Expanding Community Colleges as SNAP E&T Providers

Leveraging SNAP E&T Workforce Partnerships

Planning Guide #10



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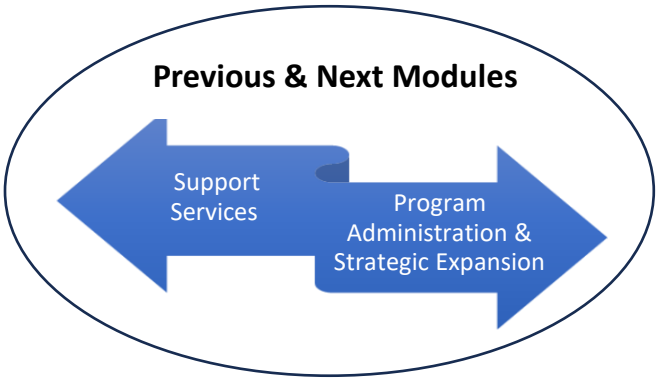
Leveraging SNAP E&T Workforce Partnerships

Summary

SNAP E&T offers community college third-party providers an opportunity to deepen partnerships with community service providers, workforce development boards, and employers to improve equitable student success. Community service agencies, which include community-based workforce organizations, community action agencies, Head Start programs, food banks, housing organizations and anti-hunger and SNAP outreach organizations, can offer complementary support services to help students achieve their academic and career goals as well as retention services after they complete their training.

Similarly, it is important for colleges to understand in particular how SNAP E&T intersects with the public workforce system and the role their local workforce boards plays in that. Workforce development boards receive federal, state and local funding for the public workforce system that at times can provide complementary holistic supports for college students to cover the costs of tuition, books, transportation and beyond.

Employers collaborate with colleges sharing input on workforce trends including skills and competencies needed for quality jobs and careers. They participate in CTE program advisory committees, provide work-based learning opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships for students in SNAP E&T programs, as well as offer career preparation opportunities for these students through college career fairs, classroom guest speakers, employer site tours, and mock interviews. Most importantly, they hire students after gaining meaningful skills and credentials.



Who to Invite to the Table (college internal planning)

- SNAP E&T college lead
- College executive sponsor
- College liaison or lead to community service provider and workforce development board such as:
  - Workforce Development Dean/Director
  - CTE Dean/Director
  - Non-credit workforce training lead
  - Adult Education Dean/Director
- Student success leader for college support initiatives including:
  - College food pantry
  - Clothes closet
  - Student resource Centers
  - Other similar support services
  - College Career Center
- Other workforce grant-funded leads
- Grants office staff

Planning Goals

1) Understand how SNAP E&T can foster stronger workforce partnerships with human service agencies, community service providers, workforce development boards and employers that enhance student success
2) Take inventory of existing workforce partnerships to identify strengths to build on and new opportunities
3) Determine how best to leverage workforce partnerships based on the role(s) they play in SNAP E&T such as other third-party provider, intermediaries and/or offering work-based learning opportunities

Community Service Providers

In addition to providing holistic support services to community college students, in some cases these community-service providers can be strong referral partners promoting college Career Technical Education and workforce development programs to their participants as a pathway to careers with economic stability and mobility. Many of these organizations have strong connections and are trusted and well respected in the community relative to colleges as large public institutions. Frequently, they can also take a whole family approach that can especially benefit parenting students or those with caregiving responsibilities. As colleges have begun to shift their recruitment strategies towards new majority learners – adults looking to upskill or reskill – these community organizations as well as human service agencies are important partners to promote community college education and training to prospective students.

Some of these community service providers may be SNAP E&T third-party providers. Many of these organizations have significant non-federal funding streams that could be leveraged for SNAP E&T. Similarly, these community organizations that act as SNAP E&T third-party providers can align with and enhance a college's SNAP E&T program offering additional supportive services and coaching. SNAP E&T incentivizes this collaboration and alignment of student-centered resources and programs, as different providers can enroll students in their SNAP E&T program as long *as they aren't charging for duplicative services.*

Workforce Board as Public Workforce System Coordinator

Workforce development boards can connect with college SNAP E&T programs in three different ways. First, as the entity that coordinates the public workforce development system, the workforce board and its service providers can harness existing federal, state and local funding for SNAP E&T college students with complementary services and supports to help them achieve their educational and career goals. Given the prevalence of federal funding, these services are frequently offered in addition to the SNAP E&T programs and supportive services provided by the College and can help maximize these resources available for students.

Workforce Board as SNAP E&T Third-party Provider

In some cases, workforce development boards may have their own SNAP E&T program offered in collaboration with the local/regional human service agency, adding to the local ecosystem of third-party providers that can include colleges, community-based organizations and other providers. A workforce development board's SNAP E&T program can align with and enhance a college's SNAP E&T program offering additional supportive services and coaching. SNAP E&T incentivizes this collaboration and alignment of student-centered resources and programs, as both programs can enroll students in their program as long as they aren't charging for duplicative services.

Workforce Board as SNAP E&T Intermediary

The workforce development board may act as an intermediary for a college SNAP E&T program. In this case, the board would work with the human service agency and collaborate closely with the college(s). This relationship may be different from other federally-funded programs such as WIOA Title I in which the workforce board contracts with a vendor/provider such as the college to deliver workforce development services. In SNAP E&T programs, colleges are investing their own resources to support SNAP E&T students, not simply receiving a federal grant. As with all SNAP E&T programs, providers should not be viewed as vendors or subcontractors, but instead as equal partners in designing the systems, programming, and solutions to meet the needs of students.

Employer Partners

Employers play an instrumental role in hiring college completers and offering various work-based learning opportunities for students such as internships, apprenticeships, site tours, classroom speakers and participate in

career fairs. They also offer guidance and insights to colleges about labor market trends such as AI and other technology advancements to help colleges create responsive new programs or align existing programs to these changing skills and competencies. This happens frequently through CTE program advisory committees that employers actively participate in.

> *Community colleges, human service agencies and the variety of community service providers all bring unique strengths, resources and investments to SNAP E&T programs and should be seen as equal partners in designing the systems, programming, and solutions to meet the needs of students.*

Leveraging SNAP E&T Workforce Partnerships



This visual demonstrates the different types of organizations that can play a role in supporting SNAP E&T participants. SNAP E&T encourages the opportunity to maximize benefits, resources and supports that can assist a participant in gaining skills and credentials leading to jobs and careers with economic stability and mobility.

Guiding Questions

1) What community service providers does the College currently partner with for referrals into college programs and/or who offer complementary holistic supports for students?
2) What type of supportive services offered through community service providers or workforce development board programs and services could assist community college SNAP E&T students – both through the existing WIOA system and through any new grants or SNAP E&T programming?
3) How are SNAP E&T and the local human service agency included in the local WIOA plan?
4) Do you know which community service providers in your local area are in the SNAP E&T plan and/or have a SNAP E&T program? What role if at all has your local workforce development board played in SNAP E&T programming?
    a. What components have these community service organizations provided to SNAP E&T participants?
    b. How has the workforce board been involved?
    c. How have these community service providers and workforce board promoted community college education and training?
    d. Who could you meet with to understand their connection and explore any collaborative opportunities?
5) In what ways have employers effectively been involved in supporting workforce development, CTE, and adult education students at the college?
6) How can employers partner further to enhance career pathways for SNAP E&T students accessing CTE, workforce development, and adult education programs at the college? In support of SNAP E&T?
7) College program completers may access retention support including programming and supportive services if they are still receiving SNAP and/or eligible for SNAP E&T. Community service organizations can also provide additional resources via other funding streams to mitigate any benefit cliffs, including those that take a whole family or two-generation approach. How can the College partner with community service providers to offer retention services to college students who have completed their program?
8) How can the college leverage SNAP E&T to create a more human-centered system?
9) How can SNAP E&T shift the approach to partnerships and collaboration in your local and state workforce development ecosystem – amongst colleges, employers, workforce development boards, CBOs and other stakeholders?

Additional questions regarding SNAP E&T workforce partners:

10) What are anticipated concerns about collaborating with community service providers, workforce boards and/or employers to better support SNAP E&T participants?
    a. What are some strategies to address these concerns?
11) What are potential next steps in expanding collaborative opportunities with workforce partners for SNAP E&T programs and students?

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) Relative to other workforce development programs in which community colleges may compete for funding and resources with community-based organizations, SNAP E&T incentivizes collaboration across third-party providers and can align student-centered resources and programs. Certain community service providers may not be aware that both a community college and community service provider can support a SNAP E&T student and be reimbursed for separate services.

2) In other instances, certain community service providers may either not see the value and importance of postsecondary education in their approach to workforce development and SNAP E&T or may not know how best to assist SNAP E&T participants in navigating community college systems that include:

    a. Enrollment processes
    b. Registration
    c. Financial aid
    d. SNAP E&T student eligibility requirements

    This all may limit opportunities for collaboration, referrals into college programs and/or supportive services and fully leveraging these SNAP E&T programs and resources.

3) SNAP E&T programs can align strategically and may be a part of the local and/or state WIOA plan. However, they may be administered differently through the human service agency and can provide a more flexible and student-centered approach to coaching and supportive services. Colleges are investing their own resources for SNAP E&T so even if the local workforce development board acts as an intermediary, it is a different type of partnership.

4) Employers may have some gaps in understanding what resources and supports are available to students participating in work-based learning opportunities such as internships or apprenticeships through the college and workforce development partners. Promoting the SNAP E&T program and participating students requires great nuance and consideration, as it is important to avoid reinforcing stereotypes and stigma surrounding public benefit access. It is also important to consider students' perspectives and experience, as many students who are accessing SNAP and SNAP E&T services will not want their potential, current, or future employer to know what resources they are accessing to support their family, meet their basic needs, and achieve their college and career goals.

Planning Checklist

- ❒ 1) Determine which trusted community service providers are SNAP E&T providers in the College's region - through existing partnerships, discussions with human service agency and/or reviewing the grant guide
- ❒ 2) Review the local WIOA plan to see if and how SNAP E&T is called out and determine whether or not your state has a combined state plan in which SNAP E&T is a required component and partner
- ❒ 3) Identify community service provider and/or workforce development board programs and services that could be a resource for college SNAP E&T students, including other SNAP E&T third-party providers and beyond
- ❒ 4) Meet with community service provider organizations and/or workforce development board staff to explore:
    - a) how their programs and services, including their own SNAP E&T program if have one, can be maximized to support college SNAP E&T students and
    - b) how these workforce partners can enhance referrals into college programs

- ❒ 5) Determine which SNAP E&T services the College and workforce partners will provide to students and ensure services and the partnership are included in SNAP E&T proposal with human service agency
- ❒ 6) Take inventory of ways employers have been active partners for career pathways, workforce development, CTE and adult education programs and identify areas where employers could more actively partner to support equitable student success for SNAP E&T students
- ❒ 7) Develop plan to engage employers further to enhance these partnerships
- ❒ 8) Continue to meet with workforce partners regularly to assess how partnerships are working and identify areas for improvement

Tools/Organizational Aids for this Module

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

Resources

- Integrating SNAP E&T into Career Pathways Systems to Boost Outcomes, SNAP to Skills Policy Brief #6
- FNS Best Practices in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Program: 2016 – 2020 (Summary)

FAQ's

1) Do students participating in SNAP E&T programs need to enroll in the WIOA system?

   If college SNAP E&T students are accessing services through the college, this is not necessary. If they access WIOA services through the public workforce development system, they most likely would need to enroll in WIOA.

2) If a community service provider and/or workforce development board has their own SNAP E&T program, could college students be enrolled in both the college and community organization programs?

   Yes, they can be enrolled in both as long as the college and workforce partner are being reimbursed for separate services. For example, each entity could not provide a student with a bus pass. However, they each could serve a student enrolled in a CTE credit certificate program, with the college workforce partner SNAP E&T program paying for tools and books and the college covering the gap in tuition and providing coaching.

3) Can a workforce partner offer SNAP E&T supportive services to community college students after they have completed their college credential and even gained employment?

   Community service providers can offer retention services if the completer is still receiving SNAP and/or eligible for SNAP E&T. If students are still receiving SNAP, they could enroll in additional services such as job search training or work-based learning with the community-service providers. If they are employed and go over income for SNAP, they can access job retention services at the community service provider. There are also many other services and programs that community service providers can offer that are not tied to SNAP or SNAP E&T. All of

these scenarios could provide critical resources for students that can promote their success and mitigate the benefit cliffs they frequently experience as their income increases.

Case Study

College XYZ has been offering an Integrated Education and Training career pathways program in Welding that SNAP E&T students have enrolled in and completed. The program has three active employer partners who have provided work-based learning internship opportunities for students in their second term of the program. They have hired a number of graduates of the program after the students completed their internship. The three employers along with other regional businesses have participated in an annual manufacturing career fair on campus that has been co-sponsored by the college, the local workforce development board, and a few community service providers, as manufacturing is a priority sector in the local WIOA plan.

The SNAP E&T students enrolled in this IET program have received coaching from the College as well as support services needed such as any gaps in tuition, books, and welding equipment (i.e. helmet, boots, and gloves). The local workforce development board and community-based organizations have actively promoted the IET program. For workforce customers, the board has been able to use federal WIOA Title I Individual Training Account (ITA) funds to cover welding certification costs. These are federal WIOA dollars so cannot be included as part of the investments that could be reimbursed with the SNAP E&T program. Relatedly, two local community-service provider organizations have their own SNAP E&T programs in collaboration with the human service agency. For community-service provider customers enrolled in SNAP E&T, these two CBO's have been able to cover transportation costs through gas cards for these students. The college SNAP E&T career coach works closely with staff at these workforce partners to ensure they are not charging for duplicative services in SNAP E&T.

When students have completed their career pathways program at the College and begun to work in their field, these two community-service organizations have both continued to offer supportive services to these college completers. One is able to provide SNAP E&T retention services including the technology support, work attire, and transportation, since they are no longer receiving these supportive services from the College. The other organization outside of SNAP E&T offers food support to those no longer receiving SNAP to mitigate the benefit cliff, leveraging other funding streams. This CBO is also able to maintain childcare support for college completers now working or in job search through other funding streams, regardless if the graduate is still receiving SNAP or SNAP E&T programs and services.