

Report to the Legislature

Refugee and Immigrant Employment Services:

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

As Required by ESSB 6052, Chapter 4, Laws of 2015, Section 207

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6052, Chapter 4, Laws of 2015, Section 207 requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS or the Department) to report to the Legislature annually on all sources of available funding for refugee and immigrant employment services during the current fiscal year, amounts expended to date by service type and funding source, the number of participants served, and program outcome data.

This report covers the most recently completed state fiscal year (SFY) 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015). The data available for current SFY 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016) is limited.

Program Overview

The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is located within the DSHS, Economic Services Administration, Community Services Division and is designated by the Governor's Office to administer \$25 million in federal and state dollars to more than 60 providers, serving more than 9,000¹ refugee and immigrant clients in Washington state annually. ORIA services include refugee cash/medical assistance (RCA/RMA), comprehensive case management, self-sufficiency education, immigration assistance, refugee medical screening and mental health services, employment assistance, English as a second language (ESL) services, unaccompanied refugee minor foster care, youth educational activities, elderly services and naturalization services.

ORIA oversees employment and ESL services to eligible refugees and immigrants through its Limited English Proficient (LEP) Pathway program (LEP Pathway or Pathway) and the ORIA Basic Food Employment and Training (ORIA BFET) program. LEP Pathway employment and ORIA BFET services are provided through ORIA's contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs), voluntary refugee resettlement agencies (VOLAGs), the state's Employment Security Department, and other employment agencies. ESL services are provided through ORIA's contracts with local community and technical colleges and community-based organizations.

The LEP Pathway program provides specialized and culturally appropriate services that lead to employment. LEP Pathway services include employability assessments, pre-employment preparation services, ESL instruction, job search, skills training, employment placement assistance, job retention, and support services. Additionally,

¹ ESA Program Briefing Book 2014 Annual Unduplicated Clients Served report for Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (RIA) 9,481 unduplicated clients for SFY 2014 DSHS Offices (ESA & HCS). This count includes clients served by the following ORIA programs: LEP Pathway, Refugee Resettlement Assistance and Naturalization Services.

Work Experience (WEX) and Community Services (CS) placements are available to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.

The ORIA BFET program provides job search, job search training (soft skills), educational services (adult basic education and ESL), workforce skills training (vocational education), assistance with establishing small businesses, post-employment services, support services and other employment opportunities to Basic Food recipients who are not participating in the state’s TANF program. Participation in BFET employment and training services is voluntary and there is no participation hour requirement.

Comparison Chart between LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET Eligible to Participate

Participants	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET
Refugees receiving TANF	✓	
Non-Refugee immigrants receiving TANF	✓	
Refugees, non-TANF, 5 years or less in U.S. (includes RCA)	✓	✓ ²
Refugees not on any public assistance, 5 years or less in U.S.	✓	
Refugees, non-TANF over 5 years in U.S. ³		✓
Non-refugee immigrants, non-TANF and federal food recipient regardless of time in country		✓

Program Budget and Expenditures

ORIA receives TANF and general state funds (GF-S) and partners with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to combine multiple funding sources and a mix of state/federal dollars to provide LEP Pathway and ORIA BFET employment services to eligible clients.

The following tables show the total budget and expenditures for SFY 2015 refugee and immigrant employment services by funding source:

² Must receive Basic Food Assistance (BFA, federal food benefits).
³ *Id.*

SFY 2015 Total Budget

	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET	TOTAL	Notes
TANF	\$ 4,616,300	N/A	\$ 4,616,300	
ORR	\$ 1,783,200	N/A	\$ 1,783,200	
GF-S	\$ 1,934,471	\$ 431,177	\$ 2,365,648	
FNS	N/A	\$ 431,777	\$ 431,777	federal 50% match ⁴
FNS	N/A	\$ 320,000	\$ 320,000	Federal 100% ⁵ upfront
FNS	N/A	\$ 171,024	\$ 171,024	federal 100% ⁶ mid-yr ⁷
TOTAL	\$ 8,333,971	\$ 1,353,978	\$ 9,687,949	

SFY 2015 Total Expenditures by Service and Funding Source

	LEP Pathway	ORIA BFET	TOTAL
TANF	\$ 4,490,845	N/A	\$ 4,490,845
ORR	\$ 1,753,340	N/A	\$ 1,753,340
GF-S	\$ 1,934,397	\$ 363,074	\$ 2,297,471
FNS	N/A	\$ 858,904	\$ 858,904
TOTAL	\$ 8,178,582	\$ 1,221,978	

LEP Pathway expenditures totaled \$ 8,178,582 for SFY 2015 as of October 21, 2015⁸.

ORIA BFET expenditures, as of June 30, 2015 totaled \$1,221,978. This amount represents \$363,074 in state funds (GF-S) used to leverage \$858,904 in federal funds (50% match and 100% federal non-match).

Program Outcomes

In SFY 2015, the LEP Pathway program served 4,541⁹ unduplicated participants in both employment and ESL. LEP Pathway contractors placed 1,734¹⁰ participants into jobs representing 47% of participants receiving employment services, and 455 of those jobs reported to have health benefits. In addition, 1,440 (83%) participants retained their job for 30 days and 1,150 (66%) were employed at least up to 90 days with the same

⁴ FNS provides 100% federal matching dollars to GF-S dollars used to support the ORIA BFET program.

⁵ No state match needed.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Issued around July 1 each calendar year.

⁸ Some June invoices have not been paid by report creation date.

⁹ Total unduplicated count includes clients who entered employment in SFY15 but were not captured until providers reported 30/90-day retentions in SFY16 for jobs with start dates in SFY15. This count differs from the ESA Briefing Book which reflects client count as reported through June 2015.

¹⁰ *Id.*

employer. Participants in the ESL programs made 891 full ESL level gains in the skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

ORIA BFET served 1,111 unduplicated participants in SFY 2015, of which 1,033 were refugees and 78 were non-refugee immigrants. ORIA BFET providers placed just over 50% or 554 participants into jobs and out of those 85% or 472 participants reached 90 days on the job during the year.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway Services

BACKGROUND

Washington State has a large and dynamic immigrant community and is ranked ninth in the nation for resettling refugees¹¹. According to the 2014 U.S. Census estimate, 18.5% of the families in Washington speak a language other than English¹². In King County, the state's most populous county, 25.9% of the families residing in the county speak a language other than English at home¹³. These numbers reflect a 2% and 3% increase respectively over the 2010 U.S. Census numbers.

The LEP Pathway program began as a pilot project in King County in May 1999 and was implemented statewide in October 1999 to provide an array of employment services targeted specifically for non-English speaking people from a wide variety of countries and cultural backgrounds. The LEP Pathway provides specialized services to refugees and other WorkFirst parents¹⁴ with limited English skills to increase their employability and place them into jobs intended to lead to self-sufficiency.

The LEP Pathway aims to provide a single, seamless program for services to increase participants' employability so they can become self-sufficient and successfully integrate into their communities.

In SFY 2015, ORIA provided LEP Pathway services through 37 contracts statewide with 28 contractors that represent the following types of organizations:

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

See **Attachment A** for a list of SFY 2015 LEP Pathway contractors.

All LEP Pathway providers have a history of serving refugees and immigrants. They have close ties to refugee and immigrant communities, are experienced in addressing their needs, and are able to provide bilingual/bicultural services. Many LEP Pathway providers employ former refugees who are able to bring their personal resettlement experiences into their work with newly arrived refugees. This combination of awareness,

¹¹ Refugee Processing Center: <http://www.wrapsnet.org/Reports/AdmissionsArrivals/tabid/211/Default.aspx>

¹² US Census Bureau, Quick Facts: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53000.html>

¹³ US Census Bureau, Quick Facts: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/53033.html>

¹⁴ TANF/SFA recipients who are required to participate in employment, job search, or training components to receive cash benefits.

knowledge and skills in serving refugees is critical to the success of the program.

ELIGIBLE POPULATION

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

- Receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)¹⁵. RCA recipients are limited to eight (8) months of cash assistance from the day they arrive to the U.S. The statewide monthly average of RCA refugees in SFY 2015 was 473 adults.
- Receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance¹⁶. The statewide monthly average of LEP adults on TANF in SFY 2015 was 3,196 or about 13.5% of the total statewide TANF adult caseload.
- Receive State Family Assistance (SFA)¹⁷. SFA is a state-funded TANF program for legal immigrants who are ineligible for TANF under federal rules. The statewide monthly average of LEP clients on SFA in SFY 2015 was 860, or about 99% of the total statewide SFA caseload.
- Have a current status as a refugee, do not receive cash assistance, and have resided in the U.S. for 60 months or less. The term ‘refugee’ under this report includes other immigration statuses allowed access to refugee benefits under federal law, which comprises of: refugee, asylee, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Amerasian, victims of trafficking and Iraqi/Afghan Special Immigrants.

POPULATION SERVED

The following table shows SFY 2015 LEP Pathway participant information:

Participants¹⁸	
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	4,541¹⁹
Refugees on RCA	594
Refugees on TANF	2,148
Refugees (non-RCA, non-TANF)	799

¹⁵ Source: DSHS ACES data, <http://emaps.esa.dshs.wa.gov/DataWebObj/Default.aspx>

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Data Source: RIA Database pulled as of October 20, 2015.

¹⁹ Total unduplicated count includes clients who entered employment in SFY15 but were not captured until providers reported 30/90-day retentions in SFY16 for jobs with start dates in SFY15. This count differs from the ESA Briefing Book which reflects client count as reported through June 2015.

Participants¹⁸	
LEP Adults on TANF/SFA and Other Referred LEP Adults	1000

Participants in the LEP Pathway enter the program with a wide-range of skills and challenges. LEP Pathway providers are experienced in delivering services to populations whose ethnicity, education and cultural background can change from year to year and develop programs and strategies to address changing needs. Many of these clients came with very limited education prior to their arrival in the U.S. and some are not literate in their native language. Clients with the lowest English proficiency levels 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.

For highly educated refugees and immigrants, the challenge of finding a job can be exacerbated if they are unable to utilize their previous experience and education in the U.S. Many refugees also struggle with the related issues of trauma, physical challenges and the pressure of learning to navigate multiple systems in the U.S. The LEP Pathway supports these clients in addressing their unique challenges while incorporating existing skills and strengths.

SERVICES

The LEP Pathway Program provides employment and ESL 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 employability assessment and identify the LEP Pathway work activities that the individual must participate in while receiving cash assistance. TANF and SFA recipients must sign an Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) to acknowledge and agree to participate in these activities. RCA recipients also need an employability assessment and must be prioritized due to the eight-month time limit for cash benefits. Most often, LEP Pathway clients participate in employment services coupled with ESL services.

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

A. Employment Services

The LEP Pathway Program participants receive an Employability Assessment to determine their educational level, English proficiency, work experience, and barriers to

employment. Using results from the Employability Assessment, participants are placed into one or more of the following activities to help them find work:

- Job Search Workshops – These may be provided to participants who have recently arrived to the U.S. and have little experience in the U.S. labor market. A Basic Computer and Internet Introduction Workshop may be provided to introduce and train participants in the techniques required for online job search.
- Work Experience (WEX) and Community Service (CS) – Work activities to improve the employability of LEP TANF parents by providing hands-on experience in a supportive and monitored work environment. Participants practice positive employee behaviors and learn new job skills.
- Skills Training – Job Skills Training provided to LEP participants in selected occupations. Participants selected for training should have the skills and abilities to perform the job in the targeted field after training completion.
- Job Placement – Job Search and Job Placement assistance to participants who are ready to enter the labor market, referrals to employment opportunities that match their background, job skills, English proficiency, and abilities.
- Job Retention Assistance – Continued support is provided for a maximum of ninety (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)

One of the most significant challenges to employment 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 a living wage job. The ability to communicate in English increases opportunities to obtain higher wage jobs and integrate more easily into local communities. 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 provide ESL classroom instruction to participants who have been assessed at ESL levels 1-6.

C. Transportation Support Services

Support services provide funds to help non-TANF refugee participants address transportation barriers in order to participate in LEP Pathway activities. TANF recipients receive support services through their local DSHS offices.

D. LEP Pathway Expansion

ORIA continuously seeks to provide effective and innovative employment and ESL services to address changing and widely varying needs of refugee and immigrant participants. The following service expansions were utilized in SFY 2015:

- Skills Training Pilots - Access and acceptance into mainstream skills training programs is often difficult for Pathway participants due to advanced English language requirements. To offer job skills training services to Pathway participants, DSHS implemented an expansion of services that included skills training.

DSHS utilized a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, which concluded at the end of March 2014, to select LEP Pathway contractors to provide Skills Training services under the LEP Pathway expansion pilot project. Bidders were required to conduct industry research to ensure that there was demand for the skills training they proposed. Four CBOs and Everett Community College received contracts for Skills Training in the following industry areas: Electronic Assembly, Warehouse Career, Commercial Truck Driving, Home Care Aid, Customer Service.

- Intensive ESL Pilots - The Intensive ESL model was developed to provide newly arrived refugees with the lowest levels of English with concentrated and contextualized English language instruction for a period of six months. Intensive ESL expands the traditional 12 hours of LEP Pathway instruction to 20 hours per week. The curriculum focuses on not only the language needed for the U.S. job market, but also on the language needed to successfully integrate into the community.

Four providers offered Intensive ESL classes during SFY15. A total of 69 students participated in the classes. 48% of the students completing at least one quarter of Intensive ESL made a full level gain during their participation in the project. This is higher than the average of 32% in regular LEP Pathway ESL courses.

PROGRAM FUNDING

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

The following chart shows total available funding for SFY 2015:

SFY 2015 Budget

TANF – Federal/State	\$ 4,616,300
ORR – TAG	\$ 1,008,910
ORR – RSS	\$ 774,290
GF-S	<u>\$ 1,934,471</u>
	\$ 8,333,971

There are specific requirements for each funding source listed above:

- TANF funding can only be used for employment services to TANF recipients. This funding is not restricted by immigration status and can be used to serve any LEP adult receiving TANF/SFA.
- ORR Refugee Social Service (RSS) funding can only be used to serve refugees who have been in the country for 60 months or less. In addition, a portion of ORR funding, the Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG), is targeted to refugees residing in two counties in our state because of the high concentration of refugees living in them. These two counties are King and Spokane.
- GF-S funding has the most flexibility as it can be used for anyone in the LEP Pathway.

PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

The total budget amount listed in the previous 'Program Funding' section represents the maximum funding ORIA may issue in contracts to cover services for a fiscal year. LEP Pathway contracts follow a state fiscal year schedule (July 1 to June 30). In SFY 2015, Contractors entered into a performance-based contract that was structured on the achievement of specific outcome goals. This contracting model meets the performance based outcome criteria for contracting required by the Governor's Executive Order 10-02, Performance Based Contracting. Under this model, Contractors receive 80% of their annual contract amount on a monthly basis to cover the costs to provide services. The remaining 20% is earned when contractors achieve their quarterly performance outcomes. Service providers must provide eligible services and bill ORIA in order to receive disbursements from this budget.

Contractors submit invoices for employment services on a monthly basis and for ESL services on a quarterly basis, and are allowed to submit billings up to 45 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 2015 for LEP Pathway services by funding

source and service type, as of October 21, 2015²⁰:

SFY 2015 TANF Expenditures

Service	TANF		Total TANF
	Federal	State	
Employment	\$ 2,436,341	\$ 494,163	\$ 2,930,504
ESL Services	\$ 1,500,980	\$ 59,361	\$ 1,560,341
Total	\$ 3,937,321	\$ 553,524	\$ 4,490,845

SFY 2015 Federal ORR and GF-S Expenditures

Service	ORR (Federal)		Total ORR (Federal)	State GF-S	Total Fed/State
	RSS	TAG			
Employment	\$ 501,065	\$ 484,652	\$ 985,717	\$ 1,524,778	\$ 2,510,495
ESL	\$ 214,263	\$ 518,022	\$ 732,285	\$ 386,439	\$ 1,118,724
Support Services	\$ 29,102	\$ 6,236	\$ 35,338	\$ 23,180	\$ 58,518
Total	\$ 744,430	\$ 1,008,910	\$ 1,753,340	\$ 1,934,397	\$ 3,687,737

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The LEP Pathway uses a performance based contracting model and LEP Pathway performance outcomes are negotiated at the beginning of each contract year. For employment services, performance is measured by 30-day and 90-day job retention at the same employer. For ESL, performance is measured by the achievement of literacy skills as determined by quarterly literacy testing. Program outcomes are identified through monthly or quarterly reporting by contractors that accompany invoices submitted for payment.

Participant and performance outcomes reported for SFY 2015, with a two-year look-back are shown below:

²⁰ Some June invoices have not been paid by report creation date.- still by 12/2015?

Services and Outcomes	Count Type ²¹	SFY13	SFY14	SFY15
Total Number of Unduplicated LEP Pathway Participants	Clients	4,603	4,628	4,541 ²²
# Employment Service Participants		3,738	3,784	3,675 ²³
# ESL Services Participants		2,448	2,526	2,279
Full ESL Level Gains (Levels 1-6)	Services	797	886	891
Number of Job Placements	Clients	1,325	1,661	1,734 ²⁴
Average Hourly Wage at Job Entry	Services	\$10.13	\$10.40	\$10.69
Full-Time		\$10.30	\$10.49	\$10.77
Part-Time		\$9.89	\$10.24	\$10.52
Number of Job Placements with Health Benefits	Services	356	529	455
Work Experience (WEX)	Clients	99	87	185
Community Services (CS)	Clients	8	1	0
Skills Training	Clients	89	134	110
Intensive ESL	Clients	N/A	N/A	69
Support Services	Services	434	882	1,007
Retention - Employed 30 Days After Job Placement	Services	1,210	1,286	1,440
Retention - Employed 90 Days After	Services	979	975	1,150

²¹ 'Clients' are unduplicated count and 'Services' are duplicated count.

²² Total unduplicated count includes clients who entered employment in SFY15 but were not captured until providers reported 30/90-day retentions in SFY16 for jobs with start dates in SFY15. This count differs from the ESA Briefing Book which reflects client count as reported through June 2015.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Refugees arrive in Washington State having 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 with 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 skills needed for employment, limited previous education and challenges navigating U.S. systems. LEP Pathway providers provide services which address not only the multiple barriers refugees and immigrants can face when entering the workplace, but they also offer services which utilize the client's unique strengths.

For newly arrived refugees, economic self-sufficiency is the key to a family's ability to thrive and successfully integrate into the community. However, many new arrivals cannot speak English, some cannot read or write in their own language, and many need to develop new job skills to become employable in a scarce job market. In addition, cultural differences also enter into the picture. For some groups, there are cultural norms against having women or individuals over 50 years old in the workplace. In those cultures, women may be expected to care for the family. Those who are older are considered "elders," beyond employment age. Regardless of these cultural factors, some refugees still feel compelled by their economic situation to enter the workplace even if it is counter to what they view as appropriate.

The LEP Pathway Program addresses these issues and many other needs of LEP participants. The primary goal is to prepare participants for self-sufficiency. Participants are referred to employment and ESL service providers close to their home and most are able to access services immediately. Through other funding, many LEP Pathway providers are able to help mitigate additional barriers that can impact self-sufficiency, such as medical, mental health, housing and immigration. Providers also have extensive partnerships with existing community resources to help address additional issues.

LEP Pathway providers work closely with local businesses and have established close ties with employers who have a history of hiring LEP individuals. Some employers will hire participants based on the service provider's reference, especially when the participant has no U.S. work experience. Employers are interested in hiring LEP Pathway participants because they often demonstrate a strong work ethic and willingness to learn.

The LEP Pathway Program use state and federal resources to help individuals mitigate barriers and thrive in their communities. Pathway providers are successfully preparing participants for employment by offering them an array of services to enhance their employability. Participants continue to show their resilience and ability to integrate more quickly by attending classes and workshops, working closely with their employment counselors and accepting available employment.

One of the best ways to understand the success of the LEP Pathway is through the stories of those served through the program. Tela arrived as a refugee from Afghanistan with her new husband, where they had survived war and trauma. Within days of their arrival, they were referred to an LEP Pathway provider to find jobs and learn English. When Tela began, she could barely respond to greetings and struggled to write her name in English. But what she lacked in English skills, she more than made up in determination and hard work. She made rapid progress and within six months her employment caseworker was able to find her an entry level job. Tela continued to take night classes after a full day at work and within six more months her English had progressed to the point she was ready for a better job. She returned to her employment specialist, who was able to assist her in getting a better job at a higher wage. Tela and her husband are now starting a family and their new lives are filled with promise.

BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (BFET)

BACKGROUND

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 to gain skills, training or 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.

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 services²⁵, skills training, vocational education, and employment assistance to Basic Food²⁶ 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 to increase employment and training opportunities for eligible refugees²⁷ and immigrants²⁸ who do not qualify for LEP Pathway services but still need employment and training support toward self-sufficiency regardless of the number of years they have resided in the U.S. 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 additional federal dollars for employment services that help program participants achieve self-sufficiency and successfully integrate into their new communities.

In SFY 2015, ORIA provided ORIA BFET services through 13 contracts statewide. ORIA BFET contracts follow the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) schedule of October 1, 2014 thru September 30, 2015. These contractors include:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Voluntary Refugee Resettlement Agencies (VOLAGs)

²⁵ BFET educational services include adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language, and General Educational Development (GED).

²⁶ Basic Food is Washington State's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps.

²⁷ Refugees in the U.S. for five years or more.

²⁸ Non-TANF non-refugee immigrants eligible for federal food benefits.

- Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Other organizations serving immigrants and refugees

See **Attachment B** for a list of FFY 2015²⁹ contractors.

ELIGIBLE POPULATION

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

- Refugees and Immigrants
- Age 16 and older,
- Do not receive TANF, and
- Not naturalized 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-refugee, 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, 2014 – June 30, 2015:

Participants	2014	2015
Total Unduplicated Participants Served	1,114	1,111
Refugees	1,020	1,033
Immigrants (non-refugee)	94	78

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 (WEX), Work Fare, or the stipends provided in certain training programs.

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

²⁹ BFET contracts operate on the federal fiscal year cycle: October through September.

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 to 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 provide 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.

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 based on the Washington ESL Adult Learning Standards to determine the participant's initial ESL level. Contractors are also encouraged to work with BFET contracted community and technical colleges to provide ESL training to program participants.

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 child care³⁰.

³⁰ 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% federal match for BFET related administrative and support services and 100% 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.

The following table shows the allocated budget for FFY 2014 and FFY 2015 which make up SFY 2015 as follows:

	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	SFY 2015
State 50% Match	\$ 430,122	\$ 431,529	\$ 431,177
Fed. 50% Match	\$ 430,122	\$ 431,529	\$ 431,177
Fed. 100% ³¹ upfront	\$ 250,000	\$ 320,000	\$ 320,000
Fed. 100% ³² mid-yr. ³³	\$ 171,024	\$ 210,528	\$ 171,024
Total	\$ 1,281,268	\$ 1,393,586	\$ 1,353,378

GF-S funds used to leverage federal match in SFY 2014 came from existing LEP Pathway contracts.

PROGRAM DISBURSEMENTS

BFET operates on a 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 costs. Upon review of each billing, DSHS will reimburse for eligible services from the contracted amount.

ORIA BFET contract expected³⁴ expenditures as of June 30, 2015, totaled \$1,221,978. This amount represents \$363,074 in state funds (GF-S) used to leverage \$ 858,904 in federal funds (50% match and 100% federal non-match).

³¹ No state match needed.

³² *Id.*

³³ General issued around July 1 each calendar year.

³⁴ Some June invoices have not been paid by report creation date.

The following chart shows ORIA BFET expenditures and monthly caseload for SFY 2015:

Month	Clients Served	Total Expenditure
Jul-14	450	\$ 107,561.07
Aug-14	429	\$ 123,541.35
Sep-14	419	\$ 101,128.37
Oct-14	440	\$ 102,310.20
Nov-14	452	\$ 92,609.80
Dec-14	443	\$ 111,132.93
Jan-15	476	\$ 105,914.99
Feb-15	467	\$ 100,805.60
Mar-15	469	\$ 98,383.11
Apr-15	478	\$ 95,688.32
May-15	489	\$ 96,565.31
Jun-15	493	\$ 86,337.22

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Participant and performance outcomes shown below as of June 30, 2015:

Outcomes	2014	2015
Entered Employment ³⁵	447	554
Full-Time	305	400
Part-Time	151	163
Average Wage	\$ 10.30	\$ 10.32
Full-Time	\$ 10.34	\$ 10.36
Part-Time	\$10.23	\$ 10.23
Retention - Employed 90 Days After Job Placement in the SFY	386	472

³⁵ 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.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Refugee resettlement in the U.S. was characterized in the early years by large numbers of individuals and families from a limited number of countries. These groups generally resettled with family or friends already living in the U.S. That pattern changed over the past decade in part due to world events and in part due to the U.S. government's efforts with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to make third country resettlement viable for an increasing numbers of refugees from a broader range of the world's approximate 15.4 million refugee population.

In FFY 2015³⁶, the top three countries of origin for refugees admitted to the U.S. are:

- Burma
- Iraq, and
- Democratic Republic of Congo

According to the U.S. Homeland Security Office, Yearbook of Immigration Statics 2013³⁷, 990,553 individuals obtained legal permanent resident status in FFY 2013. Their birth country by region is as follows:

- 40% Asia
- 32% North America
- 10% Africa
- 9% Europe
- 8% South America
- 1% Oceania

Having 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. Though many newly arriving refugees and immigrants have limited English and job skills, they possess a strong desire to succeed and derive in their new home country and are willing to work hard to achieve self-sufficient for themselves and their families.

In its third year, the ORIA BFET program continues to provide vital support to help refugees and immigrants reach better lives and opportunities for themselves and their families. Here are two illustrations of their success:

- Ibrahim is a 51 year Sudanese refugee who resettled alone in Spokane in 2012. In addition to taking care of himself, he also has the responsibility of supporting six family members who remain in Sudan. He does not read or write in any language, and speaks very little English. He worked hard to find employment but could not secure stable, full-time employment on his own until he started working with an

³⁶ <http://www.wrapsnet.org/Reports/AdmissionsArrivals>

³⁷ http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_yb_2013_0.pdf

ORIA BFET provider in 2014. With assistance from this provider he obtained two part-time jobs with good local companies in a short time. Though he was very happy to work, he nearly walked away from a good position because he was frustrated by the computerized sign-in system they use for their employees. Upon hearing of this issue, the ORIA BFET provider visited the worksite and worked with the employer, who values Ibrahim's work ethic and determination, to find another sign-in system to enable Ibrahim to continue to work for the employer. Ibrahim is now working full-time for that employer.

- Congolese refugee siblings Joseph, Dyna, and Aaron arrived in the Seattle area in July 2014 with their single mother and two other younger siblings. Their mother nurtures and takes care of them but speaks nearly no English and has no transferrable skills. Though they are barely out of their teens, they understood how difficult it would be for her to get a job, so they decided to take on the responsibility of supporting their family on their own. Aaron was referred to the LEP Pathway program and the ORIA BFET case manager worked extensively to coach Joseph and Dyna to understand the U.S. job market, the work culture, and how to complete job applications, create resumes and apply for jobs online. She also reached out to employers to advocate on their behalf. One of those employers, a hotel in Redmond, offered an interview because they trusted the ORIA BFET provider to screen and send high quality job candidates to their hotel. After speaking with the siblings, the case manager arranged an interview with the employer, accompanied them to the interview, showed them the bus routes to and from work, and helped them complete their pre-employment tests. Both Joseph and Dyna started working in October 2014 earning \$11.32 per hour. Aaron also obtained employment through the LEP Pathway program and the family no longer has to worry about how to pay their rent and utilities.

ATTACHMENT A

SFY 2015 LEP PATHWAY CONTRACTORS

Contractor	Service	Contract Amount
Asian Counseling & Referral Services	EMP	\$ 249,907
Clark College	ESL	\$ 180,747
Columbia Basin College	ESL	\$ 118,044
Community Colleges of Spokane	ESL	\$ 345,849
Diocese of Olympia	ESL & INT	\$ 317,318
ESD – Spokane	EMP	\$ 135,708
Everett Community College	SK	\$ 78,263
Highline Community College	ESL	\$ 622,410
Horn of Africa	SK	\$ 42,791
Jewish Family Service	EMP	\$ 440,465
Lutheran Community Services	ESL & INT	\$ 106,702
North Seattle Community College	ESL	\$ 24,592
Partners in Careers	EMP	\$ 209,726
Puget Sound TC	EMP & SK	\$ 391,843
Refugee & Immigrant Services NW	EMP & ESL	\$ 711,707
Refugee Federation – King	EMP & SK	\$ 764,466
Refugee Women's Alliance	EMP, ESL & INT	\$1,071,326
Renton Technical College	ESL	\$ 211,338
Shoreline Community College	ESL	\$ 53,626
South Seattle College	ESL	\$ 236,367
Tacoma Community House	EMP & ESL	\$ 326,379
TRAC Associates – King	EMP & SK	\$ 956,605
TRAC Associates – Pierce	EMP	\$ 118,068
TRAC Associates – Snohomish	EMP	\$ 22,334
TRAC Associates – Thurston	EMP	\$ 25,705
World Relief - King Co	EMP	\$ 236,689
World Relief – Spokane	EMP	\$ 169,438
World Relief – Tri-Cities	EMP	\$ 165,558
	TOTAL	\$8,333,971

EMP- Employment Provider
 ESL- ESL provider
 INT- Intensive ESL Pilot
 SK- Skills Training Pilot

ATTACHMENT B

FFY 2015 ORIA BFET CONTRACTORS

Contractor	Initial ³⁸	Mid-year adjustment ³⁹	Contract Amount
Asian Counseling & Referral (ACRS)	\$ 95,000	\$ 100	\$ 95,100
ESD Spokane	\$ 31,236	\$ (10,000)	\$ 21,236
Neighborhood House	\$ 104,005		\$ 104,005
Refugee Fed. Serv. Cntr. (RFSC)	\$ 78,495	\$ 21,209	\$ 99,704
Refugee Imm. Serv. NW (RISNW)	\$ 82,500		\$ 82,500
Refugee Women's Asso. (ReWA)	\$ 141,000	\$ 26,869	\$ 167,869
Tacoma Community House	\$ 65,500	\$ (43,838)	\$ 21,662
TRAC - Snohomish County	\$ 66,000		\$ 66,000
TRAC - King County	\$ 119,000	\$ 102,300	\$ 221,300
TRAC - Pierce County	\$ 53,500	\$ 31,050	\$ 84,550
World Relief - Seattle	\$ 109,846	\$ 8,000	\$ 117,846
World Relief – Tri Cities	\$ 78,976		\$ 78,976
World Relief - Spokane	\$ 158,000	\$ 21,000	\$ 179,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,183,058		\$ 1,339,748

³⁸ Combines 50/50 match and 100% federal funds.

³⁹ Increase due to additional 100% federal funds pass-through for additional client service. Decrease contract allotment to match changes in goals/outcome.

ATTACHMENT C⁴⁰

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Score Correlation

ESL Level	Description	Score Range
ESL 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 would be extremely limited.</p>	180 and below
ESL 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
ESL 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 in which all tasks can be demonstrated.</p>	191-200
ESL 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</p>	201-210

⁴⁰ Source <https://www.casas.org/docs/pagecontents/eslsld.pdf?sfvrsn=8?Status=Master>

ESL Level	Description	Score Range
	<p>messages based on familiar situations.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle entry-level jobs that involve some simple oral and written communication but in which tasks can also be demonstrated and/or clarified orally.</p>	
ESL 5	<p>High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Listening/Speaking: Can satisfy basic survival needs and limited social demands; can follow oral directions in familiar contexts. Has limited ability to understand on the telephone. Understands learned phrases easily and new phrases containing familiar vocabulary.</p> <p>Reading/Writing: Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic material on familiar subjects. Can write messages or notes related to basic needs. Can fill out basic medical forms and job applications.</p> <p>Employability: Can handle jobs and/or training that involve following basic oral and written instructions and diagrams if they can be clarified orally.</p>	211-220
ESL 6	<p>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