

GROWING AND STRENGTHENING SNAP E&T PROGRAMS



Partner Agreements for SNAP E&T: Equity Considerations

This resource describes how State agreements with SNAP E&T providers may affect equitable access to E&T services and offers considerations for State agencies.

When designing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) programs, one of the most important decisions States make is whether and with whom to partner to best provide services to the State’s target population. [Identifying providers](#) is one part of the process, but how States formalize these partnerships can be the most difficult part to navigate for some providers. The complexity of State processes to develop contracts or other partnering agreements can make onboarding new providers and expanding program capacity challenging, and ultimately may limit the ability of some providers to partner with States. The more complex the process, the more likely smaller providers or those that reach historically underserved communities do not have capacity to fulfill the contracting requirements.

As States design their SNAP E&T programs, it is important to consider how the partner agreement process can inadvertently limit participant choice and exacerbate gaps in equitable access. For example, some States are required to release requests for proposals (RFP) while others can gauge interest among a group of providers and enter into an agreement directly. If a State is required to use an RFP process, this can involve many separate steps, such as releasing a competitive request for proposals, collecting responses, scoring, and then selecting providers. States may also require insurance and training standards for all potential partners, which may go beyond a provider’s typical organizational practices and be cumbersome to meet. Lastly, extended reimbursement times may be unworkable for smaller providers with limited budgets.

The more complex the process, the more likely smaller providers or those that reach historically underserved communities do not have capacity to fulfill the contracting requirements, which limits a SNAP E&T program’s ability to ensure equitable access.

Even large, established organizations may experience challenges, but a small or mid-sized provider may simply not be able to comply with these requirements due to limited staff capacity or inexperience with complex government requirements. The section below lays out strategies that States can use to help small and mid-size providers access information and navigate becoming a SNAP E&T provider. These ideas were developed through a series of interviews with SNAP E&T providers and intermediaries.

Equity Considerations

By considering the accessibility of the agreement process, you can create opportunities to work with providers that meet the needs of your target populations and work toward more equitable delivery of SNAP E&T services.



Sharing information with potential providers

1. Consider how you communicate your program mission and vision, target population, and services to potential providers so they can understand how their services might align with your program.
2. Consider whether your methods for making information about becoming a SNAP E&T provider publicly available are reaching smaller providers who might not be as familiar with your typical communication channels.
3. Consider seeking input on draft applications or RFPs from potential providers, including those who serve underserved populations, before they apply.
4. Consider asking current SNAP E&T providers or community groups to share ideas for providers that are serving specific communities and directly reach out to share information about becoming a SNAP E&T provider.



Partnering processes

5. Consider options to reduce the contracting burden within State requirements and attract a broader group of potential providers. For example, are there changes to the selection criteria that could make it easier for small and mid-size organizations to become SNAP E&T providers?
6. Consider whether partnering with an intermediary organization could help your program build relationships with new providers, facilitate communication, and reduce burden by taking on administrative functions related to the contracting process.



Timely contracts and reimbursements

7. Consider how the SNAP E&T program coordinates with the State's contracts department to ensure alignment and timely payment.
8. Consider whether annual agreements with new and existing providers are executed in a timely fashion. For example, are new agreements executed prior to the start of the new fiscal year or the beginning of the service contract?



Technical assistance

9. Consider the technical assistance or support structures (such as mentoring programs) offered for providers throughout the partner agreement process.
10. Consider whether the requirements and instructions for providers are clear and consistent. For example, are templates for budgeting, reporting, and invoicing available.

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