



Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. How do clients find WWEE? What kind of barriers are they facing when they come to WWEE?**

On average, 60% of our clients are referred to WWEE from DSHS (Department of Social & Health Services) by their case worker. DSHS assists eligible low-income residents in the form of cash grants, food stamps, medical coupons, childcare subsidies, transportation assistance, and housing subsidies, to name just a few services.

Information about WWEE is distributed to partner organizations (YWCA, Catholic Community Services, Tacoma Community House, churches) and government offices (WorkFirst, WorkSource) through flyers and brochures in addition to the information available on our website. Many of the clients who come to WWEE hear about our program from a former client or a partner agency.

Although WWEE serves men, most of our clients are single mothers and face the following barriers: domestic violence, lack of education or work experience, inadequate food and shelter for their family, learning disabilities, mental health or addiction issues and low self-esteem.

WWEE's services are free to low-income individuals in our community. WWEE prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

- 2. How much does it cost to operate the WWEE program?**

The REACH Plus™ class costs approximately \$1,500 per participant. This includes up to two years of follow-up case management services and access to the Clothing Boutique, Career Development Center and support services.
- 3. What is TANF? I was told that people stay on TANF because they can get more money on TANF than if they were working. Is this true?**

TANF stands for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which provides "temporary" aid to parents with children who receive cash grants and food stamps. This assistance has a 5-year life time limit. Here are some approximate grant amounts for reference. Under TANF, a single mother with one or two dependent children receives a cash grant of \$440 per month and food stamps in the amount of \$248 per month. A single mother with three children receives \$546 in cash and \$356 in food stamps. Actual amounts vary slightly depending on each client's situation. Obviously, this amount of money is less than what individuals can make when working full time.
- 4. Describe the REACH Plus™ class.**

REACH Plus™ helps participants become competitive and successful in the job market and the workplace. This program covers self-esteem, communication, conflict resolution, career planning, resume writing, interviewing, and workplace conduct and professional dress. The computer training helps participants gain mastery of technical computer skills expected of the average worker, including how to navigate the Windows operating system, and how to use the Microsoft Office Suite of applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access). REACH Plus™ participants develop a professional portfolio, including resume and cover letter, and participate in a mock job interview.

5. Where does WWEE's funding come from?

WWEE's current funding comes from government sources (federal, state and local cities), United Way of King and Pierce counties, individuals, private foundations, corporations and two large annual benefit events.

6. Are there other programs in the community that are similar to WWEE?

Although there are several organizations in the community that provide job training services, only WWEE provides the holistic, long-term support that guarantees lasting change. Our unique five-week REACH Plus™ course taught by highly qualified, motivating instructors and our two-years of follow up support are the hallmark of WWEE's successful 26-year history.

7. Are there other services that you provide your clients in addition to the REACH Plus™ program?

- **Work Experience.** Provides eligible participants with valuable and paid work experience with a local not-for-profit, government or for-profit employer.
- **Follow-Up Services.** For up to two years after graduation, participants receive problem solving assistance, job leads, resume assistance, and some financial support.
- **Support Services.** Offers financial support for emergency services such as electric bills, bus tickets/gas vouchers, interview clothing (if none can be found in the Clothing Boutique), food or necessary household items that cannot be purchased with food stamps (toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, toothpaste etc.).
- **Career Development Center.** Provides access to a computer and the Internet to update resumes, cover letters and other materials and search for a job. WWEE also provides job retention, wage progression, and job development services.
- **Clothing Boutique.** Offers gently worn interview-appropriate clothing. Volunteer wardrobe consultants are available to assist participants in selecting suitable items.
- **Housing Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Program (HBSS).** Provides resources to help low-income families stabilize their home and life circumstances, including a rental assistance program, transitional housing program and a homeless prevention program.
- **Employment Services Department.** WWEE's Employment Services program (ES) is a value added service to participants who exhibit excellent performance in WWEE programs. Designed for graduates to receive concentrated employment services, selected candidates will have one-on-one employment coaching to create a personalized plan for gaining employment.

8. How does WWEE help clients break the cycle of poverty?

WWEE staff members treat participants with compassion, dignity, and respect. Together, our programs are a comprehensive approach to helping participants identify and overcome their barriers, discover and leverage their talents and skills, access community resources, acquire the basic readiness and technical skills for employability, and develop and act on a life-long career plan. WWEE cares for its participants while holding them accountable for their own success.

9. Is the WWEE program successful? Are your graduates successful?

Yes. Year after year, WWEE consistently delivers successful graduates into the community. Results from our fiscal year ending 6/30/10 show that two thirds of REACH Plus™ graduates enrolled in vocational or higher education, began full time employment, gained part-time employment or entered an internship. Graduates last year reported a 154% increase in earnings after entry to the WWEE program.

10. Are there ways that I can get involved with WWEE?

WWEE volunteers and donors are integral to our success in helping low-income families break the cycle of poverty. Without them, we simply would not be able to offer the quality level of programs and services that we do. There are many ways you can get involved with WWEE, whether you are an individual, business, or community group. Consider the following options: make a financial or professional clothing donation, volunteer in the clothing boutique or classroom, participate on an event committee, hire a WWEE graduate or invite others to learn about WWEE by attending a graduation or fundraising event.

11. Is the WWEE staff paid or are they volunteers?

WWEE staff (15 full time; 7 part time) are paid. However, WWEE could not operate its quality programs and services without generous volunteers, who work in our Clothing Boutiques, serve as class room speakers, assist with events and mailings, and serve as mock interviewers.