

Quarterly Meeting Notes

Program Updates

Disclaimer – there will be more clarification coming as FNS communicates with BFET.....more to come, we wanted to give a heads-up on all the things that will be rolling out.

NOTES:

Program Updates

Barb -- Work Registrant Workgroup:

Following up on the Farm Bill changes that we spoke to you about during the 2022 Training Forum:

- There will be an increased awareness to the BFET program starting December 2022, eligibility staff will be required to use a script with all work registrant households. This script mentions the BFET program and offers a referral.
 - It is very important that providers keep us updated on their capacity and let us know if they are reaching capacity so we can remove such an agency from the referral list. Send an email to you Program [Manager/SWBFETPolicy@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:SWBFETPolicy@dshs.wa.gov).
- One of the new requirements in the Farm Bill is having a system in place for Providers to funnel clients back to the State agency when they cannot serve the client in E&T. This is called Provider Determination. We have convened a workgroup of your BFET provider peers to step out this process in eJAS. Unfortunately, this process will not be implemented in eJAS until later next year. In the interim, there will be a process outside of eJAS. More information will come with an update to the Handbook and additional training.
- Another new process required by the state agency is a review of reversed referred clients. This will not impact how providers enroll clients at this time, however there may be increased communication between BFET Operations and Providers to follow up on any unclear intake notes.

Derek – ABAWD

Reminder that the ABAWD Waiver will be ending January 31, 2022. At this time we are anticipating nine non-waived counties across the state. We are working with our Tribal partners in order to secure permission to ask for waivers on behalf of several Tribal areas. We will update all stakeholders once we receive approval of our waiver from FNS.

- Following up on the information from the Work Registration Workgroup: ABAWDs will begin to be referred to BFET providers in December in anticipation of the waiver ending. Again, it will be very important for providers to communicate about their capacity to service clients. Furthermore, the Provider Determination process will be key to ensuring ABAWD clients do not fall through the cracks if they are not able to be served by the provider they were initially referred to. Again, more to come!
- NEW! There is now an eJAS Demographic Screen Indicator for ABAWDs!

For more information on how to serve ABAWD clients in the BFET program, please use the Search Tool in the BFET Provider Handbook.

Corinna –

- Workfare will be returning as an activity ABAWD clients can do to meet participation. The Workfare program allows opportunities for ABAWD clients to volunteer in the community at nonprofit and religious organizations. The number of volunteer hours is determined based on the benefit amount divided by state or local city minimum wage. This is a smaller hourly commitment than only participating in BFET.

Workfare sites are responsible for training and monitoring Workfare participants and helping them to report back their hours to DSHS. Workfare positions cannot replace other paid positions and must follow L&I volunteer standards.

- We encourage all of our non-profit BFET Providers to consider becoming a Workfare site.
 - If you are interested please contact ABAWD@dshs.wa.gov.
- We understand this is a lot of information. The ABAWD Workgroup will be working with your peers to develop training and communication documents well in advance of December 2022. We welcome questions now to help us form those documents. For example, though many of you have been providers for years and years, you may have new staff who are not as familiar with the ABAWD Policies. If you would like us to develop an ABAWD 101 training for provider staff, please let us know in the survey at the end of this meeting!

Bessie –

We are in contract close out right now. Please be reminded that your final A-19 September invoice, will be due to policy by November 13th, so that our fiscal team will be able to close out the year.

Reminder -- do your best as an agency to spend all your funds. We have had a lot of transfer funds request this year and we have had many amendments. Hopefully all providers will be able to spend down all their funding for this Federal fiscal year. The colleges: Please follow your guidelines, as they are different.

In regards to FFY 23 timely responses.

The Program Managers are in the process right now of reviewing all the application documents that you all submitted back in June. June was several months ago, so there might be some emails coming to you requesting updated information.

All the budgets have been reviewed and so there may be some requests for updated employment and training crosswalks. There may be some requests for other documents that you submitted several months ago.

If you receive an email from your Program Manager, please respond to those timely. Our goal is to get contracts out by October 1st or prior to October 1st, so that you all will be able to sign and get them executed. This all depends on The BFET program receiving their approval from FNS.

Corinna -- We want to let everyone know that we are planning to have another short training next Thursday. I apologize that we have not gotten to save the date, but we want to make sure that we get you all the information about the updates to the contract. There are quite a few of them, but nothing that will really impact your programs too much. There are some that are pretty important, such as updating our civil rights policies. That meeting is on 9/22, and right after this meeting, I will be sending out the invite. I really hope that each of you can at least have one participant attend that meeting to get the information about the new contract and we're going to try and keep it short and sweet for you and keep it an hour or less.

Also, for FFY23, a reminder that whoever has eJAS access or needs this access for federal FFY23 needs to complete the non-disclosure forms in October. Please do not send them to us early. Wait until October first, and all of your staff who need to sign non-disclosures in order to get eJAS access sign those in October so that the dates are in October this year we are going to put a hard and fast line on October 31st. Those who have not turned in non-disclosure forms by October 31st, we will be closing down eJAS on November 1st. We want to let you all know that in advance so this year you are prepared. Reminder, everybody needs to get those non-disclosure forms in in October. Another thing to keep in mind is, who really needs eJAS access? We would like you to really pay attention to those who are going to be accessing eJAS. Who is going to be updating case notes or supervisors who need to monitor that. If somebody is not going to be accessing eJAS, then you don't need to sign a non-disclosure form and send it in. You need to have non-disclosure form signed and retained at your agencies for anyone who's going to touch eJAS data. If you have somebody who needs eJAS, they need to sign the form, have it completely filled out and turned in by October 31st.

If somebody in your agency is just going to be reviewing client data, but they don't need eJAS access then they need to fill out the form. Do not check the box on the form to request eJAS access. The form needs to be retained at your agency.

Question in the chat: Are these just for new people, or is everyone required to fill this out every year?

Answer: Everyone is required to complete it every year.

Anita -- friendly reminder

If you do have eJAS access, and you don't use it very often, you need to log in every 30 days or eJAS will cut off your access right at the 30 day mark. You might want to set a reminder every 25 days in your calendar to log in otherwise you'll have to contact the eJAS help desk to try to get back in. This reminder is for those who might run reports periodically, Supervisors or anyone else that does not use eJAS daily.

Barb – Provider updates

- MRJN will not be returning to the BFET program in FFY23.
- Partner in Employment (PIE) will not be returning to the BFET program in FFY23, they will be BFET ORIA only.
- Pacific Mountain WDC will not be returning to BFET program in FFY23.
- Seattle Goodwill changed their name to
 - Evergreen Goodwill of Northwest Washington earlier this year.
- Columbia Industries will be a new BFET provider in FFY23.

Dave -- Case Notes Documentation

95% is our target and we want to see us at that level and we've been doing a good job. We're over the 90%. But took a nose-dive from June to July down to just below 92%. This is definitely a bit of a concern.

Normally I like to see an upward trend, but seeing that drop concerns me, we do have 2 trends in particular that contributed to this drop in the month of July.

1. We've seen an increase in cases of no documentation for the month of July. That is definitely a concern as that means the cases were not being looked at or not being touched, and no documentation was happening. If you were experiencing some problems with eJAS or your system or staffing, please let the operations team know. Operation's role is to help the program function and help the program meet the requirements. We are here to assist you with that.
2. The second trend was insufficient documentation, particularly with the initial note. This is for the initial month of participation you open a component for a client. This is their first time with you and there are 2 things you absolutely must document.

Required Documentation for Initial Case Notes for All Providers in the initial month of participation

1. Employment goal
2. BFET activities

You must be documenting both of these: Employment goal is very important, and educational goal does not take the place of an employment goal. Make sure you are documenting what employment the client is seeking, not just what educational program they are to be placed in.

The next item that we see is the BFET activity. Sometimes we'll see enrolling a participant who want to be in the BFET program and they have an employment goal, but we see no documentation of the activity. Why are they in BFET? What are they looking for? That is one of the big items that, is very important in that documentation and this is just a reminder to really pay attention to those initial notes. We see a huge spike of enrollment happening in September.

Great work, everyone, and continue doing the awesome work that you're doing.

Jennifer – ORIA

We were finally able to do what we've wanted to do for a long time and have one staff person fully devoted to our ORIA BFET program. Ashley Mai has been doing an amazing job for 6 years, covering both the ORIA BFET and the LEP pathway. Now we are able to make those 2 independent staff positions, and we fortunate to hire McKenzie Nassiri, who is our new Employment and Training Program Manager. McKenzie will be covering ORIA BFET, and also a new E&T program for recipients of state funded food assistance.

We're going to cover some arrival information and how it might impact your programs. We'll be going over arrival updates with both numbers and geographic locations haven't traditionally seen new arrivals, and will cover some of the current challenges that folks are facing. We'll also provide some resources and information that ORIA can offer.

One of the major impacts on all of our services right now is the large number of Afghans and Ukrainians who have come to Washington State. Starting last year in August we started to see Afghans begin to arrive in Washington State. They became federally eligible on October 1st and that was a significant influx of individuals and families. After the invasion of Ukraine, we started to see a number of Ukrainians who entered the U.S. from Mexico. These were people who did not have the assistance of sponsors, or a resettlement agency, and this resulted in a number of challenges:

1. They didn't have a lot of help navigating the systems.
2. They were not eligible for Federal benefits when they came over, because they were given the immigration status of Ukrainian parolee (this changed on May 22, 2022).
3. It's difficult to know how many people came Washington State, because this was not following the traditional refugee resettlement model.

We estimate the number of folks who came from Mexico to be around 4,000. The Biden Administration then launched the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program. This is a new model for welcoming people to the United States. They're not coming as refugees and they're not coming through a Refugee Resettlement Program, but rather through a separate sponsorship program. This model also makes it hard for us to know exactly who's coming to Washington through U4U, although we do have information on how many people are submitting applications. Another way we can look at numbers is by determining how many people are accessing public benefits. One thing you'll notice about the data on Ukrainians accessing assistance is the numbers go from 44 in January 2022 to 7,499 in August 2022.

As I mentioned, when the Ukrainians arrived they were not eligible for Federal benefits. Those with children under the age of 18, were put on State Funded Assistance (SFA) and State Food Assistance (FAP). In May, President Biden signed into law, making them federally eligible. And, as of May 22nd, Ukrainian parolees are eligible for SNAP, TANF and Medicaid.

You'll see that in July there are 3,301 Ukrainians on SNAP, and 4,070 on FAP, and that is a little misleading, because the State is currently moving all of these people from State Funded Assistance over to Federal Food and Cash Benefits. As you can imagine, with these large numbers it's taking a while to catch up with that. That's a huge number of folks who are going to be on SNAP. Many of them are going to be on TANF and also on Refugee Cash Assistance so won't for the most part be immediately accessing BFET services.

Part of the challenge in serving the Ukrainians is they are settling in areas of the state where ORIA does not have funded services. It's no surprise when we see Spokane, Grant, Benton, Franklin, Clark, Pierce, King, Snohomish and Whatcom. Those have traditionally been areas of the State where we anticipate there are going to be refugee arrivals. Traditionally that's where Refugee Resettlement Agencies have provided services. I think we're going see this outward spread continue just based on sponsor applications for that Uniting for Ukraine program.

We're going start to see people in parts of the State where we may not have those traditional programs for limited English proficient refugees and other qualifying immigrants. Some of the things that we're looking at is how to engage people in those parts of the State without ORIA programs. It's a little early to be talking about next steps, but we're looking at opportunities and policies to get people access to employment and training. More to come!. It's not just E&T programs, it also means that people don't have the same access to linguistically and culturally appropriate mental health services or kids have access to specially funded services within school districts.

We are really looking at how we're going to address these issues of people being in so many new parts of the State. If you are seeing an impact or have questions, please feel free to reach out to me or Mackenzie.

The arrivals are not done yet. For those of you with any familiarity with the Refugee Resettlement Program they used to be connected immediately with a Resettlement Case Manager who would help them navigate all of our confusing systems. But now they're joining family sponsors or community sponsors who are responsible for making those connections. ORIA is working with the community to try and figure out how we can help facilitate that, but it is going to be challenging. Washington is number 4 in the United States for U4U applications. Arrivals will continue. As of August 19th, there were 8,593 applications that were submitted for Washington State.

As you can imagine, the greatest challenge is housing right now. ORIA has started a housing stabilization program where we are providing some rental assistance for new arrivals. This program is not limited to Ukrainians or Afghans but is open to all of our eligible refugees and humanitarian entrants. We're seeing folks from Congo, Somalia and other areas that we haven't seen for a long time, so there will be a diversification of refugee arrival populations coming through.

Another challenge for the Ukrainians is they have to apply for employment authorization documents (EAD). Currently US Citizenship and Immigration Services is taking up to 6 months for them to process EADs. There are efforts to get these numbers down.

In addition to ORIA BFET and our other employment and English language training program we also offer:

- Health and Wellness
- Elder Services
- Youth Services
- Naturalization
- Case Management
- Immigration
- Housing Stabilization

We are going to be talking and letting folks know about the evolution of employment and training in underserved communities.

As always, you can reach out to McKenzie for more information on arrivals in Washington state.

McKenzie Nassiri- McKenzie.Nassiri@dshs.wa.gov

Jennifer Malloy- Jennifer.Malloy@dshs.wa.gov

Kathi Medcalf – State Board Updates (SBCTC)

Don't forget that your changes for your grants are due by Monday, September 19th.

We've got our next quarterly provider meeting for CTCs for all the student support services programs on October 20th.

All BFET programs will have both fiscal and program monitoring this year. If you haven't responded to the date for your monitoring to Kate, it is due by the fifteenth so please respond. If we don't hear from you, we will assume the date is okay. If that date doesn't work for you, make sure that you get back to Kate.

A couple of other things I wanted to bring up. Joe Holiday is leaving as our student services director at SBCTC, so we are looking for a new director. Applications are open and being accepted through September the 16th.

You should be expecting to see some new global item types for phone and Internet digital supports and Work Based Learning, of course that only applies to Lower Columbia at this point. The Work Based Learning we are hoping to have ready to go by October first, when the new contract starts, so look for those to come across your desks hopefully by the end of the month.

The other big thing is that we are currently in the process of testing a new process for BFET and CTCs link with about 5 colleges. That work group will be meeting to share their experiences on September 21st. After that, we will be setting up a system-wide training to get out the new process for BFET billing that everybody will be required to use. We will be preparing this communication as soon as possible, so watch for that coming your way.

Robin - Hello providers! My name is Robin Thrower and I am a BFET Consultant with the Operations team. I am also a REDI ambassador now called EDAI for the Department. Equity, diversity, Access and inclusion (EDAI) is a human-centered organizational approach. This means employees and customers are considered the most valuable assets to an organization. Human-centered approaches make organizations more efficient by tapping into the skills, knowledge, and abilities of its employees to better serve its diversifying customer-base.

Equity: *Fairness* and accountability with each other and those we serve.

Diversity: Embracing *differences* with authenticity in others and ourselves.

Access: *Of any and all abilities & refers to the commitment for everyone to be included in all programs and activities.*

Inclusion: *Participation*, collaboration and responsibility.

9/15-10/15 – National Hispanic Heritage Month:

This month honors the culture and contributions of both Hispanic and LatinX Americans and in honor of this I would like to share a video that gives a quick overview of National Hispanic Heritage month.

September is also National Recovery Month: This month helps to educate all Americans on treatment and mental health services for those with substance use disorder

9/10 is World Suicide Prevention Day and is an awareness day in order to provide worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides, with various activities around the world since 2003.

9/20 –HeForShe (Women): Initiated by the UN to promote gender equality & is an invitation for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible and united force for gender equality.

There are many other holidays and observances in the month of September and we make space to honor all of those.

Dave – Upcoming eJAS Changes

We got a couple change requests in eJAS that are in development right now, and they are in a phased rollout. There are two different change requests, what's involved in them and the implementation plan. This is just going to be informational to prepare us for this upcoming change.

BFET reporting measures

The reason these changes are happening is to meet Federal requirements. We have reporting requirements we need to improve. We have some requirements we need to meet as a program and we're making eJAS do some of that. We added some program efficiencies in this request. We are getting brand new components to replace supervised job search, Job Search Training, basic education and vocational education. They don't necessarily line up anymore:

Old Components	New Components
BE – Basic Education	BB – BFET Basic Education
VE – Vocational Education	BG – BFET Vocational Education
JS – Job Search	BK – BFET Supervised Job Search
JT – Job Search Training	BL – BFET Job Search Training

The reason we are doing this is to get us separated from the other employment & training programs that are within eJAS. Some of the change limitations, we've had on our components have been a result of a different program impacting BFET. By separating it, we are no longer going to have that conflict within the program, so we will have our own components.

Another change is an ABAWD status added to the client main page. This is something you have probably already seen because this promoted and has been released. There are different items you will see in eJAS on the client screen or main page:

- Non-ABAWD
- ABAWD Non-Mandatory Participant

- ABAWD Mandatory Participant

You can see that if a client is an ABAWD who has to participate and meet participation requirements to maintain their food eligibility.

We are going to be required to be reporting on a participant's educational level on the client demographic screen. If you click on the client demographic, you will see the "Education Level". We are not to the place of using it yet, but we will when we come to implementation. This is already in eJAS.

This is a new function within eJAS and is a big change. We have to report on Skill Gains and Credentials Report and we have to keep them within eJAS. Whenever a participant completes an activity, and they obtain a skill gain or credential, and you're closing out that component you're going to be completing what they actually achieved.

For Job Search Training there a couple listed. One is Job Search Preparation, another one is Computer Training for Job Search. These are 2 main skills that are part of Job Search Training.

The next one is Basic Education. Under Basic Education the different skills are Basic Skills, ELA (English Language Acquisition), General Digital Literacy, General Non-credential Training and Secondary Education.

Under Vocational Education we have Degrees, Certificates, Internships and Practicums.

ELA, Internships and Practicums will be moving into new components.

Question in the chat:

BG will be for ad hoc or casual training programs versus enrollment in a technical college.

Dave: BG is vocational training. So anytime, we are using the vocational education component or activity.

You will be using BG: That is not exclusive to colleges. For example, we have Community Based Organizations that are using Vocational Education. We will be using the BG for any vocational training. The VE is being replaced by BG.

Reviewing ABAWD portion of the handbook would be very beneficial.

We have some new components that we're going to be using and we're also getting rid of components that are no longer used.

- BC, CF, CS, FP, FT, GE, OA, PT, RD, WB, WF

SL is technically a rise component that we're using in the BFET program. We're not getting rid of SL, we're still in the process of changing it from the rise program into full BFET functionality.

The list of the brand new components that will be happening are:

Activity	Component
English Language Acquisition (ELA)	EN
Integrated Education & Training (IET)	IT
Work-based Learning – non-subsidized (WBL-N)	WN
Work-based Learning – subsidized (WBL-S)	WL

These are the new components being promoted.

English Language Acquisition is a component currently covered under Basic Education. We are required by FNS to separate it into its own component. It keeps all the same functionality as the Basic Education. This is one where you saw in the skills reported. It said Basic Education at ELA that is now being completely separated here. There is no change it's just a new

component that we'll be using Integrated Education and Training. This component is being used to align with the Integrated Educational Pathways used within the colleges, particularly the i-BEST and the career pathway program. Any type of program that is combining Vocational Education with Basic and or English Language Acquisition will be using this new component of Integrated Education and Training. We need to improve our reporting, and our current way of combining these services is not working. This new component helps us align with the Federal requirements to map out the i-eBEST program and capture that data effectively.

Work Based Learning is brand new.

We have some changes in the eJAS program for Work Based Learning and some updates to the employment screen. On the employment screen, there is currently a section that says Work Based Learning "paid" and "unpaid" option. This was something that came over from RISE and we're having that removed. It will completely go away. We are going to create a brand new option called Work Based Learning Subsidized and Work Based Learning Non-subsidized. In that case if the person is in Work Based, and the employment is connected to the Work Based Learning, you will select one of those two options to indicate what kind of Work Based Learning this is. There's going to be some additional categories added:

- Internship
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Apprenticeship
- On the job training

When Work Based Learning is selected, you will be selecting what type of Work Based Learning it is and what is that activity connected to on the employment screen. You're not going to do anything else on the component. You open up the component and the employment screen must be updated. You must select these things, and this will indicate what type of category the Work Based Learning is, whether it's subsidized or non-subsidized as well as if it's an Internship, Pre-Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship, or On the job Training. That is a significant change that we do have coming to the employment screen. This change is improving some user interface and making it a little easier just to provide case management by selecting these options.

The Skill Gains of Credentials Report is being developed, and we're adding the new components to the Skill Gains. One of the changes that we're going to have is that when a person completes Work Based Learning you're going to have that as a Skill Gain that you'll be completing. The list of options will be Internship, Pre-Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship and On The Job Training. You will choose what they actually obtained when they completed the Work Based Learning to Integrated Education and Training component. This is a combination of Basic Education and Vocational Education. Once the participant successfully completes this you will select which of these credentials or skill gains they obtained when they completed that particular component.

We also have English Language Acquisition, which is the "EN" component. English language Acquisition is what is obtained when that is completed.

Question in the chat:

Can we change eJAS so we can put in SL without having to send a request?

Dave:

It's just not in development at this at this time.

All English Language Acquisition, regardless if you are a college CBO or ORIA, all English Language Acquisition will be "EN" component.

Question answered from the chat:

We are not capturing the individual levels of English Language. We're looking for the closure of the component when they have successfully completed the entire program. We want to capture that Skill Gain.

If you have any questions about the "SL" component, please reach out to your BFET operations person. They will be able to work with you and explain the limitations with the "SL" component.

Skill Gains are measured when the component is closed. Skill Gains is a credential report. This occurs when the component is closed and the participant is successfully done with that activity. Currently, with the closure codes with the component, a

client can close a component and come back. That is not an accurate capture of Skill Gains or credentials. This is the data we have to provide on our annual report to FNS and what this whole brand new functionality will begin.

Implementation plan

A couple things already promoted and eJAS is doing a phased rollout on others. Some of the features do not affect functionality. The goal is that all changes are going to be promoted into eJAS before October first. However, this is a moving date as we are finding out some things are being promoted, but not everything is being promoted. They are holding back on a few of these different items. Be aware this is a phased roll out and the goal is October First. We are going to have these new reports. We're going to have the Skill Gains and Credential Report available, and we're going to have the new components and the new functionality on the employment screen at that time. That is our goal and we have to do some significant changes by October first.

I will be giving you notifications when this is going to be happening. It will happen fast and we're getting some of the procedures, trainings, and desk aids in draft form right now. We're ready, but we can't finalize it until we see it in eJAS, and they will be coming out close to the final promotion date. Therefore, when it gets promoted into eJAS, you'll probably be seeing it and the communication coming out in the same day. We are trying to align absolutely everything as quickly as we possibly can. They will probably give me a heads up within a week of promotion. We're going to start using those new components October first. This means we have to change all the old components over to the new components. BFET operations team is going to work on with you on updating the components and we can back date them. If eJAS does not do the October first promote date, we will back date things to October first, and make those changes with you. We understand that this is a moving date. I was told that it would be rolled out in August, and then September. Now they are saying, possibly the end of September. I'm trying to keep the plan flexible and the BFET field operations team is going to be here to contact you and work with you individually to get everything changed over and updated. I want to take that off your plate and decrease some anxiety around that particular change.

These are many eJAS changes coming. We haven't had this number of changes in the program since the RISE pilot started. We are addressing some user things that we had work-arounds to improve user ability for you.

If you have any questions about using eJAS or these upcoming changes, please reach out to your BFET field operation person. We're here to answer your questions and help you through this and help develop a plan to implement these changes.

Troy Burgess – Transitional Cash Assistance

My team works on General SNAP Basic Food policy where I specifically have been focusing on COVID response programs such as pandemic EBT.

This is an overview about a new program that started this summer called, Transitional Cash Assistance. The presentation is titled Transitional Food Assistance (TFA), however it is Transitional Cash Assistance. Transitional Cash Assistance and TFA go hand in hand.

What is Transitional Cash Assistance?

This program is a state-funded Cash program passed through State legislation and began July 1, 2022.

It is a supportive program that does two things:

1. It issues a family \$10 cash benefit when they exit basic food for exceeding the industry gross income limit, or voluntarily requests to close their benefits.
2. It allows them to be eligible for transitional food assistance

Previously only households exiting Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) qualified for this benefit. Although it seems like it's just a \$10 cash benefit, the biggest positive affect is that it expands households to Transitional Food Assistance. It is a one-time cash benefit. People can reapply and can get this program more than once but it's just a single cash benefit. So just a quick review on Transitional Food Assistance. Transitional Food Assistance is a program where families can receive five months of additional Basic Food Assistance following the closure of their TANF, or now Basic Food for specific reasons.

For those 5 months, the Basic Food amount stays the same, regardless of any changes a family may experience, and they do not have to report any changes during that time. The Transitional Food Assistance amount is based on the last food amount the family received at the time of closure. While they are active on Transitional Food Assistance a family may reapply for SNAP Basic Food if a family experiences a change that may increase their food benefits or at the end of that five-month period.

Transitional Cash Assistance was passed through State legislation in March of 2021. This bill aimed to strengthen economic recovery efforts for families on public assistance. In the past couple of years, there were a number of State and Federal programs passed to further assist families in poverty, as many were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in one way or another. This program further assists those who exit Basic Food and helps mitigate what some may call the “cliff effect”. Some may recognize this term, but for some who do not, the term “cliff effect” means that when someone receives a pay raise or a new employment, this additional income sometimes may trigger a disproportionate loss of government assistance, such as losing their food, housing, or childcare assistance. By being eligible for Transitional Food Assistance a family is eligible for five months of additional food. I'd like to think of this in a similar to a Job retention. Allowing families time to acclimate to their new employment with some additional support, and not being cut off right away.

Who's eligible for Transitional Cash Assistance?

To be eligible for this program, a family must meet some specific eligibility requirements at the time that they close their food. First, the families must have children under the age of 18, or under the age of 19, and participating in a secondary school program, not receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and must be active on Basic Food either State or Federal with a benefit greater than \$0 at the time of closure. What the “zero” means is that there are some families out there who report changes and it does not fully close their Food Assistance. It puts them in what we call a “zero” issuance. They are not receiving a monetary benefit, but their cases remains active. The focus for this Transitional Cash Assistance is when the Food Assistance closes.

There is no application needed for Transitional Cash Assistance. Families will automatically qualify when they close their Food Assistance due to income or voluntary closure. Our systems have been updated to automatically issue Transitional Cash Assistance benefits of a \$10 benefit and automatically move their food over to the Transitional Food Assistance period.

Families can get this benefit more than once. Families can decline both Transitional Cash Assistance and Transitional Food Assistance. This may be helpful for families who move out of State and would like to apply for Food Assistance, say, in Oregon or Idaho.

Just to give everybody a little example case:

Sam and co-parent Charlie receive \$350 Basic Food Benefits monthly with their 6-year-old child, Lisa. Sam reports a new job in early August earning \$25 an hour full time. The gross income is over the limit for a 3 person household and the food closes at the end of August. With this new program, instead of fully closing and then being essentially cut off the benefits, the family qualifies for the \$10 cash benefit. This triggers Transitional Food Assistance to begin in September and the food benefit will remain at \$350 per month. This amount will continue through January, regardless of Sam's income.

Sam and Charlie may reapply for Basic Food during or at the end of the period, if needed.

Questions clarified:

The \$10 benefit is issued in addition to the family receiving an additional five months Transitional Food Assistance.

They get the \$10 cash benefit and the \$10 cash benefit is what communicates to our system to give the family Transitional Food Assistance. The food will match the last food benefit that the family received before the time of closure.

There's no application needed for it. This automatic thing happens when families come into report changes, or we learn that they have had a new job or request to close their food benefits.

They're still active on food benefits and yes, they should be eligible for BFET.

This program is to support people who are exiting public assistance.

Families are more than welcome to ask questions about the program. Our Public Benefit Specialists have tools, including talking points to answer specific questions about the program.

Angie asked, Is it monthly cash benefit?

It's just a one-time issuance of the \$10 cash, this triggers our system to issue the 5 months of Transitional Food Assistance.

The family reports new income. Their food closes they get the \$10 dollar cash benefit, and they get the period of 5 months of food. In the future, (after those 5 months) if they reapply for food and are approved again, and then get another job in the future. That process will repeat and there's no one time, it's just people can get confused by that single \$10 cash payment. It's a single \$10 cash payment, but this process can be repeated more than once.

Question in the chat:

I've been out of eJAS for a little bit -- if anybody from the BFET team could remind me.

I don't believe there is an indicator for Transitional Food Assistance in eJAS. It just says Basic Food Assistance or BFA and if it's open, pending or closed.

Is this only for families or for also those on Food Assistance who are single, so it can be both?

The qualifier in this is, they have to have an eligible child, a qualifying child, who are under the age of 18 or 18, and participating in secondary educational program. This does include a single parent households as well.

Save the date! December 6th from 9am-12pm is our next Quarterly Provider's Meeting.

If you have a best practice or specialty presentation for a future meeting. (Around 10 minutes) we can learn from each other, please send to billie.malcolm@dshs.wa.gov

Our survey shows that success stories are important to showcase! Please send any success stories to SWBFETPolicy@dshs.wa.gov.



Partnering Together in Transforming Lives