Expanding Community Colleges as SNAP E&T Providers

Engaging with The SNAP E&T Agency

Planning Guide #2



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This planning guide is one of a series of documents produced by ACCT with the following project partners:

APHSA American Public Human Services Association

SJI SEATTLE JOBS INITIATIVE Opening Doors to Living-Wage Careers

skills strategy CONSULTING

USDA Food & Nutrition Service

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SNAP E&T Planning Guides

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#4 Mapping Staff Capacity

#5 Braiding Funding

#6 Budget Development

#7 Student Outreach, Engagement, Enrollment

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#9 Support Services (Participant Reimbursements)

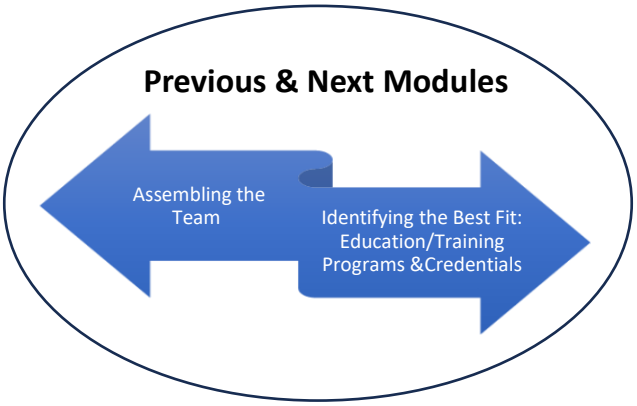
#10 Leveraging SNAP E&T Workforce Partnerships

#11 Program Administration and Strategic Expansion

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Engaging with the SNAP E&T Agency

Summary



All U.S. states have a SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program that is administered through a state or county agency designed to help connect people to high-quality education and training and support services that result in quality credentials and better jobs with family-sustaining wages. States receive funding to provide different employment and training and related supportive services to SNAP participants.

These human service agencies have considerable flexibility in designing their SNAP E&T programs – which SNAP participants to prioritize, which services or components to offer participants, and who will provide these services. Human service agencies are required to provide case management and at least one E&T component but have a great deal of discretion beyond that.

Some human service agencies have chosen to partner with community colleges directly as third-party providers or through an intermediary for their SNAP E&T programs. This provides SNAP participants opportunities to access quality education and training leading to better employment and careers. With the majority of jobs requiring some postsecondary education, SNAP E&T's emphasis on boosting skills and educational attainment helps close opportunity gaps and creates career pathways to ensure people have the chance to thrive in today's economy.

SNAP E&T is a unique program that aligns directly with state and institutional goals focused on equitable college access and completion of credentials that can support the economic wellbeing of students and meet the needs of local employers. The SNAP E&T framework is extremely flexible and can easily leverage current faculty and staff work in student success or workforce development. Colleges do not need to hire new staff or pull existing staff away from their ongoing responsibilities.

Who to Invite to the Table (college internal planning)

- SNAP E&T college lead
- College executive leader sponsor
- College leaders from the following areas:
  - Student services who oversees basic needs supports including food pantry on campus
  - College workforce development leader
  - College adult education leader
- Grants office staff

(the initial meeting with the human service agency should just be 1-2 leaders from the college)

Planning Goals

1) Understand how SNAP E&T is led by the state or county human service agency which has flexibility in its approach that can include community colleges as SNAP E&T third-party providers
2) Identify and leverage any past college collaboration with human service agency that can advance SNAP E&T partnership
3) Explore ways to align college and human service agency goals and priorities related to economic stability and mobility through SNAP E&T

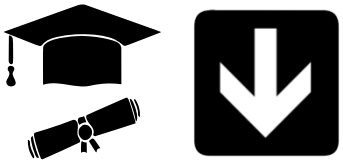
23.4%

of community college students have experienced food insecurity within the last 30 days

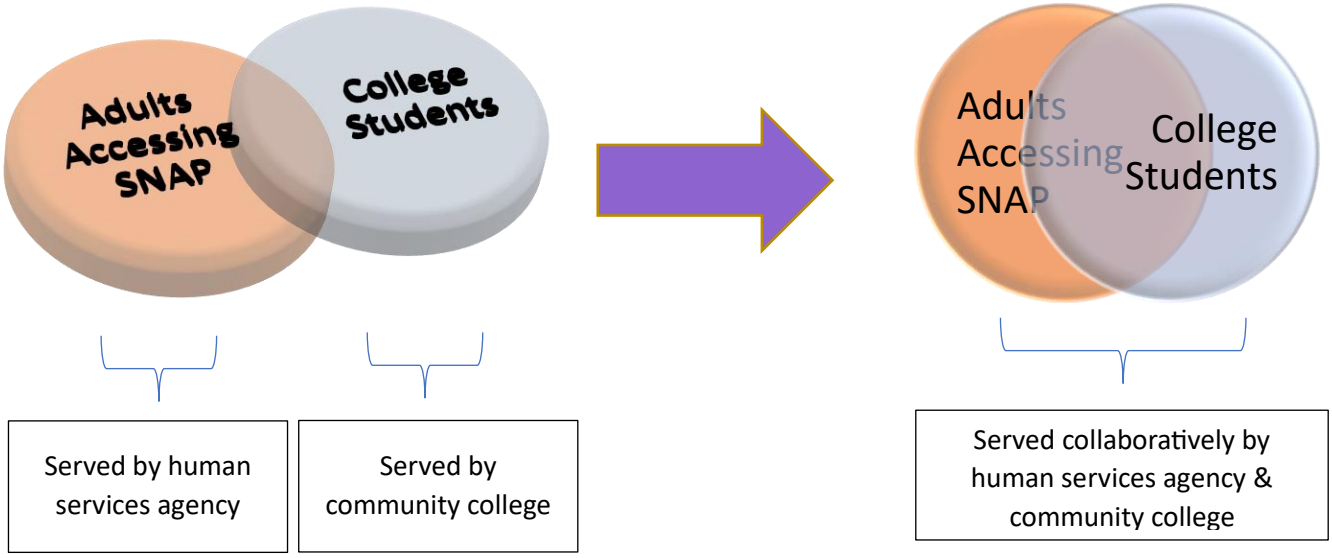
(Source: 2020 NCES National Postsecondary Student Aid Study)

SNAP Participants & Education Levels – *As Education Level Increases, SNAP Participation Declines*

	Education Level
40%	High school equivalency
19%	Some college, no degree
9%	Associate's degree
9%	Bachelor's degree



Source: TICAS calculation of SNAP recipients by reported highest level of education completed ages 18 and over from U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Detailed Program Receipt: Table 4. https://bit.ly/3Y7fp4l



Source: Kate Kinder, NCWE

This visual illustrates how with greater partnership, policy alignment and outreach, more adults accessing SNAP can enroll and complete postsecondary education that leads to careers with economic mobility and more college students can access SNAP and SNAP E&T that improves similar outcomes.

Guiding Questions

1) Who is the human services agency that administers the state or county SNAP E&T program?
2) In what ways has the college collaborated with this human service agency in the past (e.g. informally via referrals and/or formally through contracts, MOUs or grants)?
3) What are the other SNAP E&T programs operating in the area?
    a. What services/components do they offer?
4) What data does the college have about students experiencing food insecurity?
5) How can the college leads that meet with the human service agency work on building the relationship and trust?
6) What themes from the college's strategic plan and/or strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan would be helpful to share with human service agency to show alignment with human service agency priorities and focus?

Additional questions for initial meeting with human service agency:

7) What are the human service agency goals for the SNAP E&T program?
8) What challenges if any are they experiencing in achieving these goals?
9) What can the College do to help meet these goals and overcome the challenges?

Meeting Agenda Template

- Check-in regarding prior meeting action items
- Review and discuss responses to guiding questions
- Review and discuss the potential challenges
- Develop written responses for each guiding question
- Identify areas that need further research/understanding – develop specific descriptions of information still needed
- Create a detailed list of questions for technical assistance
- Clarify next steps, who is responsible, and a timeframe for reporting back to team

Potential Challenges

1) The human service agency may not know how to partner with community colleges yet as these higher education institutions are large complex public entities that may seem inaccessible to the human service agency clients.

2) The human service agency may not be aware that community colleges provide education and training beyond two-year transfer and CTE degrees including quality career pathways certificate programs (credit and non-credit) as well as adult education programs that could map more closely to SNAP E&T skills training priorities. Similarly, they may also be unaware that colleges can provide case management and wraparound services.

3) There may not be clear collegewide awareness of existing and past partnership opportunities with the human service agency that may complicate or confuse the conversation about SNAP E&T with the human service agency. Since human service agencies provide such a comprehensive array of programs and services, it is not uncommon for multiple faculty and staff to reach out to the human service agency without realizing there are existing relationships.

Planning Checklist

- ❒ 1) Gather information about the college's past experience and history with the human service agency that administers SNAP E&T
- ❒ 2) Do landscape scan to understand what other SNAP E&T programs are operating in the area
- ❒ 3) Leverage existing or past relationships with human service agency if possible to schedule initial meeting with small group of college leaders
- ❒ 4) Seek to understand human service agency SNAP and SNAP E&T goals, priorities and challenges along with larger state or regional contexts related to political climate
- ❒ 5) Explore strategies that support or advance the human service agency goals in addition to those of the college in addressing student food insecurity and overall retention and completion.
- ❒ 6) Start small in beginning a partnership and build on existing strengths

Tools/Organizational Aids for this Module

- FNS SNAP E&T Toolkit
- FNS SNAP E&T Operations Handbook
- FNS SNAP E&T https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap-etwebsite

Resources

- FNS SNAP E&T 2024 National Forum – Community College and Human Service SNAP E&T Partnerships
- FNS Webinar – How Community College Systems and SNAP Agencies Can Take Career Pathways to Scale
- SNAP to Skills
- The Institute for College Access and Success - SNAP Reimagined: Improving Postsecondary Education Access and Completion
- National Skills Coalition – Building State Career Pathways Systems: A Toolkit for State Policymakers, Human Service Agency Leaders, Community Colleges, and Partners

FAQ's

- How do you determine who to connect with at the human service agency?
    - The College should try and leverage existing contacts and relationships with the human service agency as best as possible. There may be information through the human service agency website on who has oversight of the SNAP E&T program. The Regional Analyst at the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) can be a helpful resource as they provide guidance on SNAP E&T programs within their regions. This FNS SNAP E&T online resource has a map of the US states and territories with pertinent information for each state's SNAP E&T program. The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) can also assist in identifying the best contact as they work with human service agencies across all states and territories.

- How can you learn about the SNAP E&T program in your state or region?
    - This can be done by inquiring through established human service agency contacts or other existing third-party SNAP E&T providers. It may be possible to research online but it is important to note that some

SNAP E&T programs are not promoted or advertised to the general public as they may be integrated into established programs with eligibility or enrollment requirements.

- How does SNAP E&T fit into the state overall workforce system?
    - SNAP E&T is an important element of the broader workforce development ecosystem that is flexible, student-centered and provides holistic supports for students receiving SNAP benefits. It complements the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs and services along with others federal, state and local workforce grants. Reviewing the state WIOA plan can help identify programs and services for SNAP E&T, particularly within states that have a WIOA combined plan – that includes human service agency programs and services. Understanding the WIOA state plan can help ensure that SNAP E&T is not constructed in a silo or separate program but is strategically aligned to the public workforce system and leveraging resources and services available.

Case Study

College XYZ used to have the contract with the regional human service agency to provide programs and services to TANF participants. While they no longer provide these services, there is history with the human service agency. In exploring SNAP E&T, the College dean of workforce development reached out to the regional manager of the human service agency to better understand the focus of their SNAP E&T programs. The Dean learned that the state is concentrating on increasing the percentage of state residents accessing SNAP benefits who are eligible. They have some small SNAP E&T programs with community-based organizations but have not yet partnered with any community colleges. They have put resources into SNAP outreach working with anti-poverty CBOs. The dean highlighted the work the College has done to both identify and support students experiencing food insecurity. The College has developed a food pantry on campus but did not know how best to promote SNAP benefits to students, considering the complications for student eligibility. This was a helpful starting point to begin planning to collaborate on a SNAP E&T program for short-term credential programs at the college.