

Introduction

People Served by the Economic Services Administration (ESA)

Nearly one out of every four Washington residents turns to the Economic Services Administration (ESA) in the Department of Social and Health Services every day for assistance. ESA serves low-income families, children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, older adults, and refugees and immigrants. ESA also provides services to families seeking child care, medical services, child support and/or paternity establishment.

In June 2012, the Department of Social and Health Services provided over \$140 million in Basic Food benefits to over 590,000 households. This represents a 97% increase from the number of households receiving food assistance in June 2008.

According to a USDA study, for every \$5 spent in food assistance, about \$9.20 is generated throughout the economy, with a ripple effect. In SFY 2012, the Department issued over \$1.7 billion in Basic Food benefits, which had an estimated \$3.13 billion economic impact to local communities.

The Administration also provides cash and work-related assistance to more than 61,000 households to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

In SFY 2012, ESA collected about \$430 million in debts owed to the Department, and over \$686 million in child support, serving an average of 346,719 children per month.

ESA Service Areas

ESA's Community Services Division (CSD) provides direct client services to the public through a network of 53 local Community Services Offices – 38 full service offices, 14 branch offices, and a single statewide Customer Service Contact Center. Services are also provided through a variety of outstationed staff in different communities, and by two Mobile Community Services Offices. ESA's Division of Child Support (DCS) consists of a headquarters office and nine district offices around the state. A map of ESA's three service delivery regions and offices can be found in Appendix 2.

ESA Partnerships

ESA works collaboratively with community partners to implement programs and initiatives that help vulnerable adults, children and families meet their basic needs and achieve economic self-sufficiency. For example:

- Employment and training services are provided by a combination of staff from the Employment Security Department, colleges, community action agencies, and nonprofit agencies.
- Local Community Services Offices work with a variety of community-based organizations, such as food banks, Basic Food outreach contractors, and other organizations advocating for children and families to ensure eligible individuals receive food benefits.
- WorkFirst services are provided through regional contracts with community-based and other organizations that offer services to clients with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- Electronic benefits are available to clients through participating grocery retailers and ATMs through a contract with JPMorgan, the primary contractor for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) services.
- Consistent with the Centennial Accord and DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01, ESA staff work on a government-to-government basis with Washington tribes.
- Clients are able to complete an online application through the Washington Connection website, available in offices of more than 600 community partners around the State.

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How to Access ESA Services

Local telephone books list the Community Services Offices (CSOs) and the Child Support Offices in the Government Section (look under State, Social and Health Services Departments). A list of services and contact information is available at: www.dshs.wa.gov or www.access.wa.gov.

Community Services Division

- Most client-related services can be accomplished by phone at 1-877-501-2233, or online at: www.washingtonconnection.org. These services include obtaining benefit status information, conducting an interview for food or cash benefits, renewing program benefits, reporting changes and accessing the Answer Phone system.
- If you want to do business in person, you can locate an office or get additional contact information at: www.dshs.wa.gov/onlinecso.
- Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) applications can be completed by phone at 1-877-501-2233, or online at: www.washingtonconnection.org. CSOs will refer WCCC applications received at the office (over the counter, by mail, etc.) to the unit processing these applications.
- Constituent-related services are available by phone at 1-800-865-7801.

Division of Child Support

- You can locate your local DCS office, get additional information, pay your child support, and apply for child support services at www.childsupportonline.wa.gov.
- Most client-related services are available by phone at 1-800-442-5437.
- Constituent-related services are available by phone at 1-800-457-6202.