

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Refugee and Immigrant Employment Services

Chapter 299, Laws of 2018 (ESSB 6032 Section 207 (4))

January 1, 2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
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LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT PATHWAY SERVICES:

BACKGROUND	8
ELIGIBLE POPULATION	9
POPULATION SERVED	10
SERVICES	11
PROGRAM FUNDING	14
PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
PROGRAM OUTCOMES	17

OFFICE OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES:

BACKGROUND	19
ELIGIBLE POPULATION	20
POPULATION SERVED	21
SERVICES	20
PROGRAM FUNDING	20
PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS	20
PROGRAM OUTCOMES	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A	24
ATTACHMENT B	25
ATTACHMENT C	26

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 299, Laws of 2018 (ESSB 6032 Section 207 (4)) requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS or the Department) to report to the Legislature annually on all sources of available refugee and immigrant employment services (including limited English proficiency pathway services) funding during the current fiscal year, amounts expended to date by service type and funding source, the number of participants served and program outcome data. This Refugee and Immigrant Employment Services report covers state fiscal year (SFY) 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020).

Program Overview

The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is located within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Economic Services Administration, Community Services Division, and administers over \$30 million in federal and state dollars to support comprehensive services for refugees and immigrants living in Washington state. Through a network of community-based providers, ORIA delivers services that provide individuals and families with the resources they need to rebuild their lives from their arrival in Washington to becoming naturalized U.S. citizens. More than 60 providers serve approximately 11,000¹ individuals annually.

These services are comprised of 13 different programs that fall into four core areas: Refugee Health and Wellness, Employment and Training Services, Immigration Assistance and Naturalization Services, and Whole Family Services. Included within these core areas are refugee cash/medical assistance (RCARMA), employment assistance, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, comprehensive case management, self-sufficiency education, asylee services, immigration and naturalization services, refugee health and mental health services, unaccompanied refugee minor foster care, youth educational activities and elders services.

ORIA administers three employment and training programs to provide opportunities for a diverse range of people who are refugee and immigrants seeking to gain the job skills and employment needed to become self-sufficient and economically secure. These programs are the Limited English Proficient Pathway (LEP Pathway) program, the ORIA Basic Food Employment and Training (ORIA BFET) program and the Career Ladder for Educated and Vocationally Experienced Refugees (CLEVER) program. Each program offers individualized opportunities for participants to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to enter employment, whether it is a first job in the U.S. or reentry into a previous professional career. Both the LEP Pathway and the ORIA BFET programs utilize state dollars designated for refugee and immigrant employment services to help fund these critical programs. ORIA partners with employment and training providers

¹ ESA Program Briefing Book 2020 Annual Unduplicated Clients Served report for Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (RIA) naturalization and the Office of Refugee Resettlement Annual Service Plan report.

around Washington state, including community-based organizations (CBOs), refugee resettlement agencies, employment agencies and community and technical colleges.

The LEP Pathway program, which provides services that are linguistically appropriate and culturally relative, is separated into two key program areas relevant to integration and self-sufficiency: employment and English language instruction. Services within the two areas include employability assessments, pre-employment preparation, vocationally-focused English language instruction, job search, targeted skills training, employment placement, job retention and support services. Work Experience and Community Services placements are available to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.

The ORIA BFET program provides employment services to refugees and immigrants receiving federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, but do not receive federal cash assistance, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). Individuals who have active SNAP benefits are eligible for Washington’s Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program. Participation is voluntary and services include job search, soft skills training, educational services (adult basic education and ESL), workforce skills training (vocational education), assistance with establishing small businesses, post-employment services and support services.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ORIA providers responded to help their clients with basic survival services. ORIA expanded services to meet the critical needs of participants through ORIA’s COVID-19 Response Services. Running from March 1, 2020 through the end of the state fiscal year on June 30, 2020, these services included outreach and needs assessment, information and referral, connections to emergency and basic needs services, online education and client engagement.

Participation Eligibility: LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET

Participants	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET
Refugees receiving TANF	✓	
Non-Refugee immigrants receiving TANF	✓	
Refugees receiving RCA	✓	
Refugees, non-TANF, not active RCA, 5 years or less in US and receiving federal food assistance	✓	✓
Refugees not on any public assistance, 5 years or less in US	✓	

Participants	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET
Refugees, non-TANF over 5 years in US and receiving federal food assistance		✓
Non-refugee immigrants, non-TANF and federal food recipient regardless of time in country		✓

Program Budgets and Expenditures

ORIA's employment programs uniquely braid federal and state dollars to provide a comprehensive package of services for eligible Washington state residents. The LEP Pathway blends general state funds (GF-S) with federal and state TANF dollars and federal dollars from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The ORIA BFET program utilizes general state funds to leverage resources from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Employment and Training Program.

The following tables show the total budget and expenditures for SFY 2019 refugee and immigrant employment services by funding source:

SFY 2020 Total Budgets: LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET

Funding Source	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET	TOTAL
TANF	\$ 5,600,000	N/A	\$ 5,600,000
ORR	\$ 717,000	N/A	\$ 717,000
GF-S	\$ 1,933,983	\$ 447,543	\$ 2,381,526
FNS (federal 50% match ²)	N/A	\$ 447,543	\$447,543
FNS (federal 100% upfront ³)	N/A	N/A	N/A
FNS (federal 100% mid-year ⁴)	N/A	\$165,972	\$ 165,972
TOTAL	\$ 8,250,983	\$ 1,061,058	\$ 9,312,041

² FNS provides 50 percent federal matching dollars to GF-S dollars used to support the ORIA BFET program.

³ No state match needed.

⁴ Issued around July 1 each calendar year.

SFY 2020 Total Expenditures by Program and Funding Source

Funding Source	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET	TOTAL
TANF	\$5,499,247	N/A	\$ 5,499,247
ORR	\$717,000	N/A	\$717,000
GF-S	\$1,933,983	\$ 447,543	\$ 2,381,526
FNS	N/A	\$ 612,720	\$ 612,720
TOTAL	\$8,150,230	\$ 1,060,263	\$ 9,210,493

LEP Pathway expenditures totaled \$8,150,230 for SFY 2020 (as of December 4, 2020). ORIA BFET expenditures for SFY 2020 totaled \$1,060,263 (as of December 30, 2020). This amount represents \$447,543 in state funds (GF-S) used to leverage \$612,720 in federal funds (50 percent match and 100 percent federal non-match).

Program Outcomes

In SFY 2020, the LEP Pathway program served 4,116 unduplicated participants in both employment and ESL. LEP Pathway contractors placed 1,309 participants into jobs, and 1,078 participants remained employed 90 days after being placed into jobs. Participants in the ESL programs made 776 full English language level gains in the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

ORIA BFET served 784 unduplicated participants in SFY 2020, of which 728 were refugees and 56 were non-refugee immigrants. ORIA BFET providers placed 433 participants into jobs and out of those, 338 participants reached 90 days on the job during the year.

Challenges and Successes

The LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET programs use state and federal resources to help individuals address barriers to success and thrive in their communities. Stable employment, especially for groups arriving without existing local support networks such as family and friends, is the key to a family's ability to become self-sufficient and successfully integrate into their community. Regardless of the barriers they face, most refugees and immigrants possess a strong desire to succeed and thrive in their new home country. They are willing to work hard to achieve economic stability for themselves and their families.

Many participants in ORIA's employment and training programs have come to Washington state as refugees who have fled persecution and oppression in their homelands. Some come from lengthy stays in refugee camps, while others come soon after fleeing conflict and war. Some suffer from the effects of post-traumatic stress, physical trauma and the loss of family and friends. The barriers they face upon arrival in the U.S. can include limited English proficiency, lack of transferrable employment skills,

limited previous education and challenges navigating U.S. systems. ORIA providers offer services which address not only the multiple barriers refugees and immigrants can face when entering the workplace, but they also offer services that tap into each client's unique strengths and skills.

For newly arrived refugees and immigrants, economic self-sufficiency is the key to a family's ability to successfully integrate into the community and to set the stage for the success of future generations. Regardless of their motivation, many new arrivals cannot speak English, while others cannot read or write in their own language, and many need to develop new job skills to become employable in their local job market. Cultural differences can play a role as well. For example some communities have cultural norms against having women or individuals over 50 years old enter the workforce. Women may be expected to care for the family and not seek outside employment. Those who are considered "elders," are often believed to be beyond employment age. Regardless of cultural factors, many refugees still feel compelled by their economic situation to enter the workforce even if it is counter to what they view as culturally appropriate.

ORIA's employment and training programs help participants explore these issues and other factors which can affect their employability. The primary goal is to prepare participants to achieve economic stability and opportunities to fully participate in their communities.

ORIA providers are able to address additional barriers that can affect self-sufficiency, such as medical, mental health, housing and immigration through the utilization of complementary funding. All providers have extensive partnerships with existing community resources to help address additional barriers.

Employment providers work closely with local businesses and establish close ties with employers who have a history of hiring individuals with limited English proficiency and job experience in the U.S. These strong relationships result in many employers hiring participants based solely on the service provider's reference. Employers report that they seek out LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET participants because they typically demonstrate a strong work ethic and willingness to learn.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic caused mass layoffs, agency closures and a shift to remote services. It also placed many current and prior participants in extremely vulnerable situations. ORIA's employment providers quickly adjusted to new challenges and new ways of conducting business in record time. They were also able to quickly assess new challenges facing their clients and expand their menu of services to include those targeted to help them through the pandemic.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) PATHWAY SERVICES

Washington state has a large and dynamic immigrant community and is among the top refugee receiving states in the nation⁵. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, out of Washington's 2019 total estimated population of 7,614,893, approximately 16.8 percent (1,132,834) are foreign-born. In King County, the state's most populous county, 27.2 percent of the families residing in the county speak a language other than English at home⁶.

For 23 years, the LEP Pathway program has provided an array of employment services targeted specifically for non-English proficient people from a wide variety of countries and cultural backgrounds. The LEP Pathway provides specialized services which address the unique employment needs of people who are refugees, English language learners and WorkFirst parents.

The LEP Pathway aims to provide a single, seamless program for services to increase participants' employability so they can achieve economic security and successfully integrate into their communities.

In SFY 2020, ORIA provided LEP Pathway services through 31 contracts statewide with the following types of organizations:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Community and technical colleges
- Refugee resettlement agencies
- Agency partners, such as Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Other organizations serving refugees

See **Attachment A** for a list of SFY 2020 LEP Pathway contractors.

LEP Pathway providers have a long history of serving individuals and families that are refugees and immigrants. They have close ties to refugee and immigrant communities, are experienced in addressing their needs and are able to provide culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate services. Many LEP Pathway providers employ individuals who have arrived in the U.S. as a refugee or immigrant and are able to bring their personal experiences, culture and language to their work with newly arrived refugees. This combination of personal experience, knowledge and skills in serving people who are refugees is critical to the success of the program.

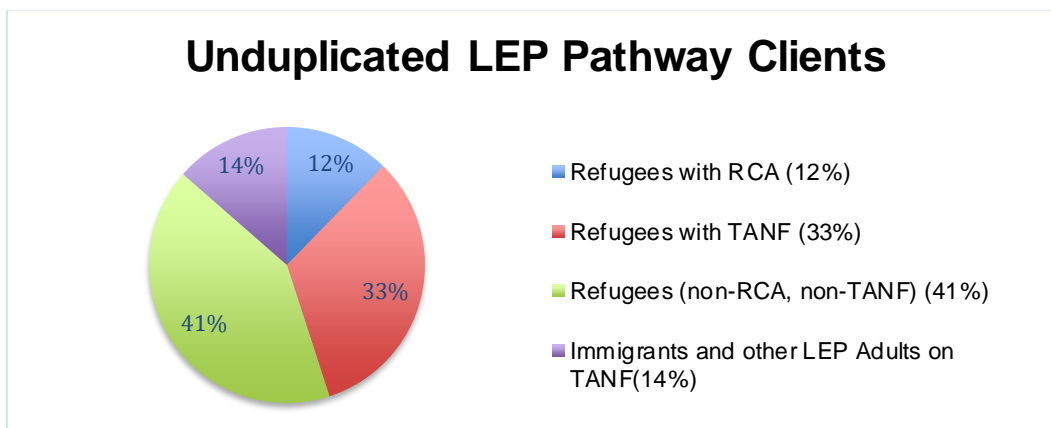
⁵ Refugee Processing Center: <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>

⁶ US Census Bureau, QuickFacts: <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

ELIGIBLE POPULATION

- People receiving Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). RCA recipients are limited to eight months of cash assistance from the day they arrive in the U.S. The statewide monthly average of RCA refugees in SFY 2020 was 317 adults⁷. Due to the pandemic, on March 1, 2020, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) temporarily extended RCA eligibility beyond eight months.
- Limited English Proficient people who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The statewide monthly average of eligible adults on TANF in SFY 2020 was 1,771 or 11.5 percent of the total statewide TANF adult caseload⁸.
- People who 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 eligible adults on SFA in SFY 2020 was 784 or 98.8 percent of the total statewide SFA caseload⁹.
- People who have a current status as a refugee, do not receive cash assistance, and have resided in the U.S. for 60 months or less. Following the onset of the pandemic, ORR temporarily expanded eligibility for these services for those who have resided in the U.S. more than 60 months.

The following chart¹⁰ shows SFY 2020 LEP Pathway participant information:



⁷ Source: DSHS ACES data

⁸ Source: DSHS ACES data, <http://emaps.esa.dshs.wa.gov/DataWebObj/Default.aspx>

⁹ Source: DSHS ACES data, <http://emaps.esa.dshs.wa.gov/DataWebObj/Default.aspx>

¹⁰ Data Source: ORIA Database pulled as of October 7, 2020.

POPULATION SERVED

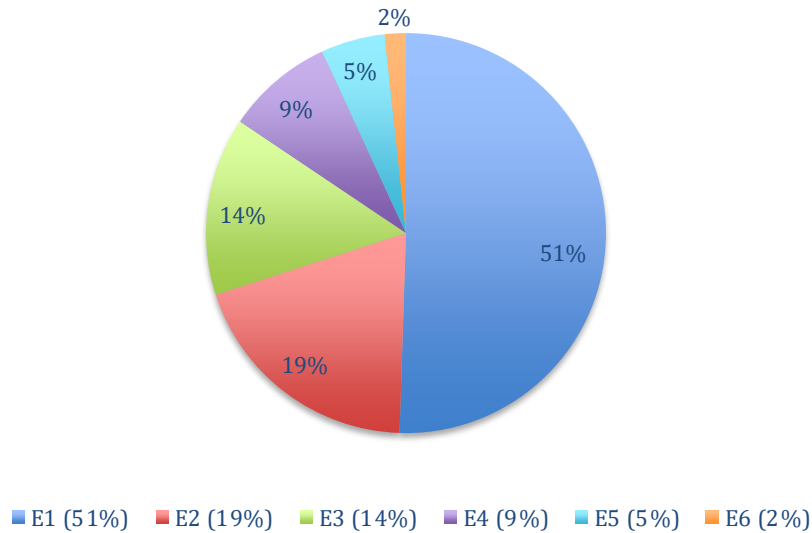
Participants in the LEP Pathway enter the program with a wide range of skills and challenges. LEP Pathway providers have significant experience in delivering responsive services to diverse groups of people, whose ethnicity, education and cultural background can change from year-to-year. LEP Pathway providers develop programs and strategies to address the changing needs of those they serve. Many people arrive in the U.S. with limited prior education and some are not literate in their native language. The very act of resettling in the U.S. is highly stressful. Many people who are refugees also struggle with issues related to trauma, including physical and emotional challenges, adding to the pressure of learning to navigate multiple systems in the U.S. Many participants in the LEP Pathway program with multiple barriers are still highly motivated to get a job, so LEP Pathway providers work closely with employers to identify appropriate job placements along with arranging for English language training.

Some refugees and immigrants arrive with technical skills or high levels of education. A 2020 report¹¹, shows that 38 percent of the adult immigrant population in Washington is likely to have a college education or higher. For highly educated refugees and immigrants, the challenge of finding a job is more difficult if they are unable to utilize their previous experience and education in the U.S. The ORIA CLEVER employment program complements the LEP Pathway by providing a seamless transition for highly educated and vocationally experienced refugees with a menu of services that help them enter jobs in their fields of expertise. Participants receive career orientation, vocational mentoring, transcript evaluation, licensing assistance and targeted job placement in the participants' respective fields. ORIA leverages the strength of both the LEP Pathway and CLEVER to support these clients in addressing their unique challenges while incorporating existing skills and strengths.

The chart below shows the English skill level of TANF participants in the LEP Pathway. Using a standardized test across all providers, participants receive a ranking of their language proficiency from E1 to E6. Level 1 (E1) is the lowest level with zero to very limited English language skills. Level 2 (E2) is limited as well, but the individual has Basic English language skills with limited vocabulary. **Attachment C** provides a more detailed description of the English language levels. Seventy percent of participants tested at the lowest two levels of English, which is why the specialized services and expertise of LEP Pathway providers is so critical. Only 16 percent of participants test at and ESL level 4 or higher.

¹¹ <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-washington>

ESL Levels of Participants



SERVICES

The LEP Pathway program provides employment and English language services to adults who receive TANF, SFA and RCA benefits and to refugees who have resided in the U.S. for less than five years.

LEP Pathway providers work in partnership with Community Services Office (CSO) staff to accept a referral, conduct an employability assessment and identify the LEP Pathway work activities that the individual must participate in while receiving cash assistance. TANF and SFA recipients sign an Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) to acknowledge and agree to participate in these activities. RCA recipients also receive an employability assessment and employment is a priority due to the eight-month time limit for cash benefits. Most often, LEP Pathway clients participate in employment services coupled with English language services.

ORIA employment providers work with local employers to develop work opportunities and offer retention assistance to clients placed into jobs.

A. Employment Services

Providers use the Employability Assessment to place participants into one or more of the following activities to help them enter the workforce:

Job Search Workshops

Targeted 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 helps to familiarize and train participants in the techniques required for online job search.

Skills Training

Job skills training provided to LEP participants in targeted occupations. Participants selected for training should have the skills and abilities to perform the job in the specified field after training completion.

Job Placement

Provides job search and job placement assistance to participants who are ready to enter the labor market.

Participants receive referrals to employment opportunities that match their background, job skills, English proficiency and abilities.

Job Retention Assistance

Continued support is available for a maximum of 90 days to participants placed into employment by providing worksite advocacy and necessary workplace accommodation, including interpretation and worksite conflict resolution.

B. English as a Second Language (ESL) Services

One of the most significant challenges to getting a job for refugees and immigrants can be limited English proficiency. Individuals with low native language literacy skills and little formal education often face the greatest barriers to learning English. Limited English skills can mean a refugee or immigrant is unable to find employment or has limited opportunities for finding a job with a living wage. The ability to communicate in English increases opportunities to obtain higher wage jobs and integrate more easily into local communities.

Participant Success Story:

S came to the U.S with his wife and two children in 2019. He and his family faced many challenges and barriers to employment including limited English proficiency and lack of affordable transportation, childcare, and housing.

His employment case manager started working with S and his family by developing a family self-sufficiency plan, establishing employment goals, and accessing other services, such as ESL class enrollment, referrals to subsidized housing agencies, and assistance in making doctor's appointments for all family. The case manager also began to provide S with initial job search training and self-sufficiency workshops.

After a quarter of ESL, S had acquired enough English skills to participate in a Work Experience (WEX) program at Appliance Depot. With his new English and employment skills, his case manager assisted him in securing a job as an appliance technician where he is happy and successful at his work.

Refugee & Immigrant Services NW
(RISNW)

LEP Pathway's ESL services provide 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 ORIA-approved tests to assess speaking and writing proficiency. LEP Pathway participants range from level 1 (beginning level skills) to level 6 (advanced ESL). See **Attachment C** for a detailed description of CASAS proficiency levels.

ORIA contracts with local community colleges and community-based organizations to develop employment related curriculum and training materials and to provide ESL classroom instruction to participants assessed at ESL level 6 or below.

C. COVID-19 Response Services

In March 2020, ORIA, expanded services to include COVID-19 services to support clients during the pandemic. These services included:

- Conduct a Needs Assessment that addresses overall financial stability, housing, employment, social and emotional well-being, child and youth, and elders and health and medical needs.
- Information and Referral on resources for COVID-19, 2020 Census, Unemployment Insurance Benefits, public benefits and new stimulus programs and updates on available services and resources.
- Providing and/or Connecting with New Services, including addressing food insecurity, addressing gaps in childcare and employer outreach and engagement.
- Education and Client Engagement offering opportunities to address social isolation through remote options, engaging volunteers to support.

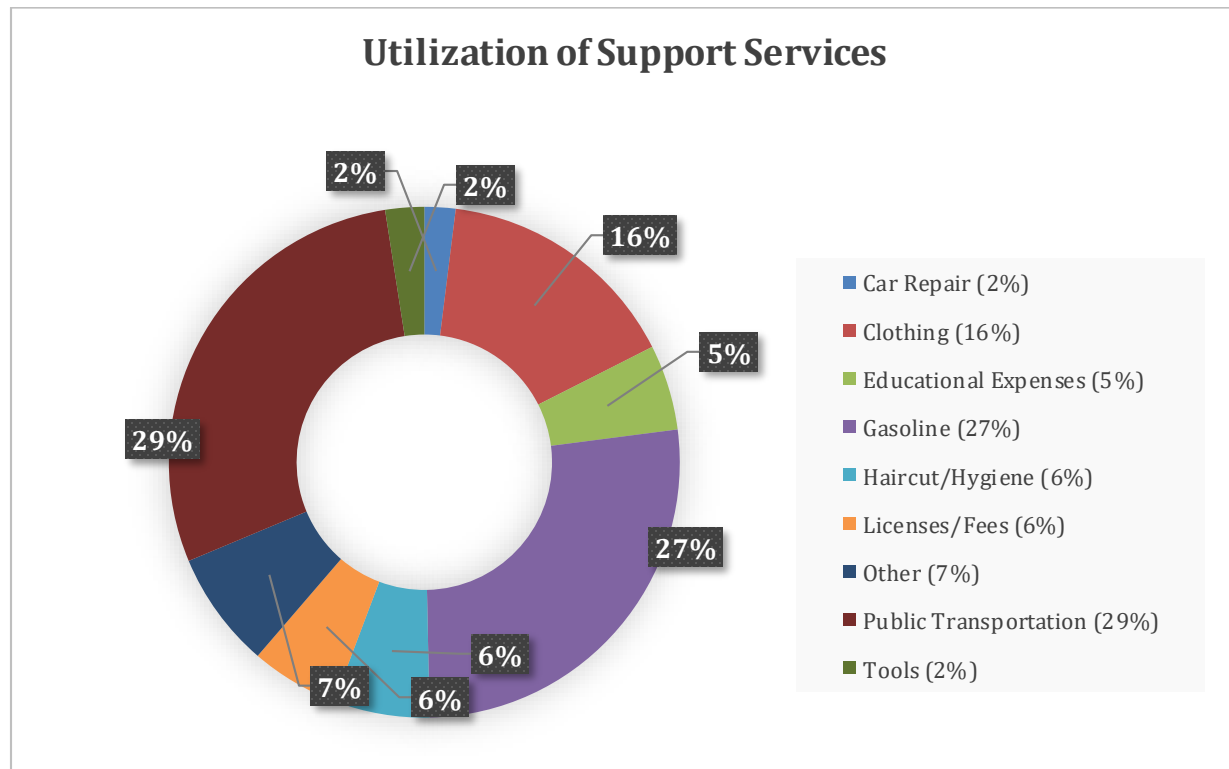
Challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected LEP Pathway contractors' ability to provide in-person services and considering mass layoffs in the food and hospitality industries – where hundreds of LEP Pathway participants work as their first job in US, ORIA amended contracts by expanding the menu of services available to participants effective March 1, 2020 by including COVID-19 Response Services.

This allowed LEP Pathway contractors to offer expanded range of services to participants who didn't feel it was safe to be in the public. COVID-19 Response Services covered a wide spectrum of services from conducting updated Needs Assessment addressing financial, housing and employment stability, information and referrals on COVID-19 resources - to providing and connecting with new services including assistance with applications for Unemployment Insurance Benefits, addressing social isolation and providing information and referrals to community resources.

ESL providers adjusted during this time and offered remote ESL classrooms. With this change in traditional in-person classroom, ESL providers and ORIA were tasked with addressing the digital divide. To help ensure students continue access to on-going learning, students with the greatest needs were provided computer equipment and connectivity to engage in remote ESL classrooms.

D. Support Services

ORIA funds Support Services to help non-TANF refugee participants address various barriers in order to participate in LEP Pathway activities. TANF recipients receive support services through their local Community Services Offices. The list of ORIA funded support services to help non-TANF employment participants during the SFY 2020 included Public Transportation, Gasoline, Car Repair, Work Tools, Work Clothes, Educational Expenses, Licenses/Fees and Haircut/Hygiene. As exhibited in the chart below, transportation remains the greatest need for LEP Pathway participants.



PROGRAM FUNDING

There are three funding sources for LEP Pathway services, including funds from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, TANF block grant, and general state funds (GF-

Participant Success Story:

R was an LEP Pathway ESL student in 2017 and worked hard to improve her English language skills. After exiting the program, R went on to pursue further studies in the healthcare field. When she realized she needed targeted ESL instruction to help achieve her goals to pass the Nursing Assistant Certified (NAC) exam she returned to the ESL program at Clark College. Staff worked with her NAC instructor to get guidance on how best to integrate her ESL studies with R's upcoming exam.

The ESL instructor worked with R to learn how to break the complex questions. For the clinical skills portion of the test, R struggled with explaining to a patient what she was doing. An ESL class volunteer offered to role play R's patients to give her relevant practice.

R passed both the written exam and the clinical skills test. The single mother of four soon started to work at an adult care center as a NAC and exited the program. Her success inspired other students to take the same path. Her success was the result of her hard work and a community of learners and teacher that worked together towards a common goal.

Clark College

S). These funds blend into a single funding stream that provides LEP Pathway employment, ESL and support services.

SFY 2020 Budget

TANF – Federal/State	\$5,600,000
ORR	\$717,000
GF-S	<u>\$1,933,983</u>
	\$8,250,983

There are specific requirements for each funding source listed above:

- TANF funding covers services for any LEP adult receiving TANF/SFA.
- ORR Refugee Social Service (RSS) funding generally covers services for refugees who have been in the country for 60 months or less. As a result of COVID-19, ORR provided a waiver temporarily extending eligibility to refugees over 60 month in US provided they did not become naturalized US citizens.
- GF-S funding has the most flexibility as it can pay for services for anyone in the LEP Pathway.

PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

The LEP Pathway program contracts follow a state fiscal year schedule (July 1 to June 30). In SFY 2020, contractors entered into

a performance-based contract structured on employment placements, job retention and English language level gains. This contracting model meets the required performance based outcome criteria for contracts. Under this model, contractors may receive a percentage of their contract amount by serving a minimum number of clients. The remaining amount is based on the provider's annual performance outcome goals.

Under this model, LEP Pathway employment providers receive 95 percent of their contract maximum amount, divided into 12 monthly payments, to cover the costs to provide direct services to clients. Providers earn the remaining 5 percent of the contract maximum amount if they achieve their annual performance goal based on employment

placement and job retention.

LEP Pathway ESL contractors receive 80 percent of their contract maximum amount, divided into four quarterly payments, to cover the costs to provide direct instruction and support services to clients. Providers earn the remaining 20 percent of the contract maximum amount if they achieve their quarterly performance goals based on a negotiated number of English language level gains.

Contractors submit invoices for employment services on a monthly basis and for ESL services on a quarterly basis. They may submit billings up to 30 days after each month/quarter of service. DSHS has 30 days from receipt and approval of each invoice to process and make payment.

The following are expenditures for SFY 2020 for LEP Pathway services by funding source and service type, as of October 15, 2020:

SFY 2020 TANF Expenditures

Service	TANF		Total TANF
	Federal	State	
Employment	\$3,203,384.08	\$634,054.00	\$3,837,438.08
ESL Services	\$1,430,259.67	\$231,549.50	\$1,661,809.17
Total	\$4,633,643.75	\$865,603.50	\$5,499,247.25

SFY 2020 Total Expenditures

Service	ORR (Federal)	TANF	State GF-S	Total Fed/State
Employment	\$ 422,706.59	\$3,837,438.08	\$733,167.39	\$4,993,312.06
ESL	\$261,371.36	\$1,661,809.17	\$1,072,486.47	\$2,995,667.00
Support Services	\$32,922.05		\$128,329.14	\$ 161,251.19
Total	\$717,000.00	\$5,499,247.25	\$1,933,983	\$8,150,230.25

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The LEP Pathway uses a performance based contracting model with a standardized rate to measure program performance for all providers. For employment services, performance is defined as follows: a) percentage of unduplicated clients placed into jobs out of the total number of unduplicated clients in job search; b) total number of unduplicated clients who remained employed 90 days following the placement out of the total number of unduplicated clients who've been placed into jobs. For ESL, performance is measured by English language level gains determined through quarterly assessment. Providers now report outcomes through the ORIA eJAS system and both contractors and ORIA program managers can utilize the system to better track individual provider outcomes as well as those for the entire program.

The severe impacts of COVID-19 affected program outcomes for both the LEP Pathway employment and ESL programs. During this period, providers were able to submit a quarterly report in lieu of outcome goals that were not achievable due to the pandemic. For this reason, outcomes for some services were lower than in prior years.

In SFY 2020, the number of participants in the LEP Pathway increased slightly compared to the prior year. Even with the impacts of COVID-19 on the job market, some indicators of economic stability increased during SY20, such as hourly wage and job retention.

The table below shows participant and performance outcomes reported for SFY 2019, with a two year look-back.

Participant Success Story:

V arrived in the U.S from Ukraine in December of 2019. Soon after, he began working full-time to support his family of six and began taking evening ESL classes at Bellingham Technical College to improve his English skills and enhance his future opportunities.

V only had a few months to settle into his new life in the U.S. when the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything. He suddenly had to begin studying English remotely, which came with many challenges. He didn't have a computer and had to adjust to the distractions caused by having four children under the age of six at home. With patience and grace, V worked with BTC staff to figure out how to continue his studies. With the help of ORIA's Emergency Support Services funding, he was able to secure a laptop. He is able to stay focused and attend ESL Zoom lessons, often with a baby or toddler in his arms.

V can now discuss his children's birthdays and ages in English, ask for help in the grocery store and have basic conversations with coworkers. He is motivated to learn more English so he can continue to support his family.

Bellingham Technical College

Services and Outcomes	Count Type¹²	SFY18	SFY19	SFY20
Total Number of Unduplicated LEP Pathway Participants		4,585	3,992	4,116
Number of Employment Participants	Clients	3,243	2,699	2,875
Number of ESL Participants		2,613	2,199	2,152
Full ESL Level Gains	Services	922	1,139	776
Job Placements	Clients	1,567	1,212	1,309
Average Hourly Wage at Job Entry	Services	\$13.80	\$15.07	\$16.12
Full-Time		\$14.05	\$15.40	\$16.65
Part-Time		\$13.25	\$14.38	\$14.99
Number of Job Placements with Health Benefits	Services	476	257	290
Work Experience	Clients	174	203	148
Skills Training	Clients	49	62	73
Support Services	Services	857	498	610
Retention: Employed 90 Days After Placement	Services	1,216	1,079	1,078

¹² 'Clients' are unduplicated count and 'Services' are duplicated count.

ORIA BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) offers federal funding to plan and implement employment and training (E&T) programs for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called the Food Stamp Program) recipients. The program design helps recipients to gain skills, certificates, or work experience to improve their employment prospects and to reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. FNS offers two types of funding: 50 percent match for administrative costs and support services, and 100 percent federal funding to plan, implement and operate the program.

The Department administers the SNAP E&T program, known as the Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET) program in Washington state. It provides job search, job search training, job search assistance, educational services¹³, skills training, vocational education and employment assistance to Basic Food¹⁴ recipients who do not receive TANF. Unlike TANF, participation in BFET employment and training services is voluntary and there is no participation hour requirement. 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 has been providing services through BFET since October 2012. The goal of the program is to increase employment and training opportunities for eligible refugees and immigrants¹⁵ who might not qualify for LEP Pathway services but still need employment and training support to achieve economic stability. The BFET program through ORIA (ORIA BFET) offers the same services statewide as the general or "mainstream" BFET program, but it focuses on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate employment and training services to foreign-born individuals who have not naturalized. By administering the ORIA BFET program, ORIA leverages general state funding to match additional federal dollars for employment services that help program participants achieve economic stability and successfully integrate into their new communities.

In SFY 2020, ORIA provided ORIA BFET services through 12 contracts statewide. ORIA BFET contracts follow the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) schedule of October 1, 2019 thru September 30, 2020. These contractors include:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Refugee resettlement agencies
- Employment Security Department (ESD)

¹³ BFET educational services include adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and General Educational Development (GED).

¹⁴ Basic Food is Washington State's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.

¹⁵ Non-TANF non-refugee immigrants eligible for federal food benefits.

- Other organizations serving immigrants and refugees

See **Attachment B** for a list of FFY 2020¹⁶ contractors.

ELIGIBLE POPULATION

Federal food benefit recipients are eligible for ORIA BFET services when they are:

- Refugees or immigrants
- Age 16 and older
- Not recipients of TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance, and
- Not naturalized U.S. citizens, unless there are no available mainstream BFET services, in which case, the provider may serve U.S. citizens.

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 U.S. It complements LEP Pathway by serving refugees and immigrants who do not qualify for LEP Pathway such as non-refugees, non-TANF immigrants and refugees who have resided in the U.S. for over five years.

POPULATION SERVED

The following table shows ORIA BFET participant information for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020, with a two year look-back.

Participants	2018	2019	2020
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	1,018	834	784
Refugees	970	782	728
Immigrants (non-refugee)	48	52	56

SERVICES

BFET provides services to employable adults who receive federal food benefits. BFET does not pay for a four-year college degree, on-the-job wages, paid work experience, Workfare or the stipends provided in certain training programs.

¹⁶ BFET contracts operate on the federal fiscal year cycle: October through September.

ORIA BFET contractors are encouraged to partner with other BFET providers and to work with technical and community colleges to provide wraparound services to increase participant success. 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.

Services provided under ORIA BFET include:

A. Employment Services

ORIA BFET provides a package of structured employment and training activities to help participants seek and obtain suitable employment, including case management services, basic education and ESL, vocational education, job search, 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.

B. Retention Services

Once employed, ORIA BFET providers continue to offer services to participants for 90 days after job placement to help resolve initial employment barriers and achieve satisfactory work performance to increase job retention. Job retention services include: post-employment counseling, coaching and other case management activities, support services for transportation, clothing and other needs to maintain employment.

C. English as a Second Language (Basic Education)

ORIA BFET provides ESL training 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 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.

D. Support Services

ORIA BFET offers a broad range of goods and purchased services necessary for participants to successfully engage in or complete a BFET activity. Support services include work clothing, equipment or tools required for a job, testing fees, relocation expenses, transportation, permits and fees, emergency housing and utility assistance and childcare¹⁷.

¹⁷ Must be ineligible for other child care subsidies such as Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) and local programs offered by the county or city.

PROGRAM FUNDING

FNS offers 50 percent federal match for BFET related administrative and support services and 100 percent funding to plan, implement and operate BFET. ORIA leverages both of these funding sources for ORIA BFET services. The BFET program operates on the federal fiscal year (FFY) cycle (October – September). ORIA provides BFET Services with funding from two sources: state refugee and immigrant employment services funding and federal match grant. This requires a mix of federal funding from two consecutive years to run the program as the state fiscal year (SFY) ends on June 30.

PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

BFET operates on a cost reimbursement model and ORIA BFET contractors must incur costs associated with BFET services then seek reimbursements for those expenses from DSHS on a monthly basis to cover program expenditures. Upon review of each billing, DSHS will reimburse for eligible services from the contracted amount.

The following chart shows ORIA BFET expenditures and monthly caseload for SFY 2020:

Month	Clients Served	Total Expenditures
Jul-19	338	\$120,873.63
Aug-19	335	\$119,221.95
Sep-19	341	\$121,555.45
Oct-19	352	\$73,904.63
Nov-19	349	\$75,290.16
Dec-19	325	\$72,475.41
Jan-20	295	\$78,275.99
Feb-20	284	\$76,357.43
Mar-20	271	\$78,633.89
Apr-20	242	\$77,618.77

Participant Success Story:

After fleeing unsafe conditions in her home country, N was granted asylum in the U.S. July 2018. N new she needed a job and sought the assistance of an ORIA BFET provider.

She worked with an employment specialist to assess her challenges, barriers and strengths. She needed guidance and coaching to work on her confidence and cultural adjustment. She also needed skill building through job search activities English language training.

Her employment specialist helped her through the process from developing a resume to applying for jobs. They also provided case management around issues of health and wellbeing. Additionally, N had no family and few supports in the U.S., so her ORIA BFET provider assisted with support services to ensure her rent was paid on time and connected her to other community resources.

After submitting many applications online, N was offered a full time job as a stocker in a supermarket where her starting pay was \$15.60 per hour.

May-20	235	\$85,034.24
Jun-20	241	\$81,021.83

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Participant and performance outcomes shown below as of June 30, 2020:

Outcomes	2019	2020
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	834	784
Entered Employment ¹⁸	654	660
Full-Time	455	434
Part-Time	199	226
Average Wage	\$14.09	\$15.15
Full-Time	\$14.48	\$15.59
Part-Time	\$13.18	\$14.31
Retention: Employed 90 Days After Job Placement in the SFY	547	388

¹⁸ Total entered employment count is unduplicated for the report period but some individuals may have both full and part-time employment during the report period.

ATTACHMENT A

SFY 2020 LEP PATHWAY CONTRACTORS

PROVIDER	COUNTY	SERVICES
Asian Counseling & Referral Services	King	Employment
Bellingham Technical College	Whatcom	ESL
Career Path Services	Spokane	Employment
Clark College	Clark	ESL
Columbia Basin College	Benton, Franklin	ESL
Community Colleges of Spokane	Spokane	ESL
Diocese of Olympia	King	Employment, ESL
Highline Community College	King, Pierce	ESL
International Rescue Committee	King	Employment
Jewish Family Service	King	Employment
Lutheran Community Services	Clark	ESL
Neighborhood House	King	Employment
Partners in Careers	Clark	Employment
Puget Sound Training Center	King	Employment, Skills Training
Refugee Federation Service Center	King	Employment, Skills Training
Refugee & Immigrant Services NW	Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom	Employment, ESL
Refugee Women's Alliance	King	Employment, ESL
Renton Technical College	King	ESL
South Seattle College	King	ESL
Tacoma Community House	Pierce	Employment, ESL
TRAC Associates	King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston	Employment, Skills Training
World Relief- King	King	Employment, ESL
World Relief- Spokane	King	Employment
World Relief- Tri-Cities	Benton, Franklin	Employment

ATTACHMENT B

FFY 2020 ORIA BFET CONTRACTORS

PROVIDER	COUNTY	SERVICES
Asian Counseling & Referral Services	King	Employment & Training
Employment Security Department	Spokane	Employment & Training
Neighborhood House	King	Employment & Training
Partners in Careers	Clark	Employment & Training
Puget Sound Training Center	King	Employment & Training
Refugee Federation Service Center	King	Employment & Training
Refugee & Immigrant Services NW	Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom	Employment & Training
Refugee Women's Alliance	King	Employment & Training
TRAC Associates	King, Pierce, Snohomish	Employment & Training
World Relief- King	King	Employment & Training
World Relief- Spokane	King	Employment & Training

ATTACHMENT C¹⁹

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

1	<p>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 are limited.</p>	180 & below
2	<p>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
3	<p>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 which all tasks can be demonstrated.</p>	191-200

¹⁹ Source <https://www.casas.org/docs/pagecontents/eslsld.pdf?sfvrsn=8?Status=Master>

4	<p>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> <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>	201- 200
5	<p>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
6	<p>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