

Employment and Training Programs

Program Description

Employment and training programs help people build their skills and make 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 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 ages 16-24 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 DSHS Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance's Limited English Proficiency Pathway programs.



Highlights

- In state fiscal year 2024, 45% of WorkFirst families engaged in work or other activities aimed at stabilizing their situation and/or strengthening their skillsets.¹
- In calendar year 2023, an average of 41% of adults were employed upon exiting the WorkFirst program.
- Those who maintained employment into a second calendar year quarter after exit saw an average quarterly median earning level of \$7,230.

¹ Briefing Book SFY 2024 TANF/WorkFirst, page 32

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Virtual options such as online workshops and digital activity logs are also provided when appropriate through certain partners for greater accessibility.

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.

