



March 31, 2016

SUBJECT: Partnering to Help Connect Low-Income Able-bodied Adults to the Public Workforce System

TO: Commissioners and Directors of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program State Workforce Administrators, WIOA Liaisons, Workforce Development Boards, and American Job Centers

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Labor (DOL) are partnering to encourage State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) agencies and State and local workforce agencies to work together to develop shared strategies that will better connect SNAP participants, specifically able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), to employment and training opportunities through American Job Centers (AJCs).

Our agencies share a common goal which is to help low-skilled, low-income, or low-wage individuals find sustainable employment. Both the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Agriculture Act of 2014 (Farm Bill) underscore the importance of connecting low-income individuals to job-driven training activities, breaking down barriers which often impede ABAWD's from successfully entering the workforce.

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. Participation in workforce programs under WIOA is considered a qualifying activity for the purposes of helping ABAWDs maintain SNAP eligibility. Furthermore, expanding SNAP participants' access to employment and training services is critical to helping them transition from the program by becoming economically self-sufficient.

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. USDA is committed to helping States expand and strengthen their existing programs, and to think strategically about the role other workforce development programs can play in responding to the needs of ABAWDs.

Another resource, the State and local Workforce system, specifically the American Job Centers (AJCs) and their partners, provides job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages.

They provide access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers.

USDA and DOL encourage you join us in this effort to ensure that low-skilled and low-income individuals obtain the skills and credentials needed to secure employment and increase their earnings. Your close coordination and sharing of information and resources is essential for the delivery of integrated services for SNAP recipients at the State and local levels.

If you have any questions about this memo, please contact Moira Johnston (Moira.Johnston@fns.usda.gov) at USDA or Robert Kight (Kight.Robert@dol.gov) at DOL.

Sincerely,

//Original Signed//

Kevin W. Concannon
Under Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food, Nutrition and Consumer Service

//Original Signed//

Portia Wu
Assistant Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment & Training Administration