.
4. If you or a client are experiencing system slowdowns or getting bounced out of Washington Connection, please try clearing your internet browsing history/temporary files and cookies and then restart your browser window. This should correct the problem. As a reminder, clearing your internet browsing history should be done at a minimum of once every 30 days. If this doesn’t help the problem, send an email to IT Support by clicking on the Contact Us link.

5. Is a client experiencing difficulties logging in to their Washington Connection Client Benefit Account? If they need to reset their password, direct them to the SecureAccess Washington website at <https://secureaccess.wa.gov/myAccess/saw/select.do>

If the user is receiving error messages about their user ID, have them send an email to IT Support by clicking on the Washington Connection Contact Us link. IT Support will triage the problem and assist in resolution.

If the user no longer has access to their email account which was used to register the User ID, have them send an email to IT Support by clicking on the Washington Connection Contact Us link. IT Support will disassociate the User ID from the old email address which will allow the user to continue.

If the user created a Washington Connection Client Benefit Account several years ago, but never activated the account, have them send an email to IT Support by clicking on the Washington Connection Contact Us link. IT Support will disassociate the User ID which will allow the user to create another one.

If the user has not received their User ID activation/confirmation email, have them send an email to IT Support by clicking on the Washington Connection Contact Us link.

DSHS Policy & Program Updates



CSD began providing child care subsidy for homeless families through the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy program beginning July 1. This gives children access to a safe and stable environment while their parents seek stable housing and employment. Statewide WCCC eligibility for families experiencing homelessness replaces a small homeless child care subsidy program that the Department of Early Learning (DEL) operated in some locations. This change was made to establish a more comprehensive and integrated approach to serve homeless families as required by the Child Care and Development Block Grant. It also fits with the DSHS

mission of transforming lives by helping families move toward self-sufficiency and is certainly a building block in DSHS’s work to prevent intergenerational poverty. CSD is committed to serving all low-income families needing child care and also understands and addresses the special needs of families dealing with the upheaval of being without stable housing.

Families experiencing homelessness who are not otherwise eligible for the Working Connections Child Care program may be eligible to receive special childcare assistance called the Homeless Grace Period (HGP). The HGP provides four months of childcare benefits with a licensed provider and \$0 copayment to help families while they are resolving issues surrounding homelessness; such as obtaining or verifying employment, locating housing or resolving outstanding copayments with previous providers.

Families may be eligible for the HGP after verifying that they are experiencing homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento Act. Definitions of the Act are: The child is: living in a motel, shelter, transitional housing; moving from place to place; living in a car, park, campground, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing; or living with more than one family in a house or apartment (doubling up). And, they meet all child care subsidy requirements, except one or more of the following:

- The requirement to be employed or participate in WorkFirst/BFET
- The requirement to pay or make a repayment plan for outstanding copayments

Homeless families that are seeking child care subsidy may contact the Community Services Division Customer Contact Center at 1-877-501-2233 for assistance. Families looking for a child care provider can call the Child Care Aware Family Line at 1-800-446-1114 for assistance.

DSHS Family Emergency Programs

DSHS administers several emergency assistance programs to help families in crisis.

The Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) program is an emergency cash benefit, limited to one 30-day period every 12 months, available to families that do not need ongoing monthly cash assistance. The total DCA benefit amount cannot exceed \$1250 in one 12-month period. These families must meet all eligibility requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or State Family Assistance (SFA) in the month of application but they do not have to participate in WorkFirst requirements or assign child support rights with the Division of Child Support. In addition, families must have or expect to receive enough income to support themselves over the next 12 months. If a family returns to TANF/SFA within 12 months following DCA approval, they must pay back all or part of the cash received from DCA.

The Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) is an emergency cash benefit, limited to one payment in a 12-month period, available to families or pregnant women who face an emergency and do not have the money to meet their basic needs. The CEAP benefit cannot exceed the maximum TANF/SFA monthly benefit amount. Families or pregnant women must be ineligible for all other cash assistance programs in order to receive CEAP. This includes families and pregnant women who are ineligible for TANF/SFA due to non-compliance sanction.

The Additional Requirements Emergency Need (AREN) program is an emergency cash benefit, limited to \$750 in a 12-month period, available to families or pregnant women receiving TANF, SFA or RCA to help pay shelter and utility related expenses in an emergency.

Partnership in focus



The Community Services Division Customer Service Contact Center (CSCC) Launches a Language Based Routing System

The CSCC is in the process of implementing Language Based Routing (LBR). LBR will provide for the direction of calls from self-identified Spanish, Russian, or Vietnamese speaking callers to phone agents certified in the same language. The goal of this project is improved customer service to our limited English speaking customers and increased access to our services.

Matching clients with phone agents who are certified in their own language, whenever possible, will streamline call processing and lead to a much better caller experience. It also will utilize the abilities of our certified dual-language staff more effectively and potentially create time and cost savings due to fewer interpreter assisted calls, translation requests, and handoffs.

Calls will be routed to language certified staff based on their availability. Self-identified limited English speaking callers will not be given preference over another caller nor will they have to wait longer for an agent that is certified in their language. If a certified agent for the caller's language is available, the call will be routed to that agent. If not, it will go to the next available agent.

The project plan was developed by a workgroup of CSCC staff, including dual-language certified staff members. We will implement Language Based Routing in phases to all queues in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese; with Spanish being implemented first. Implementation began on July 13th, with non-WorkFirst application callers.

More queues and languages will be added in phases. The LBR project team will monitor and analyze the data collected to ensure our goals are achieved.



Are you a Washington Connection Community Partner? Does your organization have an inspiring community story or an upcoming event to share? Would you like to share your short story in this newsletter? Please contact Stephanie Hill at Stephanie.Hill@dshs.wa.gov for more information.