

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Expansion of the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Program

As required by RCW 74.04.535

November 1, 2020

Economic Services Administration
Community Services Division
PO Box 45470
Olympia, WA 98504-5470
(360) 725-4888



TABLE OF CONTENTS

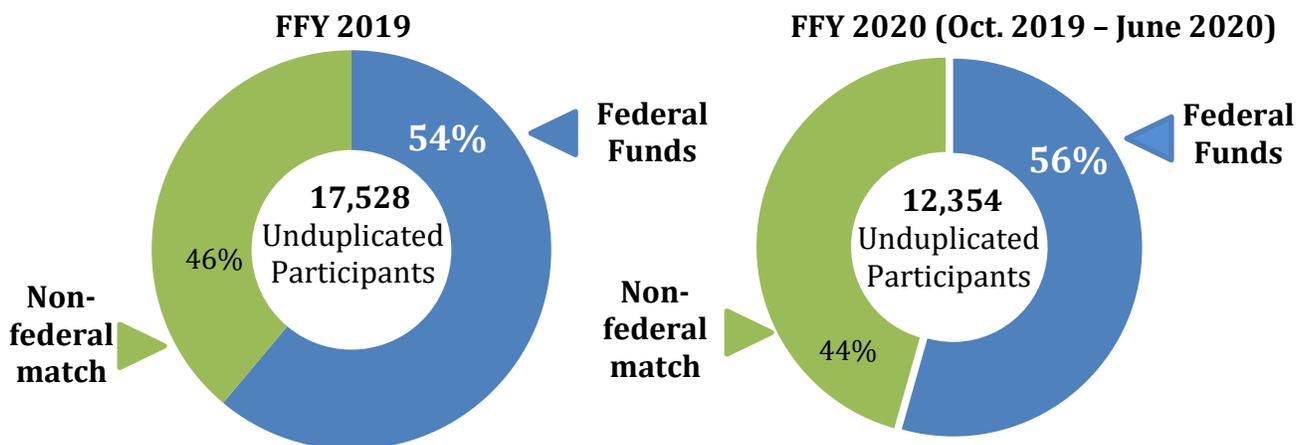
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW	6
Program Background	6
Program Funding	7
Coordination with Other Employment Programs	10
III. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FOR FFY 2019 - 2020	10
Participants and Services	10
Participant Demographics	11
Employment Outcomes	13
IV. PROGRAM SERVICES	14
Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA)	14
Community Based Organizations (CBOs)	14
Community and Technical Colleges	15
V. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FOR FFY 2020	16
New Providers - FFY 2020	16
Outreach and Support - FFY 2020	16
Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)	17
VI. PROGRAM FUNDING FFY2019 AND FFY2020	18

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Washington state Basic Food Employment and Training, or BFET, program provides job search, job search training, educational services, skills training, and other employment opportunities to Basic Food (also called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) recipients. To receive BFET services, Basic food recipients cannot be an active recipient of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF, WorkFirst program; Refugee Cash Assistance, or RCA; or the state funded Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants. Services are provided through community or technical colleges and community based organizations, or CBOs. Washington’s BFET program is considered one of the top national models for SNAP employment and training, or E&T, services to help recipients reach their full potential.

RCW [74.04.535](#) requires the Department of Social and Health Services, DSHS or the Department; the Employment Security Department, or ESD; and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, or SBCTC, to work in partnership to expand the BFET (formerly known as food stamp employment and training) program. This statute also requires DSHS to track and report outcomes annually, including those achieved through performance-based contracts as follows: federal funding received, the number of participants served, achievement points, the number of participants who enter employment during or after participation in BFET, and the average wage of jobs attained. This report covers Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 and three quarters of FFY 2020 (October 2019 – June 2020).

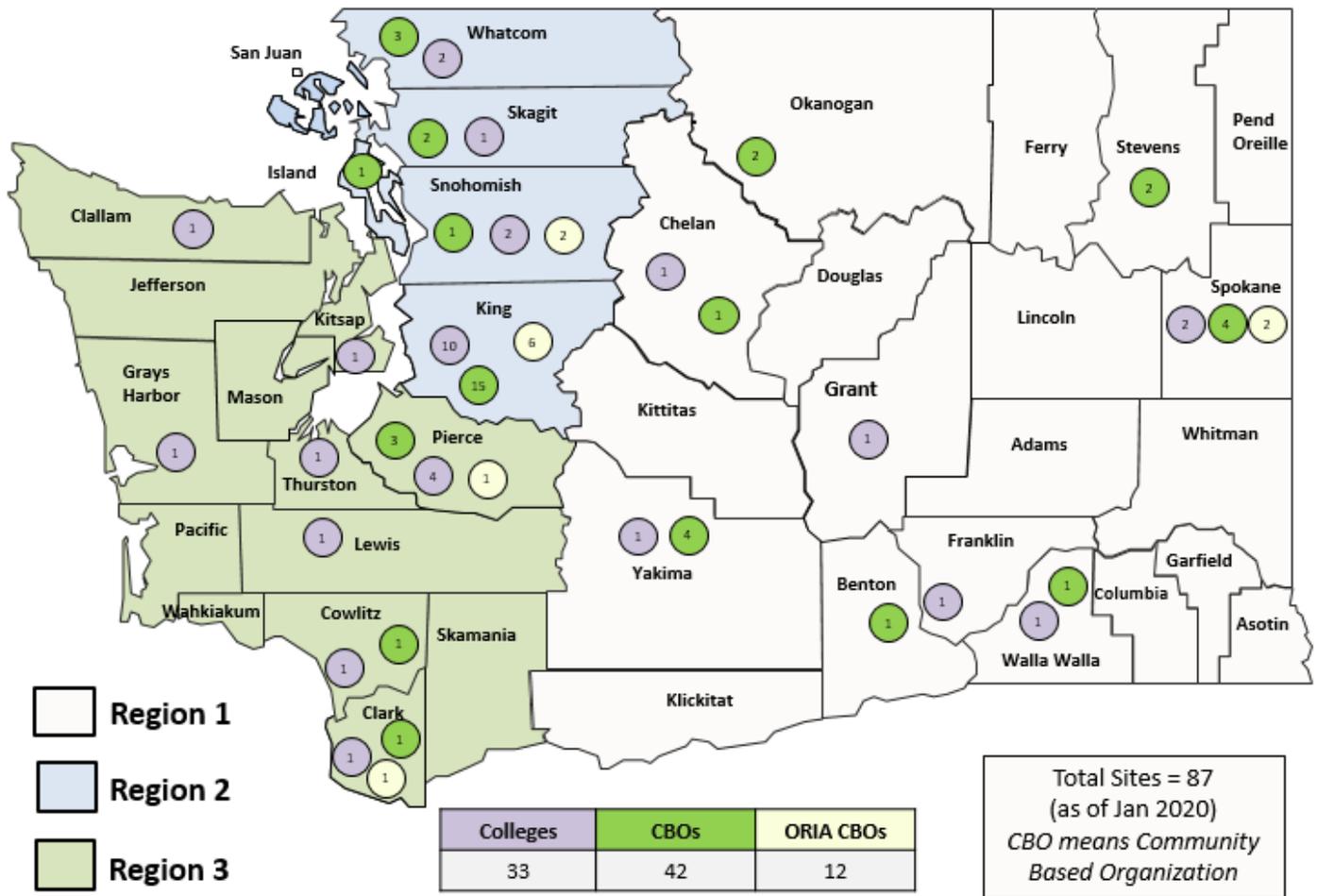
The chart below represents the number of unduplicated clients served in FFY19 and FFY20.¹ Also noted is the percentage of match federal funding.



¹ Source: EMAPs report #4500 BFET Program Growth.

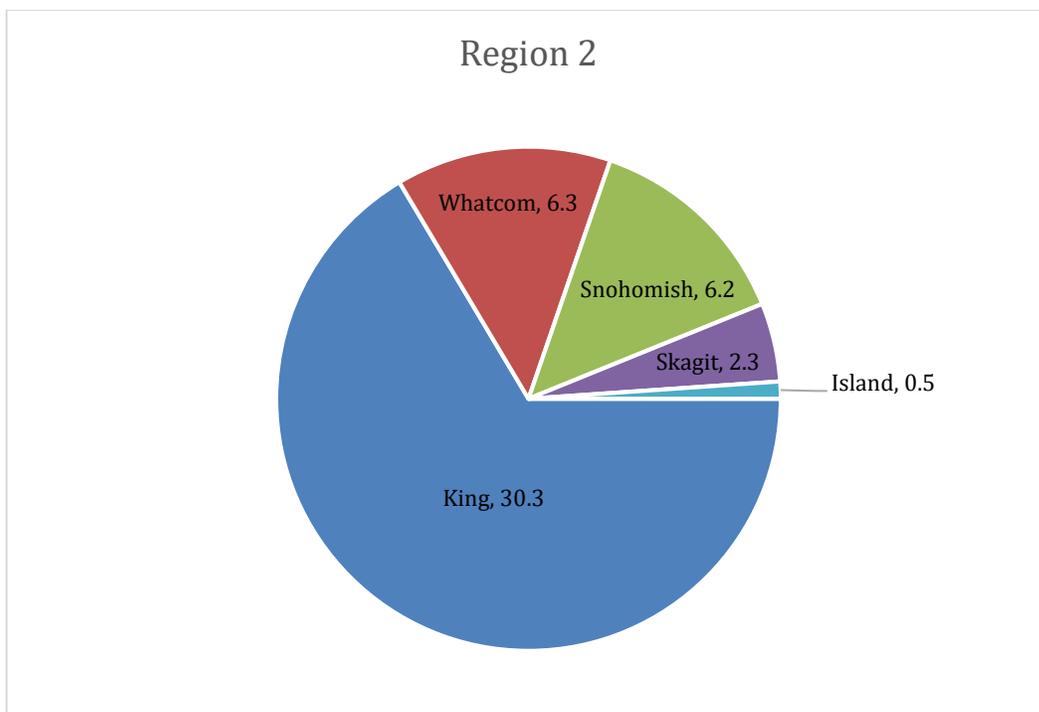
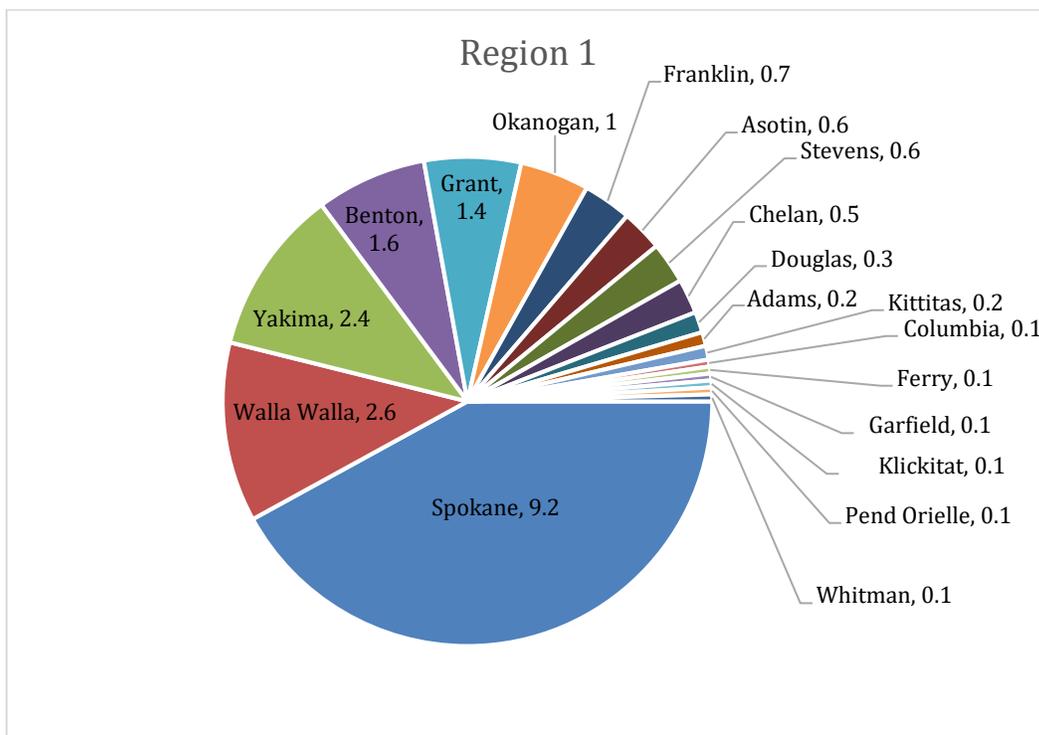
The map below represents BFET sites providing services at colleges, CBOs and ESD offices, as of July 2020.

Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Service Locations in Washington State

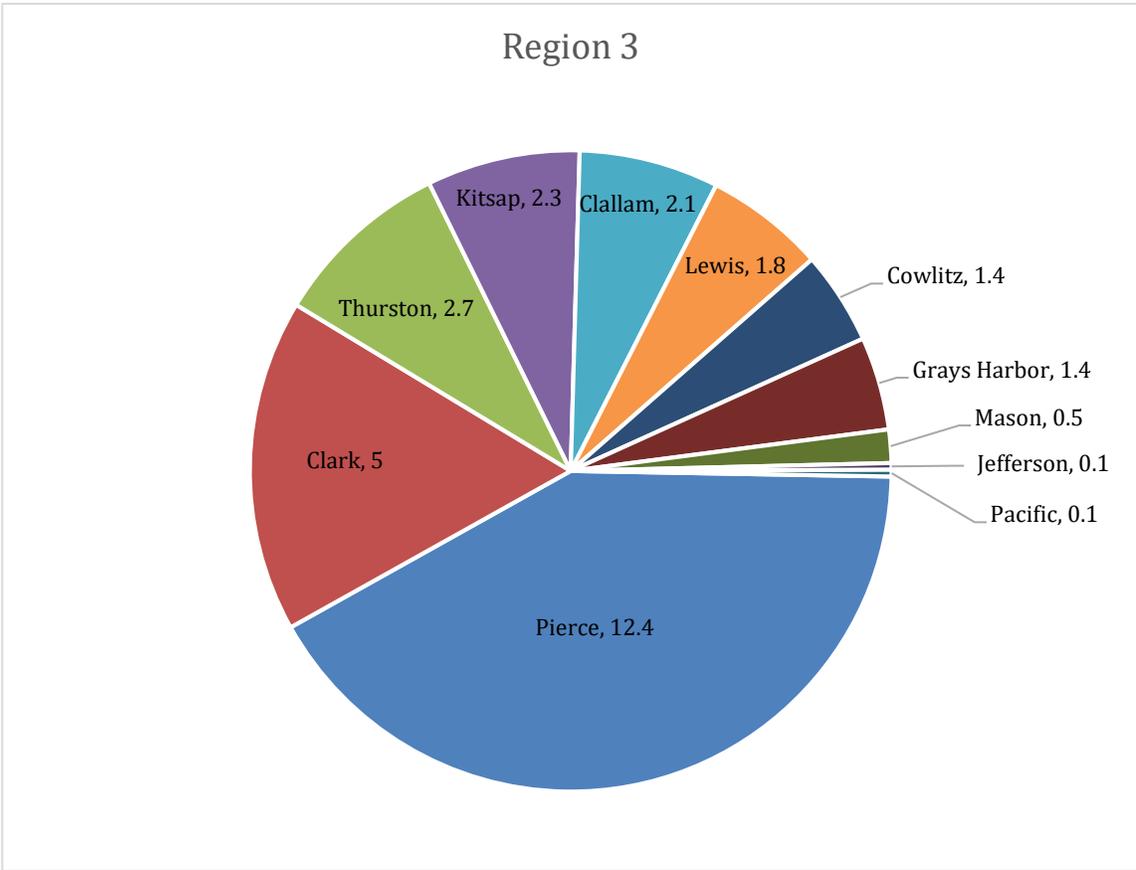


Future BFET service expansion depends on the availability of partners with necessary local funds for third party match to draw down federal funds, program and service needs in an area, and the overall BFET strategic plan. The Department continues efforts to recruit CBOs and tribal nations in unserved or underserved parts of the state to provide wraparound services supporting participant success.

**FFY 2019 – FFY 2020 (through June 2020)
Regional distribution of BFET participants by residential address (monthly average)²**



² Data from DSHS EMAPS report 4189



II. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Background

BFET started in Seattle as a pilot in October 2005, with four CBOs and one community college. It is now a statewide program with over 40 CBOs, 12 ESD locations and all 34 community and technical colleges offering services (some colleges carry the BFET caseload for more than their own school). BFET provides E&T services along with critical supports to Basic Food recipients. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, or FNS, has federal authority for the BFET program. The program is a partner in the state’s comprehensive workforce development system, which serves low-income individuals, indigent workers, and employers by encouraging skill enhancement and financial independence through gainful employment.

BFET leverages collaborative partnerships using each partner’s particular strength: community and technical colleges provide education and training to increase an individual’s employability while ESD and CBOs assist job-ready individuals in entering the job market. Many participants are co-enrolled in BFET services through multiple agencies to provide wraparound services and maximize outcomes.

BFET is a nationally recognized model of a successful employment and training program due to several factors. The program emphasizes skill building and post-secondary certificate attainment as the key to long-term self-sufficiency. BFET provides wraparound services that work in tandem with the skill building strategy to prevent or mitigate barriers

from derailing a participant's progress. Labor market information determines which local economic areas are in-demand and programs are designed to help establish pathways to fill vacancies.

The BFET program's innovative use of technology to conduct case management communication between DSHS and providers, and facilitate bi-lateral communication amongst providers on shared cases, increases the program's success and has contributed to the program's national recognition as a leader in the E&T field.

FNS regularly invites Washington state to share best practices to assist in the development and strengthening of SNAP E&T programs in other states. State agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions from other states visit Washington state to learn about our BFET program, including our service delivery model, strategic planning group, and technology interface.

BFET provides employability assessments, in addition to a menu of services, through local CBOs including:

- Case management
- Life skills
- Job readiness training
- Basic skills/English as Second Language, or ESL, training (e.g., literacy, math, vocational ESL, High School Equivalency preparation)
- Vocational training
- Job search assistance
- Job placement
- Support services (e.g., transportation, childcare, hygiene, clothing, etc.)
- Job Retention Services

Typical services a BFET participant could receive at local community and technical colleges include:

- Assessment and career planning
- Tuition assistance applied to a vocational certificate or non-transfer associate degree
- Adult education
- GED preparation
- High school 21+
- Case management
- Job search assistance
- Support services

Program Funding

FNS supports the state's SNAP E&T program through several different funding streams:

100 Percent Grant Funding:

The federal government distributes roughly \$90 million annually to states in 100 percent federal funds to assist in the administration of SNAP E&T programs. Washington primarily uses these funds to administer the statewide program. A small portion is reserved to start services in underserved geographic areas and help underserved populations. This funding does not require third party match. It fluctuates annually based on the federal formula related to the number of work registrants³ in the state. After initial issuance and approval, states may request

³ [WAC 388-444-0005](#)

additional 100 percent federal funds, unspent by other states, through the carryover funds process. Washington state regularly requests carryover funds to provide additional support to the BFET program.

100 Percent Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) Pledge Funding:

The Food and Nutrition Act provides \$20 million each fiscal year for state agencies that pledge to offer a qualifying SNAP E&T component to all at-risk Able-bodied Adults without Dependents, or ABAWDs. At-risk ABAWDs are those who are in their third countable month and at risk of losing their SNAP eligibility due to the three-month time limit. Washington has committed to offering qualifying education, training, or workfare opportunities to every ABAWD applicant or recipient who is in the last month of the three-month period of eligibility. ABAWD pledge funds allow program staff to collaborate with local employers, colleges, and community partners for job fairs, educational opportunities, drug and mental health counseling, mentorships, and job search activities.

50/50 Reimbursement Funding:

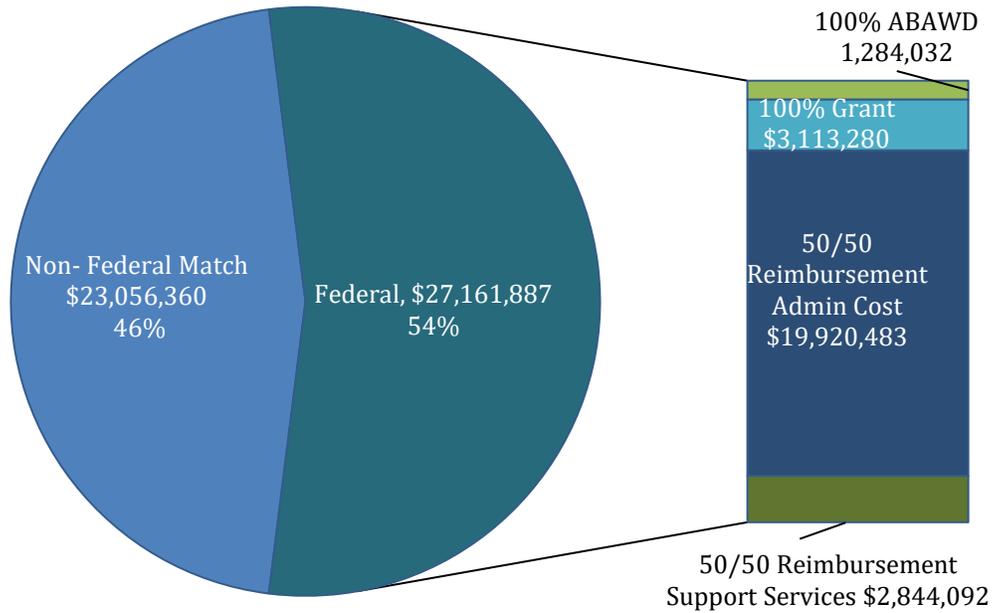
In addition to the 100 percent federal funds allocation, states are offered 50/50 reimbursement funding for SNAP E&T programs to cover administrative costs and support services. This funding is distinguished from 100 percent funds because the federal portion is a reimbursement, not a grant. The BFET providers must initially cover the cost of program operations then receive reimbursement for 50 percent of the cost after providing services and incurring a cost. The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, or ORIA, within DSHS leverages approximately \$400,000 in GF-S each year to provide matching funds to serve refugees and immigrants through the BFET program.

75/25 Tribal Funding:

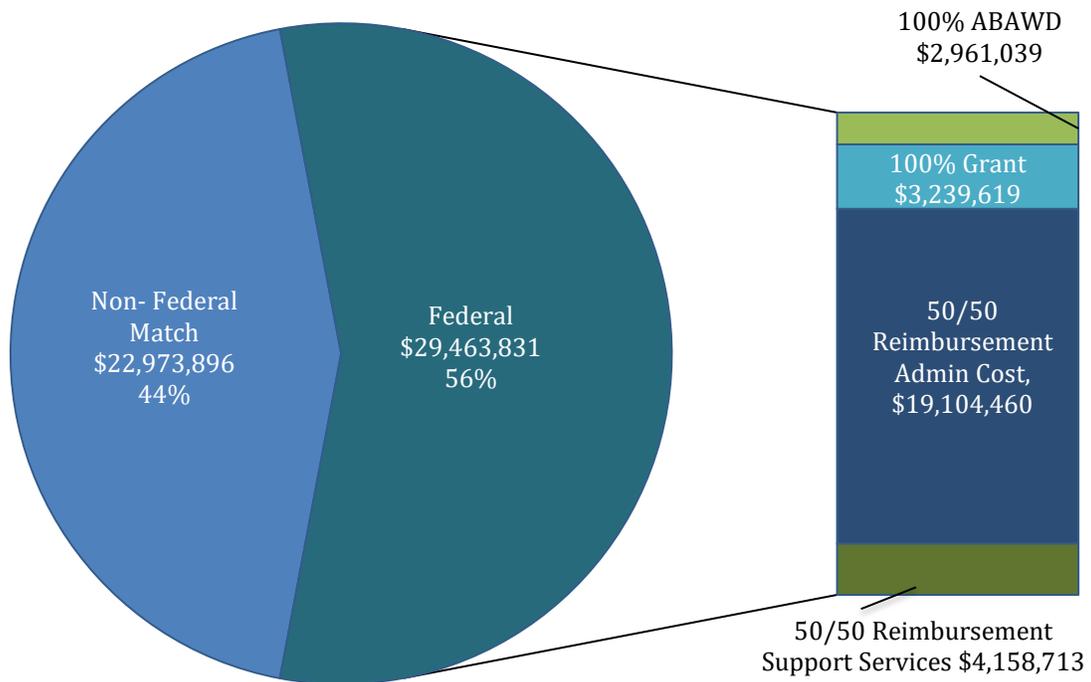
Tribal funding has a unique model. FNS values and supports strengthening tribal relations and programming and recognizes the importance of employment and training activities with tribal entities. The funding model is still a reimbursement model, but tribal programs are reimbursed at 75 percent to cover administrative costs and support services for their BFET program. Tribal programs are required to match 25 percent of funds.

Washington's BFET program uses the 50/50 reimbursement model to fund the majority of BFET services. The 100 percent funds are insufficient to support the program on a statewide scale. The use of the 50/50 reimbursement model supports program growth based on each community's capacity to provide match funding. The BFET program leverages state, local, and private funds to provide services. This funding model creates a new funding stream for colleges and CBOs to provide much needed services, while increasing partnerships to invest in the program.

FFY 2019 Funding Breakdown



FFY 2020 Funding Breakdown



Total budgeted costs were expected to increase by 4.4 percent in FFY 2020, due to an increase in providers and their expected enrollment.

Coordination with Other Employment Programs

Washington state's BFET program is a partner in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, Combined State Plan. Local providers integrate BFET services with other services, such as WIOA, to expand the reach of services available at their sites. BFET collaborates with the Workforce Training Board, ESD, and SBCTC to identify and target emerging industries, develop career pathways and increase opportunities for participants to stack credentials.

The Washington state BFET program also works with numerous other E&T programs:

- **Employment Pipeline** is a DSHS administered program available for individuals looking to find immediate employment. Employment Pipeline assists DSHS clients with navigating employment and training programs and resources, assesses employment needs, completes referrals, and provides retention services. BFET and Employment Pipeline collaborate at community events to provide client access to employment and training resources.
- **Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance** focuses on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate employment and training services to refugees and immigrants in Washington state. The BFET program through ORIA offers the same employment and training services statewide as the mainstream BFET program. ORIA's goal is for refugee and immigrant families and individuals to succeed and thrive in Washington state.
 - **The Limited English Proficient Pathway program** provides employment services and vocationally-focused English language training to: adults who receive TANF or State Family Assistance and are English language learners, people receiving RCA, and people who have lived in the United States for less than five years and have an initial U.S. immigration status of refugee. For eligibility purposes, the term "refugee" encompasses people who resettle in the U.S. as refugees as well as people granted asylum, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, Victims of Human Trafficking, and Special Immigrant Visa holders from Iraq and Afghanistan. ORIA administers this program by contracting with CBOs, refugee resettlement agencies, colleges, and other state agencies to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
 - **Career Ladder for Educated and Vocationally Experienced Refugees**, or CLEVER, is a program that assists highly educated and/or vocationally skilled people who meet the federal eligibility as refugees to re-enter their profession in the United States. The CLEVER program provides the following services: career orientation and planning, international transcript evaluation, licensing and recertification assistance, vocational mentoring, targeted job placement and job retention, and support services.
- **Tribal Relationships**

Washington state has a history of working with local tribal councils and programs, such as the Tribal TANF program. The BFET program continues to build upon these existing relationships with the assistance of the DSHS Tribal Liaison currently located within the Community Services Division, or CSD. Washington state's BFET program currently has three Tribes providing E&T services to SNAP clients in our rural areas.

III. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FOR FFY 2019 - 2020

Participants and Services

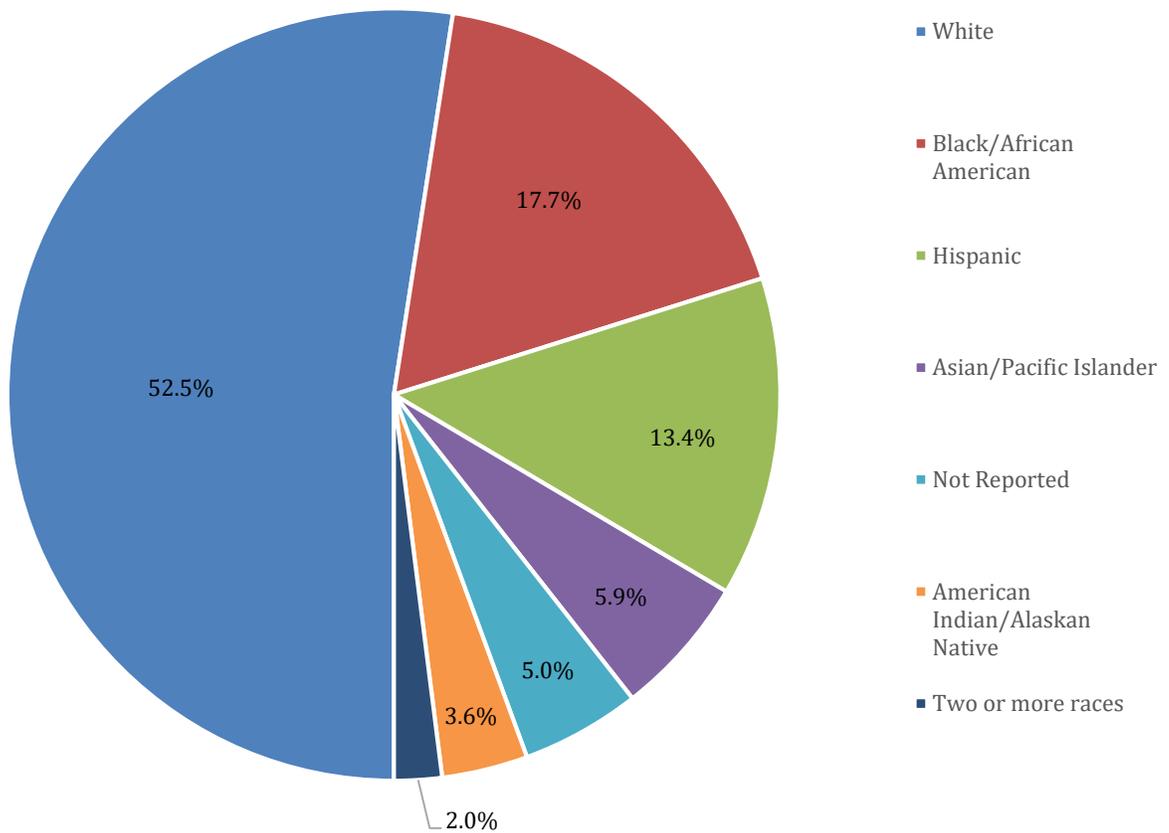
BFET contracts with providers in thirty-four counties. However, some providers offer services beyond the county they are located in, giving BFET a bigger reach beyond these thirty-four counties. BFET partnered with 42 CBOs in FFY20 (with multiple service locations) along with 33 Community and Technical Colleges. ORIA contracted with 12 CBOs (overlapping

with some mainstream BFET contracted CBOs) across the state to administer services to increase access to E&T services for refugees and immigrants.

Participant Demographics⁴

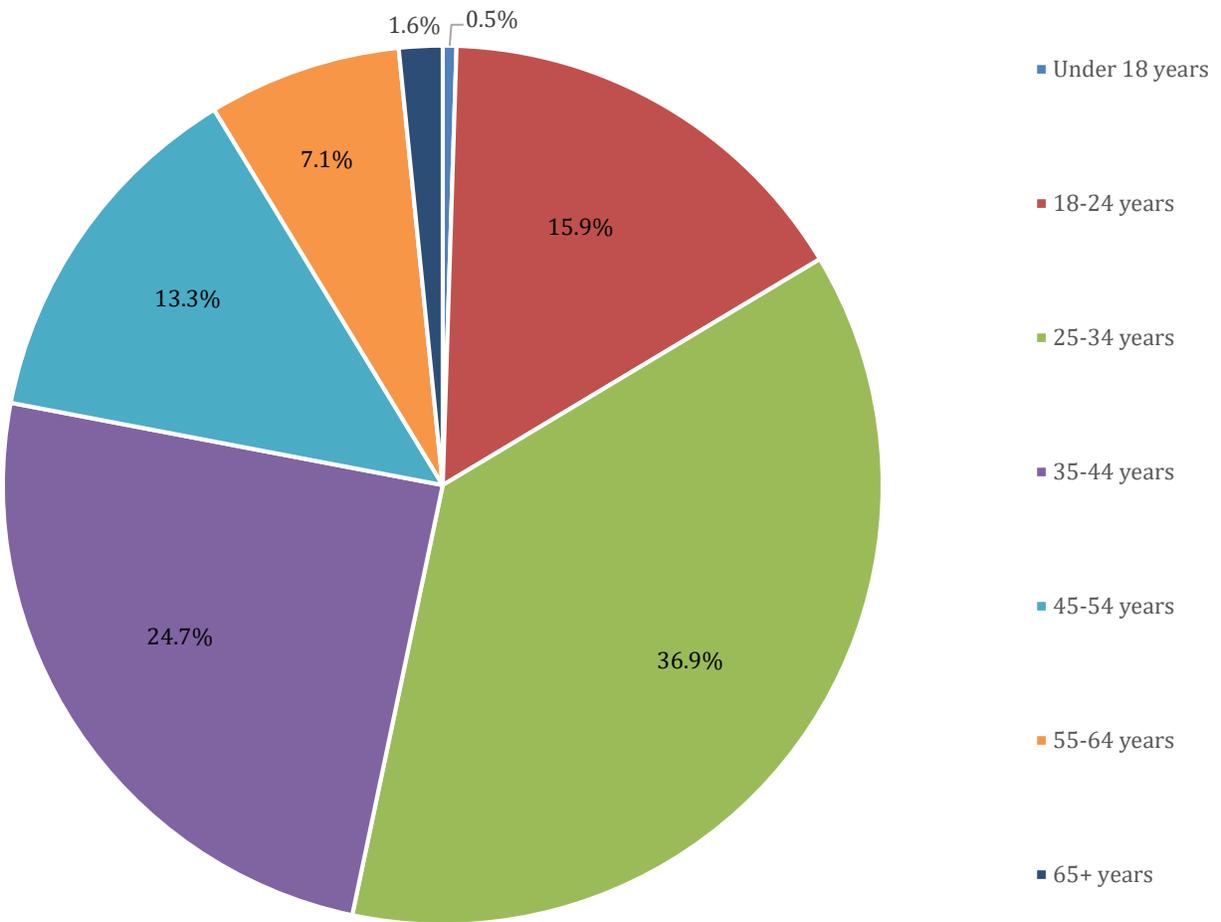
FFY	Average Monthly Participants	Average Women Per Month	Average Men Per Month
2019	6,352	4,071	2,281
2020	6,238	4,043	2,196

Participant Engagement by Race and Ethnicity
FFY19 - FFY20 (Monthly Average through June 2020)



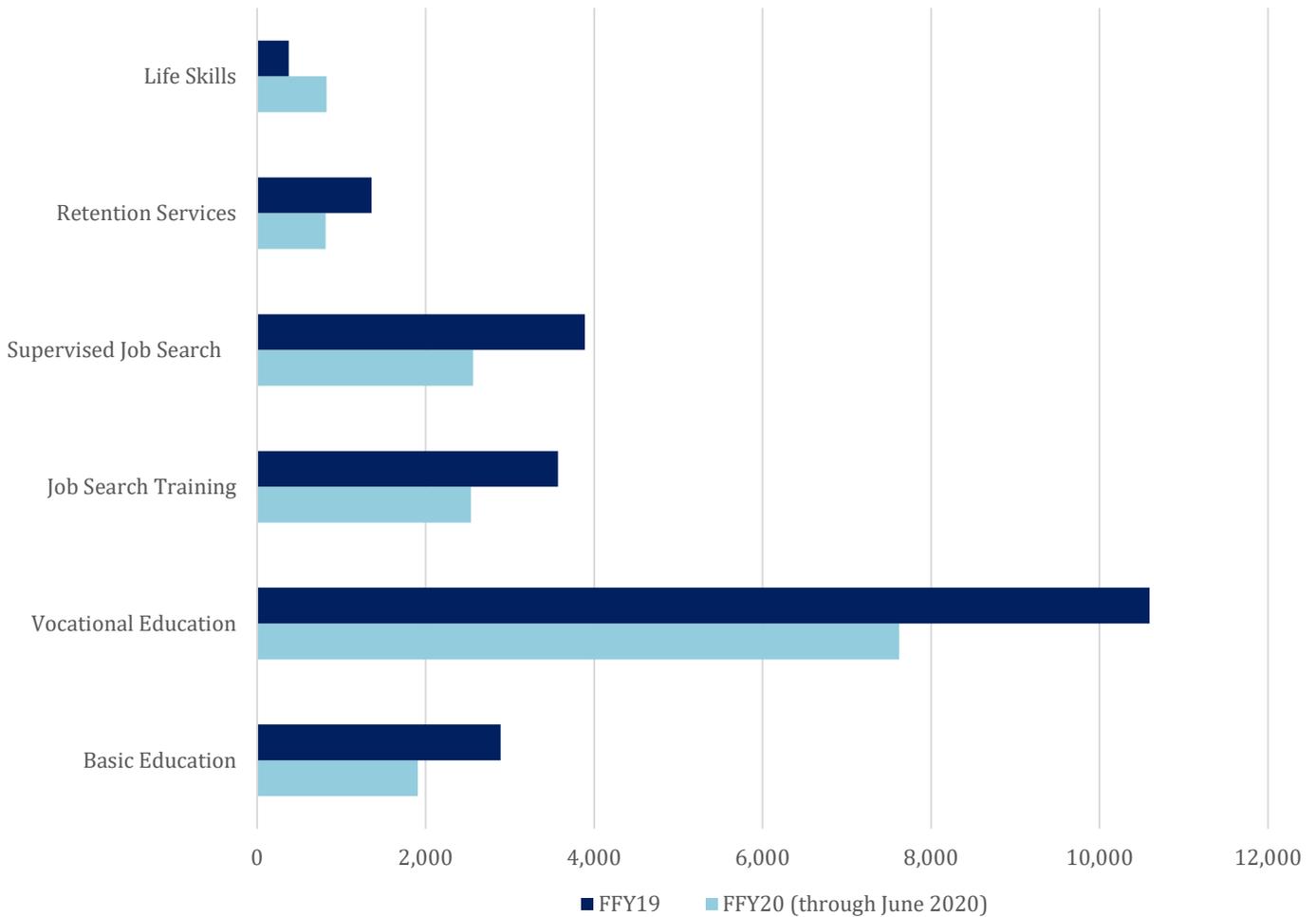
⁴Data from DSHS EMAPs report 4189

Age FFY19 - FFY20



This graph shows the activity use of components by BFET participants by year:

BFET Components by Use⁵



Employment Outcomes

A significant number of BFET participants are working while receiving E&T services. These employment opportunities include survival jobs, which help pay the bills and saves a person from completely being unemployed, along with career employment.

FFY ⁶	Avg. # of Women Working per Month	Avg. Age	Avg. Wage/Mo.	Avg. # of Men Working per Month	Avg. Age	Avg. Wage/Mo.
2019	1,481	34	\$1,148.48	682	35	\$1,247.77
2020	1,398	33	\$1,178.40	613	35	\$1,299.67

⁵Data from DSHS EMAPs report Annual BFET Clients Enrolled in BFET Activities, FFY2019 and FFY 2020 (thru June 2020)

⁶Data from DSHS EMAPs report #4248

IV. PROGRAM SERVICES

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA)

ORIA operates within DSHS' Economic Services Administration, Community Services Division. The BFET program administered by ORIA offers the same services statewide as the general or mainstream BFET program with a focus on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate employment and training services to refugees and immigrants. Current contractors through ORIA BFET include:

Asian Counseling and Referral (ACRS)	TRAC Associates King
Neighborhood House	TRAC Associates Pierce
Partners In Careers	TRAC Associates Snohomish
Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA)	WorkSource, Spokane
Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC)	World Relief Seattle
Refugee Immigrant Services Northwest (RISNW)	World Relief Spokane

Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

DSHS contracts directly with over 40 CBOs, including some with multiple service locations. A list of current CBOs include:

Apprenticeship & Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW)	Northwest Indian College
Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS)	Opportunity Council – Island County
Adonai	Opportunity Council – Whatcom
Career Path Services – Pierce and Spokane County	Partner In Employment
Cares of Washington	People for People
Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council	Port Jobs
Confederated Tribes of Colville-Omak and Nespelem	Puget Sound Training Center
Community Action of Skagit County	Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC)
Entrust-Klickitat, Kittitas / Grant County, Moses Lake, Yakima and Sunnyside	Rod's House
FareStart	Seattle Jobs Initiative
Goodwill Industries Inland Northwest	Spokane Area Workforce Development Council
Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region	Spokane Tribe
Goodwill of Seattle	TRAC Associates - King County
Housing Hope	Valeo Vocation
King County Jobs Initiative	WorkSource – Columbian Basin, Colville, Okanogan, Skagit, Spokane, Vancouver, Walla Walla, Whatcom and Yakima counties
Lower Columbia Community Action Program	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Seattle King and Snohomish County
Multi-Service Center	YWCA of Spokane
Neighborhood House of Washington- Seattle and Kent	

Three CBOs subcontract a portion of their BFET services, these include:

1. ANEW
 - Partner in Employment
2. King County Jobs Initiative
 - Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) of Seattle
 - Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) of Greater Seattle
 - Friends of Youth
 - TRAC Associates
3. Seattle Jobs Initiative
 - Neighborhood House
 - YWCA
 - Pacific Associates

Community and Technical Colleges

The role of the BFET program within the community & technical colleges is to provide educational opportunities and increase the skill level and knowledge helping participants reach their full potential.

All 34 colleges provide BFET services through an umbrella contract managed by SBCTC. Some colleges carry the BFET caseload and provide case management for other schools. The colleges provide services designed to help students attain skills necessary for employment to include vocational education, Adult Basic Education, ESL, High School Equivalency and participant support services. Some colleges also offer case management, job search and job readiness training. Colleges providing BFET services are:

Bates Technical College	Bellevue College
Bellingham Technical College	Big Bend Community College
Cascadia Community College	Centralia College
Clark College	Clover Park Technical College
Columbia Basin College	Edmonds Community College
Everett Community College	Grays Harbor College
Green River Community College	Highline Community College
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	Lower Columbia College
North Seattle College	Olympic College
Peninsula College	Pierce College Fort Steilacoom
Pierce College Puyallup	Renton Technical College
Seattle Central College	Shoreline Community College
Skagit Valley College	South Puget Sound Community College
South Seattle College	Spokane Community College
Spokane Falls Community College	Tacoma Community College
Walla Walla Community College	Wenatchee Valley College
Whatcom Community College	Yakima Valley Community College

As the lead contractor, SBCTC takes an active role in facilitating program planning and the future growth of the BFET program. SBCTC participates in and supports program strategic planning and the annual BFET training forum.

V. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FOR FFY 2020

The BFET program had an exciting year in 2020. CSD put forth increased program oversight to assist in program success. A program audit tool was created to enhance program integrity and a standard method of evaluation and feedback resulting in program improvements.

New Providers - FFY 2020

1. **Spokane Area Workforce Development Council** elevates local workforce efforts with critical insights, researched guidance, innovative funding, and strategic partnership — to cultivate a flourishing Spokane economy and job market together.
2. **Valeo Vocation** is a nonprofit staffing agency providing employment services that are designed to transition homeless and low-income participants into living-wage careers. Valeo's focus is helping participants reach stability with knowledge built on the model that employment barrier reduction is reliant on survival job income.

Outreach and Support - FFY 2020

1. The BFET program is very intentional when deciding to bring on new providers. Due to the lack of BFET presence in the Pierce and Spokane County area, CSD strived to find partnerships to boost outreach and support for SNAP recipients in these two areas. In FFY 2020, Valeo Vocation and Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, or SWDC, were contracted as new BFET providers. Valeo Vocation brings additional resources and support services in reducing homelessness. SWDC brings support in the way of two career centers and 19 affiliated sites across Spokane County.
2. In 2019, the BFET program created a Peer Mentoring Workgroup to support new and current BFET providers. In May of 2020, the workgroup finished a Peer Mentoring Guide. This guide is intended to engage Washington state's BFET providers with an intentional peer to peer mentoring model that empowers agencies to work collaboratively, and also support overall state programming. The mentoring guide covers methods that address the following components: internal processes, program best practices, overcoming roadblocks, lean efficiencies, limited resources, and the importance of contract compliance and utilizing the BFET Provider's Handbook. Once finalized, the BFET program will use FFY 2021 to implement the mentorship work with providers.
3. In March of 2019, a referral tool was released through an internal document system used by CSD staff. The referral tool helps support eligibility staff with referring SNAP recipients to the various BFET programs. The tool was created to improve the information provided to clients interested in an employment and training program.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the lives of our entire community. BFET enrollment and participant reimbursement saw a decrease since the health crisis started, despite providers still operating in a virtual environment. BFET clients face additional barriers and have increased needs as a result of the current health crisis. BFET providers are acclimating to the environmental needs of participants and shifting their services to include virtual services, adapting social distancing guidelines and supporting the critical need for Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE. BFET encourages the use of existing participant reimbursement funds for PPE as this has become an increased need for providers.

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

ABAWDs⁷ are individuals receiving Basic Food assistance who are between the ages of 18 and 49, without dependent children living with them and are determined able to work. These individuals are required to participate in work-like activities each month to maintain their Basic Food eligibility. ABAWDs who are unable to meet work participation for three months in a 36-month period (currently Jan. 2018 – Dec. 2020) will not receive more than three months of Basic Food benefits. For the calendar year 2019, King County was the only county considered to be mandatory for ABAWD rules, with the exception of those residing on the Muckleshoot Reservation. FNS published a final rule change for the way states can request time limit waivers. Washington would move from one non-waived county to twenty-six non-waived counties, possibly affecting up to 68,000 ABAWDs statewide. In preparation for this change, CSD partnered with SBCTC to create the ABAWD Navigator program.

Navigators are located at all 34 SBCTC sites to provide all ABAWDs the following services:

- Performing an intake that includes an assessment of client skills and goals
- Referring to local resources to assist client in meeting goals
- Referring to state approved community employment and training programs
- Assisting clients in understanding the ABAWD work requirements and how to report participation to DSHS
- Providing ongoing support for engagement

While Washington prepared for the roll out of the additional counties and the navigator program effective April 1, 2020, two events occurred influencing our implementation:

1. In March 2020, the District of Columbia Federal Court issued an injunction blocking the implementation of the ABAWD waiver rule changes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Governor Inslee issued the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under COVID-19 changes, the new waiver rules were not implemented April 1, 2020. FNS advised states that ABAWDs could be given “good cause” for non-participation if they were impacted by the pandemic. The Department implemented the Navigator program with changes from in-person meetings to virtual or telephonic meetings. Navigators focus on identifying the individual’s needs and local resources available with strong emphasis on education and retraining to meet their future needs while in a stay at home environment.

Approximately \$20 million is available nationwide to states that pledge to provide job training supports to ABAWDs in their state. Washington state received \$2.9 million to support ABAWDs. This funding was used to support the SBCTC partnership as well as a number of system upgrades and changes to support coding accuracy in ABAWD cases.

The BFET program is a preferred option for ABAWDs to meet participation requirements. Other options include employment, volunteering, workfare and participation in other state E&T programs. While BFET is not mandatory, it offers a variety of services to assist ABAWD individuals in improving marketable skills for in-demand industries and securing long-term success.

Workfare is a volunteer work option for ABAWD participation. Workfare helps ABAWDs improve their employment prospects through meaningful volunteer work experience and regain Basic Food program eligibility. The goal of the

⁷<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/able-bodied-adults-without-dependents-abawds>

program is to provide supervised opportunities with a nonprofit, public, or government agency for participants to gain soft skills and work experience.

CSD continues to work with our internal and external partners to inspire engagement in E&T for all ABAWDs regardless of waiver rules. The department believes voluntary participation in these services will aid the overall recovery of the Washington state economy and support our mission to transform lives.

VI. PROGRAM FUNDING FFY2019 AND FFY2020

Funding Category	FFY 2019	FFY 2020
1. 100 Percent Federal E&T Grant:	\$ 3,113,280	\$ 3,239,619
2. Share of \$20 Million ABAWD Grant (if applicable)	\$ 1,284,032	\$ 2,961,039
3. Additional E&T Administrative Expenditures	\$ 40,229,822	\$ 38,014,623
a. 50% Federal	\$ 19,920,483	\$ 19,104,460
b. 50% State	\$ 20,309,339	\$ 18,910,163
4. Participant Expenses:	\$ 5,591,113	\$ 8,222,445
a. Transportation/Other	\$ 5,525,743	\$ 8,172,545
50% Federal	\$ 2,809,657	\$ 4,131,913
50% State	\$ 2,716,086	\$ 4,040,633
b. Dependent Care	\$ 65,370	\$ 49,900
50% Federal	\$ 34,435	\$ 26,800
50% State	\$ 30,935	\$ 23,100
5. Total E&T Program Costs (= 1+2+3a+3b+4a+4b)	\$ 50,218,247	\$ 52,437,726
6. 100% State Agency Cost for Dependent Care Services	\$ -	\$ -
7. Total Planned Federal FY Costs (Must agree with Part H—Operating Budget	\$ 50,218,247	\$ 52,437,727