

# 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, in partnership with other state agencies and partners, focus on supporting individuals and families in building their skills and fully making use of their talents through employment and/or education and training. Each program is tailored to serve a particular population based on eligibility for other assistance programs. Participants are eligible for support services with a focus on engagement by reducing barriers, such as assisting with transportation and accessing quality child care.

ESA strives to align its employment and training programs with other programs and services implemented under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA allows partner agencies who administer education, employment and training 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 employers' needs.

Providing participants access to these supports increases the ability of Washington state residents, employers and communities to realize their full economic and social potential and overall well-being:

- **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 Employment Security Department, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Department of Commerce and community-based organizations.
- **Connecting job seekers to education, employment and training.** Basic Food Employment and Training is Washington's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-related Employment 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 accredited to partnerships with tribal entities, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Workforce Development Councils and CBOs. BFET partners offer participants the opportunity to increase their skills through training and education to improve their employment prospects and financial well-being.
- **Providing immediate opportunities.** Employment Pipeline is a DSHS-administered program that quickly connects individuals receiving DSHS services to livable wage employment 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.

## Highlights

- **23 % of WorkFirst families participate** in work or training activities that strengthen their skill sets.  
*Note: WorkFirst participation requirements were suspended in March 2020-September 2021 due to pandemic public health conditions. This affected participation during SFY 21.*
- **62 % of clients remained employed** a year after exiting the BFET program.
- Despite COVID-19 restrictions, **the Employment Pipeline program placed 176 participants in employment** with an average wage of \$16.96/hr. during SFY21.

### More information:

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(9/2022)