



Growing and Strengthening SNAP E&T Programs

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TEN
YEARS
STRONG

10

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- FNS has been working on improving SNAP E&T for about a decade
 - States have done a huge amount of work to build the infrastructure of the program
 - What comes next?

E&T is Unique Among Federal Programs

- Can be a double-edged sword, but there is so much opportunity in the program
- Only Federal workforce development program that has the potential to genuinely meet the needs of low-income participants
- Trying to address a very, very complicated set of issues
- Program won't work if it isn't intentionally designed to do so



SOMETIMES YOU
HAVE TO STEP BACK
IN ORDER TO MOVE
FORWARD



FNS “Growing
and
Strengthening”
webpage



QR: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap-et/growing-strengthening>

Growing and Strengthening Series

Growing and Strengthening SNAP E&T Programs



- Developing a series of tools that:
 - Help determine if your SNAP E&T program is meeting your goals
 - Identify what changes are needed to operate an effective program

Part 1: Understanding Your Program



- Assess program factors to determine if you are meeting your program goals
 - Include as part of your planning and development of your annual State SNAP E&T Plan
- Includes:
 - Reviewing elements of current E&T program
 - Determining interests/needs of target population
 - Understanding the labor market
 - Consulting with the workforce board and employers

Part 2: Designing Your Program



- Using information from Part 1, decide where redesign is needed, including:
 - Refining the program vision
 - Expanding or eliminating certain components and services
 - Selecting different or additional providers
 - Revising business processes

Part 3: Selecting Providers to Meet Your Program's Needs



- SNAP E&T providers quality is a major factor in the success of your program
- Periodically review the mix of providers to ensure they offer a variety of services to diverse populations
- Consider if all providers are a fit for your specific program; not all providers will be a good match

Part 4 : Monitoring Programs and Analyzing Data



- Data are essential to assess if your program is meeting its goals
- Helps you make decisions about improvements and program changes
- Access to individual-level data in real or near-real time allows you to know if providers are operating programs as intended and effectively serving participants

Example Tools in the Series

Consulting with the State Workforce Development Board

- **What:** A core part of designing your program is understanding the current and future labor markets in your State
- **Why:** Obtaining this information allows you to design effective SNAP E&T programs that prepare participants for the available jobs in their communities
 - Information includes: the availability of jobs, the industries with highest-demand, and the skill needs of employers
 - Compare the types of available jobs to the needs and desires of your participants—identify gaps and consider program changes to meet needs

Consulting with State WDB Tool

- Tool describes what consultation is and guidance on how to approach consultation
- Consultation includes more than attending a committee or meeting where staff in the workforce development system attend
- Hold targeted conversations with State WDB to understand the labor market landscape
- May meet with other partners in workforce network as well to align services or learn more about labor market



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.

CONSULTING WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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

Approaches for Understanding the SNAP E&T Target Population

- **What:** A resource to help State agencies explores approaches to better understand the characteristics and needs of potential and current SNAP E&T program participants
- **Why:** Understanding who your program serves and the services and supports they seek is a necessary first step to operating an effective program
 - If programs are not designed to offer what SNAP participants want or need, they will not enroll or stay engaged

Understanding Target Population Tool

- Resource for using data to understand who the program is and can be serving
- **Administrative data.** Using existing data to identify characteristics of those who do and do not participate in E&T programs
 - Includes key data elements and examples of how to use the data
- **Participant feedback.** Approaches and guidance on conducting surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions with SNAP participants to incorporate their voices
 - Includes tips for designing data collection
 - Includes best practices and example questions



Select who to include

Once you can access SNAP administrative data, you will need to decide which part of the SNAP population you have questions about. You may have general questions about SNAP participants or more targeted questions about a subset of participants.

The types of SNAP participants that you include in your data should be based on your program's target population. For example, if your program primarily targets able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), you will likely limit the data you are looking at to ABAWDs in your State. The data you examine may be further defined by the questions you are asking. For example, if you want to know about outcomes for ABAWDs who participate in SNAP E&T, you may narrow your data set to those ABAWDs who have participated in SNAP E&T. But if you want to know why some ABAWDs participate in SNAP E&T and some do not, you would include all ABAWDs in your State.

Whichever groups you select, you should talk to your eligibility and data staff to ensure that you understand how certain participant indicators are developed in the data system and that you will include the exact people that you need during the period of interest.



Choose relevant data elements

Administrative data systems have numerous data elements, so selecting only the data that are needed will make it easier to understand the results. The characteristics you choose should help you understand your target population and be relevant to the question you are asking. Also, using individual-level data, as opposed to aggregate data, gives you flexibility to answer more and specific questions you have.

Key eligibility elements typically included in SNAP administrative data appear in Box 1. It also identifies SNAP E&T data you can link to the characteristics of people currently participating in SNAP E&T or who have participated in the past.



Identify data trends

After you have SNAP administrative data, you can begin to explore whom the program is serving and those who could be served. For example, you could look at the average age and gender of work registrants who are not participating in SNAP E&T compared to those who are participating to determine if there are large differences. If, for instance, your program targets ABAWDs but you find your program is mostly serving

Box 1. Key administrative data elements

SNAP eligibility data:

- Age
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Educational attainment
- Presence of children in the household
- Presence of earned income
- Disability status
- Primary language spoken
- Geographic locations (zip codes and/or county)
- ABAWD status
- Work registrant status
- Sanction due to E&T (if applicable)

SNAP E&T data:

- Start/end date of participation
- Assessment data
- Participant reimbursements (amount, type, frequency)
- Components and length of engagement
- Provider and location
- Employment and wage information

Additional Resources

- Part 3 includes a tool on Selecting Providers to Meet Your Program's Needs (discussed at last Forum)
- More tools will be added over time
- Location: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap-et/growing-strengthening>

Questions

We want to hear from you!

Provide feedback on this session by scanning the QR code and filling out the survey



QR: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6HFLHH>