Expanding Community Colleges as SNAP E&T Providers

Case Management

Planning Guide #8



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APHSA American Public Human Services Association

SJI SEATTLE JOBS INITIATIVE Opening Doors to Living-Wage Careers

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USDA Food & Nutrition Service

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SNAP E&T Planning Guides

#1 Assembling the Team

#2 Engaging with the SNAP E&T Agency

What is Your SNAP Agency Looking For?

#3 Identifying the Best Fit: Education/Training Programs and Credentials

#4 Mapping Staff Capacity

#5 Braiding Funding

#6 Budget Development

#7 Student Outreach, Engagement, Enrollment

→ **#8 Case Management**

#9 Support Services (Participant Reimbursements)

#10 Leveraging SNAP E&T Workforce Partnerships

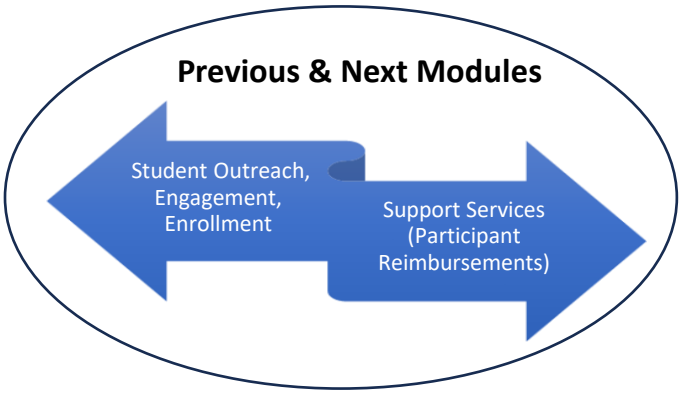
#11 Program Administration and Strategic Expansion

SNAP E&T Planning Guide #8

Case Management

Summary

Case management is a required part of the SNAP Employment and Training program involving a set of services offered to guide and support SNAP E&T participants as they engage with and complete their SNAP E&T program. According to the Food and Nutrition Services USDA SNAP E&T Program Toolkit "Case management services can include, but are not limited to: comprehensive intake assessments, individualized service plans, progress monitoring, or coordination with service providers. In accordance with the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, all E&T participants must receive case management and at least one E&T component."



Community and technical colleges, as third-party SNAP E&T providers, can offer all parts of SNAP E&T case management themselves, or work with another third-party provider, intermediary or state/county entity to provide case management to community college SNAP E&T students. Many colleges are already offering services and supports that would be considered case management but may be described differently within the college. Career coaches, student resource specialists, navigators, success coaches, and cohort or faculty advisors are frequently providing support and individualized guidance for students that could be easily enhanced or adapted for SNAP E&T requirements.

Case management services must be designed to support the participant as they progress through an E&T program. State agencies have flexibility to offer a variety of services and tailor those services to the needs of the participant. This may be the examples listed above but could also include other services as well. According to FNS, State agencies are responsible for ensuring that case management is provided through an efficient administrative process and targeted to the needs of participants and is not an impediment to participation in E&T. In other words, case management meetings and provision of services support must advance and support the success of the E&T participant and not misuse the participant's time.

State SNAP agencies also have the flexibility to adjust the timing and frequency of case management appointments for participants. This depends on the needs and

Who to Invite to the Table (college internal planning)

- SNAP E&T college lead
- College executive leader sponsor
- Student Services leader
- Academic Advisors/ Career Coaches/ Navigators – *who provide case management services*
- Faculty and staff and admin from following programs available through SNAP E&T:
  - Workforce development/ Continuing Education
  - Career Technical Education
  - Adult education
- College liaison with human service agency, CBO's, and workforce partners

Planning Goals

1) Examine case management for SNAP E&T including common case management services and who may provide these services
2) Determine how college will document SNAP E&T case management services
3) Understand how SNAP E&T case management services should be student-centered and flexible based on the participant's needs

circumstances of participants and allows for a student-centered approach. For example, a case manager may meet more frequently with a participant at the beginning of the E&T program, and if they are successfully engaged in the assigned E&T component(s), the case manager could determine that further appointments can be scheduled on an as-needed basis (with a minimum of once per month check-ins). Another SNAP E&T participant may benefit from consistent bi-monthly meetings throughout the program.

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 Case Management Services



This visual illustrates the most common SNAP E&T case management services for participants. It is important to note that State SNAP agencies determine which case management services will be offered and who will provide them across their regions.



Source: Food and Nutrition Services Survey of SNAP E&T Case Management Study, National Forum Presentation 2022

Guiding Questions

1) What existing case management services and supports have been effective at assisting students with low incomes in completing quality credential programs?
    a. What elements of case management have made the biggest difference?
    b. Who provides these case management services?
    c. How are case management services documented?
2) How can existing case management supports for students be enhanced through SNAP E&T case management services?
3) How will SNAP E&T case management services be captured and tracked based on the State SNAP agency expectations and existing college systems?
4) Who will capture and also track case management SNAP E&T requirements at the college?
5) How will case managers and any support staff assisting with documentation and tracking be trained?
6) If another entity is providing case management services to community college students, how will the college collaborate and communicate with them effectively?
7) How can academic advisors, career coaches and navigators who have provided existing college students with case management supports be engaged in the planning and implementation process for SNAP E&T case management?

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 regarding case management:

8) What are anticipated concerns about SNAP E&T case management from college faculty, staff or administrators?
    a. What are some strategies to bring them along?
9) What are next steps in planning for SNAP E&T case management services for the college?

Potential Challenges

1) The term case management can generate concerns or raise assumptions that college staff are being asked to become social workers or perform work outside their scope and areas of expertise. It is important to clarify that case management in the context of SNAP E&T fits and aligns with community college efforts to serve students holistically and provide the individualized and equitable supports needed to boost equitable student success and be student centered. As with any grant or federal program, there may be some additional documentation or data requirements that are unique to SNAP E&T.

2) If another entity is providing the case management services for college SNAP E&T students, it will take strong and effective communication and collaboration to ensure SNAP-eligible students receive the proper case management services and can seamlessly access the appropriate SNAP E&T components to meet their needs. It is also important to consider how SNAP E&T students can get support and guidance around their college success and chosen program if the case management is being provided by an external partner. If possible, it is

recommended that colleges also identify staff who can fulfill this role and work in collaboration with external case management partners, providing complimentary and non-duplicative support.

3) Similar to other state or federal grants, SNAP E& T may require case management staff to verify eligibility or capture participant information in a separate data system. It is important to consider and build this work into staff roles and scope of work, as it will be key for tracking data, looking at outcomes, and generating a robust revenue stream. There also may be additional elements that would be helpful for colleges to report on (e.g. skills or credential gains) that are not as germane for other third-party providers or may require a slightly different cadence given the academic calendar. Colleges should work with their human service partners to develop systems and reporting tools/timelines that are compliant and can best meet the needs of both parties.

Planning Checklist

- ❒ 1) Gather information from SNAP agency or intermediary about case management service requirements for SNAP E&T participants as well as which components, activities and participant reimbursements are approved.
- ❒ 2) Clarify with SNAP agency if the college will provide case management services or if this will be done by or in collaboration with another organization
- ❒ 3) Determine what training is available for college coaches/navigators on case management services and required tracking and documentation through SNAP agency (if college is providing case management services).
- ❒ 4) Upon familiarity with systems and process, determine who will complete the monthly reporting (SNAP verification and reporting of service engagement and issuance of support services). Collaborate with human service partners to design a process that is compliant and works seamlessly for community college third-party providers and human service agencies.
- ❒ 5) Create a student-centered process and flow for case management, from initial outreach, orientation, assessment and case plan through program progression and completion.
- ❒ 6) Continue to communicate emerging needs of SNAP E&T participants to offer insights and input on what may be permissible in the future in terms of case management services and SNAP E&T components and activities.

Tools/Organizational Aids for this Module

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

Resources

- SNAP E&T 2022 National Forum : Case Management Best Practices
- FNS SNAP to Skills - Come Together : Using Team-Based Case Management in SNAP E&T
- 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

FAQ's

1) When and how often do SNAP E&T participants need to receive case management services?

State agencies have flexibility in how case management services are delivered. According to FNS, as a best practice, State agencies should provide case management services soon after referral to E&T and periodically, as needed, throughout a participant's progression through an E&T program. Regular engagement with case management services ensures the participant is well-supported to successfully complete the program. This cadence may look different for each SNAP E&T participants who have unique needs, realities, and academic and career goals, but needs to include monthly progress and engagement check-ins at a minimum.

2) Are community college third-party SNAP E&T providers required to offer case management services to SNAP E&T participants?

All SNAP E&T participants must receive case management services as part of the SNAP E&T program. State agencies do have flexibility in how case management services are delivered. This can be offered through community college third-party providers, other E&T providers, State agency employees directly or other means like contractors. In other words, community colleges can be SNAP E&T providers and either offer the case management directly or another entity could be contracted to do so through the State SNAP agency. As mentioned above, community colleges have seen the best student and program outcomes when they do have college staff onsite who can provide case management or coaching support, given then familiarity with internal systems, relationships, and levers to advocate on a student's behalf. However, this can be greatly complimented by working in concert with another case manager, who may be more focused on job search support.

3) Are there limitations on what case management services can be offered to SNAP E&T participants?

State agencies have flexibility in the types of services offered through case management, but can only use E&T funds for allowable components, activities, and participant reimbursements. Community college third-party providers should work closely with their State SNAP agency or intermediary to understand which components, activities and participant reimbursements are approved in their state/county and continue to communicate emerging needs of SNAP E&T participants to offer insights and input on what may be permissible in the future.

Case Study

ABC Community College has recently been approved as a SNAP E&T third-party provider and will provide case management services to students enrolled in the SNAP E&T program. The College learns from the state SNAP agency what the expected case management services are and approved SNAP E&T components and activities. The SNAP agency offers training to the two college Career Coaches providing case management to SNAP-eligible students on the required elements of case management services and required documentation. From there the college develops systems for the comprehensive intake assessment, education service plans and participant progress monitoring, while also integrating student centered design principals that were identified through an initiative to redesign the student onboarding experience to better serve adult learners.

Throughout the first year implementing SNAP E&T, the Career Coaches identify various needs of participants through the intake assessment process. They are able to provide E&T components and activities and make referrals to outside organizations for those support services not included in the state plan. They also provide input to the state SNAP agency

about the most common needs of SNAP E&T students to help shape what support services may be available. For example, internet and personal laptops were a priority need of SNAP E&T students but not included in the state plan in the current year as approved support services. The Career Coaches identified community partners who could assist in addressing this need this year but communicated this participant need to the SNAP agency to determine if these services could be added in the next year.