

# COMMUNITY PARTNER CONNECTION

Transforming Lives

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019



## March for Meals!

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## March for Meals

Spokane, WA

Join us for a fun-filled morning mall crawl! Registration is \$20.00 per person. Plus each participant receives a March for Meals T-Shirt!

- Trophies will be awarded for Most Participation, Most Enthusiastic, and the Most Laps.
- Door prizes will be given away every 15 minutes at the walk.
- The route is pre-set and less than a mile. Participants will be awarded on how many times they complete the route.
- Join us March 8, 2019 from 8 to 10 a.m. at the Spokane Valley Mall and North Town Mall for a fun way to make new friends while supporting Greater Spokane County (GSC) Meals on Wheels and Spokane County Seniors!

Registration forms are available online at [www.GSCMealsOnWheels.org](http://www.GSCMealsOnWheels.org). For more information visit us at 12101 E. Sprague Ave., Spokane or contact us at (509) 924-6976



## Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels is Proud to Host *The 3rd Annual Great Spokane Road Rally*

Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels is proud to host The Great Spokane Road Rally for the third year on July 13, 2019. Much like the "Amazing Race," teams of two start at a central location and are given a Passport that has cryptic directions on how to find each of the 8+ pit stops that are located around Spokane County. Once at the stop, each team has to participate in a challenge, all of them being fun and a little goofy!

Once the Road Rally is completed, each team meets back up at the starting point for an afternoon BBQ, social hour, auction, and the very popular Valve Cover Racing (think Pinewood Derby for adults!)

Join us for a day full of fun and laughter, all benefiting Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels. Find out more at [www.spokaneroadrally.com](http://www.spokaneroadrally.com).



# Free Tax Preparation

## February through April, 2019

In 2018, the free tax preparation program in Spokane County prepared more than 4,500 tax returns and helped save local families over \$800,000 in filing fees and costs, including securing \$5.7 million in refunds and valuable tax credits for individuals and families. All of this was made possible thanks to a strong community of 190+ volunteers. To learn how you can volunteer visit this website: [www.volunteerspokane.org/](http://www.volunteerspokane.org/)



### Key volunteer roles available for the upcoming tax season:

#### GREETER

You greet everyone visiting the site to create a pleasant atmosphere. You screen taxpayers to determine the type of assistance they need and confirm they have the necessary documents to complete their tax returns. Tax law certification is not required for this position.

#### TAX PREPARER

You complete and successfully certify in tax law training, including the use of electronic filing software, to provide free tax return preparation for eligible taxpayers.

#### QUALITY REVIEWER

You review tax returns completed by volunteer tax preparers, ensuring that every taxpayer receives top quality service and that the tax returns are error-free. You must be tax law certified at least at the intermediate level.

#### INTERPRETER

You provide free language interpreter services to customers who are not fluent in English. Basic tax knowledge is helpful, but it is not required for this position.

## REGION 2 update

# ICHS Patients Can Now Access Free Legal Help

International Community Health Services (ICHS) and Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) announced a partnership that will give low income patients free legal services. Patients referred from ICHS's Bellevue Clinic can meet with ELAP's attorneys for advice on issues impacting their ability to stay in good health.

"ICHS cares for patients holistically. There are many factors that impact whether someone can access and benefit from quality, preventative health care," said Vanja Knezevic, ICHS Bellevue Health Center Manager. "Often, low-income and marginalized patients face social issues that can exacerbate health issues. For example, a person who is facing eviction is more likely to be stressed or depressed. Someone who is denied public benefits might be prevented from providing healthy nutrition for their family. We're seeking to lessen these potential health impacts."

The health care teams at ICHS's Bellevue clinic will work closely with ELAP's legal aid attorneys to identify patients who qualify. Referred patients will meet with an attorney for sessions that will be scheduled at ICHS's Bellevue clinic. "We are excited to move forward with ICHS," said Gerald Kroon, ELAP Executive Director. "This innovative partnership will increase access to much needed civil legal aid, addressing legal issues that adversely affect a person's medical wellbeing."

The new partnership, which is slated to run through March 2019, is initially available by referral through ICHS's Bellevue clinic. The 6-month pilot program may be extended to include ICHS's three other full service clinics if funding and interest allow. Services will be available to qualifying King County residents who fall below 200% of the [federal poverty level](#), which was \$50,200 for a family of four in 2018.

### About ICHS

International Community Health Services (ICHS) provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health services to improve the wellness of King County's diverse people and communities. ICHS serves as part of the health safety net for the area's neediest and most vulnerable; including immigrants, refugees, elderly and the young. ICHS's commitment to health equity includes: supporting safer neighborhoods, nutritious foods, green spaces, jobs, housing, and economic opportunity. Since its founding in 1973, ICHS has grown from a single store-front clinic in Seattle's Chinatown-International District with deep roots in the Asian Pacific Islander community, to a regional health care provider employing more than 500 people and serving nearly 31,000 patients at nine clinic locations in 2017. For more information, please visit: [www.ichs.com](http://www.ichs.com).



### About Eastside Legal Assistance Program

ELAP was founded in 1989 by attorneys and community representatives who saw a need for an organization to provide free civil legal services to low-income people in East and Northeast King County. Since then, ELAP has expanded its services to include legal services for survivors of domestic violence through all of King County and patients at community healthcare centers. ELAP offers services through 27 community-based legal advice clinics, brief services, direct representation, and assistance with wills. Services are provided by over 250 volunteer attorneys and ELAP staff attorneys. For more information, please visit: [www.elap.org](http://www.elap.org).



# Community Resource Fairs at Lake Washington Institute of Technology

Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWTech) offers quarterly Community Resource Fairs providing students and community members easy access to a variety of resources in one place. Our event partners include: WorkSource, Cities of Kirkland and Redmond, and King County Libraries. Our partners play an integral role in helping us to create an exceptional community resource fair that provides information on many needed resources.

The community partners provide our students, staff, and community members with information on services such as housing, transportation, health care, food assistance, Workforce Development Assistance Programs, Employment Resource Center, high school programs, LWTech Dental Clinic services, tutoring resources, and much more. Both the community partners and participants appreciate the easy connection to available services.

**Our next fair will be held on February 12, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in our East Mall, and will**

have a special focus. LWTech has again been selected by the United Way of King County to receive a service grant to support our Martin Luther King Jr. volunteer service project. This entails a multifaceted service project in honor of Dr. King’s legacy and his fight against poverty and inequality. For more information, please contact Amber Hisatake at (425) 739-8204.



Lake Washington Institute of Technology • 11605 132nd Ave. NE • Kirkland, WA. 98034 • 425-739-8100 • [www.LWTech.edu](http://www.LWTech.edu)

## Ferndale Community Resource Center

This year, the clothing bank supplied Halloween costumes to over 30 kids. By passing along costumes that no longer fit, we give a helping hand to those in need and keep items out of landfills.



## Recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness Month

*BraBeDazzle* is a fun, creative annual event organized in October by Citrine Health. Members of the community decorate bras in late August with materials donated by community members, local businesses and non-profits. Each bra is the individual creation by a local woman and carries a creative reminder about getting regular mammograms that matches the unique design. The bras are then displayed in local businesses throughout the month of October – Breast Cancer Awareness month. *BraBeDazzle* is a great way to bring the community together around this important message!

Citrine Health (accredited Medicare facility) is a non-profit organization that promotes women’s health programs and offers specialized services to breast cancer survivors, including The Bra Shop. Our certified fitters help you find the perfect sized bra for you. We have traditional, sports and nursing bras as well as post-mastectomy products.



## Ferndale Community Garden

Beginning in 2018, First Fruit Food Bank Garden (FFFBG) grew fresh produce expressly for the Ferndale Food Bank. This year thanks to the hard work of FFFBG Manager, Greg Hart and a crew of helping gardeners, over 5,250 pounds of restaurant quality vegetables were donated to the Ferndale Food Bank.

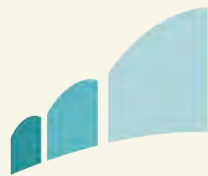
To sign up to get a plot at the Ferndale Friendship Community Garden contact Gloria Perez at (360) 223-3836 or [Rainglo@comcast.net](mailto:Rainglo@comcast.net).



## Resource Navigation in the Food Bank

For the past 18 months, Byrd Barr Place (formerly known as Centerstone) has been piloting their Community Connectors at Food Banks Program. Funded by the City of Seattle Human Services Department, Community Connectors seeks to provide additional resources for clients coming in for food assistance. After successfully completing the pilot phase, this valuable service will continue in 2019, strengthened by the lessons learned and relationships built.

Byrd Barr Place nurtures a more equitable Seattle through programs and advocacy that enable people to live healthy, prosperous lives. Their programs provide access to basic human needs. The Energy Assistance Program gives low income households in Seattle financial aid to keep their homes heated. The food bank gives groceries once a week to anyone in need. Byrd Barr Place is also a starting point for many who



### BYRD BARR PLACE

have questions about social services and financial assistance. Questions are asked about child care assistance, job search support, healthcare access, transportation discounts, food access programs, affordable housing, and more. Byrd Barr Place applied for the Community Connectors at Food Banks funding in hopes of finding answers to these questions, and helping show a clearer path to services.

At Byrd Barr Place, the Community Connector works with clients one on one to find resources like low cost health

insurance, DSHS services, rent/utility assistance programs, and more. They also coordinate outreach efforts hosted in the food bank, such as: including transportation discount enrollment events, health care access outreach, and affordable housing advocacy opportunities. Since the pilot program began, Byrd Barr Place has served 328 individual clients with resource referrals and application assistance. Almost 200 of these clients have been successfully enrolled in programs that continue to alleviate their financial burdens. Many more have been connected to assistance through over 30 service and community events the food bank has hosted since August 2017.

Byrd Barr Place will renew their Community Connectors program in 2019, continuing to look for more ways to increase the community's access to essential services in the new year.

## Refugee Women’s Alliance Offers Additional ESL Classes

One of the biggest challenges newly arriving refugees face is that they don’t usually have enough time to focus on learning the English language. This is because their time is spent on obtaining employment to support their families. Once they get a job, most have to drop out of the English classes which defeats the purpose of resettlement. When families stop attending ESL classes, their English skills do not improve. As a result, most often people are usually stuck at entry level jobs with unlikely prospects for growth; leaving families in poverty.

Part of ReWA’s response to this challenge was to add an evening English Second Language (ESL) class so that refugees could continue studying English while working and supporting their families. The evening class, located in SeaTac, was added to the existing six (Monday through Thursday) ESL classes. Twelve hours a week every three months a close-knit family is formed in the classroom. The students come together to talk, learn, commiserate, and celebrate.

To mark the completion of evening class in SeaTac, students gathered together in the classroom for their quarterly class party and potluck. Around 6 p.m. students began to arrive more dressed up than usual and very excited to share food and celebrate their successes. A table quickly filled with Honduran style tacos, Somali sambusas and spaghetti, Eritrean injera with doro wat, Iraqi cardamom cookies, and Afghan chapli kebob. Another student, Metiku, who shyly

said he did not have time to cook, showed up with enough soda and juice for each person to have at least five beverages.

Asho brought her three-year old daughter to the party and introduced her classmates and teachers as “aunties.” Students talked, laughed and shared jokes (in English!) while waiting for the graduation to begin. Maria, an ESL student from Honduras, brought her friend Manar (classmate from Iraq) a heaping plate of tacos. “Try my tacos!” she said. Maria recalls being so nervous her first day at ReWA because she was the only Spanish speaker in the class and spoke “zero” English. Maria went on to recall that it was Manar who first made her feel comfortable by inviting her to sit next to her. Manar laments back to last year and laughs - “You no English, me no English, but no problem! Five minutes later, we [were] sisters.” Maria added, “At ReWA,

we feel welcome. People make sure that we know we are welcome.”

In the two weeks prior to the graduation party, students took four English tests to assess how they improved their skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Of the fifteen students, nine earned a full level gain, meaning they moved from level 2 to level 3, or from level 3 to level 4. Students who achieved level gains received a certificate honoring their accomplishments. ReWA teachers and staff work exceptionally hard to make the ESL classroom a safe, fun, empowering, and a supportive space.

Most of the students deal with culture shock and some form of post-traumatic stress in addition to daily struggles of life in a foreign place. The majority of students work full time jobs in addition to studying English and understand how crucial learning English is to creating better futures for themselves and their families. Knowing how difficult this can be, the teachers are always proud of their students when they do well. This quarter was no different, although highlighted by each student’s enthusiasm for one another.

With differing cultures, religions, languages and ESL levels, this group of students came together to celebrate one another’s achievements by chanting each other’s names and giving standing ovations as their classmates received their certificates. The comradery evidenced in the classroom beautifully demonstrates what a special place ReWA is for staff and students alike.



## Chinese Information & Service Center Hosts Annual Senior Resource Fair

Chinese Information & Service Center (CISC) hosted the Annual Senior Resource Fair on September 5, 2018 at the North Bellevue Community Center. The theme this year was “Better Living Together,” which reflected for our community to join together and support seniors to live healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives.

Over 300 guests attended this year’s event, where they connected with 32 organizations that provide a wide variety of medical, social, and legal services in the community.

Additionally, several community partners also offered free flu shots, blood sugar and blood pressure screening, spinal screenings, and informational workshops at the fair.



# Orion Celebrates Outstanding Employees and Program Participants

Orion believes in the power of work and provides adults various employment services through our Auburn and Mukilteo locations. In 2018, over 400 individuals were served in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties through these two locations. Each year, Orion recognizes outstanding employees and program participants at the end-of-year holiday party at each of our locations. These are individuals who have located work with Orion's support; worked hard to get where they are; and, are inspirational.

In 2018, the winner from the Auburn location "Graduate of the Year" was Jason W. and the winner from the Mukilteo location "Worker of the Year" was Tricha C. With assistance from Orion staff, both individuals

overcame their own personal circumstances to find permanent employment. They have both shared that their new workplace is a great job match and they are enjoying the work!

Additionally during the party, the Tom Trott Award (named after a highly regarded employee) is presented to one staff member of the year. This year's winner was Bob Book. As the Instructor at Orion's Auburn location, Bob developed the training curriculum for classes like math and blueprint and has tested over 1000 individuals since 2012. His teaching philosophy has always been to meet people where they're at. Students appreciate Bob's approach and find that they're able to increase their skill level and

confidence with his instruction. Orion will lose an invaluable team-member when Bob retires in March! To learn more about Orion and our programs, please visit [www.orionworks.org](http://www.orionworks.org).

From January 15 through April 18, 2019, Orion's Auburn location is partnering with the United Way of King County to provide free tax preparation services on-site. No appointments are necessary, but note that the site can become crowded, especially during February and April. Hours are: Monday, 5 to 9 p.m.; Wednesday 5 to 9 p.m.; and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For additional information (including eligibility information and what ID or documents you should bring), visit: [Tax Help – United Way of King County](#).

## How Workforce Saved My Bacon *A Testimonial*

By Robin Oliver

Actually I am a vegetarian. What Workforce really saved was my livelihood, my ability to be a productive member of society, and my self-esteem.

I enrolled at Shoreline Community College (SCC) when I had lost my life long vocation as a chef in the spring of 2014. By doctors' orders, from that day forward, I had to find work that I could do while sitting down.

After 35 years, I faced my fears and set out to earn a high school diploma. For the first time in my life, I felt a greater fear than that of having to learn algebra; it was the fear of becoming a homeless and jobless person with no vocation. It was a dark revelation to find that there

were no sit-down jobs available without an education. I doubted that I could be educated because I had been a D-student in my youth. I felt panic every time I looked at math problems. Since college requires algebra, I imagined that I was doomed to live the rest of my life in a shopping cart.

Education was really the only way to change my path. Workforce guided me in starting classes, connected me to medical insurance, coached me in applying for an EBT card and helped me with housing.

It was the dedicated teachers at SCC who gave me the first positive and effective educational experience I ever had. I earned my high school diploma from the High School 21 Program at Shoreline Community College spring of 2015. This was a life changing experience because I learned more than technical skills in my education, I saw who I really was without the shame of educational failure permanently bonded to my reflection. Only then could I see the scope of my own capabilities.

Winter quarter 2016, I graduated from Shoreline Community College again, this time with an AAAS degree in Business Technology and a 3.7 GPA. I have enrolled again at Shoreline in the Visual Communications Technology (VCT) program and I am currently president elect of the VCT Club.



## Seattle Indian Health Board has an Awesome Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Program and Much More!

Looking for a WIC program with friendly, respectful staff, plenty of additional services and referral information, a convenient location, and free parking? Look no further than Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB).

At SIHB, we have plenty of openings for pregnant, postpartum women, infants and children up to age 5. We accept all WIC-eligible clients. Did you know that most families that get health benefits from the State of Washington qualify for WIC?

### SIHB WIC provides:

- Monthly checks for healthy food
- Health screenings and referrals
- Nutrition education
- Breastfeeding support, including breastfeeding peer counseling and IBCLC access

### SIHB also has a perinatal program which includes:

- Doctor and nurse visits
- Case management
- Housing and transportation referrals
- Medical insurance assistance
- Addiction treatment
- Weekly home cooked lunch and baby items

### Give us a call or stop in to sign up!

206-324-9360 ext. 2643 • 611 12th Ave S, Seattle WA 98107



## Grateful for the Support

The Salvation Army's Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) exists to help men and women overcome life issues and dependency on drugs and alcohol. The ARC provides opportunities that stabilizes lives, rebuilds confidence and self-respect. The ARC offers six to twelve months of residential rehabilitation services, including housing, meals, clothing, as well as, rehabilitation counseling and classes free of charge.

We are financed primarily through the collection and sale of donated goods and grateful for the support of the local community in this incredible effort against the crisis of addiction facing our country. Our purpose is to HELP and we could not do it without the generosity of the community we serve!



### REGION 3 update



## Serenity House of Clallam County

*Building a stronger community in Clallam County*

Serenity House of Clallam County is a community based non-profit organization dedicated to providing shelter and services for homeless individuals and families.

The agency's focus is on the individual; helping each person to obtain permanent housing and become able to support their household. To achieve these goals, our staff takes time to understand the personal history; internal and exterior barriers; emotional and often physical issues, which have led them to seek services. Enabling them to become self-reliant by finding and utilizing their own sources of strength is essential to this process.

Serenity House has sheltered the homeless since 1983. It is the only provider of emergency shelter for single adults in the region, and is the lead agency for Clallam County's Shelter Provider Network. For information on how you can help eradicate homelessness in Clallam County, please call (360) 452-7224 or [serenity@serenityhouseclallam.org](mailto:serenity@serenityhouseclallam.org).

## Parent to Parent Grays Harbor

Looking for a group that shares something in common with you? A group where you can:

- Ask questions
- Find answers
- Share ideas
- Make new friends
- Learn new things

Parent Connection Group meets the third Wednesday of the month at The Arc Office 523 W. 1st, Aberdeen from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Join us! For more information contact Charlene at (360) 537-7000 or [charlenem@arcgh.org](mailto:charlenem@arcgh.org).





# New Roads *aka Starting Point Project*

“If there was something that you wish you could have had access to when your child was first diagnosed, what would it be?” The result of those conversations with many families in New Roads aka the Starting Point Project.

Exception Families Network’s (EFN) goal is to help connect families with special needs in the South Sound community. We meet face-to-face with families who suspect a special need in their child, are new to a diagnosis, or are new to the area in order to help

them bridge the gap with locating proper services and support for their child(ren).

Please join us the 3rd Saturday of each month, from 10am to 11:30am, in the Conference Room at EFN for our monthly get together of volunteers and families, as we share our thoughts and ideas.

Questions about this program? Please contact us at [info@exceptionalfamilies.org](mailto:info@exceptionalfamilies.org).



## Parent Support Group Program

Founded in 2011 by Angela Fish, the Exceptional Families Network Tacoma Support Group started a parent support group for families with special needs children. The support group’s goals are to network, strengthen the special needs community, learn from one another and expert speakers, and better advocate for children.

As a family support group inclusive of diagnosis, EFN encourages professionals and interested community members to join. Our families are dealing with autism spectrum disorder, sensory processing disorder, ADD/ADHD, mental health, and other diagnoses.



We do our best to provide speakers and topics that are of interest to our exceptional families. Our belief is that there are always opportunities to learn, whether the information is “traditional” or not. Parents are encouraged to ask questions and draw their own conclusions that are appropriate for their family.

To learn more about the Tacoma group visit: [www.exceptionalfamilies.org/sfps-tacoma.html](http://www.exceptionalfamilies.org/sfps-tacoma.html)

To learn more about the Olympia group visit: [www.exceptionalfamilies.org/sfps-olympia.html](http://www.exceptionalfamilies.org/sfps-olympia.html)

# Tacoma Housing Authority

At the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) we provide high-quality, stable and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need.

THA also manages a Housing Choice Voucher Program that provides rental assistance to more than 3,700 households to rent from private landlords. Altogether, THA serves more than 11,500 persons – or about 6 percent of the City’s residents. The majority of the people receiving assistance from THA are elderly, disabled or children.

**Here are some *fast facts* about the work we do:**

- We serve over 11,500 people in Tacoma
- Over 4,100 households receive assistance from THA to pay rent to private landlords and non-profit landlords.
- About 1,460 household live in THA properties.

# Thanksgiving Update Arlington Drive Youth Campus

Tacoma Housing Authority made very good progress this year on the ambitious, innovative, and essential Arlington Drive Youth Campus for Homeless Youth and Young Adults. We have assembled the financing to build it; chose the construction contractor and service providers; convened a wide array of community voices – including formerly homeless youth - who advised us with these choices; and we expect to break ground in January.

This campus will greatly enhance what the Puget Sound can offer to homeless young people; giving them a second chance at an adolescence and a second chance at adulthood without abuse, exploitation, impoverishment and fear.

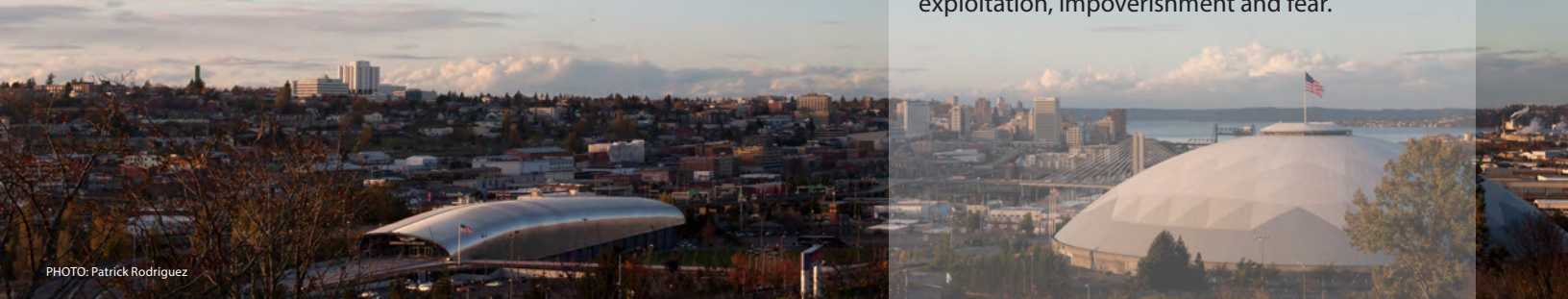


PHOTO: Patrick Rodriguez

## DSHS Policy & Program Updates

### Washington’s SNAP Employment and Training Programs



#### *Resources to Initiate Successful Employment and Basic Food Employment and Training*

Resources to initiate Successful Employment (RISE) was a three year, \$22 million-dollar pilot program funded by USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), awarded to the State of Washington in March 2015. RISE was designed to fill the gap experienced by Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) participants who face multiple barriers and lack the needed work experience to obtain employment helping them reach their full potential. Although the RISE pilot program ended on December 31, 2018, many RISE providers transitioned into BFET to continue providing services to participants, such as Strategies for Success Training (SFST) to assist participants with continued barrier reduction. SFST is instructor led discussions, which include topics such as work life balance, stress management, problem solving, and critical thinking to help participants deal with the demands of every-day life.

The Washington State BFET program is the national model for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) employment and training. The program is federally funded, providing job search, job search training, educational services, skills

training, and other employment opportunities to Basic Food (also called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients who are not actively receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families WorkFirst work program or Food Assistance Program. Services are provided through community or technical colleges and/or community based organizations. BFET partners evaluate the potential barriers that prevent participants from reaching their full potential and provides resources to help remove those barriers.

#### PROGRAM DIFFERENCES

 <p><b>RISE</b></p>	 <p><b>BFET</b></p>
Focus on barrier reduction	Focus on employment
May not be employment ready	Able to work, or look for work at least 20 hours a week
Comprehensive weekly case management	Case management tied with an activity
Randomized enrollment into BFET or RISE	Voluntary enrollment into BFET
100% federally funded	50/50 federal match funding
Exclusive RISE activities	Standard BFET activities

As participants transition from RISE to BFET, it's important to understand the similarities and differences between the two employment and training programs. Both programs are voluntary and offer employment and training services; however, there are fundamental differences between the two programs.

During the past year, there has been an expansion in BFET partnerships in under-served areas, as well as many RISE partners joined the BFET program. We have welcomed the following partners: Career Path Services (expanded to Pierce County from Spokane County), Adonai (serving Benton, Clallam, Mason,

Thurston, King, and Pierce counties), Rod's House (serving Yakima County), Partners in Employment (serving King County), People for People (serving Yakima, Klickitat, and Skamania counties), Entrust (serving Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, and Yakima counties), Spokane Tribe, and Confederated Tribes of Colville. All of these partners share Department of Social and Health Services' goal of reducing poverty in Washington State.

For more information about Washington's BFET program or for a list of participating providers, please visit: [www.dshs.wa.gov/BFET](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/BFET).

## The Mobile CSOs

The DSHS Community Services Division (CSD) has two Mobile Community Services Offices or Mobile CSOs. Since their inception in 2009, the two Mobile CSOs have provided access to DSHS services and outreach to under-served communities in Washington. The mobile offices have also served as emergency support and disaster recovery through continuity of DSHS program assistance and/or by delivering disaster benefits to areas affected by disaster. Today, the Mobile CSOs continue to drive towards a thriving Washington by supporting working families in rural areas, our aging citizens, and the homeless.

### Mobile CSOs Get a Fresh Look

The Mobile CSOs are long trucks with truck boxes that have been customized as office space. One serves the east side of the state and the other serves the west side by delivering CSD program assistance to rural and remote areas that wouldn't otherwise have access to vital services, such as Washington State's food assistance programs.

Both Mobile CSOs received a significant remodel. The process started with the Mobile CSO East in 2017 and the Mobile CSO West's remodel was completed in December of 2018. The focus of the redesign was to extend the life span of the Mobile CSOs to ensure they can continue to deliver services for many years to come. The main change was to the entryway, which involved moving the location of the door and redesigning the stairwell.

The previous entryway was designed so that customers would have to climb up five steps before entering the Mobile CSO. The stairs were somewhat steep and posed a challenge for some customers, especially small children and elderly individuals. Although the Mobile CSOs are equipped with chair lifts to assist customers



with mobility issues, as the primary mode of entry, the stairs could be improved.

The new design incorporated a door at the base of the truck box that has only two stairs, which are very shallow to the ground and similar to a transit bus. Once inside the Mobile CSO, there is a landing with additional stairs that lead to the floor level of the interior with railings on both sides for added security.



Not only is the entryway much safer, but it is also less strenuous for customers going in and out of the truck. In order to make the new entryway design work, there were some changes to the lobby area of the office. Other changes were done to improve the use of space, a weather door was added to improve interior climate control, and touchup paint applied to exterior areas have given the Mobile CSOs a fresh look. Customers seem very pleased with the end result! For a list of events visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/csd-mobile-office/mobile-community-services-office](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/csd-mobile-office/mobile-community-services-office).

## Customer Service Contact Center: *Customer Survey*

Capturing customer feedback to improve service delivery continues to be a goal for the Statewide Customer Service Contact Center (CSCC). Providing first call resolution and helpful referrals for other services are examples of excellent customer service that the CSCC strives to offer.

In 2018, steps were taken to gather further feedback by telephonic survey. In April and May, the CSCC offered a survey to clients in the Navigation and Production Queues in an effort to seek and incorporate customer feedback in the way the Statewide CSCC operates. A total of 2,291 people participated in the initial survey. Then in July and August, the survey was extended to the Washington Combined Application (WASHCAP) Queue for further feedback. WASHCAP is a simplified food benefits program for most single supplemental security income recipients. A total of 224 people participated in the WASHCAP survey.

### The Results:

For the survey periods, the average was taken of positive responses (answers such as “very satisfied” and “satisfied” were combined as a positive response) to each question.

SURVEY QUESTION	Production and Navigation Queues April-May % Positive Responses (2,291 total responses)	WASHCAP Queue July-August % Positive Responses (224 total responses)
Did we resolve the reason for your call today?	84%	70%
Did you resolve today's question on the first call?	91%	88%
How helpful was the agent that assisted you today?	94%	86%
Did the agent give you information about resources?	74%	60%
How satisfied are you with the services provided today?	94%	85%
How satisfied are you with the Contact Center overall?	92%	89%

### Next Steps:

Subsequent surveys will be used to measure the effectiveness of initiatives being implemented by the CSCC in order to improve the customer experience. Consideration will be made for future improvements based on the analyzed data.

## How to Apply for Assistance

Applying for public assistance can be difficult for many. With that in mind, DSHS Community Services Division created a video that provides the viewer with the – How, Where, and When – to applying for services and benefits. The ‘How to apply for assistance’ video can be found [here](#) and can be shared with anyone interested.



## Manage Apple Health Coverage on the go With the New WAPlanfinder app!

If you have Washington Apple Health (Medicaid), now you can manage your health coverage from your mobile device with the WAPlanfinder app, available in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#). The app is for those applying for, renewing, or reporting changes for their health coverage through Washington Healthplanfinder (for children, pregnant women, parent/caretakers, and single adults).

### The app allows you to:

- Sign in to your account
- View coverage status
- View important messages, including renewal notices
- Upload documents quickly and securely
- Find in-person help in your area
- Update your notification preferences – go paperless!
- Access the help center and FAQs
- Get push notifications about upcoming deadlines

Using the app makes it easy to [manage your health coverage information](#) from your phone or tablet. Get your messages in real time and view your coverage status. Avoid the hassle of paper forms by uploading verification documents right to your account with just the snap of a photo. You can even quickly find in-person help nearby.

[Watch the video](#) and download the WAPlanfinder app for free today!



## Washington Connection Updates Tutorials

The new English Washington Connection Tutorials are now available on YouTube and on [www.WashingtonConnection.org](http://www.WashingtonConnection.org) through the links located on each page. Please note the About This Site tab Online Tutorials will not be updated until April 2019. Unfortunately, the Spanish tutorials are a little delayed. Please watch for them in the coming months.

### Create Account

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIBEBIzEIA&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIBEBIzEIA&feature=youtu.be)



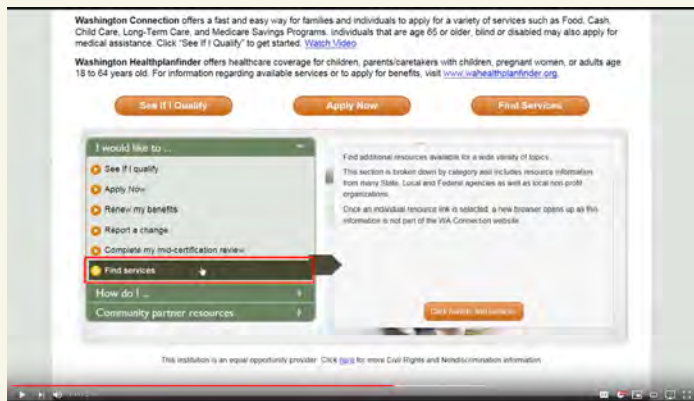
### Apply/Renewal

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mcmWMno4s&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mcmWMno4s&feature=youtu.be)



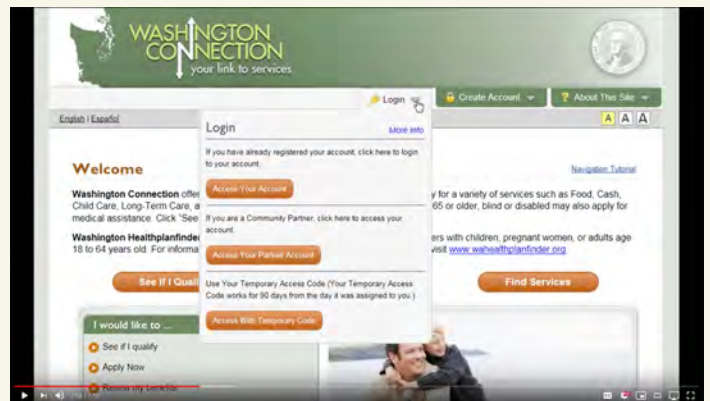
### Find Services

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sdU5mkXIYY&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sdU5mkXIYY&feature=youtu.be)



### Navigation

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=51ebbn5Sb-4&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51ebbn5Sb-4&feature=youtu.be)



### Report Changes

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyKaYPlqqm8&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyKaYPlqqm8&feature=youtu.be)



### See If I Qualify

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpORWfnLGfA&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpORWfnLGfA&feature=youtu.be)

