

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Economic Security for All

DECEMBER 2022



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Executive summary

In 2022, the Legislature appropriated state funds for EcSA in proviso, expanding its capacity to deliver comprehensive and coordinated services to the 26 percent of Washingtonians who live in poverty. This proviso requires two reports from Employment Security Department (ESD). This is the first report, due December 1, 2022. This report reflects the first three months of the twelve-month period of performance for this appropriation. The next report is due on June 1, 2023.

Economic Security for All (EcSA) is a poverty reduction program that supports low-income Washingtonians in their pursuit of equity, dignity, and sustained self-sufficiency. The program is designed to coordinate existing systems through intensive program navigation, local innovation, and flexible support that fills gaps and meet needs within existing programs and regulations. At the local level, EcSA is run by partnerships of community service providers, includes the voices of who have experienced poverty, and is convened and coordinated by Local Workforce Development Boards. EcSA takes an innovative approach to equitably reduce poverty, focusing on historically marginalized populations and people with multiple obstacles to self-sufficiency.

In July 2022, EcSA began receiving state funding. Through the end of the first quarter (September 30, 2022), it has exceeded targets for service delivery and customer outcomes:

- Determined a personalized self-sufficiency wage goal for 372 customers.
- Delivered 568 career and support services to customers as they pursued their career plans.
- Placed 105 customers in training that leads to employment at self-sufficiency earnings.

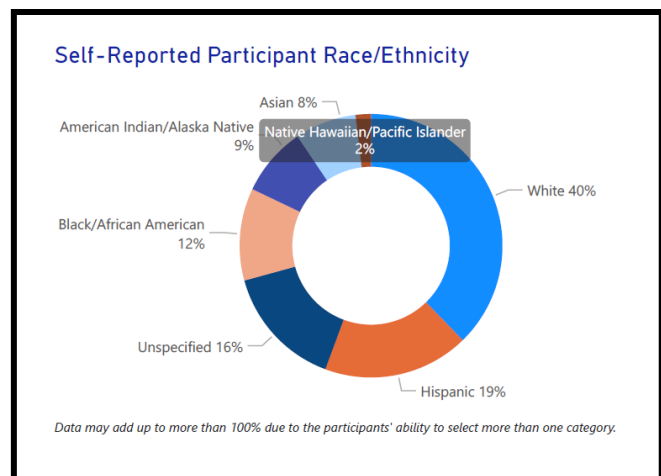
Background

Economic Security for All (EcSA) is a poverty reduction program that supports low-income Washingtonians in their pursuit of equity, dignity and sustained self-sufficiency. The program is designed to coordinate existing systems through intensive program navigation, local innovation, and flexible support that fills gaps and meet needs within existing programs and regulations. At the local level, EcSA is run by partnerships of community service providers, includes the voices of who have experienced poverty, and is convened and coordinated by Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs).

EcSA serves low-income Washingtonians

Over 1.8 million Washingtonians, 26 percent of the state's population, are currently living in households that earn less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Of those, more than 500,000 are children, a number greater than the populations of the cities of Spokane and Tacoma combined.

Local EcSA partnerships are implementing new models to increase their collective impact for Washingtonians experiencing poverty, with a strong focus on equity. The program's commitment to equity and inclusion is reflected in customer demographics.



- Over half of the customers served are people of color — compared to 22 percent of the statewide population.
- A quarter of EcSA customers are unhoused, and all are in poverty, with income below the eligibility threshold for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- EcSA serves customers in rural and urban areas of the state.

EcSA's pilot phase

In 2019, Governor Inslee piloted EcSA using federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds. Initial funds were awarded to four local partnerships in July 2019 and a second round of funding was awarded in June 2021 to seven additional local partnerships, totaling approximately 12 million dollars across both rounds.

Statewide expansion

In 2022, the Legislature appropriated state funds for EcSA in proviso, expanding its capacity to deliver comprehensive and coordinated services to the 26 percent of Washingtonians who live in poverty.¹ This proviso requires two reports from Employment Security Department (ESD).

\$6,208,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the continuation of the Economic Security for All program. The department must collect quarterly data on the number of participants that participate in the program, the costs associated with career, training, and other support services provided, and progress made towards self-sufficiency. The department must provide a report to the governor and the legislature on December 1, 2022, and June 1, 2023, that includes an analysis of the program, a summary of the quarterly data collected, and associated recommendations for program delivery.

With proviso funding, ESD began working with the LWDBs. Together, this group co-designed implementation, agreed to targets, and executed contracts. Each LWDB collaborated with local leaders from social service, education, and workforce programs—as well as people with lived experience of poverty—to better coordinate their programs, focus on human-centered service delivery, and execute local contracts.

The LWDBs lead these local partnerships, streamlining services to help more low-income families move out of poverty. Each local service model was developed in partnership with people who have lived experience of poverty. This is critical, as people experiencing poverty have repeatedly shared feedback that programs are siloed and disjointed. EcSA has acted on their input to improve coordination and make programs easier to use together. The



service model relies on a local coordination team, responsible for providing the following services:

- Bundling multiple benefits to stabilize customers' households.
- Creating career plans for customers to reach a self-sufficiency earnings goal.
- Coordinating wrap-around support across programs to fill gaps in benefits.
- Connections to training or education, with financial support to cover living expenses.
- Supporting customers until they achieve self-sufficiency.

Goals, outcomes and expenditures

The EcSA program is dedicated to accomplishing the following goals:

- Bundle workforce, education, and social services to stabilize customer's lives.
- Establish and implement customized career plans to reach self-sufficiency.
- Remove barriers at the local, state, and federal levels that prevent coordinated delivery of multiple benefits.

Bundling services

Cycles of poverty are reinforced and maintained by complexity and lacking awareness of available resources. Even when people in need are aware of programs, accessing them often becomes a full-time job. EcSA combats this challenge by having experienced staff navigate and leverage all available services. This support allows customers to maintain focus on the details of their plan.

Using career plans to achieve self-sufficiency

Every person in poverty is there for unique reasons. Because of this, a one-size-fits-all program is not sufficient to address the needs of people experiencing poverty. Differences in personal circumstance, individual need, and regional requirements all demand that each customer be assessed on the basis of their own individual needs. To accomplish this, EcSA has partnered with the University of Washington Self-Sufficiency Standard and Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council to assess customers using a *self-sufficiency calculator*. Each customer's

self-sufficiency goal varies depending on family composition, geographic location, and individual economic factors. The self-sufficiency assessment establishes the goal that case managers and customers use to co-create career plans, which are designed to stabilize and move customers and their households out of poverty permanently.

Wrap-Around services provide stability

In the process of exiting poverty, instability often occurs when people take the first steps to improve their situation. Often, this puts them in a position where they become ineligible for the services they have previously relied on for survival. For this reason, stability is one of the most vital parts of the process, both for EcSA customers and their families. The program uses a comprehensive approach to ensure that unexpected issues are avoided when possible, and addressed quickly and comprehensively when not. For example, wrap-around services can cover an unexpected change in childcare costs, a heating bill, help with a rent payment, and other obstacles that often knock people off their pathway to self-sufficiency.

Authentically include people with lived experience in design and implementation

For decades, people experiencing poverty have often been treated as the greatest barrier to their own advancement. The EcSA program recognizes that the best source of expertise for facts on the ground is the people who live there. Human-centered design is foundational to EcSA. Many of EcSA's staff and partners have lived experience of poverty. Local programs partner with others who have escaped poverty and place their experience at the center of our work.

Removing barriers at local, state and federal levels

Many programs designed to serve people experiencing poverty have been developed and implemented independently of one another. As a result, requirements don't align across programs. This leads to situations where receiving one benefit can result in loss of another. The EcSA program is designed to address these risks wherever possible. At the service delivery level, case managers and staff must understand the rules of various programs and do careful planning to prevent unexpected loss of benefits and hardship. At the program level, EcSA is partnering with local front-line service providers, state agencies — including DSHS — and those at the federal level to identify and remove structural policy and process barriers, where possible, to improve cross-program partnerships

Meeting or exceeding targets

In the first quarter, EcSA partnerships focused on negotiating local contracts, training staff, and outreach customers. We expect training, career, and support services to increase rapidly, as the programs continue supporting customers as they work toward their self-sufficiency goals.

EcSA has exceeded its Sept. 30 targets, negotiated between ESD and the LWDBs. The following tables highlight local first quarter performance by LWDBs, including customer enrollments as well as services delivered.

Enrollments

EcSA exceeded its Sept. 30 enrollment targets.

- Enrolled 372 customers in the first quarter, which is 156% of their performance target (237).
- Of those, 105 have already moved into a training pathway for a living-wage career, which is 122% of the target (86).

State EcSA quarter 1 performance: Enrollments July – September 2022

LWDB	Q1 Target	Actual
Olympic	17	33
Pacific Mountain	25	32
Northwest	3	14
Snohomish	5	2
Seattle-King	34	65
Tacoma-Pierce	35	57
Southwest	39	38
North Central	12	21
South Central	15	21
Benton-Franklin	22	52
Spokane	30	37
Statewide Total	237	372

Training Services

Training services are connections to training provided at community colleges or other local training providers to provides specific vocational skills that lead to employment with self-sufficiency level earnings. This category includes training funded through partner resources,

including Pell Grant, WA College Grant, DSHS (BFET, WorkFirst), or WIOA programs. EcSA training funds are used to fill the gap when there is unmet need or when a training does not qualify for other resources.

State EcSA quarter 1 performance: Training services July – September 2022

LWDB	Q1 Target	Actual
Olympic	2	10
Pacific Mountain	10	0
Northwest	2	2
Snohomish	0	0
Seattle-King	0	17
Tacoma-Pierce	29	14
Southwest	8	0
North Central	12	21
South Central	10	18
Benton-Franklin	10	18
Spokane	3	5
Statewide Total	86	105

Career and support services

Career Services. Case managers help customers navigate career services, which, include customer assessments, referrals to partner resources, career counseling and plan development, mentorship, financial literacy, workforce preparation activities, job search and placement assistance.

Support Services. Services include only those supports directly provided with EcSA funds: rental assistance, childcare, health care, transportation, incentive payments, and other work/training related expenses. The table does not include supports provided to customers through partner resources.

State EcSA quarter 1 performance: Career and support services July – September 2022

LWDB	Career services	Support services
Olympic	45	18
Pacific Mountain	32	0
Northwest	14	10
Snohomish	2	0
Seattle-King	61	4
Tacoma-Pierce	104	5
Southwest	38	0
North Central	24	16
South Central	42	15
Benton-Franklin	103	20
Spokane	46	8
Statewide Total	471	96

Local EcSA partnerships are implementing new models to increase their collective impact for Washingtonians experiencing poverty. Over half of the customers served are people of color, compared to 22% of the statewide population, and a quarter of EcSA customers were unhoused. The EcSA partnerships have local flexibility to design models that match their communities' needs, and they are putting lessons learned from the federally funded pilot phase into action. The state EcSA funding allows this work to continue, providing the state with local laboratories to continue testing innovative approaches to poverty reduction.

Expenditures

State EcSA Quarter 1 Performance July – September 2022

LWDB	Total Contract	Total Expenditures
Olympic	\$436,241.00	\$32,770.09
Pacific Mountain	\$562,444.00	\$49,227.03
Northwest	\$75,000.00	\$7,558.04
Snohomish	\$591,165.00	\$18,456.52
Seattle-King	\$1,039,448.00	\$49,527.53
Tacoma-Pierce	\$745,364.00	\$152,311.00
Southwest	\$557,764.00	\$87,140.78
North Central	\$453,711.00	\$155,488.78
South Central	\$552,518.00	\$129,011.43
Benton-Franklin	\$434,166.00	\$145,920.23
Spokane	\$565,179.00	\$133,803.83
Statewide Total	\$6,013,000.00	\$961,215.26

Expenditures: by category

LWDB	Career	Training	Support	Other
Olympic	\$2,906.90	\$20,315.29	\$7,760.72	\$1,787.18
Pacific Mountain	\$49,227.03	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Northwest	\$ -	\$4,430.80	\$2,939.30	\$187.94
Snohomish	\$3,101.92	\$ -	\$ -	\$15,354.60
Seattle-King	\$22,790.74	\$11,653.00	\$1,024.34	\$14,059.45
Tacoma-Pierce	\$86,469.00	\$62,653.00	\$3,189.00	\$ -
Southwest	\$43,554.88	\$ -	\$ -	\$43,585.90
North Central	\$64,728.87	\$47,405.61	\$34,246.47	\$9,107.83
South Central	\$752.00	\$58,527.55	\$4,268.06	\$65,463.82
Benton-Franklin	\$90,821.31	\$35,698.35	\$19,400.57	\$ -
Spokane	\$100,420.66	\$6,050.00	\$5,168.35	\$22,164.82
Statewide Total	\$464,773.31	\$246,733.60	\$77,996.81	\$171,711.54

Service provision

ESD and local teams have engaged over 80 local partner organizations to ensure that customers get all the services to which they are entitled, with as few barriers as possible. This requires intentionality at the local, regional and state levels.

Local. LWDBs and their subcontractors consider how best to leverage local programs and resources to coordinate delivery of the following services to:

- Developing individualized career plans, set a customized target for each household using the UW self-sufficiency calculator.
- Bundling multiple services to help each household stabilize and work toward their earnings goal.
- Streamlining access so people receive all the benefits they are eligible for.
- Providing wrap-around support for education and training to help customers persist to completion.

Regional. LWDBs lead local partnerships with community organizations as well as people experiencing poverty. Depending on local need, partnerships may be with housing insecurity programs, workforce development programs, local DSHS service providers and other

community-based organizations. The LWDBs also manage subcontractors, ensuring that all applicable rules are followed and sharing best practices across programs.

State. EcSA has a technical advisory committee, which is comprised of representatives from state agency partners, labor unions, employers and nonprofit organizations. It advises ESD, engaging in conversations and providing guidance on programmatic decisions related to required elements, service delivery, program alignment, and policy.

Promising practices

EcSA and WDAs are beginning to identify promising practices for incentives and stipends, data sharing agreements and training programs.

Incentives and stipends

One of the most exciting aspects of the EcSA is the unique opportunity to experiment with new methods of assisting customers. A major focus of the program is offering incentive payments and stipends to customers. These payments, linked with participation in program, incentivize retention in training and education and cover expenses that might interfere with training success. A number of local areas are experimenting with different approaches to incentive payments. The flexibility of state EcSA funds allows local areas to test new practices, identify which ones are most successful, and share their findings so that other areas can learn and consider for possible replication in other parts of the state.

North Central: SkillSource

North Central WDA's SkillSource is using an incentive program designed to keep customers engaged with their case manager and making satisfactory progress on their training plan. To qualify, a customer must do all of the following:

- Meet at least monthly with their case manager to review progress.
- Meet satisfactory progress for their customized career plan for each month of enrollment.
- Complete the activities outlined in the customized career plan expected during breaks.
- Complete additional monthly activities outlined in their individualized career plan.

By meeting these requirements, customers can be eligible for \$1,000/month and receive up to \$12,000 in a year.

Training

North Central and Seattle-King County (Sea-King) have experienced success with training programs and tools.

North Central: Mattawa CDL training cohort

From January through March 2022, North Central used EcSA for people to obtain their CDL. They conducted targeted recruiting in Mattawa, WA and helped customers prepare for training. Six students enrolled in the training cohort at Big Bend Community College, which started in February 2022. Ultimately, all six students completed their training and achieved employment at wages above their individual self-sufficiency rates. Local community leaders in Mattawa were instrumental in the recruitment of interested individuals and in providing support for the training.

- For a nominal fee, the Port of Mattawa provided classroom space and a gravel track for students to practice driving large semis and trailers.
- The training provider, Big Bend Community College, brought semi-trucks 60 miles from Moses Lake so students could train near their homes.

Sea-King: CLIFF

Sea-King worked closely with the Community and Economic Development team at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to customize and adapt that Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) Tool for the Sea-King region. CLIFF offers a suite of tools, including a dashboard, dashboard, planner and the guaranteed income tool. These tools help customers and case managers work together to determine how additional benefits will impact any current assistance customers are receiving. This information helps them make informed decisions as they work their way into self-sufficiency.

Data sharing agreement

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW)

At Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), an exciting new partnership with DSHS has taken shape. Many EcSA customers collect Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, more commonly known as food stamps, making it a natural partner program for EcSA.

Unfortunately, federal data protection regulations are understandably rigid, and often present a significant barrier to informing customers of all the programs they could benefit from. To overcome this, EcSA worked with WSW and DSHS to get permission from the Department of Agriculture to share data so that people could learn about the opportunity to take part in EcSA.

Through the data sharing agreement, staff were able to contact SNAP recipients and invite them to apply for other services, including EcSA. ESD is currently working with DSHS to expand this practice statewide, so all Washingtonians who receive SNAP can benefit.

Future program coordination

Washington College Grant

Because all EcSA customers are below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), they may qualify for the Washington College Grant to cover the cost of education and training needed to reach their self-sufficiency goal. ESD is working with Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to explore automatic eligibility for Washington College Grant. This would eliminate the requirement to complete state or federal financial aid applications for the first year of training enrollment. ESD and WSAC will likely need a data sharing agreement for this to work. It will also require collaboration and support from financial aid offices at postsecondary schools across the state.

Endnotes

¹ DSHS analysis of 2020 American Community Survey data, using the SNAP threshold of 200% FPL as the poverty line.