

Report to the Legislature

Refugee and Immigrant Employment Services:

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathway And Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET)

As Required by Section 207(4), Third Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill
(3ESSB) 5034, Chapter 4, Laws of 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 207(4) of Third Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (3ESSB) 5034, Chapter 4, Laws of 2013 requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS or the Department) to report to the Legislature annually on all sources of available funding for refugee and immigrant employment services during the current fiscal year, amounts expended to date by service type and funding source, the number of participants served, and program outcome data. The Department provides employment services to refugees and immigrants through the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathway Program and the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program.

LEP Pathway

Program Overview

The LEP Pathway Program provides specialized and culturally appropriate services that lead to employment. LEP adults who receive cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), State Family Assistance (SFA)¹, or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programs are eligible for LEP Pathway services. Refugees² who are not receiving cash assistance are also eligible for LEP Pathway services as long as they have resided in the U.S. for 5 years or less. LEP Pathway services include employability assessments, pre-employment preparation services, English as Second Language (ESL) training, job search, skills training, employment placement assistance, job retention, and support services. Additionally, Work Experience (WEX) or Community Services (CS) placements are available to TANF recipients.

The LEP Pathway program is administered by the Office of Refugee & Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Economic Services Administration, Community Services Division. LEP Pathway services are provided through ORIA's contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs), voluntary refugee resettlement agencies (VOLAGs), Employment Security Department, and other employment agencies. Most ESL training is provided through contracts with local community and technical colleges.

¹ State Family Assistance provides state-funded cash assistance to legal immigrant families who are ineligible to receive assistance through the federally-funded TANF program.

² For purposes of this report, the term "refugee" refers to an individual who is eligible for benefits provided through the federal Refugee Cash Assistance program. These individuals include refugees, asylees, Amerasians, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, Special Immigrant Visa holders, and victims of human trafficking.

Budget

LEP Pathway services are provided with funding from three sources. Funds from two of these sources can only be used for specific clients in the LEP Pathway, as follows:

- Federal and state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds can only be used for individuals receiving TANF/SFA cash assistance.
- Funds from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) include Refugee Social Services (RSS) and Targeted Assistance Grant funds. Refugee Social Services funds can only be used to serve refugees who have resided in the U.S. for five years or less. The Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) provides additional funds for the three counties that comprise high refugee impact areas: King, Snohomish, and Spokane counties.
- General state funds (GF-S) may be used to serve anyone eligible for LEP Pathway services.

The following tables show the total budget for SFY 2014 and SFY 2013, by funding source:

SFY 2014 Budget

TANF \$ 3,600,000
ORR \$ 1,909,109³
GF-S \$ 2,366,000
\$ 7,875,109

SFY 2013 Budget

TANF \$ 3,600,000
ORR \$ 2,907,619⁴
GF-S \$ 2,366,000
\$ 8,873,619

Expenditures

Contract expenditures for LEP Pathway services for SFY 2013 totaled **\$7,659,301**. The charts on pages 16 and 17 of this report show LEP Pathway expenditures by service and funding source.

Outcomes

Program outcomes are identified through monthly or quarterly reports by contractors that accompany invoices submitted for payment. Participant and performance outcomes reported for SFY 2013 are shown below:

³ ORR funding was less in SFY 2014 because there were unexpended funds from SFY 2012 that were added to the SFY 2013 Budget. In addition, the SFY 2014 award from ORR was reduced due to both sequestration and an increase in the number of refugees who moved to other states.

⁴ SFY 2013 budget includes an additional \$138,688 in ORR funds not reported in the previous report. This funding was added as a result of both carryover and transfer of ORR funds from other programs.

Services and Outcomes	Number of Participants Served⁵
Number of LEP Pathway Participants ⁶ # Participants in Employment Services 4,027 # Participants in ESL Services 3,249	4,930
Full ESL Level Gains (Levels 1-6)	804
Employment (entered employment) Average Hourly Wage at Employment Entry \$10.22 Full-Time \$9.88 Part-Time \$10.09 Number of Job Placements with Health Benefits	1,438 365
Work Experience (WEX)	102
Community Services (CS)	8
Skills Training	93
Support Services	452
Retention - Employed 30 Days After Job Placement	1,233
Retention - Employed 90 Days After Job Placement	1,009

The number of total participants reported for SFY 2013 represents a 3.8% decrease from SFY 2012. This may reflect a shift in the numbers of clients in employment services who enrolled in the BFET program after October 1, 2012, as well as a transition to a different contract model last year. The new contract model captures data more effectively than the contract model used previously.

⁵ Source: DSHS ORIA Mapper Data

⁶ Unduplicated count of total participants in LEP Pathway, Employment Services, ESL Services, WEX and CS.

Basic Food Employment and Training Program (BFET)

Program Overview

The Department administers the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program, which provides employment services to Basic Food⁷ recipients who do not receive TANF benefits. The BFET program is managed at the federal level by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), which provides a dollar for dollar match to state funds expended for these services.

In October 2012, ORIA began providing BFET services to refugees. In January 2013, BFET services were expanded to include immigrants. These services are provided through contracts with service providers who have the capacity to provide services in culturally appropriate ways. By administering the BFET program, ORIA was able to leverage additional federal funds for employment services that help program participants achieve self-sufficiency and successfully integrate into their new communities.

The BFET program provides job search, job search training, job search assistance, educational services⁸, skills training, vocational education, and employment assistance to Basic Food recipients who do not receive TANF. Unlike TANF, participation in BFET employment and training services is voluntary and there are no participation hour requirements. BFET is an important part of the state's comprehensive workforce development system serving low-income individuals, displaced workers, and employers, and encourages financial independence from public assistance through skill acquisition, personal responsibility, and gainful employment.

Budget

ORIA provides BFET services with funding from two sources: general state funds (GF-S) allocated by the Legislature for the state fiscal year (July – June) and federal funds from the USDA provided for a federal fiscal year (October – September). The overlap between state and federal fiscal year results in a mix of state funding from two consecutive state fiscal years and federal funds provided for the federal fiscal year (FFY), which ends on September 30. Nine months of the BFET match for FFY 2013 is allocated from SFY 2013 while funding for the remaining three months is allocated from SFY 2014. The following table shows the budget for FFY 2013 and the amount allocated from SFY 2013 for the first nine

⁷ Basic Food is Washington State's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.

⁸ BFET educational services include adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language, and General Educational Development (GED).

months of FFY 2013, and the amount allocated from SFY 2014 for the last three months of FFY 2013:

FFY 2013 Budget (Oct. 2012 – Sept. 2013)	
ORIA SFY 2013 match (GF-S)	\$ 322,588
ORIA SFY 2014 match (GF-S)	\$ 107,529
Federal BFET match	<u>\$ 430,117</u>
Total ORIA BFET	\$ 860,234

GF-S funds used to leverage federal match in SFY 2013 came from existing LEP Pathway contracts. Through collaboration with existing LEP Pathway contractors, ORIA leveraged \$ 322,588 in LEP Pathway funding from October 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013 to pull down additional federal BFET dollars.

Expenditures

As of June 30, 2013, SFY 2013 contract expenditures for ORIA BFET totaled **\$ 617,982**. This amount represents \$ 308,991 in state funds (GF-S) used to leverage \$ 308,991 in federal match. Expenditures for the current fiscal year (SFY 2014) are not available as of this report's production.

Outcomes

Participant and performance outcomes shown below for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013 include data reported through August 31, 2013 for participants enrolled in BFET, as of June 30, 2013⁹:

Participants	
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	476
Refugees	462
Immigrants (non-refugee)	14

⁹ Source: eJAS data base

Outcome	
Entered Employment	246
Full-time	160
Part-time	86
Average Wage	\$ 10.01
Full-time	\$ 10.02
Part-time	\$ 9.99
Average Time Between ORIA BFET Enrollment and Job Placement	81 days
Retention - Employed 90 Days After Job Placement	166
Additional participants enrolled by June 2013 and employed as of Aug. 31, 2013 who have not reached 90 days	75

Approximately 97% of the participants are refugees and over 52% of the participants entered employment during this report period.

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SFY 2013 REPORT ON REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway Services

BACKGROUND

Washington State has a large and dynamic immigrant community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 17.8% of the families in Washington in 2012 speak a language other than English.¹⁰ In King County, the state's most populous county, 24.8% of the families residing in the county speak a language other than English at home.¹¹

According to the Department of Homeland Security, in federal fiscal year 2012 (October 2011 through September 2012), Washington State ranked ninth in the nation in resettling new refugees. Only Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas resettled more refugees than Washington.¹² The refugee groups with the highest arrival rate in Washington over the last several years are the Burmese, Bhutanese, and Iraqi.

The LEP Pathway program began as a pilot project in King County in May 1999 and was implemented statewide in October 1999 to provide an array of employment services targeted specifically for non-English speaking people from a wide variety of countries and cultural backgrounds. The LEP Pathway provides specialized services to refugees and other WorkFirst parents¹³ with limited English skills to increase their employability and place them into jobs intended to lead to self-sufficiency.

The program aims to provide a single, seamless program for services to increase participants' employability so they can become self-sufficient and successfully integrate into their communities. A participant entering the program receives consistent services despite changes in their immigration status or benefits (TANF, SFA, or RCA).

ORIA provided LEP Pathway services through 28 contracts statewide with 24 providers that represented the following types of organizations:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Local community and technical colleges

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Quick Facts: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53000.html>

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Quick Facts: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/53033.html>

¹² DHS, Refugee and Asylees:2012:http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_rfa_fr_2012.pdf

¹³ TANF/SFA recipients who are required to participate in employment, job search, or training components to receive cash benefits.

- Voluntary Refugee Resettlement Agencies (VOLAGs)
- Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Other organizations serving immigrants and refugees

Of the 28 contracts for LEP Pathway services, 12 service providers provided employment services, 12 provided ESL services, and 4 provided both employment and ESL services. The majority of ESL service providers are local community and technical colleges. See **Attachment A** for a list of SFY 2014 contractors.

All LEP Pathway service providers have a history of serving immigrants and refugees. They have close ties to refugee and immigrant communities, are experienced in addressing their needs, and able to provide services in culturally appropriate, language specific ways. Many LEP Pathway providers hire staff that entered the U.S. as refugees, thus enriching the program by incorporating personal resettlement experiences. Their knowledge, skills, and personal experience in serving refugees are critical to the success of the program.

POPULATION SERVED ¹⁴

LEP adults who are eligible for LEP Pathway program services include those who:

- Receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). RCA recipients are limited to eight (8) months of cash assistance from the day they arrive to the U.S. The statewide monthly average of RCA refugees in SFY 2013 was 450 adults.
- Receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance. The statewide monthly average of LEP clients on TANF in SFY 2013 was 4,267, or 12%¹⁵ of the total statewide TANF caseload.
- Receive State Family Assistance (SFA). SFA is a state-funded TANF program for legal immigrants who are ineligible for TANF under federal rules. The statewide monthly average of LEP clients on SFA in SFY 2013 was 908, or 94% of the total statewide SFA caseload.
- Have a current status as a refugee, do not receive cash assistance, and have resided in the U.S. for 60 months or less.

¹⁴ Source: DSHS ACES data

¹⁵ This percentage reflects a 4% increase from the previous report for SFY12. This was due to changes in the DSHS ACES system which previously did not capture all LEP clients.

SERVICES

The LEP Pathway program provides employment and English as a Second Language (ESL) services to employable adults who receive TANF, SFA, and RCA program benefits and to refugees who have resided in the U.S. for less than five years.

LEP Pathway providers work in partnership with individual DSHS clients and Community Services Office (CSO) staff to identify LEP Pathway work activities that the individual must participate in while receiving cash assistance. TANF and SFA recipients must sign an Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) to acknowledge and agree to participate in these activities. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) recipients also need an employability assessment and must be prioritized due to the program's eight-month time limit for cash and medical benefits.

In addition, many of ORIA's employment providers work with employers to develop work opportunities and offer assistance to those employers to ensure a successful job placement.

Most often, LEP Pathway clients participate in employment services coupled with ESL training.

A. Employment Services

LEP Pathway program participants receive an Employability Assessment to determine their educational level, English proficiency, work experience, and barriers to employment. Using results from the Employability Assessment, participants are placed into one or more of the following activities to help them find work:

- Job Search Workshops – these may be provided to participants who have recently arrived to the U.S. and have little experience in the U.S. labor market. A Basic Computer and Internet Introduction Workshop may be provided to introduce and train participants in the techniques required for online job search.
- Work Experience (WEX) and Community Service (CS) – work activities to improve the employability of LEP TANF parents by providing hands-on experience in a supportive and monitored work environment. Participants practice positive employee behaviors and learn new job skills.
- Skills Training – Job skills training provided to LEP participants in selected occupations. Participants selected for training should have the skills and abilities to perform the job in the targeted field.

- Job Placement – Job search assistance to participants who are ready to enter the labor market, referrals to employment opportunities that match their background, job skills, English proficiency, and abilities.
- Job Retention Assistance – Continued support is provided for a minimum of ninety (90) days to participants placed into employment by providing worksite advocacy, and necessary workplace accommodation to include interpretation, and worksite conflict resolution.

B. English as a Second Language (ESL)

The most prevalent barrier to employment for refugees and immigrants is their inability to speak English well. Pre-literate refugees with little to no education prior to arrival have the most difficult time with learning English. For most refugees and immigrants, the ability to speak English increases their ability to earn higher wage jobs and integrate into their local communities. If their improvement is minimal or slow, they are unlikely to find work. The LEP Pathway's ESL component provides participants with work-related English language training to enhance their employability.

ESL contractors utilize the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to assess an individual's English language proficiency for listening and reading, and other tests to assess speaking and writing proficiency. ESL level 1 indicates the participant's English proficiency skills are at the low end of the scale, and higher ESL levels indicate higher English proficiencies. Attachment C provides detailed descriptions of CASAS proficiency levels.

If the assessment determines that the participant is limited English-proficient (ESL levels 1-6), the participant is referred to the LEP Pathway for employment and ESL services. ORIA contracts with local community colleges and community based organizations to develop employment related curriculum and training materials, and provide ESL classroom instruction to participants who have been assessed at ESL levels 1-6.

C. Transportation Support Services

Provides assistance to help non-TANF refugee participants address transportation needs to participate in LEP Pathway activities. TANF recipients receive support services through their local DSHS offices.

LEP Pathway Expansion – Skills Training, Intensive ESL & Community Jobs

In April 2013, DSHS implemented an expansion of services to the LEP Pathway to include **Intensive ESL** and **Skills Training**. Total funding

allocated to six contracts for both projects for the last three months of SFY 2013 (April-June 2013) was \$190,050.

DSHS utilized a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, which concluded at the end of March 2013, to select Intensive ESL and Skills Training contractors. Bidders were required to conduct industry research to ensure that there was demand for the skills training they proposed.

Two community based organizations provided **skills training** for the LEP Pathway Enhancement project. Asian Counseling and Referral Services provided Cleaning Services training associated with cleaning in hotels, offices, and hospitals. The Refugee Federation Service Center provided Electronic Assembly skills training classes. A total of 36 clients were enrolled into two Skills Training classes and 28 have graduated.

Funds allocated for the Skills Training classes totaled \$84,000. The final outcome data is not yet available as participants who completed the classes are looking for work. However, preliminary reports from service providers are promising – they report that 21 enrollees found work after participating in these classes.

The purpose of providing **Intensive ESL** instruction was to give newly arrived refugees and immigrants intentional time to increase their English proficiency. In addition, instruction would include topics related to life skills so they could better navigate their new surroundings. English language proficiency and knowledge of how to accomplish everyday tasks decreases the level of anxiety and worry many newcomers experience when they don't understand the system. These are two of the most important skills newcomers need in order to integrate into their new communities.

Intensive ESL was provided by four contractors: Coalition for Refugees from Burma, Diocese of Olympia, Highline Community College and South Seattle Community College. Services were provided from April through June 2013. A total of \$106,050 was awarded to these contractors to provide intensive ESL.

- 70 students served by contractors
- 64% on TANF/35% refugees not on TANF
- Country of Origin: 40% Burmese; 18% Iraqi, 12% Somali, remaining students from Africa, Ukraine, and the Middle East
- 65% completed their classes ¹⁶73% of those completed made ESL level gains as measured by pre-post testing of literacy skills

¹⁶ Reasons for non-completion were predominately related to acceptance of employment, movement out of area or state, health issues, childcare issues, or movement to other programs.

Although funding for SFY13 ended June 30, 2013, three of the four contractors have continued to provide intensive ESL services: Diocese of Olympia, Highline Community College, and South Seattle Community College. Funding for the LEP Pathway Expansion projects is not included in the LEP Pathway budget amounts shown on page 16. Plans are being developed to dedicate additional funding for LEP Pathway pilots in the upcoming year.

Another project related to the LEP Pathway expansions was additional funding allocated to the Department of Commerce for services to LEP clients. An additional \$500,000 of funding was provided to the Department of Commerce to increase the number of LEP clients who participate in their WorkFirst programs. The subsidized employment component of these programs – Community Jobs – has helped LEP clients find work in the past. Community Jobs provides refugees work experience in a supported work environment that helps them develop the skills and experience they need to find subsidized employment that leads to self-sufficiency. Plans are being developed to dedicate additional funding for this activity through the Department of Commerce in the upcoming year.

PROGRAM FUNDING

There are three funding sources for LEP Pathway services: funds from ORR, TANF, and GF-S. These funds are combined into a single funding stream that is used to provide LEP Pathway employment and ESL services. The following chart shows total available funding the Pathway for:

SFY 2014 Budget	SFY 2013 Budget
TANF \$ 3,600,000	TANF \$ 3,600,000
ORR \$ 1,909,109 ¹⁷	ORR \$ 2,907,619 ¹⁸
GF-S <u>\$ 2,366,000</u>	GF-S <u>\$ 2,366,000</u>
\$ 7,875,109	\$ 8,873,619

There are specific requirements for each funding source listed above:

TANF funding can only be used for employment services to TANF recipients. This funding is not restricted by immigration status and can be used to serve any LEP adult receiving TANF/SFA.

Under federal rules, ORR funding can only be used to serve refugees

¹⁷ ORR funding was less in SFY 2014 because there were unexpended funds from SFY 2012 that were added to the SFY 2013 Budget. In addition, the SFY 2014 award from ORR was reduced due to both sequestration and an increase in the number of refugees who moved to other states.

¹⁸ SFY 2013 budget includes an additional \$138,688 in ORR funds not reported in the previous report. This funding was added as a result of both carryover and transfer of ORR dollars from other programs.

statewide who have been in the country for 60 months or less. In addition, a portion of ORR funding is targeted to refugee residing in three counties in our state because of the high concentration of refugees living in them. These three counties are King, Snohomish, and Spokane.

General state funds (GF-S) have the most flexibility as they can be used for anyone in the LEP Pathway, including those ineligible for federal assistance because of their immigration status.

PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

The total budget amount listed in the previous section, Program Funding, represents the maximum funding ORIA may issue in contracts to cover services for a fiscal year. Service providers must provide eligible services and bill the Department in order to receive disbursements from this budget.

The following are expenditures for SFY 2013 for LEP Pathway services by funding source and service type:

Total LEP Pathway SFY 2013 Expenditures

Service	TANF		Total TANF
	Federal	State	
Employment	\$ 1,354,013	\$ 394,069	\$1,748,082
ESL Services	\$ 655,884	\$332,693	\$ 988,577
Total	\$2,009,897	\$ 726,762	\$2,736,659

SFY 2013 Federal ORR RSS/TAG and State General Fund (GF-S) Expenditures

Service	ORR (Federal)		ORR (Federal) Total	State GF-S
	RSS	TAG		
Employment	\$ 843,368	\$ 912,176	\$ 1,755,544	\$ 1,127,274

ESL Services	\$ 836,884	\$ 229,810	\$ 1,066,694	\$ 858,400
Support Services	\$ 83,830	\$ 1,550	\$ 85,380	\$ 29,350
Total	\$1,764,083	\$1,143,536	\$2,907,618	\$2,015,024

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Program outcomes are identified through monthly or quarterly reporting by contractors that accompany invoices submitted for payment. Participant and performance outcomes reported for SFY 2013 are shown below:

Services and Outcomes	Number of Participants Served
Number of LEP Pathway Participants ¹⁹ # Participants in Employment Services 4,027 # Participants in ESL Services 3,249	4,930
Full ESL Level Gains (Levels 1-6)	804
Employment (entered employment) Average Hourly Wage at Employment Entry \$10.22 Full-time \$9.88 Part-time \$ 10.09 Number of Job Placements with Health Benefits	1,438 365
Work Experience (WEX)	102
Community Services (CS)	8
Skills Training	93

¹⁹ Total participants in LEP Pathway, in Employment Services, ESL Services, WEX and CS are unduplicated.

Services and Outcomes	Number of Participants Served
Support Services	452
Retention - Employed 30 Days After Job Placement	1,233
Retention - Employed 90 Days After Job Placement	1,009

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Refugees can face significant challenges to success. Most come from areas of political and social strife, and some have been living in refugee camps for years or even decades before coming to the U.S. In addition, some refugees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their struggles prior to their arrival. Despite these challenges, they have overcome adversity and are determined to improve their own lives and the lives of their children when they resettle in the U.S.

For all newcomers, having employment is the key to a family’s ability to become self-sufficient and successfully integrate into their community. However, many new arrivals cannot speak English, some cannot read or write in their own language, and many need to develop new job skills to become employable in a scarce job market. In addition, cultural differences also enter into the picture. For some groups, there are cultural norms against having women or individuals over 50 years old in the workplace. In those cultures, women may be expected to care for the family. Those who are older are considered “elders,” beyond employment age.

The LEP Pathway program addresses some of these issues and many other needs of LEP participants and the challenges they face. The goal is to prepare participants for self-sufficiency. Participants are referred to employment and ESL service providers close to their home and most are able to access services immediately. Through other funding, many LEP Pathway providers are able to help address other barriers that relate to their self-sufficiency needs, such as medical, education, housing, and immigration. Providers also have extensive partnerships with existing community resources that are also helpful.

LEP Pathway providers work closely with local businesses and have established close ties with employers who are willing to hire LEP individuals. Some employers will hire participants based on the service provider’s reference, especially when the participant has no U.S. work experience. Employers are interested in hiring LEP Pathway participants

because they often demonstrate a strong work ethic and willingness to learn.

Despite dwindling resources and the barriers participants face, LEP Pathway providers have been successful in preparing participants for employment by offering them an array of services to enhance their employability. Participants continue to show their resilience and ability to assimilate more quickly by attending classes and workshops, working closely with their employment counselors and accepting available employment.

BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (BFET)

BACKGROUND

The Department administers the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program, which provides employment services to Basic Food²⁰ recipients who do not receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. The BFET program is managed at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which provides 100% match to state funds allocated for these services.

In October 2012, ORIA began providing BFET services to refugees and expanded services to include immigrants in January 2013 through contracts with service providers who have the capacity to provide services in culturally appropriate ways. By administering the BFET program, ORIA was able to leverage additional federal dollars for employment services that help program participants achieve self-sufficiency and successfully integrate into their new communities.

The BFET program provides job search, job search training, job search assistance, educational services²¹, skills training, vocational education, and employment assistance to Basic Food recipients who do not receive TANF. Unlike TANF, participation in BFET employment and training services is voluntary and there are no participation hour requirements. BFET is an important part of the state's comprehensive workforce development system serving low-income individuals, displaced workers, and employers by encouraging financial independence from public assistance through skill acquisition, personal responsibility and gainful employment.

ORIA provides BFET services through 12 contracts statewide with 10

²⁰ Basic Food is Washington State's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.

²¹ BFET educational services include adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language, and General Educational Development (GED).

providers made up of:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Voluntary Refugee Resettlement Agencies (VOLAGs)
- Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Other organizations serving immigrants and refugees

See **Attachment B** for a list of FFY 2013 contractors.

POPULATION SERVED

ORIA BFET serves refugees and immigrants who:

- Receive federal food benefits
- Do not receive TANF, and
- Have not naturalized

This program differs from LEP Pathway in that it serves all refugees and immigrants who meet the above criteria regardless of the length of time they have been in the country.

This table shows participant information for Oct. 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013:

Participants	
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	476
Refugees	462
Immigrants (non-refugee)	14

SERVICES

BFET provides services to employable adults who receive federal food benefits. BFET services include employment and training services such as basic education (including ESL), vocational education, job search, and 90-day job retention. It also includes case management services including support services such as help with transportation, clothing, or housing. Many ORIA BFET clients participate in both employment services and ESL training.

There is no set maximum time limit for BFET participation, but there is a general expectation to achieve a successful exit from the program by obtaining employment and/or completing training within two years of

enrollment. BFET does not pay for a four-year college, on-the-job wages, paid Work Experience (WEX), Work Fare, or the stipends provided in certain training programs.

Services provided under BFET include:

A. Employment Services

BFET provides a package of structured activities to help participants to seek and obtain suitable employment. Services include, but are not limited to, job search workshop, computer basics workshop, labor market information, job seeking skills instruction, resume writing, job skills assessment, counseling, life skills and work ethic training, and job placement services.

Once employed, providers continue to provide services to participants for 90 days after job placement to help resolve initial employment barriers and achieve satisfactory work performance. **Job retention services** include post-employment counseling, coaching, and other case management activities.

B. English as a Second Language (Basic Education)

BFET provides ESL to participants to gain language skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment. Instruction and curriculum for ESL must include work-related topics to help prepare participants for employment while learning English.

Contractors use the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) testing for reading and listening and ORIA-approved assessments for writing and speaking based on the Washington ESL Adult Learning Standards to determine the participant's initial ESL level.

Contractors are also encouraged to work with BFET contracted community and technical colleges to provide ESL training to program participants.

C. Support Services

BFET offers a broad range of goods and purchased services necessary for participants to successfully engage in or complete a BFET activity. Participants also receive support services such as clothing required for the job, equipment or tools required for a job, relocation expenses, testing fees, transportation, and child care.

D. Partnership with Other BFET providers

ORIA BFET contractors are encouraged to work with technical and community colleges to provide wraparound training (colleges) and employment (ORIA BFET contractors) to increase participant success.

PROGRAM FUNDING

ORIA provides BFET Services with funding from two sources: general state funds (GF-S) allocated by the legislature for the state fiscal year (July – June) and federal funds from the USDA provided for a federal fiscal year (October – September). The overlap between state and federal fiscal year results in a mix of state funding from two consecutive state fiscal years and federal funds provided for the federal fiscal year (FFY), which ends on September 30. Nine months of the BFET match for FFY 2013 is allocated from SFY 2013 while the remaining three months is allocated from SFY 2014.

The following table shows the budget for FFY 2013, the amount allocated from SFY 2013 for the first nine months of FFY 2013, and the amount allocated from SFY 2014 for the last three months of FFY 2013:

FFY 2013 Budget (Oct. 2012 – Sept. 2013)	
ORIA SFY 2013 match (GF-S)	\$ 322,588
ORIA SFY 2014 match (GF-S)	\$ 107,529
Federal BFET match	<u>\$ 430,117</u>
Total ORIA BFET	\$ 860,234

GF-S funds used to leverage federal match in state fiscal year (SFY) 2013 drew down from existing Pathway contracts. Through collaboration with existing Pathway contractors, ORIA transferred a total of \$ 322,588 from Pathway contracts from Oct. 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013 to the BFET program.

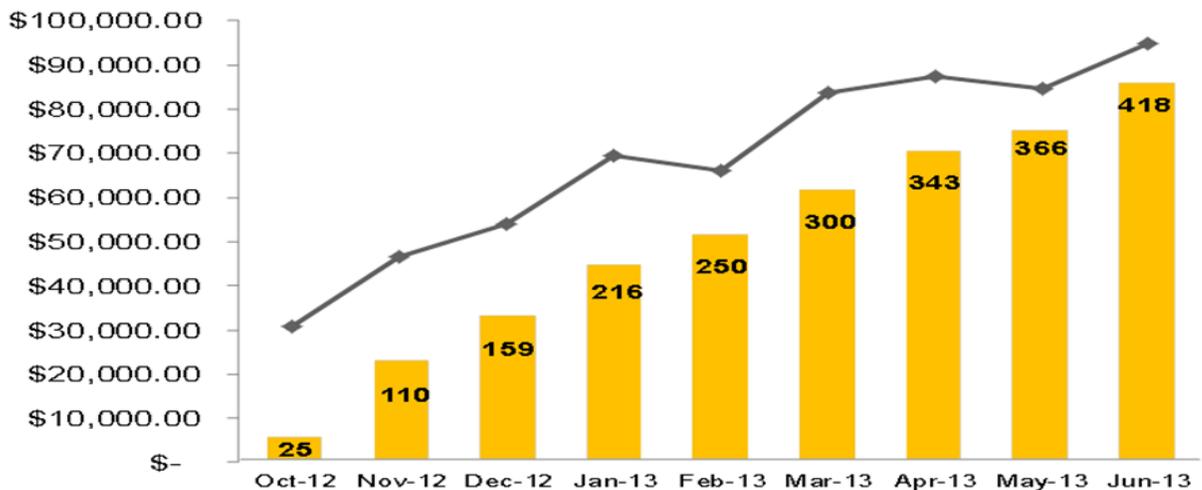
PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

The previous section shows the maximum BFET contract award for FFY 2013 and the maximum state funds segregated for BFET match in SFY 2013. As BFET operates on reimbursement model, contractors must incur costs associated with BFET services and then seek reimbursements for those expenses from DSHS on a monthly basis to cover program costs. Upon review of each billing, DSHS will reimburse for eligible services from the contracted amount.

As of June 30, 2013, SFY 2013 contract expenditures for ORIA BFET total totaled **\$ 617,982**. This amount represents \$ 308,991 in state funds (GF-S) used to leverage \$ 308,991 in federal match. Expenditures for the current fiscal year, SFY 2014, are not available as of this report's production.

The charts below show ORIA BFET expenditures and number of clients (unduplicated) served for the first nine months of FFY 2013. Caseloads were smaller in comparison with expenditures when the program was first implemented in October due to program start-up. Service providers needed to invest in the infrastructure they needed to manage the program and to recruit participants. The gap between caseload and expenditures decreased gradually as program enrollment increased during the year.

	Clients Served	Total Expenditure	State's Share (GF-S)
Oct-12	25	\$30,876	\$15,438
Nov-12	110	\$46,446	\$23,223
Dec-12	159	\$54,077	\$27,038
Jan-13	216	\$69,579	\$34,789.
Feb-13	250	\$66,232	\$33,116
Mar-13	300	\$83,802	\$41,901
Apr-13	343	\$87,444	\$43,722
May-13	366	\$84,548	\$42,274
Jun-13	418	\$94,973	\$47,486



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Program outcomes are identified through the invoices contractors submit for payment. Outcome data reported from October 2012 – June 2013 is shown on the chart below:

Outcome	
Entered Employment	246
Full-time	160
Part-time	86
Average Wage	\$ 10.01
Full-time	\$ 10.02
Part-time	\$ 9.99
Average Time Between ORIA BFET Enrollment and Job Placement	81 days
Retention - Employed 90 Days After Job Placement	166
Additional participants enrolled by June 2013 and employed as of Aug. 31, 2013 but have not reached 90 days	75

Approximately 97% of the participants are refugees and over 52% of participants enter employment during this report period.

ATTACHMENT A

SFY 2014 LEP PATHWAY CONTRACTORS

Contractor	Service	Contract Amount
Asian Counseling & Referral Services	EMP	\$150,541
Bellingham Technical College	ESL	\$39,256
Clark College	ESL	\$241,916
Columbia Basin College	ESL	\$103,328
Community Colleges of Spokane	ESL	\$351,578
Employment Security- Spokane	EMP	\$131,233
Everett Community College	Pilot	\$76,000
Highline Community College	ESL	\$420,167
Jewish Family Service	EMP	\$447,639
Lutheran Community Services NW	ESL	\$145,839
Neighborhood House	EMP	\$70,132
North Seattle Community College	ESL	\$38,386
Partners in Careers	EMP	\$208,233
Ready By Five	ESL	\$32,858
Refugee & Immigrant Services NW	Both	\$678,866
Refugee Federation Service Center	EMP	\$1,184,455
Refugee Women's Alliance	Both	\$694,030
Renton Technical College	ESL	\$298,805
Shoreline Community College	ESL	\$41,869
South Seattle Community College	ESL	\$338,063
Tacoma Community House	Both	\$425,553
TRAC Associates – King County	EMP	\$900,600
TRAC Associates – Pierce County	EMP	\$109,895
TRAC Associates – Snohomish County	EMP	\$16,859
TRAC Associates – Thurston County	EMP	\$22,590
World Relief - King Affiliate	Both	\$364,808
World Relief – Spokane Affiliate	EMP	\$199,830
World Relief – Tri-Cities Affiliate	EMP	\$141,780
Total		\$7,875,109

EMP- Employment Provider

ESL- ESL provider

Both- Provides both employment and ESL

Pilot- Expansion pilot project

ATTACHMENT B

FFY 2013 ORIA BFET CONTRACTORS

Contractor Name	Contract Amount
Asian Counseling and Referral	\$56,000
Employment Services Division – Spokane	\$28,000
Refugee Women’s Alliance	\$80,000
Neighborhood House, Inc.	\$104,000
Refugee Federation Service Center	\$88,138
Refugee Immigrant Services NW	\$60,000
TRAC Associates, Snohomish Co.	\$50,000
TRAC Associates, King Co.	\$100,000
TRAC Associates, Pierce Co.	\$44,000
World Relief, Seattle	\$92,906
World Relief, Spokane	\$77,478
World Relief, Tri-Cities	\$79,712
Total	\$860,234

ATTACHMENT C²²

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Score Correlation

ESL Level	Description	Score Range
ESL 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Beginning Literacy / Pre-Beginning ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Functions minimally, if at all, in English. Communicates only through gestures and a few isolated words.</p> <p>Reading/Writing: May not be literate in any language.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English and in which all tasks are easily demonstrated. Employment choices would be extremely limited.</p>	180 and below
ESL 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Low Beginning ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Functions in a very limited way in situations related to immediate needs; asks and responds to basic learned phrases spoken slowly and repeated often.</p> <p>Reading/Writing: Recognizes and writes letters and numbers and reads and understands common sight words. Can write own name and address.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle only routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English and in which all tasks are easily demonstrated.</p>	181-190
ESL 3	<p style="text-align: center;">High Beginning ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Functions with some difficulty in situations related to immediate needs; may have some simple oral communication abilities using basic learned phrases and sentences.</p> <p>Reading/Writing: Reads and writes letters and numbers and a limited number of basic sight words and simple phrases related to immediate needs. Can write basic personal information on simplified forms.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle routine entry-level jobs that involve only the most basic oral or written communication in English and in which all tasks can be demonstrated.</p>	191-200
ESL 4	<p style="text-align: center;">Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Can satisfy basic survival needs and very routine social demands. Understands simple learned phrases easily and some new simple phrases containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with frequent repetition.</p>	201-210

²² Source: <https://www.casas.org/docs/pagecontents/eslslld.pdf?sfvrsn=4?Status=Master>

ESL Level	Description	Score Range
	<p>Reading/Writing: Can read and interpret simple material on familiar topics. Able to read and interpret simple directions, schedules, signs, maps, and menus. Can fill out forms requiring basic personal information and write short, simple notes and messages based on familiar situations.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle entry-level jobs that involve some simple oral and written communication but in which tasks can also be demonstrated and/or clarified orally.</p>	
ESL 5	<p style="text-align: center;">High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Can satisfy basic survival needs and limited social demands; can follow oral directions in familiar contexts. Has limited ability to understand on the telephone. Understands learned phrases easily and new phrases containing familiar vocabulary.</p> <p>Reading/Writing: Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic material on familiar subjects. Can write messages or notes related to basic needs. Can fill out basic medical forms and job applications.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle jobs and/or training that involve following basic oral and written instructions and diagrams if they can be clarified orally.</p>	211-220
ESL 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Advanced ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Can satisfy most survival needs and social demands. Has some ability to understand and communicate on the telephone on familiar topics. Can participate in conversations on a variety of topics.</p> <p>Reading/Writing: Can read and interpret simplified and some non-simplified materials on familiar topics. Can interpret simple charts, graphs, and labels; interpret a payroll stub; and complete a simple order form; fill out medical information forms and job applications. Can write short personal notes and letters and make simple log entries.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle jobs and job training situations that involve following oral and simple written instructions and multi-step diagrams and limited public contact. Can read a simple employee handbook. Persons at the upper end of this score range are able to begin GED preparation.</p>	221-235
	Exit ESL Program	236