

Employment and Training

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Economic Services Administration
Community Services Division

Program Description

The Department of Social and Health Services' Economic Services Administration's employment and training programs help support individuals and families in building their skills and making full use of their talents. Through partnership with other state agencies and community-based organizations, each Employment and Training program serves a particular population based on eligibility for certain assistance programs. Participants are eligible to receive support services to facilitate engagement and reduce barriers. Transportation, child care and clothing for employment are a few examples of available resources and supports.

ESA strives to align its E&T programs with services implemented under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA allows partner agencies who administer education and E&T programs to leverage resources and coordinate approaches to help workers and job seekers, including youth (age 16-24 years old) and adults with low incomes, acquire skills and credentials that meet workforce needs.

Providing participants access to these supports increases the ability of Washington state residents, employers and communities to secure their full economic and social potential:

- **Helping parents prepare and go to work.** WorkFirst is for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or State Family Assistance. WorkFirst provides families with opportunities to engage in work activities that support financial stability and resilience through partnerships with the Employment Security Department, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Department of Commerce, community-based organizations and contracted providers through the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance's Limited English Proficient Pathway programs.
 - Virtual options such as online workshops and digital activity logs are also provided when appropriate through certain partners for greater accessibility.
- **Connecting job seekers to education, employment and training.** Basic Food Employment and Training is Washington's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-related employment (*continued on next page*)

Highlights

- Despite suspension of WorkFirst activity requirements Mar. 2020 through Sept. 2021, **in State Fiscal Year 2022 over 23% of WorkFirst families were documented as engaged in work or other activities** aimed at stabilizing their situation and/or strengthening their skill sets..
- **64% of clients remained employed** a year after exiting the BFET program. The BFET median wage in SFY21 was \$19.83/hr. after one year of employment.
- Despite COVID-19 restrictions, **Employment Pipeline placed 371 participants in employment** with an average wage of \$18.12/hr. during SFY22, and 277 participants with an average wage of \$19.01 during SFY23.

More information:

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(continued from previous page) and training program. To be eligible, participants must receive Basic Food assistance and not be participating in TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance programs. BFET's program success is credited to partnerships with tribal entities, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Workforce Development Councils and community-based organizations. BFET partners offer participants opportunities to increase their skills through training and education to improve their employment prospects and financial well-being.

- DSHS's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance provides the ORIA BFET program which offers services to eligible clients with limited English proficiency.
- Washington's state funded Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants E&T program, also known as FAP E&T, serves participants who are ineligible for SNAP/BFET solely due to their immigration status
- **Providing immediate opportunities.** Employment Pipeline is a DSHS-administered program that quickly connects individuals receiving DSHS services to livable wage employment opportunities. Adapting to the post-pandemic workforce development world, Employment Pipeline continues to engage DSHS benefit recipients with employment and training opportunities. Employment Pipeline navigators work with local workforce development partners, such as WorkSource, to identify opportunities that fit the job seeker's skill level and interest. Navigators provide up to one year of post-employment support to help maximize job retention outcomes for the newly hired individual.

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