Expanding Community Colleges as SNAP E&T Providers

Identifying the Best Fit: Education/Training Programs and Credentials

Planning Guide #3



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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

The United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service funded this project under FRPS Program FY22 SNAP E&T National Partnership federal grant agreement number SNAP-ETNP-22-DC. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the U.S.D.A. Food and Nutrition Service, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

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SNAP E&T Planning Guides

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SNAP E&T Planning Guide #3

Identifying the Best Fit: Education/Training Programs and Credentials

Summary

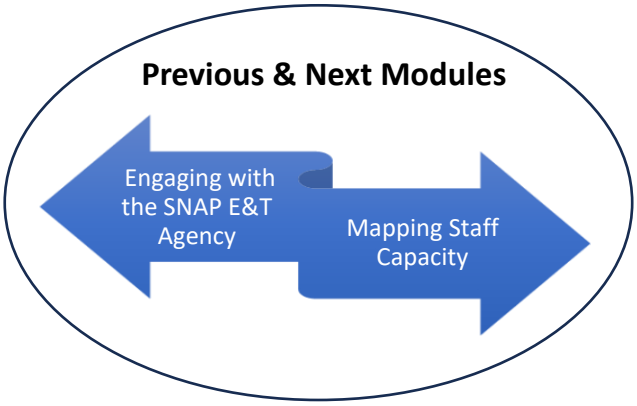
As SNAP E&T third party providers, community colleges have the opportunity to identify the education and training programs in which students will enroll, complete, and gain meaningful credentials that lead to good jobs.

Colleges should begin by looking at regional labor market needs and consider regional priority sectors. Colleges should also identify occupations where there are shortages of workers and pathways for job and career opportunities that meet the needs of employers, learners, and the community. Community colleges should examine what educational programs at their institution have historically been effective at connecting and supporting access for students with low incomes to increase college credential completion and connection to good jobs.

There are a variety of college education and training programs that are recognized as SNAP E&T educational components. This includes but is not limited to:

- English Language Acquisition
- Basic Education/Foundational Skills Instruction
- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Apprenticeships
- Career/Technical Education or other Vocational Training (CTE)

Colleges should start small with some of these educational components but design the program for scaling to offer a range of adult education, non-credit and credit CTE programs that result in career-aligned credentials. College third-party SNAP E&T providers can also offer complementary SNAP E&T components such as Supervised Job Search, Internship, or Job Retention services and can build up to these additional components over time. Colleges can also partner with other community-based organizations and third-party providers to offer these aligned services. Further information about how to design these partnerships is included in module #10, *Leveraging SNAP E&T Workforce Partnerships*.



Who to Invite to the Table (college internal planning)

- SNAP E&T college lead
- College executive leader sponsor
- College leaders from:
  - Career Technical Education
  - Non-credit Workforce training
  - Adult education
  - Institutional Research
- Student services leaders overseeing following areas:
  - Outreach
  - Student intake/orientation
- Advisors/Coaches/ Navigators
- Other workforce grant-funded leads
- Grants office staff

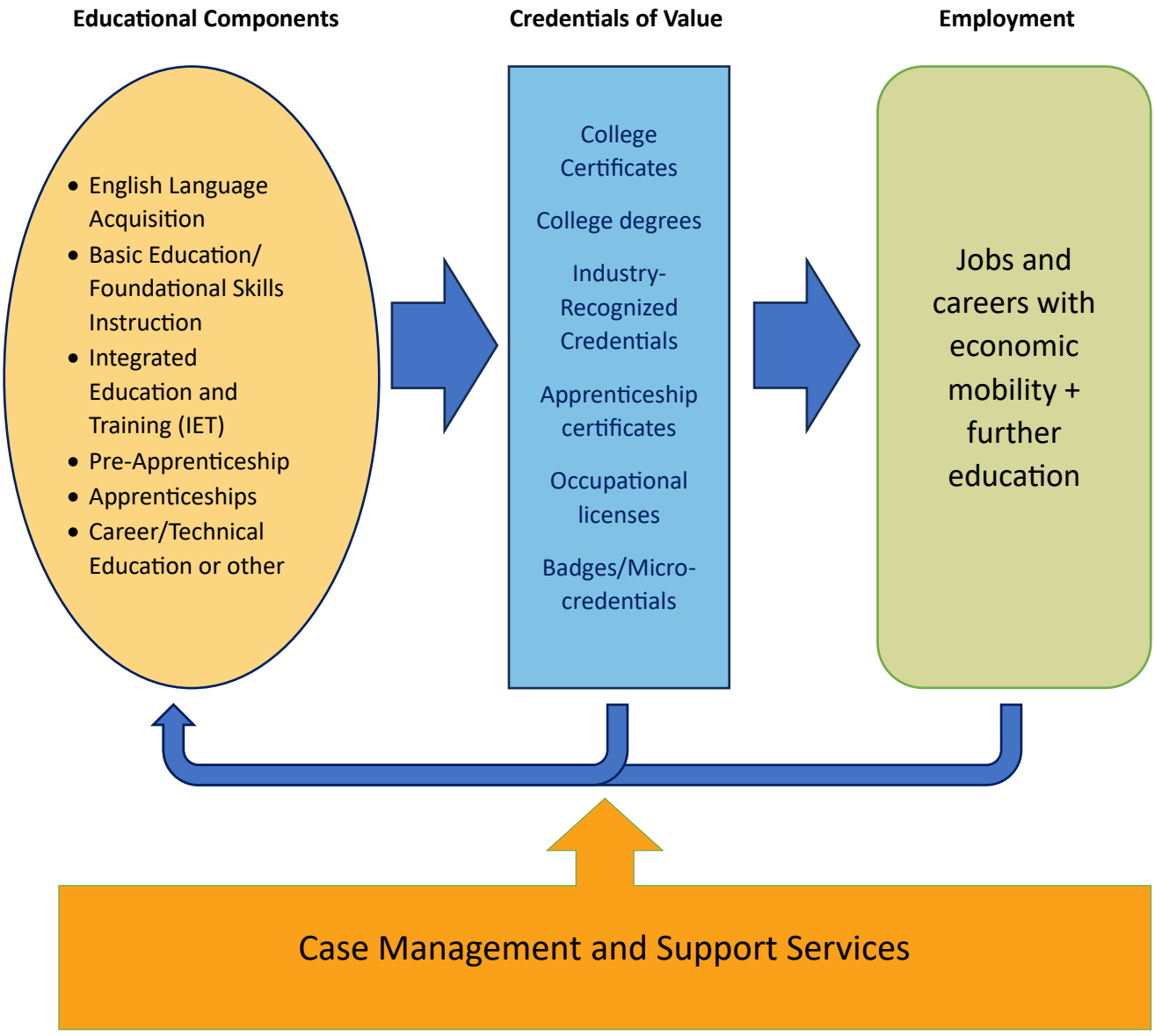
Planning Goals

1) Determine how colleges can identify strategic college education and training programs that SNAP E&T students enroll in, complete and gain quality credentials leading to jobs with economic stability and mobility.
2) Identify existing college education and training programs and pathways that have effectively supported students with low incomes gain credentials of value leading to good jobs in their field of study
3) Understand how to establish an expansive approach to SNAP E&T that offers diverse pathways and leverages non-federal college funding to scale the SNAP E&T program

While there may be a tendency for colleges to make a list of education and training programs for SNAP E&T in line with other workforce grants, it is strongly recommended that colleges refrain from making a list of programs eligible for SNAP E&T in order to maximize the college's ability to equitably serve students and boost enrollments and student outcomes. Instead, colleges should work with their SNAP agency to identify the range of educational components that will best meet the needs of learners in pursuing their path to a good job and career. Essentially, colleges need to be able to articulate to their SNAP agency how the full range of programs, from IET up to CTE degrees and apprenticeships, lead to good jobs and include this in any materials being submitted to the state for the SNAP E&T plan.

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.

SNAP E&T Education/Training Programs and Credentials



This visual illustrates the different education and training programs (or educational components) that SNAP E&T students can enroll in and complete gaining meaningful credentials that lead to jobs and careers with economic mobility while receiving SNAP E&T case management and support services. This is not an exhaustive list in terms of educational components and credentials of value. It is important to note that learners may continue on an educational pathway after gaining credentials of value and jobs in their field.

Guiding Questions

1) What are local/regional priority industry sectors with job growth and a shortage of workers?
2) What programs and pathways at the College have effectively helped students with low incomes gain credentials of value leading to good jobs in their field of study?
    a. What credit and non-credit CTE certificate and workforce training programs have had strong completion and employment outcomes at the college?
    b. What adult education, ESOL, high school equivalency and/or Integrated Education and Training programs have effectively supported students in gaining credentials of value (if offered at the College)?
    c. What apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs have had strong employment outcomes?
    d. What credentials of value can students gain from these education and training programs?
3) What additional insights do college advisors, coaches and navigators have in determining what programs and pathways students with low incomes are interested in pursuing?
4) What college education and training programs have non-federal sources of funding for staffing and student supports that can be leveraged for SNAP E&T for reimbursement (i.e. general funds, state grants, foundation resources, philanthropic investments, etc…)
5) What additional SNAP E&T components, beyond educational components, should be considered as the program is scaled in the future? This could include components such as Supervised Job Search, Internship, or Job Retention.

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 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

Additional questions for identifying the best fit with regard to education/training programs and credentials:

6) What are anticipated concerns about identifying education and training programs and credentials at the College for SNAP E&T?
    a. What are some strategies to address these concerns?
7) What are potential next steps in identifying education and training programs and credentials for SNAP E&T?

Potential Challenges

1) In recommending that Colleges start small with a new SNAP E&T program, they may choose to limit the number of college education and training programs identified for SNAP E&T, which will reduce accessible pathways for certain SNAP-eligible students, and limit college investments that could be leveraged for reimbursement.

2) Colleges may select only non-credit workforce and adult education programs for SNAP E&T because students may have more significant financial need as fewer resources are typically available for students in these programs. If this is the case, it will be more challenging to grow the college's SNAP E&T program in future years. For this reason, colleges should include a blend of education and training programs in which students can leverage other resources that complement SNAP E&T, positioning the program for growth.

3) Conversely, colleges may identify only traditional CTE credit programs for SNAP E&T which would exclude students beginning their educational path in adult education, others in non-credit workforce training programs, or those pursuing apprenticeships, which integrate work-based learning effectively and have very strong employment outcomes.

Planning Checklist

- ❒ 1) Examine labor market needs in the region where there are shortages of workers and job opportunities that meet the needs of learners, employers, and the community. Review priority industry sectors and jobs as part of local WIOA plan.
- ❒ 2) Identify existing college education and training programs that have effectively supported students with low incomes in gaining credentials of value and meaningful employment. Review program outcomes in terms of completion and employment rates.
- ❒ 3) Seek additional input from college advisors, coaches, and navigators about what educational programs and pathways students with low incomes are most interested in pursuing that lead to employment.
- ❒ 4) Identify the educational components that will be offered as part of SNAP E&T, including different credit CTE and non-credit workforce training and adult education options for students.
- ❒ 5) Consider how to scale up SNAP E&T to additional education and training programs in the future based on labor market needs as well as other SNAP E&T components such as Supervised Job Search, Internship, or Job Retention services.
- ❒ 6) Start small in the beginning but be open to various education and training options for SNAP-eligible students and avoid formal lists.

Tools/Organizational Aids for this Module

- FNS SNAP E&T Toolkit
- FNS SNAP E&T Operations Handbook
- FNS SNAP E&T website

Resources

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

FAQ's

- 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 other federal, state and local workforce grants. Reviewing the state and local WIOA plans 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. To ensure that SNAP E&T is strategically aligned to the public workforce system to best leverage resources and services available and not constructed in a silo or as a separate program, it is valuable to understand the WIOA state and local plans.

- Do the community college education and training programs identified for SNAP E&T have to be on the regional WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)?
    - No. SNAP E&T programs are not confined to programs listed on the regional ETPL. While the regional ETPL may help identify certain specific college programs that lead to high-wage, high-demand jobs and careers with economic mobility, there may be other educational pathways not included in the ETPL that can prepare students for jobs and careers in sectors that have job growth and a shortage of workers. In this way, SNAP E&T can extend resources and supports for students in programs beyond the ETPL while offering complementary services for those on the ETPL and receiving funds via the WIOA system.

- Should colleges create a list of education and training programs that they have identified for SNAP E&T so faculty and staff are aware of which academic pathways will be available to SNAP-eligible students?
    - No! SNAP E&T allows for flexibility in students accessing a multitude of education and training programs that lead to employment. To more equitably serve students with SNAP E&T services and supports and boost enrollment and student outcomes, colleges should refrain from making a list of programs eligible for SNAP E&T. Rather, colleges should work with their SNAP agency to identify the range of educational components that will best meet the needs of learners in pursuing their path to a good job and career.

Case Study

ABC Community College is getting started as a new SNAP E&T third party provider. They are in the process of determining which education and training programs should be included in their SNAP E&T program. They are active with their local workforce development partners through the WIOA system and know the priority sectors in the local WIOA plan are healthcare, manufacturing and construction trades. The College has gained insights from college coaches who work with adult education students that there are a number of students interested in careers in the early childhood education field, in which there is also a shortage of qualified workers.

The college has a number of credit CTE non-degree stackable credential programs, associate degree programs and non-credit workforce training in each of these three priority industries that lead to employment opportunities. Additionally, the College offers a pre-apprenticeship program and two apprenticeship programs within the construction trades. The college also offers Integrated Education and Training programs for adult education students in early childhood education and healthcare. All of these programs have staff that are funded through non-federal sources so staff time and effort could be leveraged for reimbursement.

ABC Community College is going to include the credit and non-credit certificate and AAS degree programs in healthcare, manufacturing and construction trades for SNAP E&T as well as the apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and the two Integrated Education and Training certificates. There may be opportunities to expand to a new applied baccalaureate degree in nursing and early childhood education in the following year.