



United States Department of Agriculture

SNAP E&T REVIEW



APRIL 2016

Welcome



A Message from USDA Food & Nutrition Service

I am pleased to announce an exciting new offering from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that will enhance communication about the SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) to States and their stakeholders all across the country.

Today, we're launching the SNAP E&T Review, the first-ever SNAP E&T newsletter that will connect you to national program and policy updates related to SNAP E&T. SNAP E&T Review will feature the latest news about SNAP E&T, information about how to design job-driven SNAP E&T programs, and emerging best practices.

One of FNS' top priorities is working with States to build SNAP E&T programs that can provide SNAP recipients the skills and experience they need to find better jobs and reduce their need for SNAP. We are committed to improving SNAP E&T programs nationally and will be rolling out resources (such as this newsletter) and tools to help your agency incorporate job-driven elements into your E&T programs.

Over the next year, you can expect a continuum of resources featured in the Review, including new publications, workbooks, a new digital platform, webinars, and success stories from SNAP E&T participants. These resources will be made available to all States and their partners interested in learning about and growing high quality SNAP E&T programs.

Looking forward to working with you,

Jessica Shahin

Associate Administrator, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

FNS Introduces the SNAP to Skills Project

In late 2015, Secretary Vilsack introduced *SNAP to Skills (S2S)* – a project of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) operated in partnership with Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI). The goal of S2S is to provide States the tools and resources they need to develop job-driven SNAP E&T programs that help SNAP participants find jobs and work toward self-sufficiency.

Through S2S, FNS will:

- Develop a series of policy briefs on best practices related to developing, operating, and running SNAP E&T programs;
- Launch a new *SNAP to Skills* website;
- Share success stories of SNAP E&T participants; and
- Work directly with 10 States to jumpstart their efforts to build robust and effective SNAP E&T programs by providing a combination of hands-on, roll-up-our-sleeves-and-get-to-work technical assistance as well as tools, resources, learning and networking opportunities.

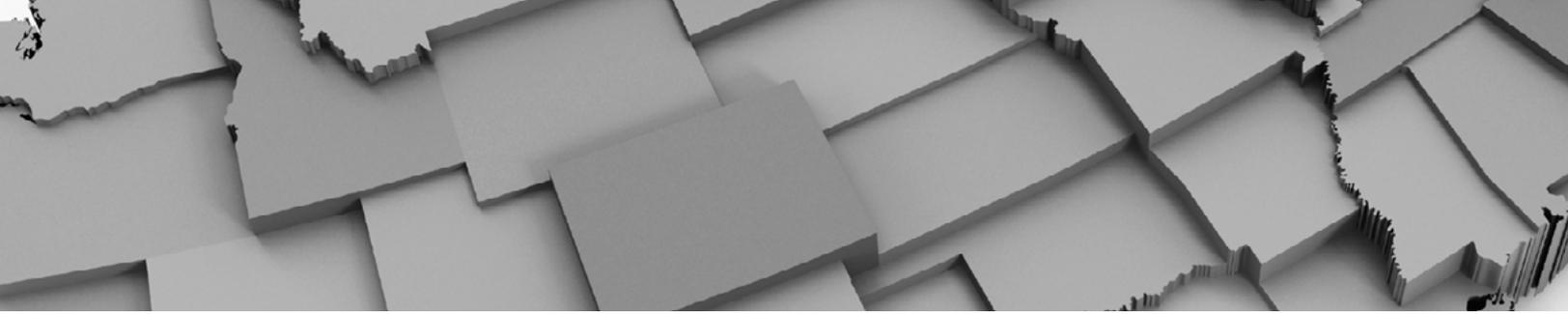
FNS is fortunate to be working with SJI on this project, an organization that has a wealth of direct experience in running SNAP E&T programs and sharing their knowledge and working with other States.

New Resource: *Why Now is the Time for States to Build Their SNAP E&T Programs*

The *SNAP to Skills* project will produce a regular series of policy briefs covering both policy and technical issues related to building successful SNAP E&T programs. The first policy brief, *Why Now is the Time for States to Build Their SNAP E&T Programs*, provides a short explanation of the SNAP E&T program and why this is an opportune (and critical) moment for States to take action to build their programs.

Additionally, it offers a few key strategies – or shifts in thinking – for States to jumpstart their efforts. Finally, it briefly explains how the *SNAP to Skills* project can help States advance.

READ FULL BRIEF **HERE**



10 States to Receive Technical Assistance as Part of the *SNAP to Skills* Project

On March 2, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the 10 States that were selected to receive enhanced technical assistance in the *SNAP to Skills* project. These States are: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina and Tennessee.

These 10 States will receive direct technical assistance from SJI as well as networking opportunities to share their progress with their S2S peers. The States were chosen based on their demonstrated commitment to expanding the SNAP E&T program, their ability to build effective partnerships with training providers through 50/50 funding, and the existence of job-driven workforce development programs in the State. In addition, *SNAP to Skills* will provide *all* States access to tools and resources to assist them in building their SNAP E&T programs.

States to Report on Outcomes of SNAP E&T Programs

On March 24, USDA published an interim final rule that requires States to report on earnings and employment outcomes for participants in the SNAP E&T program. States will be required to start reporting outcomes to USDA on fiscal year 2017 activities. The rule is available [here](#).

Under this rule, USDA and States will track key earnings and employment outcomes for SNAP E&T participants to help States identify effective training programs and those in need of improvement. To foster and streamline partnerships across federal training programs, the reporting requirements are aligned closely with the measures included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which governs the nation's federal training programs.

USDA and DOL Partnering to Help Connect Low-Income Able-bodied Adults to the Public Workforce System

On March 31, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Labor issued a joint letter to encourage collaboration at the regional and local levels to identify ways to provide effective job-driven education and training opportunities to SNAP participants, particularly Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs), through the workforce system. The full letter is available [here](#).

ABAWDs may only participate in SNAP for three months in any 36-month period unless they are working or participating in an employment and training activity for 80 hours per month or complying with a workfare program.

During the economic downturn, due to high levels of unemployment, most States had a waiver of the 3-month time limit. However, as the economy continues to recover, many States are no longer eligible or will not implement such waivers.

One resource available to States to help ABAWDs maintain their eligibility is the SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program which is intended to help SNAP participants including ABAWDs, gain skills, training or work experience to improve their employability and reduce their need for nutrition assistance. In addition, participation in workforce programs under WIOA is considered a qualifying activity for the purposes of helping ABAWDs maintain SNAP eligibility. USDA and DOL encourage States to join USDA and DOL in efforts to ensure that low-skilled and low-income individuals obtain the skills and credentials needed to secure employment and increase their earnings.

Upcoming Events, Important Dates & Resource Links

- Under Secretary Kevin Concannon recently sent a letter to all State Commissioners urging them to incorporate job-driven elements into their SNAP E&T programs. **Read the letter.**
- Planned for Summer 2016: FNS will launch a new website as part of the *SNAP to Skills* project. States will be able to access information about the project, SNAP E&T tools and resources, policy briefs, and stories from successful SNAP E&T programs. Experience learning opportunities with your colleagues on SNAP E&T topics and more!

Contact

SNAP to Skills Project

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