

GROWING AND STRENGTHENING SNAP E&T PROGRAMS



Consulting with the State Workforce Development Board

This resource for State agencies explores one part of the growing and strengthening series to build stronger SNAP E&T programs—consulting with State workforce development boards (WDBs) to better understand labor markets in your State.

A core part of designing your program is understanding the labor market landscape in your State. Not only is this good practice, but States are required to consult with their State WDB to inform the design of their E&T programs (7 CFR 273.7(c)(5)). These conversations will help you understand the current and future labor markets. This information is key to designing effective SNAP E&T programs, so they are preparing participants for the right jobs in their communities. You should use the information you receive about the availability of jobs, the industries with highest-demand, and the skill needs of employers to assess if there are gaps between the jobs your program is preparing participants for and where the labor market has the most availability and need. You should also compare the types of available jobs to the needs and desires of your participants. If you identify any gaps, you should consider ways to change your program design to better fit the labor market landscape and the needs of your participants.

Where do I start?



Identify your State WDB

Every State has a State WDB. The State WDB is usually associated with the Governor's Office and is distinct from the local WDBs that operate the American Job Centers (AJCs). If you are unsure of where it is or who to contact, you can find a list of WDB locations and contacts by State on the [U.S. Department of Labor website](https://www.dhs.gov/e-verify/employment-eligibility).

What is a State Workforce Development Board?

WDBs are part of a network of Federal, State, and local offices that support economic expansion and development. WDBs develop regional strategic plans and set workforce development funding priorities for their area. They serve as connectors between the U.S. Department of Labor and local American Job Centers (AJCs).



Consult directly with the State WDB to obtain labor market information

After you identify your WDB, identify the appropriate contact person and reach out to them for a consultation. Consultation means seeking out staff from the State WDB and holding targeted conversations about the labor market landscape, employer skill needs, and available education and training programs specifically to inform the design of your SNAP E&T program. The State WDB collaborates with local businesses and education & training providers, so it has vital information and data on the labor market in the specific areas where your program operates. The State WDB can share information about high-demand and emerging industries within the State.

The State WDB also may be able to identify providers in the community that fill a specific gap in your program and connect you to them. Some key questions to consider asking your State WDBs:

- ✓ What types of jobs are available and in-demand in the areas that E&T participants are located, and are they good jobs (wages, benefits, schedules)?
- ✓ What credentials and skills do employers use to make hiring decisions?
- ✓ What training providers are considered the best for preparing participants for the identified occupations, and how can we connect with them?
- ✓ What are the current challenges facing local labor markets?
- ✓ What labor market trends does the WDB envision in the next year, three years, or five years?

Is not consulting with State WDBs

- ✗ Being on a committee with a workforce partner
- ✗ Consulting with one or more local WDBs
- ✗ Participating in meetings that staff from the workforce development network attend
- ✗ Having the State or local WDB review your State SNAP E&T State plan
- ✗ Holding discussions with state labor agency staff

Who else should I talk with to understand my State's labor markets?

At a minimum, the Food and Nutrition Act requires States consult with the State WDB, but there are other partners in the State's workforce development system who could help you understand additional labor market conditions.



LOCAL WDBS

In addition to the State WDB, States often have several local WDBs. It could be helpful in areas with large E&T programs or where you want to grow the program to also consult with one or more of the local WDBs to get additional details about the local labor market, employers, and providers.



EMPLOYERS

Discussions directly with key employers in the areas where you operate or want to operate SNAP E&T or in industries or occupations you want to focus on can provide information about their specific workforce needs. Start with those who could employ many SNAP participants or are in high-demand or emerging industries to learn about what skills and credentials they are looking for in an employee and how they may be able to partner with your program in training and hiring participants.



OTHER WORKFORCE ORGANIZATIONS

Talking with others in the workforce development system, such as large providers or provider networks, can provide additional context to understand the labor market, particularly in areas where there is no AJC.

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