

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Refugee and Immigrant Employment Services

Chapter 297, Laws of 2022 (ESSB 5693 Section 205 (4))

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 297, Laws of 2022 (ESSB 5693 Section 205 (4)) requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to report to the Legislature annually on all sources of available funding for refugee and immigrant 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.

This report covers state fiscal year (SFY) 2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022).

Special Program Summary: Afghan and Ukrainian Crisis

SFY 2022 saw two unprecedented world events that significantly impacted the refugee resettlement program in Washington state. In September 2021, Washington established a joint coordinated effort between the DSHS Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) and the Afghan-American community to support the direct resettlement of more than 3,200 Afghan humanitarian parolees. After the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, Washington started to see growing numbers of Ukrainians arriving into our local communities seeking resources and supports.

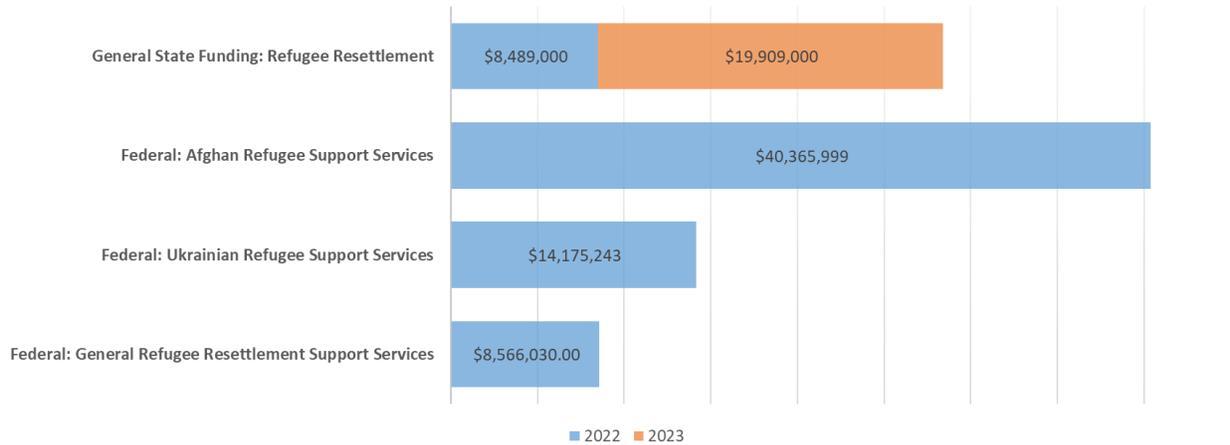
By the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022, Washington welcomed more than 15,000 newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants. This included nearly 3,300 Afghans resettled through Operation Allies Welcome, over 2,300 refugees resettled through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and more than 10,000 Ukrainians arriving through various pathways.

To respond to this critical need, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$8,489,000 for SFY 2022 and \$19,909,000 for SFY 2023 for DSHS to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide services to refugees and immigrants who arrived in Washington state on or after July 1, 2021, and are eligible for federal refugee resettlement services.¹ In addition to this funding, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement provided additional funding to Washington through appropriations approved by U.S. Congress to serve Afghan² and Ukrainian³ arrivals. Below is a chart with all related federal and state funding appropriated for SFY/FFY 2022. Additional funding will be allocated to Washington for FFY 2023.

¹ ESSB 5693, Section 205 (28), page 273.

² Funding appropriated through the Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022, and Additional Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022.

³ Funding appropriated through the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022.



With the additional funding, DSHS ORIA worked with community partners to build capacity and provide services to the growing number of arrivals. To support provider capacity, ORIA gave providers a 25% increase for their SFY 2022 budgets. In June 2022, ORIA established the Housing Stabilization Services Program by partnering with 12 organizations across the state to provide rental assistance to refugees. In June 2022, these providers served over 1,180 households reaching nearly 4,000 people and invested \$5.2 million into direct assistance. Beginning in SFY 2023, ORIA blended federal and state funding to invest more than \$15 million toward emergency rental assistance to ensure that refugees and humanitarian immigrants had a safety-net to keep them housed.

These additional resources also supported immigration-related legal services for Afghan humanitarian parolees, case management services, community outreach and education services, health navigation services, culturally responsive mental wellness support services as well as new employment and training programs. This legislative report focuses on the traditional programs funded by general state funding to support refugee and immigrant employment services.

ORIA Employment and Training Program Overview

ORIA is located within the 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 70 providers serve approximately 11,000⁴ individuals annually.

These services are comprised of 14 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 employment assistance, English as a Second Language (ESL)

⁴ ESA Briefing Book 2022: Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (RIA)

instruction, comprehensive case management, self-sufficiency education, asylee services, refugee health screenings, health case management, behavioral health services, unaccompanied refugee minor foster care, youth educational activities, elder services, technology access and digital inclusion, naturalization, and other services.

ORIA administers three employment and training programs that provide opportunities for a diverse range of people to access jobs and training needed to utilize their experience, build new skills and connect with employment opportunities that support them on the path to financial security. These programs are the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathway Program, the ORIA Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Program and the Career Ladder for Educated and Vocationally Experienced Refugees (CLEVER) Program. This report only explicitly documents the outcomes and expenditures for the LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET programs.

Each program offers individualized opportunities for participants to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to enter employment, whether it is a first job in the U.S. or reentry into a previous professional career. The LEP Pathway and 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, including community-based organizations, refugee resettlement agencies, employment agencies and community and technical colleges.

The LEP Pathway Program provides linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant services, and is separated into two key program areas that support integration and self-sufficiency: employment, and English language instruction. Services within these areas include employability assessments, pre-employment preparation, vocational-focused English language instruction, job search, targeted skills training, employment placement, job retention and support services. Work experience and community services placements are also 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 not receiving federal cash assistance, including TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). SNAP recipients 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 (e.g. adult basic education and ESL), workforce skills training (e.g. vocational education), post-employment services and support services.

The following table shows who is potentially eligible for each program:

Participation Eligibility: LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET

Participants	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET
Refugees and eligible humanitarian immigrants receiving TANF	✓	
Non-refugee immigrants receiving TANF	✓	
Refugees and eligible humanitarian immigrants receiving RCA	✓	
Refugees, non-TANF, not active RCA, 5 years or less in US and receiving federal food assistance	✓	✓
Refugees and eligible humanitarian immigrants not on any public assistance, 5 years or less in US	✓	
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 combine 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). ORIA increased capacity for all LEP Pathway providers to meet the growing community of Afghan and Ukrainian arrivals by adding \$2,191,057 of general-state funds designated for refugee and immigrant services for recent arrivals to the \$1,931,515 general state funds for refugee and immigrant employment and training services. 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 (E&T) Program.

The following tables show the total budget and expenditures for SFY 2022 refugee and immigrant employment services by funding source:

SFY 2022 Total Budgets: LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET

Funding Source	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET	TOTAL
TANF	\$ 5,600,000	N/A	\$ 5,600,000
ORR	\$ 1,559,962	N/A	\$ 1,559,962
GF-S	\$ 4,122,572	\$ 434,485	\$ 4,557,057

FNS (federal 50% match ⁵)	N/A	\$ 434,485	\$ 434,485
FNS (federal 100% upfront ⁶)	N/A	N/A	N/A
FNS (federal 100% mid-year ⁷)	N/A	\$ 195,211	\$ 195,211
TOTAL	\$ 11,282,534	\$1,064,181	\$ 12,346,715

SFY 2022 Total Expenditures by Program and Funding Source

Funding Source	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET	TOTAL
TANF	\$ 5,140,598	N/A	\$ 5,140,598
ORR	\$ 1,559,962	N/A	\$ 1,559,962
GF-S	\$ 4,122,572	\$ 404,481	\$ 4,527,053
FNS	N/A	\$ 599,692	\$ 599,692
TOTAL	\$ 10,823,132	\$ 1,004,173	\$ 11,827,305

LEP Pathway expenditures totaled \$10,823,132 for SFY 2022. ORIA BFET expenditures totaled \$1,004,173; this amount represents \$404,481 in state funds (GF-S) used to leverage \$599,692 in federal funds (50% match and 100% federal non-match).

Program Outcomes

In SFY 2022, the LEP Pathway program served 4,383 unduplicated participants in employment and ESL services. Program outcomes continued to be impacted by the ongoing pandemic, but services continued to be offered throughout the contract year. LEP Pathway contractors placed 1,258 participants into jobs, and 718 participants remained employed 90 days after being placed. Program outcomes in ESL are typically a measurement of level gains in the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Due to the transition to remote instruction during the pandemic, ORIA ESL providers were unable to conduct formal testing for most of SFY 2022 to determine English level gains. Formal assessments were slowly reintroduced during the year, and all providers will be formally assessing participant level gains in SFY 2023.

ORIA BFET served 582 unduplicated participants in SFY 2022. 89% of these participants were refugees or humanitarian immigrants. ORIA BFET providers placed 277 participants into jobs, with 91% retention rates reaching 90 days on the job during the year.

Challenges and Successes

⁵ FNS provides 50% federal matching dollars to GF-S dollars used to support the ORIA BFET program.

⁶ No state match needed.

⁷ Issued around July 1st each calendar year.

The LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET programs use state and federal resources to help individuals address barriers to achieving economic stability, and provide them with opportunities to thrive in their communities. Stable employment is essential to a family's self-sufficiency and successful integration into their community. Regardless of the barriers they face, refugees and immigrants possess a strong desire to thrive in their new community, and work hard to achieve economic stability for themselves and their families.

Many participants in ORIA's employment and training programs have come to Washington as refugees or humanitarian parolees who have fled persecution and oppression in their homelands. During SFY 2022, Washington state welcomed over 3,000 Afghans evacuated from their homeland and resettled in the United States through Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). Between January and July 2022, over 6,000 Ukrainians sought refuge in Washington. In addition to those two groups of arrivals, Washington continued to welcome refugees from around the world through the traditional resettlement program.

Many new arrivals 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. In addition to traditional barriers, the large number of arrivals put strain on the systems, which had to increase their capacity to serve large numbers of people in a short period of time. Throughout this unprecedented year, ORIA providers continued to offer services that addressed the multiple barriers refugees and immigrants can face when entering the workplace, all while tapping 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 set the stage for the success of future generations. Many new arrivals cannot speak English, while others cannot read or write in their primary language. This can slow the process of acquiring English language proficiency. Many people also need to develop new job skills to enter the U.S. job market. Cultural differences can play a role as well. For example, some communities have cultural norms that are less accepting of women or individuals over 50 years old entering 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 that can affect their employability, and do so in culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate ways. The primary goal is to prepare participants with the skills necessary to achieve economic stability and with resources to be able to thrive 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 and a large referral network. 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.

During SFY 2022, many refugees and immigrants continued to feel the impact of COVID-19. During the pandemic many refugees and immigrants lost their jobs, and reentry into the workforce system was challenging. Many employment providers also were challenged by the transition from remote services to in-person services. Many adopted a hybrid approach and offered both remote and in-person services, which was one positive outcome resulting from the pandemic. ORIA also invested federal funds in technology access and digital inclusion that benefited many participants in its employment and training programs.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) PATHWAY SERVICES

Washington state has a large and dynamic immigrant community and is traditionally among the top refugee receiving states in the nation⁸. During SFY 2022, Washington was one of the top destinations for Afghans arriving through OAW and Ukrainians arriving through the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program. According to the 2022 Census, out of Washington's total estimated population of 7,740,775, approximately 14.7% are foreign-born. In King County, the state's most populous county, 24.2% of families speak a language other than English at home⁹.

For over 25 years, the LEP Pathway program has provided an array of employment services targeted specifically toward individuals with limited English proficiency from a wide variety of countries and cultural backgrounds. 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 of services to increase participants' employability so they can achieve economic security and successfully integrate into their communities.

In SFY 2022, ORIA provided LEP Pathway services through 16 employment and 14 ESL contractors statewide with the following types of organizations:¹⁰

⁸ Refugee Processing Center: <https://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>

⁹ US Census Bureau, Quick Facts: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Washington](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/washington)

¹⁰ See **Appendix A** for a list of SFY 2022 LEP Pathway contractors.

- Community-based organizations
- Community and technical colleges
- Refugee resettlement agencies
- Other organizations serving refugees

LEP Pathway providers have a long history of serving individuals and families facing unique barriers. They have close ties to refugee and immigrant communities, are experienced in addressing participants' needs and culturally sensitive, and provide linguistically appropriate services. LEP Pathway providers employ individuals who have arrived in the U.S. as a refugee or immigrant themselves, allowing them to bring their personal experiences, culture and language to their work with new arrivals. This combination of personal experience, knowledge and skills in serving people who are refugees is critical to the success of the program.

LEP PATHWAY ELIGIBLE POPULATION

- LEP adults who receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). RCA recipients are limited to 12 months of cash assistance¹¹ from their date of arrival in the U.S. The statewide monthly average of RCA refugees in SFY 2022 was 529 adults¹².
- LEP adults who receive TANF. The statewide monthly average of eligible LEP adults on TANF in SFY 2022 was 1,876 or 9.6% of the total statewide TANF adult caseload¹³.
- LEP adults 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 LEP adults on SFA in SFY 2022 was 835 or 99% of the total statewide adult SFA caseload¹⁴.
- People who have refugee or another eligible humanitarian immigrant status and have resided in the U.S. 60 months or less.

The following chart¹⁵ shows SFY 2022 LEP Pathway participation by category:

¹¹ Per U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement Dear Colleague Letter 22-12, the RCA program expanded to serve eligible populations from eight months to up to 12 months. This went into effect March 28, 2022.

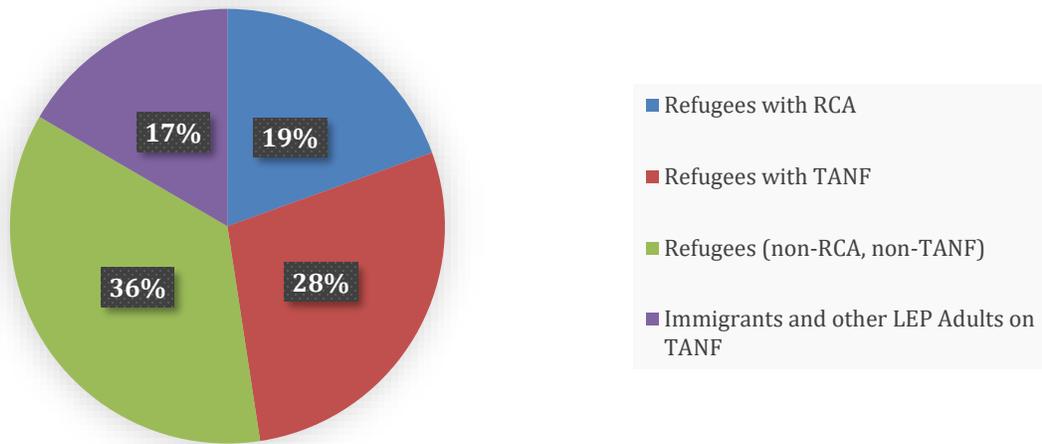
¹² Source: DSHS ACES data

¹³ Source: DSHS ACES data

¹⁴ Source: DSHS ACES data

¹⁵ Source: ORIA Database pulled as of October 20, 2022.

Unduplicated LEP Pathway Clients



LEP PATHWAY POPULATION SERVED

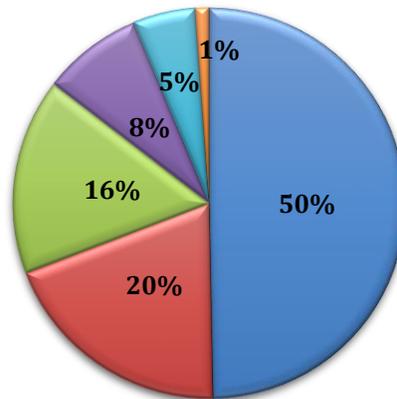
Participants in the LEP Pathway enter the program with a wide range of skills and challenges. LEP Pathway providers have significant experience in delivering services to people with diverse backgrounds, with ethnicity, education and cultural backgrounds of participants often changing from year-to-year. 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. 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. While many participants in the LEP Pathway program have multiple barriers, they are still highly motivated to get a job. 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 report¹⁶ indicated that 38% of the adult immigrant population in Washington is likely to have a college education or higher. For these individuals, the challenge of finding an appropriate job is 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 LEP Pathway and CLEVER to support these clients in addressing their unique challenges while incorporating existing skills and strengths.

¹⁶ <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-washington>

The chart below shows English skill level of TANF participants in the LEP Pathway. Using a standardized test across all providers, participants receive a language proficiency ranking from E1 to E6. Level 1 (E1) is the lowest level with zero to very limited English language skills. Level 2 (E2) is limited, but the individual has basic English language skills with limited vocabulary.¹⁷ 62% of participants tested at the lowest two levels of English, which is why specialized services and expertise of LEP Pathway providers are so critical.

ESL Levels of Participants



■ E1 (50%) ■ E2 (19%) ■ E3 (16%) ■ E4 (8%) ■ E5 (5%) ■ E6 (1%)

LEP PATHWAY SERVICES

The LEP Pathway program provides employment and English language services to adults receiving federal and state cash assistance and to eligible refugees and humanitarian immigrants who have resided in the U.S. for less than five years.

LEP Pathway providers work in partnership with Community Services Office staff to accept a referral, conduct an employability assessment and identify LEP Pathway work activities that the individual must participate in while receiving cash assistance. TANF and SFA recipients sign an Individual Responsibility Plan to acknowledge and agree to participate in these activities. RCA recipients also receive an employability assessment and employment is a priority due to the 12 month time limit for cash benefits. All participants in the LEP Pathway also receive a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan which identifies goals and outcomes for all members of the job seeker's household. Most LEP Pathway clients participate in both employment and English language services.

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

Employment Services

¹⁷ Appendix B provides a more detailed description of English language levels.

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

Developed for participants who have recently arrived to the U.S. and have little experience in the U.S. labor market. A computer and internet introduction workshop helps familiarize and train participants in techniques required for online job search.

Skills Training

Provides LEP participants with specialized preparation for jobs in targeted occupations. Skills trainings include commercial truck driving, culinary skills, certified nursing assistant, home care aid, driver's education and warehouse occupations.

Job Placement

Provides job search and job placement assistance to participants who are ready to enter the labor market. Employment opportunities are identified that match a participant's background, job skills and English proficiency.

Job Retention Assistance

Continued support is available for 90 days after employment to provide employee advocacy, skill building assistance, interpretation and worksite conflict resolution.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Services

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 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. LEP Pathway ESL services provide participants with work-related English language training to enhance 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).¹⁸ Due to the pandemic and the shift to remote learning, most providers paused CASAS testing because the formal assessment requires students to be onsite for the proctored exam. CASAS testing was fully resumed in the last quarter of SFY 2022.

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. One positive outcome of the pandemic was the implementation of hybrid learning models which included both onsite and remote access classes. ORIA funded technology access through the purchasing of student computer equipment and ongoing digital access training.

¹⁸ See **Appendix B** for a detailed description of CASAS proficiency levels.

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 Office. The list of ORIA-funded support services distributed to employment participants during the SFY 2022 included: technology equipment and access, public transportation, gasoline, car repair, work tools and clothing, educational expenses, licenses/fees and haircut/hygiene.

LEP PATHWAY PROGRAM FUNDING

ORIA blends multiple funding sources to support LEP Pathway services, including funds from the federal ORR, TANF block grant, and general state funds (GF-S).

SFY 2022 Budget

TANF – Federal/State	\$ 5,600,000
ORR	\$ 1,559,962
GF-S	<u>\$ 4,122,572</u>
	\$11,282,534

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.
- GF-S funding has the most flexibility as it can pay for services for anyone in the LEP Pathway. During SFY 2022, ORIA was able to utilize additional state funds to support increased participation and support providers as they increased capacity.

LEP PATHWAY PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

LEP Pathway contracts follow a state fiscal year schedule (July 1 to June 30). In SFY 2022, contractors entered into a performance-based contract structured on employment placements, job retention and English language level gains. This model meets 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.

LEP Pathway employment providers receive 95% of their contract maximum amount divided into 12 monthly payments which cover the costs of direct services for clients. Providers earn the remaining 5% of the contract maximum amount if they achieve their annual performance goals based on employment placement and job retention.

LEP Pathway ESL contractors receive 80% of their contract maximum amount, in four quarterly payments which cover the costs of direct instruction, program administration

and support services to clients. Providers earn the remaining 20% of the contract maximum amount if they achieve their quarterly performance goals based on a negotiated number of English language level gains.¹⁹

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 2022 for LEP Pathway services by funding source and service type, as of November 3, 2022:

SFY 2022 TANF Expenditures

Service	TANF		Total TANF
	Federal	State	
Employment	\$ 3,090,202	\$ 463,089	\$ 3,553,291
ESL Services	\$ 1,275,262	\$ 312,045	\$ 1,587,307
Total	\$ 4,365,464	\$ 775,134	\$ 5,140,598

SFY 2022 Total Expenditures

Service	ORR (Federal)	TANF	State GF-S	Total Fed/State
Employment	\$ 834,202	\$ 3,553,291	\$ 2,476,730	\$ 6,864,222
ESL	\$ 642,371	\$ 1,587,307	\$ 1,586,217	\$ 3,815,895
Support Services	\$ 83,390	\$0	\$ 59,626	\$ 143,016
Total	\$ 1,559,963	\$ 5,140,598	\$ 4,122,573	\$ 10,823,133

LEP PATHWAY 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,

¹⁹ As a result of the pandemic, all providers halted the assessment process due to the in-person nature of the testing. Due to the inability to assess using traditional methods, providers were not held to their traditional language level gains.

performance is defined as follows: a) percentage of unduplicated clients placed into jobs out of the total number of unduplicated clients in job search, and: 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. ESL provider performance is measured by English language level gains determined through quarterly assessment. Providers report outcomes through the ORIA eJAS system and both contractors and ORIA program managers can utilize the system to track individual provider's outcomes as well as outcomes for the entire program.

This table shows participant and performance outcomes, with a two year look-back.

Services and Outcomes	Count Type ²⁰	SFY20	SFY21	SFY22
Total Number of Unduplicated LEP Pathway Participants		4,116	3,118	4,383
Number of Employment Participants	Clients	2,875	2,172	2,944
Number of ESL Participants		2,152	1,405	2,265
Full ESL Level Gains ²¹	Services	776	113	270
Job Placements	Clients	1,309	797	1,258
Average Hourly Wage at Job Entry	Services	\$16.12	\$17.29	\$18.43
Full-Time		\$16.65	\$17.64	\$18.56
Part-Time		\$14.99	\$16.45	\$17.85
Number of Job Placements with Health Benefits	Services	290	176	314
Work Experience	Clients	148	42	83
Skills Training	Clients	73	66	96
Support Services	Services	610	455	670

²⁰ 'Clients' are unduplicated count and 'Services' are duplicated count.

²¹ ESL Level gains were lower than average due to the suspension of in-person testing.

Services and Outcomes	Count Type ²⁰	SFY20	SFY21	SFY22
Retention: Employed 90 Days After Placement	Services	1,078	658	718

ORIA BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (BFET)

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

DSHS administers the SNAP E&T program, known as the BFET program in Washington state. BFET provides job search training, job search assistance, educational services²², skills training, vocational education and employment assistance to Basic Food²³ 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 and displaced workers by preparing them for financial independence through skill acquisition 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 immigrants²⁴ 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 2022, ORIA BFET provided services through 11 contracts statewide.²⁵ ORIA BFET contracts follow the federal fiscal year schedule of October 1, 2021 thru September 30, 2022. These contractors include:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)

²² BFET educational services include adult basic education, ESL, and General Educational Development (GED).

²³ Basic Food is Washington state’s version of federal SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps.

²⁴ Non-TANF non-refugee immigrants eligible for federal food benefits.

²⁵ See **Appendix C** for a list of FFY 2022 contractors.

- Refugee resettlement agencies
- Other organizations serving immigrants and refugees

ORIA BFET 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 RCA, 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.

ORIA BFET POPULATION SERVED

The following table shows ORIA BFET participant information, with a two year look-back.

Participants	2020	2021	2022
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	784	576	582
Refugees	728	537	520
Immigrants (non-refugee)	56	39	62

ORIA BFET 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.

ORIA BFET contractors are encouraged to partner with other BFET providers and 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:

Employment Services

Refugee and Immigrant Employment Services
January 1, 2023

ORIA BFET provides a package of structured employment and training activities to help participants seek and obtain suitable employment, including: case management services; vocational education; job search; job search workshops; computer basics workshops; labor market information; job seeking skills instruction; resume writing; job skills assessment; counseling; life skills and work ethic training; and job placement services.

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; and support services for transportation, clothing and other needs to maintain employment.

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 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.

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 but are not limited to: work clothing; equipment or tools required for a job; testing fees; relocation expenses; transportation; permits and fees; emergency housing and utility assistance; and childcare²⁶.

ORIA BFET PROGRAM FUNDING

FNS offers 50% federal match for BFET-related administrative and support services and 100% funding to plan, implement and operate BFET. ORIA leverages these funding sources for ORIA BFET services. The BFET program operates on the federal fiscal year 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 ends on June 30th.

ORIA BFET PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

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

²⁶ Must be ineligible for other child care subsidies such as Child Care Subsidy Program and programs offered by the county or city.

The following chart shows ORIA BFET expenditures and caseload data for SFY 2022:

Month	Clients Served	Total Expenditures
Jul-21	241	\$97,408.38
Aug-21	251	\$108,085.83
Sep-21	263	\$158,591.18
Oct-21	263	\$76,493.02
Nov-21	239	\$76,863.25
Dec-21	225	\$78,739.22
Jan-22	216	\$71,176.82
Feb-22	199	\$60,485.18
Mar-22	203	\$67,372.46
Apr-22	192	\$65,006.45
May-22	211	\$71,231.28
Jun-22	212	\$72,720.54

ORIA BFET PROGRAM OUTCOMES

This table shows participant and performance outcomes reported for SFY 2022, with a one year look-back.

Outcomes	2021	2022
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	576	582
Entered Employment ²⁷	347	277
Full-Time	222	183
Part-Time	125	100
Average Wage	\$16.80	\$17.66
Full-Time	\$17.55	\$18.11
Part-Time	\$15.46	\$16.84
Retention: Employed 90 Days After Job Placement in the SFY	296	253

²⁷ 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.

APPENDIX A

SFY 2022 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
Family Learning Center	Benton, Franklin	ESL
Highline Community College	King, Pierce	ESL
International Rescue Committee	King	Employment
Jewish Family Service	King	Employment, Skills Training
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	Spokane	Employment
World Relief- Tri-Cities	Benton, Franklin	Employment

APPENDIX B

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

1	<p>Beginning Literacy / Pre-Beginning ESL</p> <p><u>Listening/Speaking:</u> Functions minimally, if at all in English. Communicates only through gestures and a few isolated words.</p> <p><u>Reading/Writing:</u> May not be literate in any language.</p> <p><u>Employability:</u> 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><u>Listening/Speaking:</u> 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><u>Reading/Writing:</u> Recognizes and writes letters and numbers and reads and understands common sight words. Can write own name and address.</p> <p><u>Employability:</u> Can handle only routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English in which all tasks are easily demonstrated.</p>	181- 190
3	<p>High Beginning ESL</p> <p><u>Listening/Speaking:</u> 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><u>Reading/Writing:</u> 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><u>Employability:</u> 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

4	<p>Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Can satisfy basic survival needs and 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 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

APPENDIX C

FFY 2022 ORIA BFET CONTRACTORS

PROVIDER	COUNTY	SERVICES
Asian Counseling & Referral Services	King	Employment & Training
Neighborhood House	King	Employment & Training
Partners in Careers	Clark	Employment & Training
Refugee Federation Service Center	King	Employment & Training
Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest	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