

Basic Food

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers a federally funded program known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In Washington state, it's called the Basic Food Program (formerly known as Food Stamps).

DSHS is committed to providing Basic Food benefits to all eligible people who want to receive them. Basic Food Education & Assistance Program helps connect eligible individuals and families with vital food benefits by contracting with community organizations that focus on serving low-income households.

Community contractors assist low-income families and individuals, including elderly households, who may be eligible for Basic Food benefits, but haven't applied to the program.

Community contractors provide low-income families and individuals with information on Basic Food eligibility guidelines and with application assistance. DSHS determines whether applicants are eligible for benefits.



How We Choose Partners

Through a competitive bid process, DSHS selected lead organizations that provide Basic Food Education & Assistance Program services in fixed geographical areas.

Our lead contractors can subcontract for services with other community-based organizations to extend coverage in rural areas, ethnic communities and other hard-to-reach populations in Washington.

Each year, lead contractors review their service delivery plans and make adjustments as needed to connect households to Basic Food. These changes often include adding one or two new community-based organizations to provide program access services to a particular population or location.

Lead contractors send partnership and service delivery plans to DSHS for review and approval before being submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a part of DSHS' statewide Basic Food Education & Assistance Program plan for funding awards.

Contractors are required to provide 50 percent match funding and the USDA contributes 50 percent in federal funds. Contractors often get their match funding through local fundraising and grant writing.

Basic Food Education & Outreach Program contracts are pay-for-performance contracts that pay only for performance achieved.



Washington Connection Community Partnerships

Many community organizations want to help low-income families in Washington, but do not want to use the formal outreach program because of administrative requirements or ability to obtain matching funds.

Community organizations are invited to join Washington Connection, where people can easily and securely learn about and apply for a broad array of services and benefits online such as food and cash assistance; child care subsidy; and long-term care services and support. Washington Connection also provides contact information and links to other services that require a different application process.

Community partners periodically receive updated information related to services or features supported by Washington Connection; have a local contact for your questions; have the opportunity to attend community partnership meetings, and network with other organizations, and provide feedback about Washington Connection. You may also receive technical assistance and marketing materials as needed.

To learn how to become a community partner contact:

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