

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

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

As required by RCW 74.04.535

November 1, 2022

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

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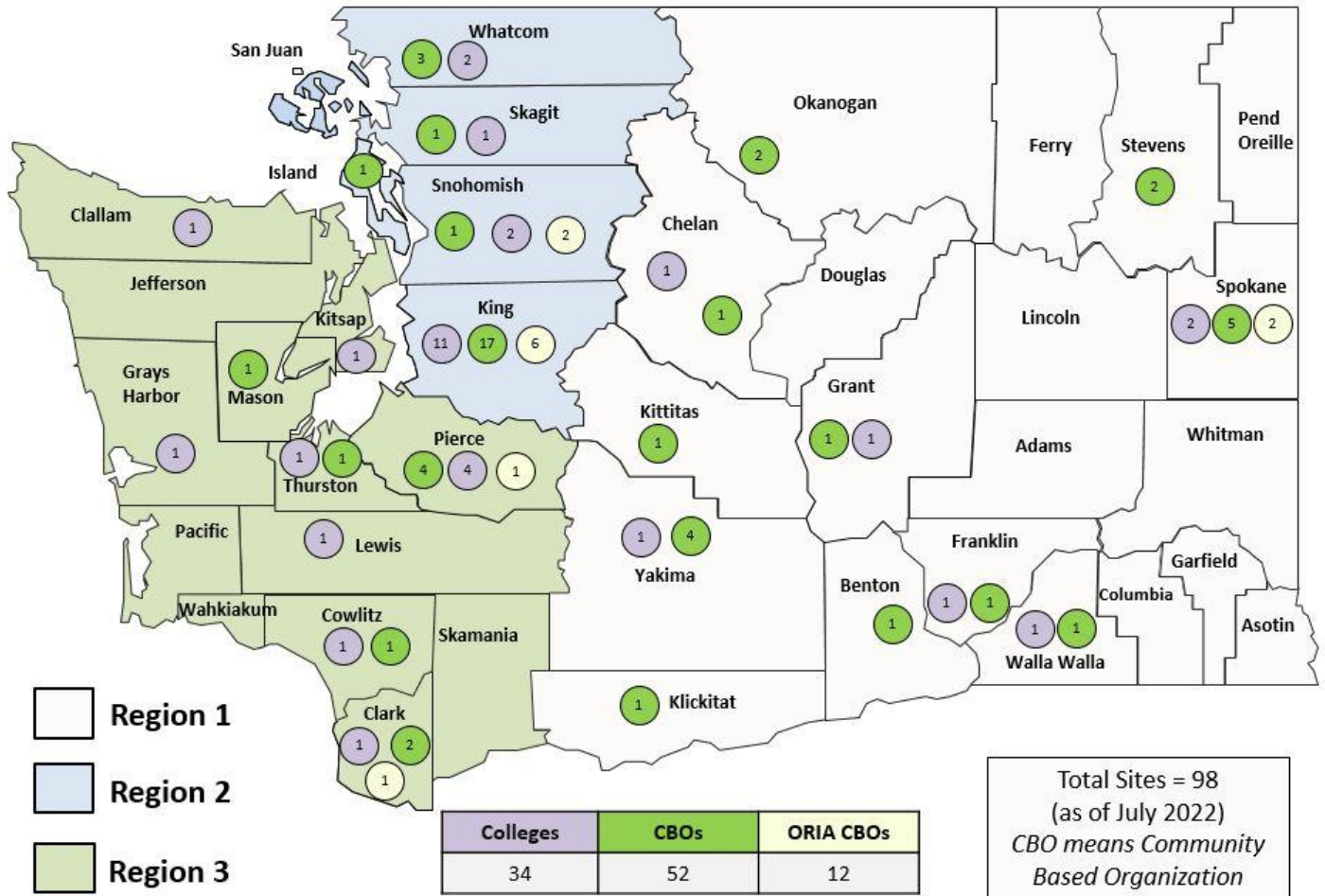
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Washington state Basic Food Employment and Training 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 federally funded BFET services, Basic food recipients cannot be active recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families WorkFirst program; Refugee Cash Assistance; or the state funded Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants. Services are provided through community or technical colleges and community based organizations. Washington's BFET program is considered one of the top national models for SNAP employment and training services, helping recipients reach their full potential.

RCW [74.04.535](#) requires the Department of Social and Health Services, the Employment Security Department, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges 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.

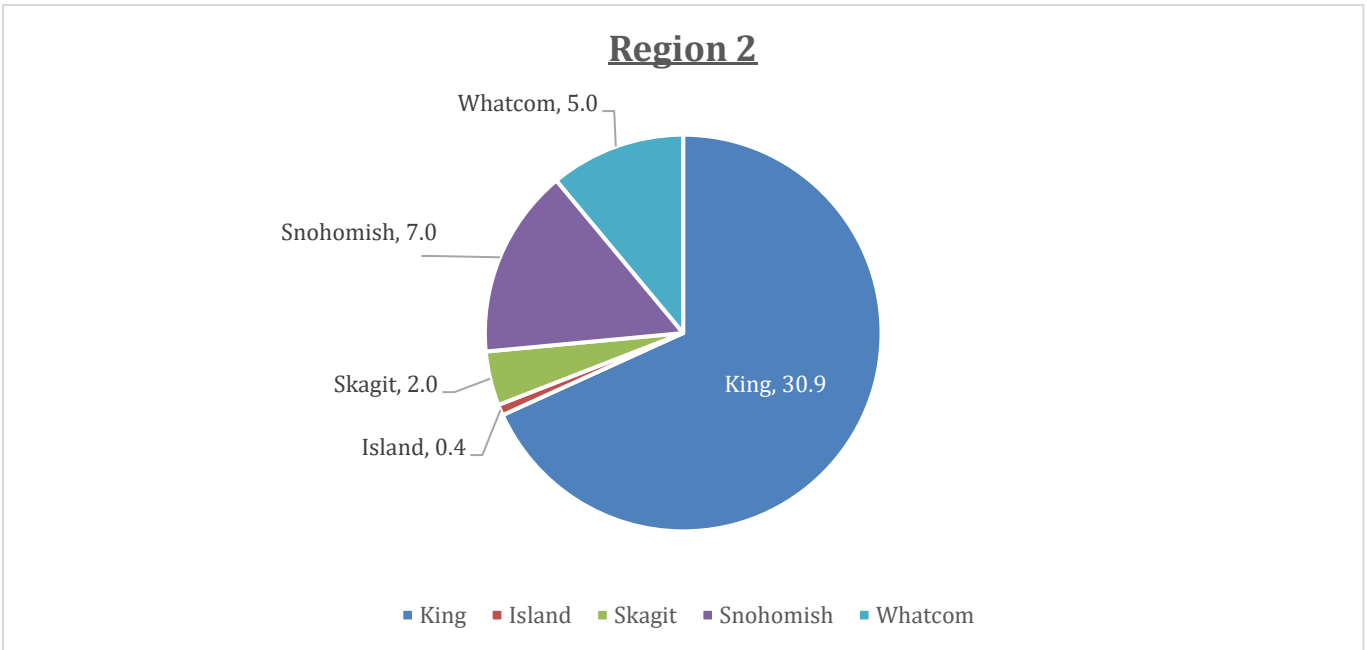
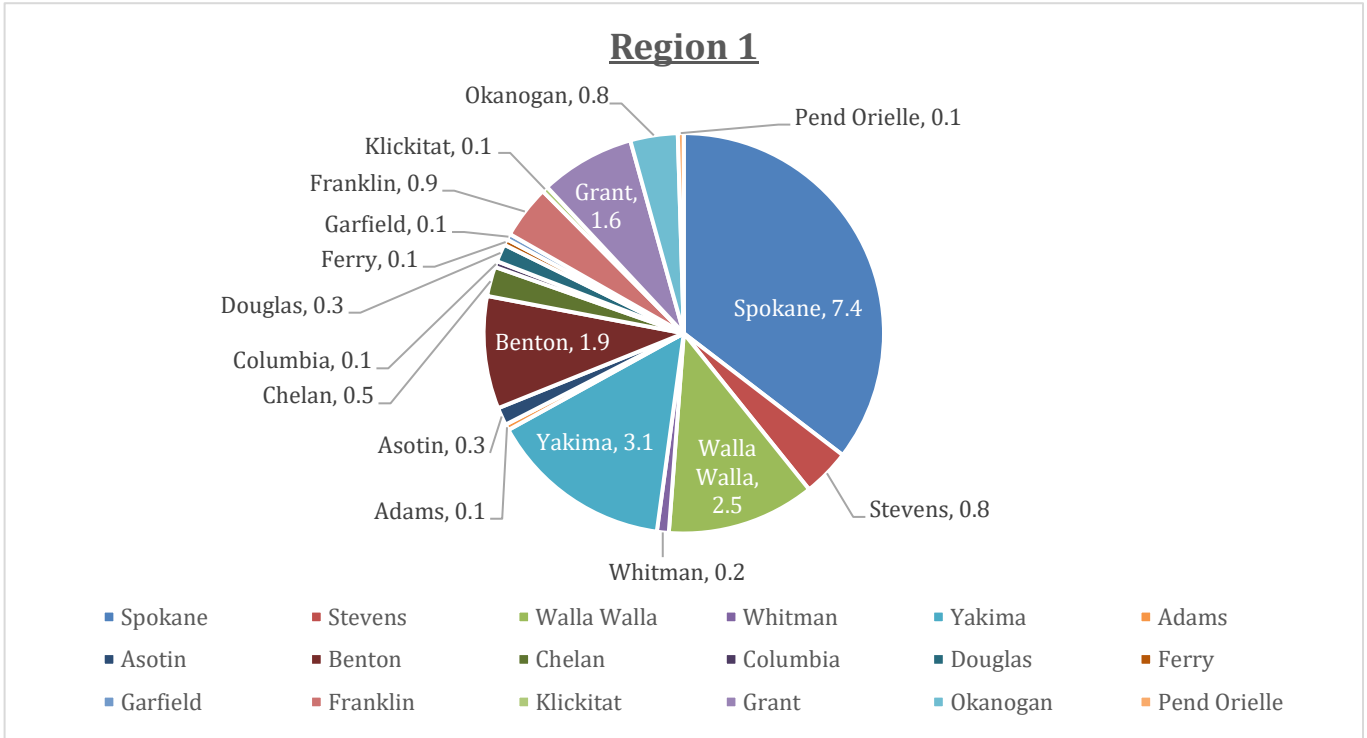
The map below represents BFET sites providing services at colleges, CBOs and ESD offices, as of July 2022.

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

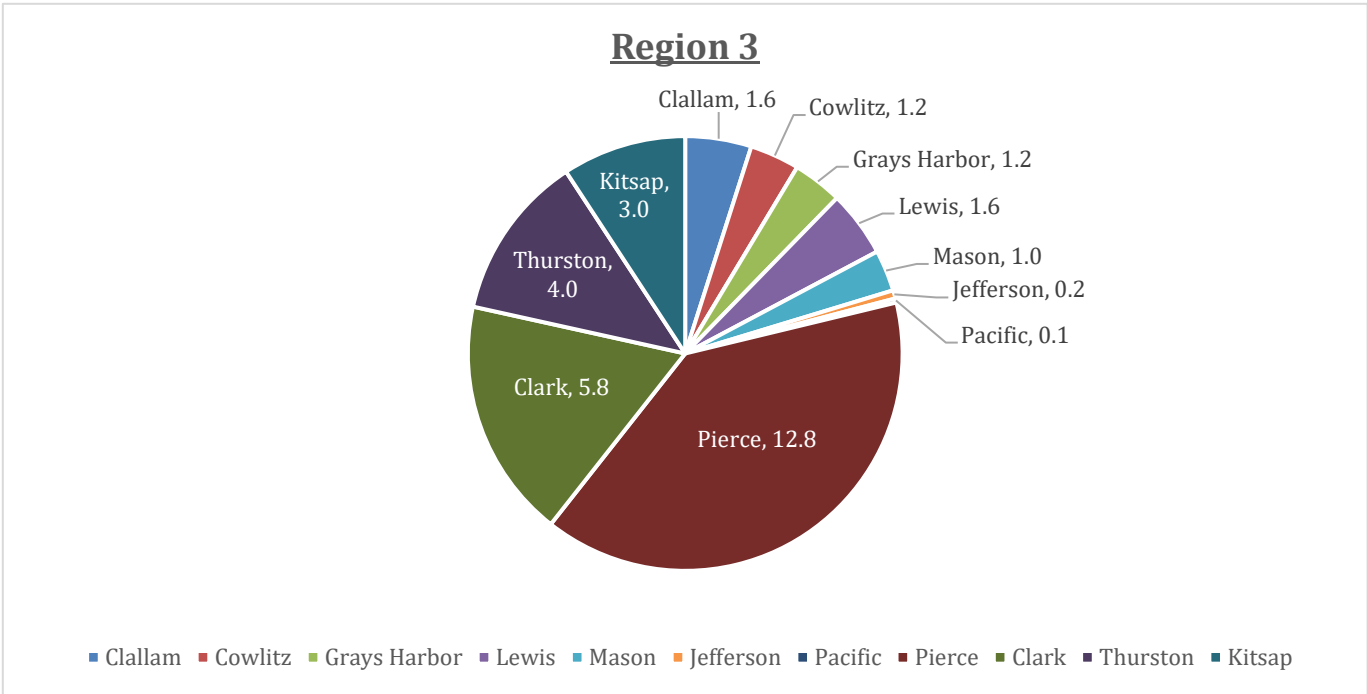


Future BFET service expansion depends on the availability of partners with necessary local funds for third party match to draw down federal funds, program and service needs in an area, and the overall BFET strategic plan. The Department continues efforts to recruit CBOs and tribal nations in unserved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

July 2021 - June 2022
Regional distribution of BFET participants by residential address (monthly average)¹



¹ 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 45 CBOs, nine Employment Security Department WorkSource 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’s Food and Nutrition Service holds federal authority for the BFET program. The program is a partner in the state’s comprehensive workforce development system, which serves low-income individuals 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 disrupting 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 Language Acquisition (ELA) training (e.g., literacy, math, vocational ELA, High School Equivalency preparation)
- Vocational training
- Supervised job search
- Job placement
- Support services (e.g., transportation, internet services, 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
- Supervised job search
- 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 registrants² in the state. After initial issuance and approval, states may request 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 filed for an ABAWD time limit waiver based on the state's extended unemployment benefits eligibility. Given the waiver, pledge funding was not requested in 2021 or 2022. Pledge funding requests are considered by FNS for each fiscal year.

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 within DSHS leverages approximately \$400,000 in GF-S each year to provide matching funds to serve refugees and immigrants through the BFET program.

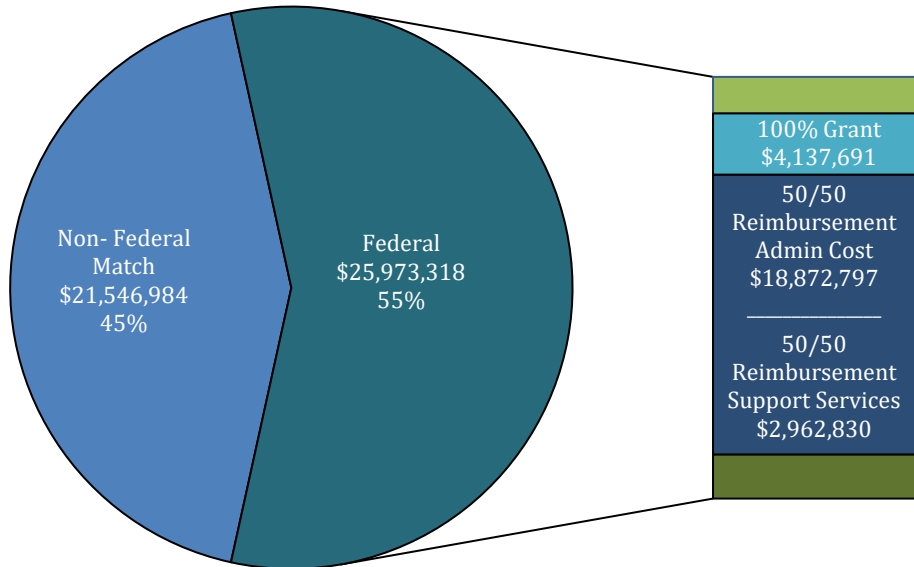
75/25 Tribal Funding:

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.

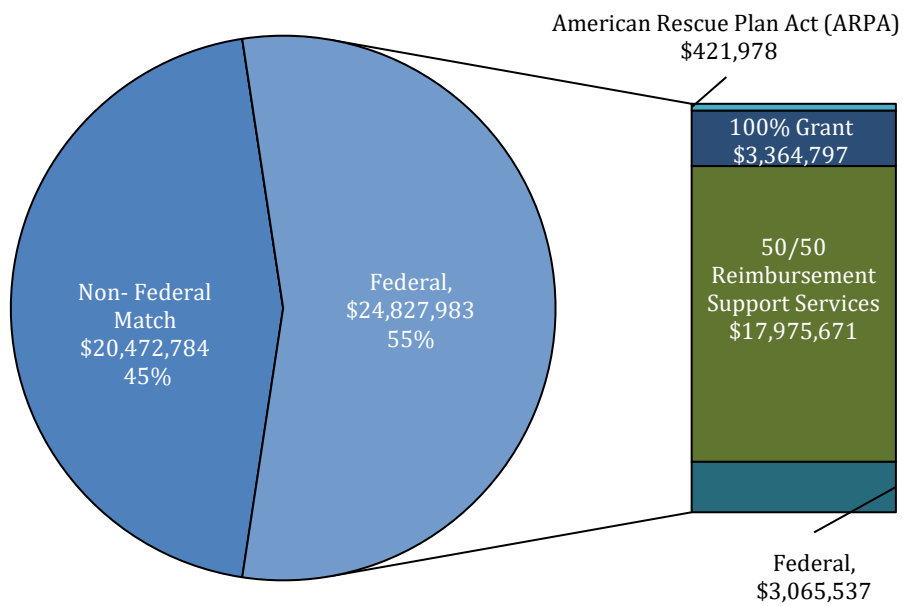
Washington's BFET program uses the 50/50 reimbursement model to fund the majority of BFET services. The 100 percent funds are insufficient to support the program on a statewide scale. The use of the 50/50 reimbursement model supports program growth based on each community's capacity to provide match 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.

² [WAC 388-444-0005](#)

FFY 2021 Funding Breakdown



FFY 2022 Funding Breakdown



The total budget for FFY 2022 is 5.6 percent lower than FFY21.

Coordination with Other Employment Programs

The BFET program works in collaboration with the workforce development system. The Washington state workforce development system is a collaborative partnership between state agencies such as Employment Security Department, Department of Commerce, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (serving K-12), Department of Social and Health Services, businesses, labor, job-seeker constituents, local elected officials, and the 12 local Workforce Development Councils, each serving as a Workforce Development area/region, and community based partners.

BFET activities are structured to be provided in partnership with Title 1 programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act³. In FFY23, there are 17 BFET providers who are also WIOA service providers, where the likelihood of collaboration increases for the benefit of the participant. WIOA service providers coordinate referrals of BFET clients to WIOA programs as priority of service customers, and employment and training activities. SNAP eligibility is an element of automatic WIOA eligibility, allowing opportunities to structure and integrate services to provide comprehensive supports and services to help customers move more effectively through education, training and employment pathways. These activities can include job search, job readiness, basic education, support services and job retention, and wage progression. Alignment within the partnerships varies in local regions and per contractors situated in the respective regions. There may be some duplication in services between the partner programs; however, that is primarily due to each program having its own eligibility criteria, which must be met by the participants. Several BFET partners receive WIOA Title 1 funding in which they have the ability to braid those funds, provide additional resources, and fill gaps where BFET funds are not available.

The Washington state BFET program also works with a number of other E&T programs:

- **Employment Pipeline** is a DSHS administered program available for individuals seeking 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

³ "State Workforce Plan – Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)." 2020, Page 57, Core Programs. <https://www.wtb.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TAP-Update-2020-030420.pdf>, accessed October 20, 2022.

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 vocationally skilled people who meet federal eligibility as refugees with re-entering 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 within the Community Services Division.

Washington State’s BFET program currently has three Tribes providing E&T services to SNAP clients in our rural areas.

III. PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHTS FOR FFY 2021 - 2022

Participants and Services

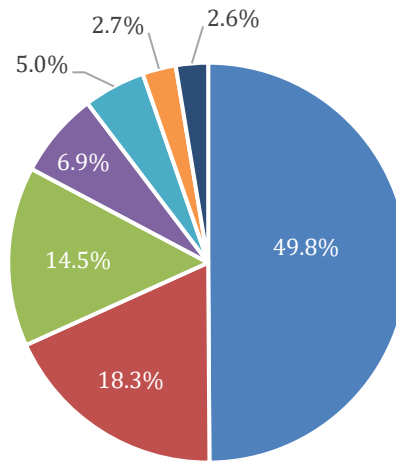
BFET contracts with providers in 34 counties. However, some providers offer services beyond the county they are located in, allowing BFET to reach beyond these 34 counties. BFET collaborated with over 45 CBOs in FFY 22 (with multiple service locations) along with 34 Community and Technical Colleges. ORIA contracted with 12 CBOs (overlapping with some mainstream BFET contracted CBOs) across the state to increase access to E&T services for refugees and immigrants.

Participant Demographics

FFY	Average Monthly Participants	Average Women Per Month	Average Men Per Month
2021	4,338	2,959	1,379
2022	4,154	2,866	1,288

Source: Emaps Report #4189

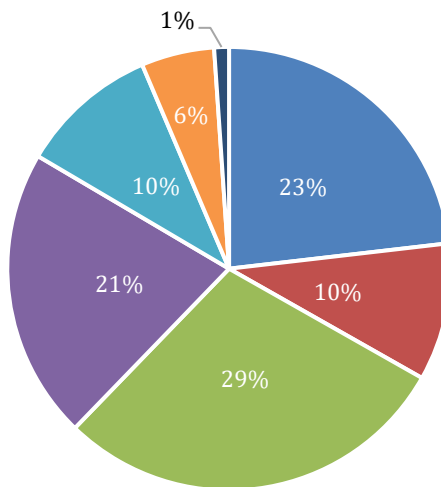
Participant Engagement by Race & Ethnicity FFY21 and FFY22 (Oct-June) Monthly Average



- White
- Black/African American
- Hispanic
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Not Reported
- American Indian / Alaskan Native
- Two or more races

Source: Emaps Report #4189

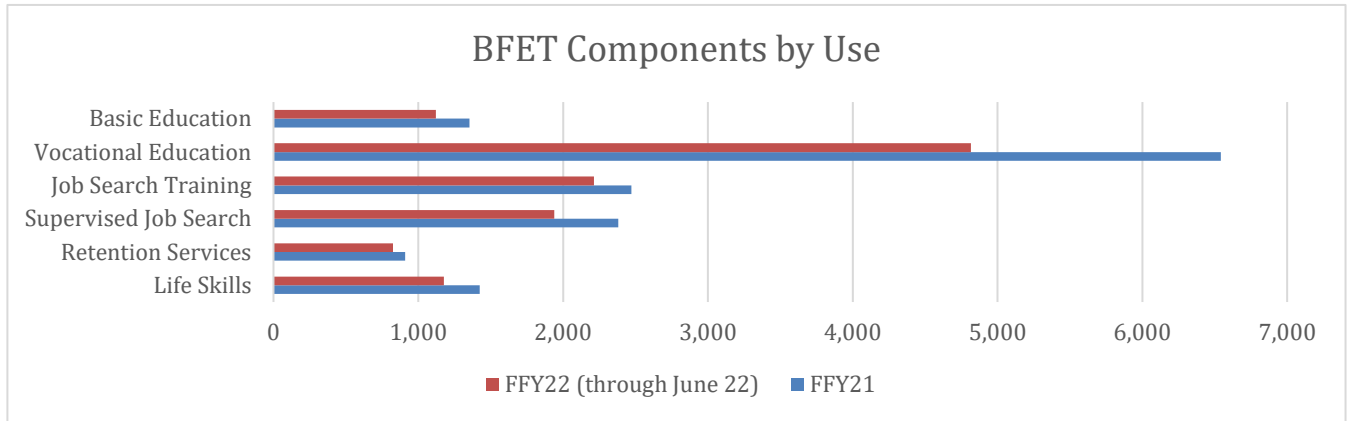
Average Participant Age FFY21 and FFY22 (Oct-June)



- Under 18 years
- 18-24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65+ years

Source: Emaps Report #4189

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



Source: Emaps Report #3751

Employment Information

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 being completely unemployed, along with career employment resulting from BFET participation.

FFY	Avg. # of Women Working per Month	Avg. Age	Avg. Wage/Mo.	Avg. # of Men Working per Month	Avg. Age	Avg. Wage/Mo.
2021	865	33	\$1,426.42	315	35	\$1,571.58
2022	903	34	\$1,515.79	311	35	\$1,777.79

Source: Emaps Report #4248

IV. PROGRAM SERVICES

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA)

ORIA operates within DSHS' Economic Services Administration's 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)	World Relief Seattle
Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC)	World Relief Spokane
Refugee Immigrant Services Northwest (RISNW)	

Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

DSSH contracts directly with over 50 CBOs, including some with multiple service locations. Current CBOs include:

Adonai – King, Mason and Pierce Counties	Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council (WDC)
Apprenticeship & Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW)	Partner In Employment
Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS)	People for People
Career Path Services – Pierce and Spokane Counties	Port Jobs
Cares of Washington	Puget Sound Training Center
Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council	Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC)
Code Fellows	Rod’s House
Confederated Tribes of Colville-Omak and Nespalem	Seattle Jobs Initiative
Community Action of Skagit County	Seattle Workforce Development Council
Entrust-Klickitat, Kittitas, Benton, Franklin, Grant, Yakima Counties	Spokane Workforce Development Council
FareStart	TRAC Associates
Goodwill Industries –Spokane, Tacoma, Seattle	Uplift NW
Housing Hope	Valeo Vocation
Lower Columbia Community Action Program	Washington Beauty School
M.R.J.N. Associates	Weld Seattle
Multi-Service Center	WorkSource – Columbian Basin, Colville, Okanogan, Skagit, Spokane, Vancouver, Walla Walla, Whatcom and Yakima counties (nine separate contracts)
Neighborhood House of Washington	Workforce Southwest Washington, Workforce Development Council
Northwest Indian College	Yakama Nation
Opportunity Council – Island and Whatcom Counties	Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) of Seattle King and Snohomish County
Orion Industries	

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

1. Seattle Jobs Initiative
 - Pioneer Human Services
 - Partner in Employment
 - Pacific Associates
2. Spokane Area Workforce Development Council
 - Career Path Services
3. Workforce Southwest Washington
 - Equus Workforce Solutions

4. Seattle Workforce Development Council

- ACRS
- YWCA
- TRAC Associates
- Neighborhood House
- Pacific Associates

Community and Technical Colleges

The role of the BFET program within the community and technical colleges is to provide educational opportunities and increase 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, such as: vocational education, Adult Basic Education, ELA, 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 2021-2022

While the global health crisis significantly affected the participation rate of our clients, as well as the way BFET providers delivered services, this time provided an opportunity for creative solutions that were accepted by our federal partners.

New Providers - FFY 2022

1. **Code Fellows** is a technical skills training academy, delivering high-quality live instruction both online and in person to people from all backgrounds. Learners are guided toward vocational change and life transformation through software development, technical operations, cybersecurity and career training. They shape passionate learners with immersive training to meet industry needs and improve diversity. Given the digital platform of the learning program, Code Fellow's BFET program is offered statewide.
2. **Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation** delivers services to create employment and training opportunities for Yakama Nation Tribal Members and other Indians, and to eradicate discrimination against Indian People.
3. **Most Reliable Job Network (M R J N)** works with individuals in the communities they serve to gain employment. MRJN serves a diverse population of individuals that may be houseless, in foster care, displaced workers; or have mental health conditions, physical disabilities, criminal backgrounds, or learning disabilities.
4. **Seattle King Workforce Development Council (WDC)** covers a diverse population throughout the King County region: individuals who are low income, young adults, justice involved individuals, veterans, individuals in substance use recovery, and immigrants. All clients receive a full range of case management and employment services including, but not limited to: life skills training, career planning, supervised job search and job retention services.
5. **Uplift Northwest** guides individuals on their path to self-sufficiency by providing employment opportunities and job readiness services. They advance racial justice by breaking down barriers to employment for those most impacted by systemic inequities. They provide advanced job training, career guidance and job placement services that help hundreds of individual attain economic security, a livable wage, and reach the next level of their career path.

Outreach and Support - FFY 2021

In preparation for new SNAP E&T rules released by the USDA, Washington continued to make partnerships with Workforce Development Councils a priority. This year BFET welcomed Seattle King Workforce Development Council in addition to existing partnerships with other Workforce Development Councils.

1. The CSD hosted a BFET virtual forum in June 2022 for the purposes of SNAP E&T updates from our federal funders and provided program training to all providers. Approximately 300 participants attended at the three-day conference.
2. The BFET Provider Handbook was enhanced and updated. The handbook is now digital to navigate with ease.

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

ABAWDs⁴ 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. 2020 – Dec. 2023) will not receive more than three months of Basic Food benefits.

Washington state has had a time limit waiver for ABAWD rules since June 2021 due to the economic impacts of the pandemic. The current waiver ends January 31, 2023. In spring of this year, CSD convened a workgroup to develop the methods, procedures, and trainings needed to re-implement the ABAWD time limit rules. This workgroup will also develop communication materials to disseminate information to clients, stakeholders and the public about the return of the work requirements for some individuals.

⁴ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/able-bodied-adults-without-dependents-abawds>

VI. PROGRAM FUNDING FFY 2021 AND FFY 2022

Funding Category	FFY2021	FFY2022
1. 100 Percent Federal E&T Grant:	\$ 4,137,691	\$ 3,364,797.00
2. Share of \$20 Million ABAWD Grant (if applicable)		\$ -
2a. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for E&T	\$ -	\$ 421,978.00
3. Additional E&T Administrative Expenditures	\$ 37,531,126	\$ 35,646,128.53
a. 50% Federal	\$ 18,872,797	\$ 17,975,671.45
b. 50% State	\$ 18,658,329	\$ 17,670,457.08
4. Participant Expenses:	\$ 5,851,486	\$ 5,867,863.00
a. Transportation/Other	\$ 5,746,786	\$ 5,490,837.00
50% Federal	\$ 2,908,855	\$ 2,856,023.50
50% State	\$ 2,837,930	\$ 2,634,813.50
b. Dependent Care	\$ 104,700	\$ 377,026.00
50% Federal	\$ 53,975	\$ 209,513.00
50% State	\$ 50,725	\$ 167,513.00
5. Total E&T Program Costs (= 1+2+2a+3a+3b+4a+4b)	\$ 47,520,303	\$ 45,300,766.53
6. 100% State Agency Cost for Dependent Care Services	\$ -	\$ -
7. Total Planned Federal FY Costs (Must agree with Part H—Operating Budget)	\$ 47,520,303	\$ 45,300,768