

Employment and Training Program

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

Program Description

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 that 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 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 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 Proficiency Pathway programs. Virtual options, such as online workshops and digital activity logs, are also provided when appropriate through certain partners for greater accessibility. *(continued on next page)*

Highlights

- **In State Fiscal Year 2023, 45% of WorkFirst families were engaged in work or other activities aimed at stabilizing their situation and/or strengthening their skill sets.**
 - **In the first quarter of 2023, 46% of adults were employed upon exiting the WorkFirst program.**
 - **In the second quarter of 2023, 78.4% of adults retained employment four quarters after WorkFirst program exit.**
- **62% of clients remained employed a year after exiting the BFET program. The BFET median wage in SFY 23 was \$21.32/hr. after one year of employment.**
- **Employment Pipeline placed 289 participants in employment with an average wage of \$19.00/hr. during SFY 23, and 276 participants with an average wage of \$19.60 during SFY 24. Employment Pipeline enrolled 1,249 participants in SFY 23, and 1,351 participants in SFY 24.**

More information:

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- **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 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' 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 or BFET solely due to their immigration status.

For recipients of Refugee Cash Assistance, the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance's LEP Pathway program providers offer the same culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate services as those available to refugee and immigrant families who receive TANF. Additionally, ORIA's LEP Pathway program offers continued services for federally eligible refugees and immigrants once employment is secured, even if cash and food benefits end.

- **Providing immediate opportunities.** Employment Pipeline is a voluntary, DSHS-administered program that helps people receiving DSHS benefits navigate employment and training opportunities that best meet their skill level and interests. Employment Pipeline provides navigation services to maximize and leverage DSHS benefits and local partners like WorkSource as well as other local services and supports to get and keep a job. Employment Pipeline navigators provide up to one year of post-employment support, including recertification of benefits without having to visit a local Community Services Office, for newly hired clients.

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