

Appendix 4 Electronic Benefits and Funds Transfer

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)



Electronic Funds Transfer - Direct Deposit (EFT)

What EBT does:

- ☞ Delivers cash and food assistance benefits through a magnetic stripe debit card.
- ☞ Uses Point of Sale (POS) devices and Automated Teller Machines (ATM).

Who EBT serves:

- ☞ Clients who receive both federal and state food assistance benefits and/or cash benefits from TANF, General Assistance, Refugee Assistance, and the Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program.

How it was done:

- ☞ In 1996, Washington joined a coalition of five other western states (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, and Idaho) in a competitive procurement (Request for Proposal). Nevada later joined the alliance.
- ☞ In 1996, Citibank EBT Services was selected as the successful vendor.
- ☞ In 1997, stakeholders were organized into several EBT workgroups to assure they had input on issues affecting them. Stakeholders included food retailers, client advocates, tribal members, disability community, banks, union, federal, field and headquarters staff.
- ☞ In 1998, business and technical requirements for EBT were developed in association with Citicorp, ACES and stakeholders.

Time frames:

- ☞ In April 1998, the EBT contract was signed.
- ☞ In March 1999, the EBT Pilot started in Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Clark, Klickitat, Pacific, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties.
- ☞ In June 1999, the first of six regional rollouts began in Region 1.
- ☞ In November 1999, statewide implementation of EBT was completed.
- ☞ Federal Food Stamp rules requires EBT in all states by October 1, 2002.

What EFT does:

- ☞ At client request, cash benefits are deposited directly into personal checking/savings accounts.

Who EFT serves:

- ☞ Clients who receive cash benefits, who have EBT, and have or are willing to open a savings or checking accounts. It is an optional service clients may choose.

How it was done:

- ☞ EBT Steering Committee agreed to pursue EFT outside of the EBT contract.
- ☞ Beginning in June 1999, a workgroup including staff from ACES, State Treasurer office and EBT met to determine business and technical requirements.

Time frames:

- ☞ In January 2000, EFT Pilot started in two Pierce County offices (Pierce West and Pierce North).
- ☞ In May 2000, all EBT cash assistance clients statewide were given the option to use EFT.