

Passageways to Recovery Employment and Education (PREE)

Background

To address criminal court system responses to drug use and possession and expand behavioral health outreach, treatment, and recovery support services throughout the state, [Second Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5536](#) (2E2SSB 5536 or “the Blake bill”) was passed during the 2023 Special Session on May 16, 2023.

The Washington State Legislature appropriated funding for the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) to establish a grant program for providers of employment, education, training, certification, and other supportive programs designed to provide persons recovering from a substance use disorder with employment and education opportunities. The grant program shall employ a low-barrier application and give priority to programs that engage with black, indigenous, persons of color, and other historically underserved communities

HCA’s Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) applied a low barrier application process and prioritized contractors that had a history of providing employment and education services to black, indigenous, persons of color, and other historically underserved communities. Five agencies were awarded the grant funding.

Overview

The PREE program is designed to decrease barriers to employment for individuals that have a substance use disorder. Common barriers include but are not limited to gaps in work history, criminal convictions, court and/or treatment requirements, unreliable transportation, childcare needs, lack of education and unstable housing.

The program has dedicated barrier removal and education funds to support individuals who are re-entering the workforce.

The PREE program follows the evidence-based model of [Individual Placement and Support \(IPS\)](#). DBHR recognizes and embraces culture diversity within an evidence base model that does not align with all cultures such as Tribes.

IPS key principles:

- Zero exclusion
- Integrated employment and treatment
- Competitive jobs
- Rapid job search
- Follow along support
- Preference is honored
- Benefits planning

Eligibility requirements

- Verified substance use disorder
- Interest in employment or education pathways
- Priority 50% or more given to persons who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and other historically underserved populations

Budget for SFY 25

- Biannual budget: 5,242,000

Program Outcomes SFY 24

12/2023 – 06/30/2024

- Active enrollments: 389
- Employment starts: 71
- Education starts: 41
- Barrier removal funds provided: 243
- Percentage served identify as BIPOC: 87%

For more information

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