



# Participant Engagement Strategies for SNAP E&T

April 24, 2019



# Agenda

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1. Welcome and Agenda Overview
2. Guest Speaker: Mercy Albaran, [Fenton](#) (Social Change Communications Agency)
3. Participant Engagement in the Context of SNAP E&T
4. Insights from Applied Behavioral Science
5. Guest Speakers: Ruth Tipton, State of Kansas; Jenny Welch Buller, [Center for Public Partnerships and Research](#), University of Kansas
6. Guest Speaker: Matt Weis, [National Able Network](#)
7. Q&A



THE SOCIAL CHANGE AGENCY **FENTON**

## EFFECTIVE MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Messaging 101

April 24, 2019



## MEET THE TRAINER



Mercy Albarán

- Messaging, branding, and media specialist at [Fenton](#), a social change agency
- I'm from Oakland, CA
- My family received SNAP benefits when I was growing up

## AGENDA

- Why messages matter
- Audiences
- Messaging and brand best practices
- Live poll



## WHY MESSAGES MATTER



## WHY DO MESSAGES MATTER?

- Messages make people feel something
- Messages are important tools for you and your ambassadors
- Messages frame the conversation
- Messages are sticky
- Messages are a starting place

## WHAT IS A MESSAGE?

- Concise, consistent language you will use for many purposes
- Messages can be adapted for specific events, media, and speaking opportunities
- Defining, differentiating, compelling, and memorable
- You don't need an encyclopedia of messages, just a short suite



## AUDIENCES



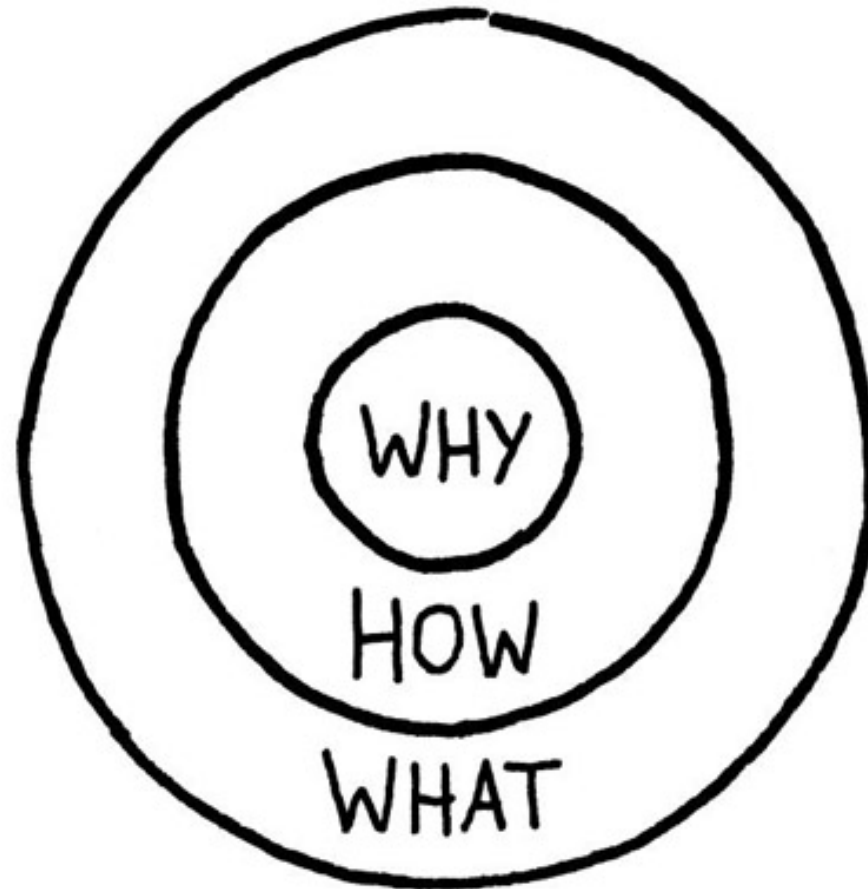
## WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

- Who do you need to be successful?
- What do they value?
- What are their barriers?
- Who do they trust?
- Where do they get their information?
- What do you want them to do?

## MESSAGING AND BRAND BEST PRACTICES



## FOCUS ON THE *WHY*



## EXAMPLES

***“Paths to employment and economic self-sufficiency for SNAP clients.”***

***“Helping you find and keep a job.”***

—SNAP Path to Work Website

## APPEAL TO SHARED VALUES

- Easy access to healthy food
- Children's health and well-being impacted by the food they eat
- Economic mobility
- Supporting community

**MEET PEOPLE  
WHERE THEY  
ARE, NOT  
WHERE YOU  
WOULD LIKE  
THEM TO BE**



## EXAMPLES

***“...adults are healthy and reach their maximum potential;  
children are...healthy, ready to learn, and reach their full  
potential.”***

*—Rhode Island Department of Human Services Website*

## MORE BEST PRACTICES

- Focus on *one thing*
- Use positive frames
- Break the jargon habit
- Show, don't tell

**POLL:**  
**WHAT IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT WHY?**

*Please submit your answer via the GoToWebinar chat box.*

THANK YOU!

CONTACT INFO:

MERCY ALBARAN

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# Outreach and Marketing

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- What changes did the 2014 Farm Bill make to allowable and unallowable outreach activities?
- What kind of outreach can you do in E&T?



# Allowable Activities

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- Sharing factual information so a person can make an informed choice about applying
- Including:
  - Application assistance
  - Eligibility pre-screening
  - Assistance obtaining verification documents
  - Translation services
  - Exhibits at community events
  - Workshops



# Unallowable Activities

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## 2014 Farm Bill Changes

- **Non-reimbursable:** *Not allowed to be reimbursed with Federal funds*
  - Recruitment activities designed to persuade
  - Radio, television, and billboard ads that promote SNAP benefits and enrollment
  - Agreements with foreign governments that promote SNAP benefits and enrollment
- **Unpermitted:** *Not allowed if an entity receives Federal funds (even if non-Federal resources fund the unpermitted activity)*
  - Paying workers based on the number of applications they submit

**NOPE.**

**STILL NOPE.**

3bagsfull

# Non-reimbursable Activities

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- All recruitment activities designed to persuade
- Persuasive practices are:
  - Coercing or pressuring an individual to apply
  - Providing incentives to fill out an application
- Persuasive practices are **NOT**:
  - Providing factual information so an individual can make an informed choice about applying
  - Correcting misinformation

# Non-reimbursable Activities

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- Radio, television, and billboard ads that promote SNAP benefits and enrollment
- **NOT** included in the restriction:
  - Social media
  - Internet sites
  - Newspaper ads
  - Media interviews
  - Signs indicating SNAP EBT is accepted
  - D-SNAP ads

# Non-reimbursable Activities

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- Agreements with foreign governments that promote SNAP benefits and enrollment
- Allowable
  - Hosting a SNAP outreach fair with the YMCA
- Unallowable
  - Hosting a SNAP outreach fair with a foreign consulate

# Special Considerations for E&T

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- In the final outreach rule preamble:
  - Providing Specialized Services: Outreach targeted to a specific population based on specific needs
  - Providing information about ancillary benefits of applying for SNAP

OK

OK



# Engaging Potential SNAP E&T Participants

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## Stakeholders:

- **SNAP Agency**
  - SNAP eligibility staff level
  - SNAP agency level
- **Third-Party Partners**
  - CBOs
  - Community and technical colleges
- **Current/Potential SNAP Participants: The Audience**

# Participant Engagement - SNAP Agency

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- Consider developing a **Participant Engagement/Marketing Plan**
  - (1) Vision & goals; (2) Integrated into State SNAP E&T Plan; (3) Key messaging to be utilized; (4) Specific strategies to be utilized; (5) Staffing/resources; (6) Functions of State Agency vs. SNAP eligibility staff vs. third-party partners
- Communicate plan to eligibility staff, partners; regularly update
- Agency brochure and website with SNAP E&T info; provider page and participant page
- Support/train eligibility staff
  - Refocused role – from eligibility/compliance to engagement/skills/opportunity
  - Easy access to E&T info (requirements/program services/providers)
  - Easy access to points of contact (at providers, State agency)
  - Messaging on E&T
- Out-station staff: Increase access and connection with E&T options
- Communications: Letters about E&T requirements—choice & opportunity vs. requirement

# Participant Engagement – Third-Party Partners

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- Integrated into their communities; have existing strategies/methods for engaging participants
- State SNAP Agencies and third-party partners can work together to design and develop tailored participant engagement messaging/materials specific to SNAP E&T

## **CBOs**

- Often serve a population with high levels of SNAP eligibility
  - Justice-involved/Dept. of Corrections
  - Non-custodial parents
  - Housing authorities and homeless assistance programs
  - Youth (foster youth, opportunity youth)

## **Community and technical colleges**

- Benefit to students
  - Increased advising and support services
  - SNAP/SNAP E&T as a part of financial aid package

# Examples

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## **SNAP Agency**

- Massachusetts SNAP E&T website for clients & video  
<https://www.snappathtowork.org/clients>

## **Community and Technical Colleges**

- Hawai'i Community College website  
<https://hinet.hawaii.org/>
- Fresh Success website & video (California)  
<https://foundationccc.org/What-We-Do/Student-Services/FreshSuccess>

# SNAP Participants – the Audience

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## SNAP Participants

- Seeking food assistance from SNAP agency
  - With reverse referral, seeking employment/training/support
- Experiencing food scarcity; financial stress; other related challenges
- Potential concern about stigma related to receiving "welfare" and/or sharing private/household information
- May be unaware of E&T requirements
- Likely to have barriers such as lack of transportation, childcare, stable housing

# SNAP Participants – the Audience

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## SNAP Participants

- Nearly 3/4 of adult SNAP participants either currently work or have worked within the past year
- 82% of SNAP households participate in work, but most work in low-wage jobs
- SNAP participants most commonly work in services, office, and sales jobs, including 4,515,500 in the services industry
- Most common occupations: Cashier, cooks, nursing/home health aides, janitors/cleaners, drivers
- 1/3 of SNAP participants have less than a high school diploma; Limited English common

*Most Working Age SNAP Recipients Work, But Often in Unstable Jobs*, March 2018, Ctr for Budget and Policy Priorities  
*Why Now is the Time for States to Build Their SNAP E&T Programs*; Policy Brief, April 2016, USDA SNAP to Skills

See <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/SNAPEandTCharacteristics.pdf>



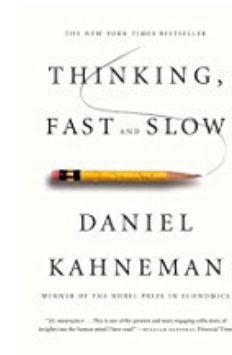
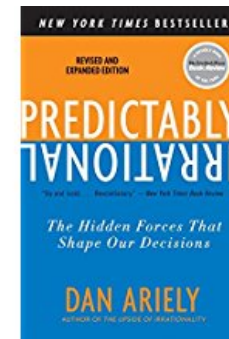
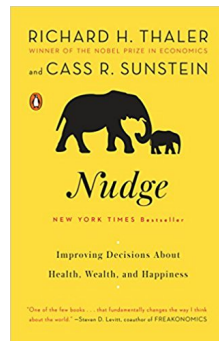
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# Behavioral Science

- A cross-disciplinary field that systematically studies **behavior**—how people behave, how we make decisions, how we form habits, and why
- Provides us with concepts, frameworks, and tools to understand behavior and to change our behavior
- Combines insights and methods from different fields: Social sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology), economics, cognitive science, marketing, consumer behavior
- Can help us create better, more effective communications



# Common Issues in Communications

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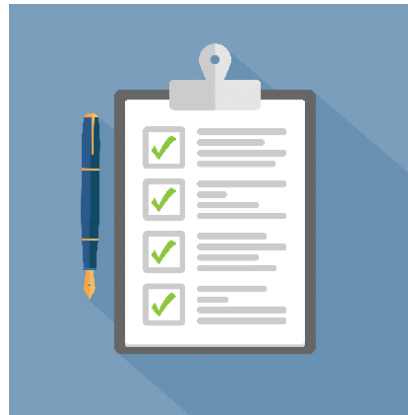
- **Jargon = confusion**; can deter people from taking action
  - “You are an ABAWD living in a non-waived area...”
  - “Review the table that identifies exemptions and exceptions. If you believe you qualify for one of these, please contact your local agency office...”
- Messaging unclear; information **overly complex**
- Language may be **unintentionally daunting** to participants; poverty stigmas
- **Lack of clear action steps = lack of action**
- Behavioral tendencies are not proactively addressed
  - **Present bias**—we value immediate/present time payoffs more than future ones
  - **Status quo bias**—a preference for the current state of affairs
  - **Procrastination**—we sometimes put off difficult or complex actions and decisions



# Improving Communications

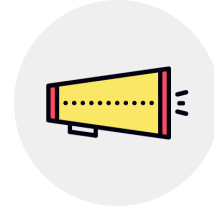
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1. **Identify desired response** to communication
2. **Understand context *and* recipient(s)** – how will recipient(s) see and receive the communication? Does communication need to be tailored? When would be the optimal time to send or show the communication?
3. **Use behavioral insights** to improve communications



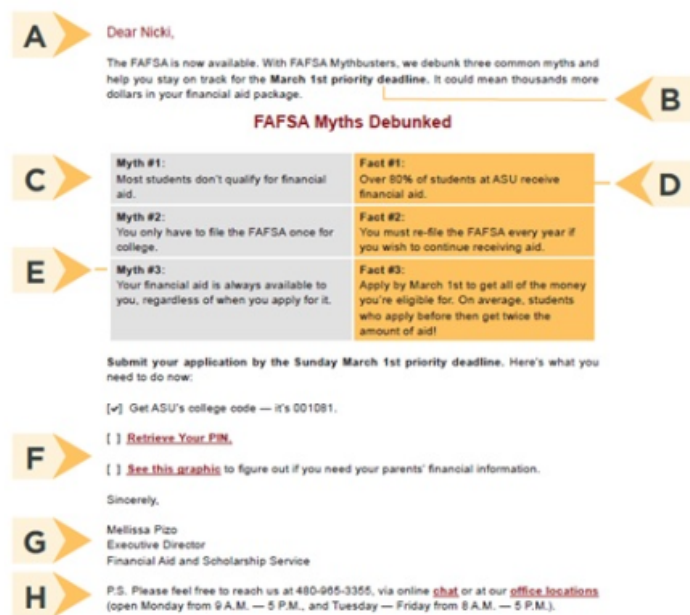
# Common Behavioral Techniques to Improve Communications

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- **Personalize communication** to capture attention
  - “Dear Janice, this is Brian from the \_\_\_\_\_ office. We noticed that...”
- Feature **past participants** in recruitment materials
- **Use plain, clear language** to create cognitive ease
- **Highlight key information** using bullet points, color, or simple graphics
  - Add a P.S. (postscript) if letter or email
- **Correct common misperceptions** (e.g. who qualifies for a program)
- **Make it simple to take action**
  - Chunking: Break actions down into simple steps
  - Clearly indicate deadlines (salience)
  - Make it easy to take action
    - Postcard to drop in the mail
    - Link to click on
    - Number to call

## Redesigned (Behaviorally-Informed) Reminder Email to Submit FAFSA Application



The first of eight redesigned emails

acceptable and normal for them to apply for and receive aid

E. Makes clear the **potential to lose full aid award**, increasing motivation to file before deadline

F. **Actionable guidance** includes links to necessary information and next steps

G. Coming from a real person rather than an unidentified entity (e.g. the Financial Aid Office) makes email feel more personal, increasing engagement with contents

A. Personalized greeting may encourage readers to continue reading email

B. Increases **salience of deadline** through bolding and placement at top of email, making it more likely that students will notice it

C. Corrects common misperceptions about who qualifies for aid in friendly, easily understandable language

D. Shows widespread use of financial aid so that students feel it is

## Checklist for Letters and Email (Excerpt)

### Letters and Email

Sending people a letter or an email? Use this checklist to make sure your message is being properly understood!

#### Presenting important details

Is the information you want people to read first at the top or along the left side of the page?

Y

N

Are pertinent details highlighted in bold and/or color?

Y

N

Have you used a post-script (p.s.)?

Y

N

#### Customization

Is the message personalized?

Y

N

Does the communication establish similarities between sender and recipient?

Y

N

Are any descriptions of behavior specific to the recipient's local context?

Y

N

Does the text contain jargon and/or technical language which may be unfamiliar to the user?

Y

N

Sources: [Increasing FAFSA Applications \(ideas42\)](#), [Behavioral Evidence Hub](#)



things that people read in letters or emails, and here we included several outreach options to make it easier to access help

# Contact Information

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# Strategies for Engaging SNAP E&T Participants in Kansas



Lessons from the **GOALS** Pilot Project

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Ruth Tipton and Jenny Welch Buller



# Who We Are

- Ruth Tipton

- Kansas Department for Children and Families
- Asst. Director E&T Employment Services/Special Projects
- GOALS pilot project manager 2014-2019



- Jenny Welch Buller

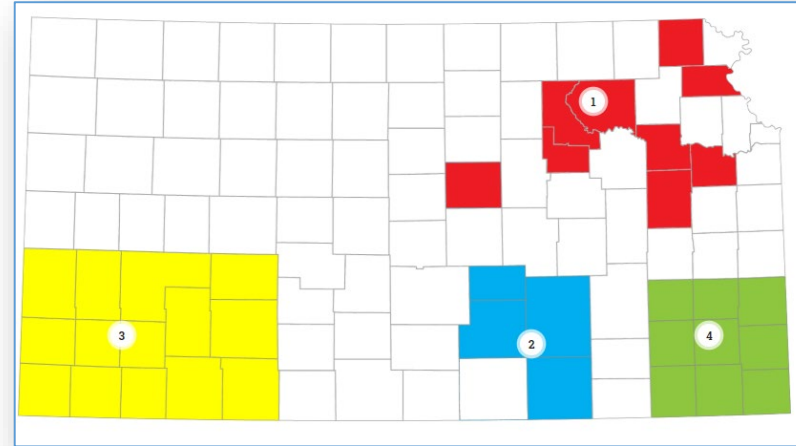
- University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research ([kucppr.org](http://kucppr.org))
- Research Project Coordinator
- GOALS pilot project support/coordinator
- SNAP Academy participant, 2017



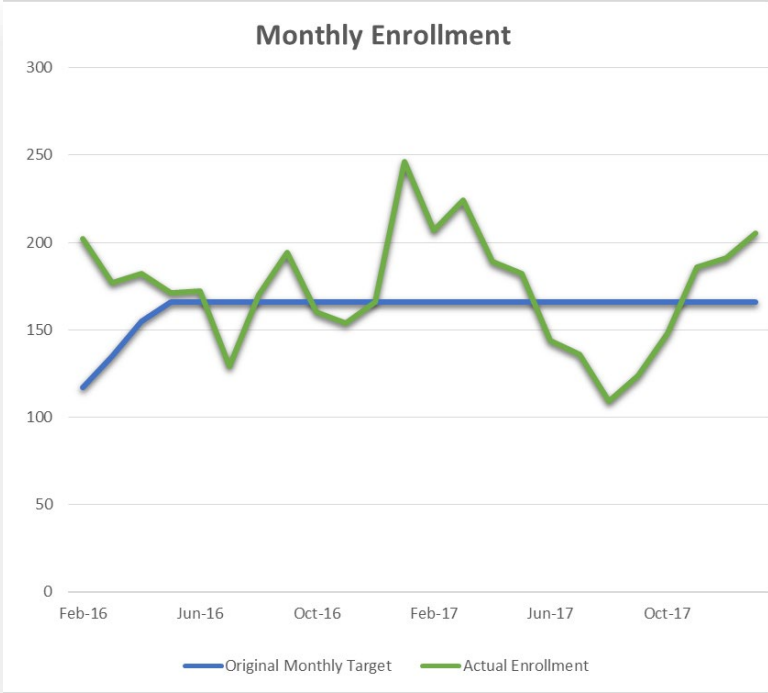
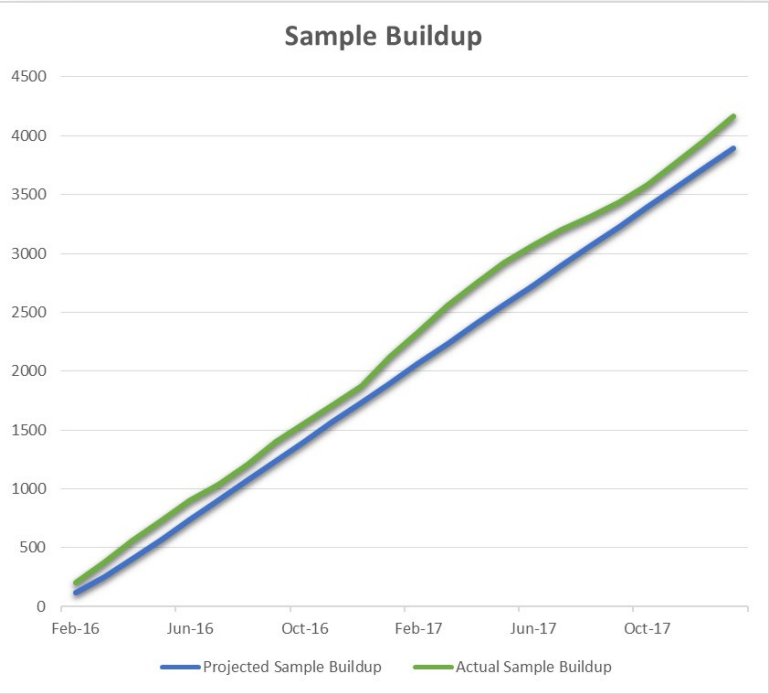
# GOALS Pilot Project

GOALS was a three-year pilot program funded by USDA and administered by the Kansas DCF as part of a national effort to test innovative approaches to SNAP E&T programs.

**January 2016 – March 2019**



# GOALS Pilot Project: Engagement Success





# Initial Messaging to Participants

## Kansas GOALS Pilot Project: What worked and why

1. Established a clear vision
2. Upfront investment in research and design
3. Staff creativity and passion!



# Ongoing Engagement Efforts



**NEW OPPORTUNITIES  
NEW TRAININGS  
NEW EMPLOYERS**

We're in the final months of the GOALS program grant. If you're a GOALS member who still receives Food Assistance and are interested in taking advantage of this program, the time is now.

**Southwest Kansas News**  
CLARK • FINNEY • FORD • GRANT • GRAY • HAMILTON • HASKELL • HODGEMAN • KEARNY • MEADE • MORTON • SEWARD • STANTON • STEVENS

Job opportunities are on the rise. Bridges classes are offered in the DCF offices in Dodge City, Liberal and Garden City Community College. Meet employers, learn job-specific information, participate in mock interviews and much more. Our Employer Liaison has a number of well-paying employers looking for a good match. Make an appointment to speak with her today. Don't miss your chance!

Contact the GOALS program at 620-227-8508 ext. 312.



**GOALS**

With the help of GOALS, he earned his CDL, found full-time employment earning a livable wage, and was able to leave the homeless shelter.

**Southeast Kansas News**  
ALLEN • BOURBON • CHEROKEE • CRAWFORD • LABETTE • MONTGOMERY • NEOSHO • WILSON • WOODSON

There are more training opportunities than ever before. Labette Community College now offers classes in Manufacturing, Plumbing and Welding. In fact, GOALS has enrolled many students in these classes. Bridges classes are being held at various locations so don't miss your opportunity to meet employers and participate in mock interviews.

Contact the GOALS program at 620-331-0350 ext. 233.



**GOALS**

Although she was employed, she often struggled supporting herself and her family. GOALS helped her build a professional resume and find job opportunities matching her interests.

She reports everything is going well and it's one of the best things that could have happened to her.

The Southwest and Southeast areas have proven that even though we aren't in a larger city, we can do so much to help the unemployed.

Speaking of which, how are our GOALS members doing in places like Wichita and Topeka? To find out, turn the page and read on.






Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The GOALS program is administered through the Kansas Department for Children and Families. The USDA and DCF are equal opportunity employers.


**Northeast Kansas News**  
ATCHISON • BROWN • DOUGLAS • GEARY • OSAGE • POTAWATOMIE • RILEY • SALINE • SHAWNEE

There are still classes and training opportunities to take advantage of.

Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center in Lawrence offers courses in being a Pharmacy Technician and Certified Nurses Aide, as well as other great programs for GOALS members. Kitchen Works in Lawrence also has short-term training for those interested in culinary classes. Bridges classes are offered at the Topeka DCF office and give GOALS members access to employers and valuable job skills training.

Success stories like these could be your story, but you need to hurry. We're looking to serve every member we can before the GOALS program, as it exists today, comes to an end. Employers in Manhattan, Salina and Junction City have openings and GOALS can help you get a foot in the door and land that interview.

The time is now! You don't want to miss out on these opportunities. Call the GOALS program at 785-296-8788.




**GOALS**

After addressing her serious drug problems and her criminal background with the help of the GOALS program, she now has full-time employment and was able to purchase a car.

This man walked from Manhattan to Topeka to be given a chance and receive training in GOALS.

He was taught to ride a bike, got the training he needed and now has a full-time welding job.



**South Central Kansas News**  
BUTLER • COWLEY • HARVEY • SEDGWICK

WSU Tech offers ongoing classes in the fields of Aeronautics, Office Management, Manufacturing and Healthcare. In fact, GOALS participants have gotten job offers with Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita. There are also Bridges and Partners 4 Success classes that help polish your employment skills and put you face to face with potential employers.

After being wrongly incarcerated for 30 years, one of our clients was given a chance in GOALS. With the help of programs like Partners 4 Success he's moving forward with his life in a positive direction.



**GOALS**

Bridges classes are offered in Winfield by Eagle Nest and in Wichita by Episcopal Social Services. Butler Community College offers the Partners 4 Success class in Wichita only.

Don't miss out on the last few months of opportunities GOALS has to offer. Contact your GOALS program at 316-337-6698 today.



**GOALS**

The Bridges program was such a success. The participants have found employment and are on their way to self-sufficiency.

# Reengagement Efforts

**GOALS** A brighter future is within your reach.

Training: \_\_\_\_\_

Time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for participating in the GOALS program!**

**GOALS** has new opportunities for:

 <b>TRAINING</b>	 <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	 <b>CAREER ADVANCEMENT</b>	 <b>SUPPORT SERVICES</b>
--	--	--	--

**CALL NOW to see if you are still eligible.**  
**1-888-369-4777**

Ask for your local **GOALS** Career Navigator. Don't miss out!  
**DEADLINE TO RE-ENGAGE IS OCTOBER 31, 2018**

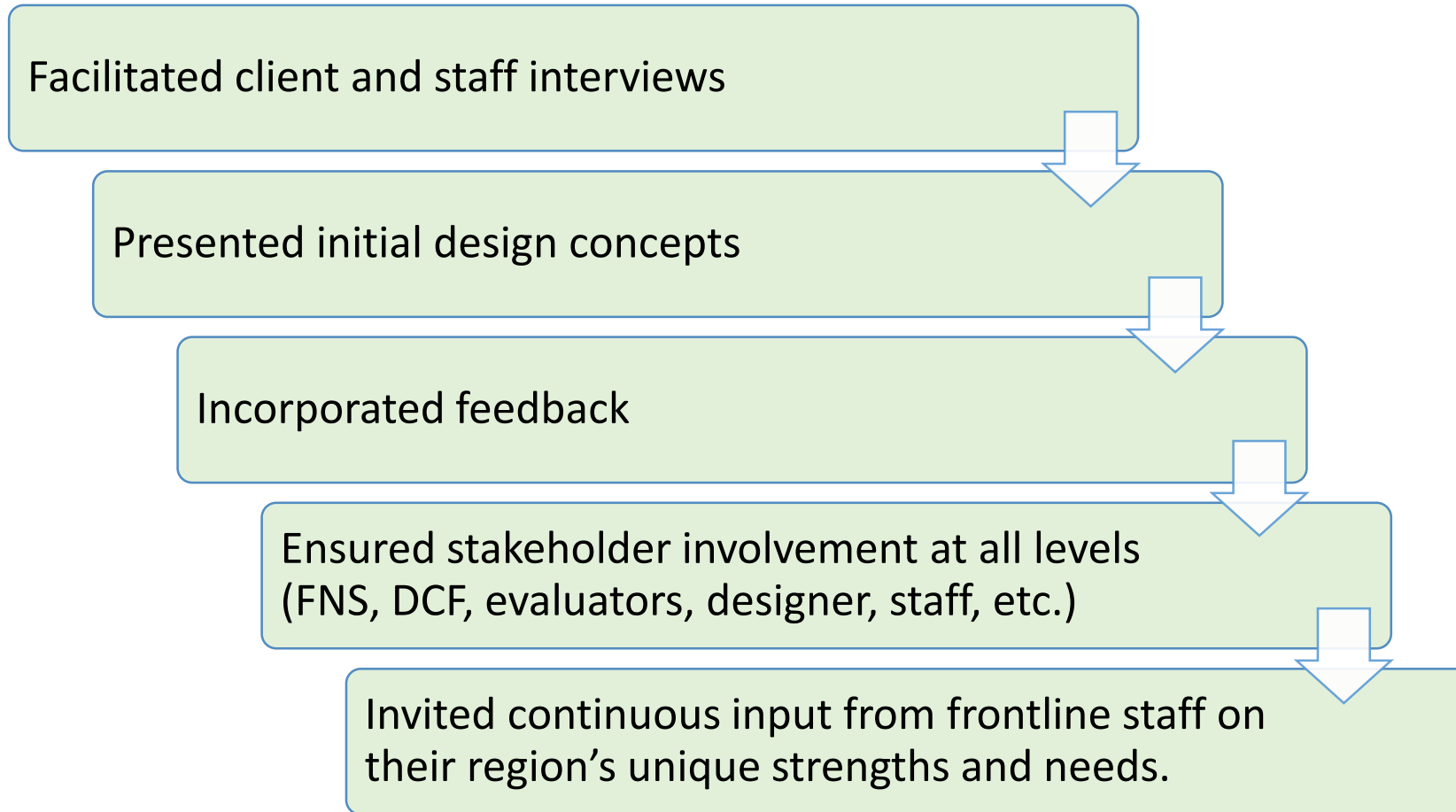
**GOALS** A brighter future is within your reach.

CN NAME  
PHONE  
EMAIL

**GOALS**  
PROGRAM MANAGER  
555 S. Kansas Ave.  
4th Floor  
Topeka, KS 66603



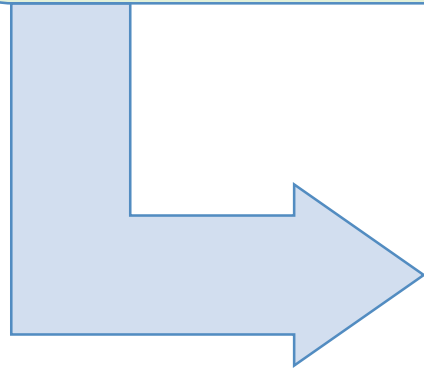
# Process To Get To What Worked



## How We Deployed



- Posters
- Mailers
- Website
- Staff calls, lobbies



- Newsletters
- Postcards
- Folders
- Staff calls
- Staff cell phones/texting

# Resources and Recommendations

## Behavioral Science and Human-centered Design

Handy evidence-based resources and recommendations for a small budget:

- Resources from:
  - MDRC's Center for Applied Behavioral Science (CABS)
  - The Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE)

**Webinar:** ["Incorporating Behavioral Insights into Everyday Practices to Improve Program Operations"](#)

**Report:** [OPRE's Creating Solutions Together: Design Thinking, The Office of Family Assistance, and 3 Grantees](#)

# Thank You!



Questions?

Website: [goals.ks.gov](https://goals.ks.gov)

Ruth Tipton: [Ruth.Tipton@ks.gov](mailto:Ruth.Tipton@ks.gov)

Jenny Welch Buller: [jwbuller@ku.edu](mailto:jwbuller@ku.edu)



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**TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY.**

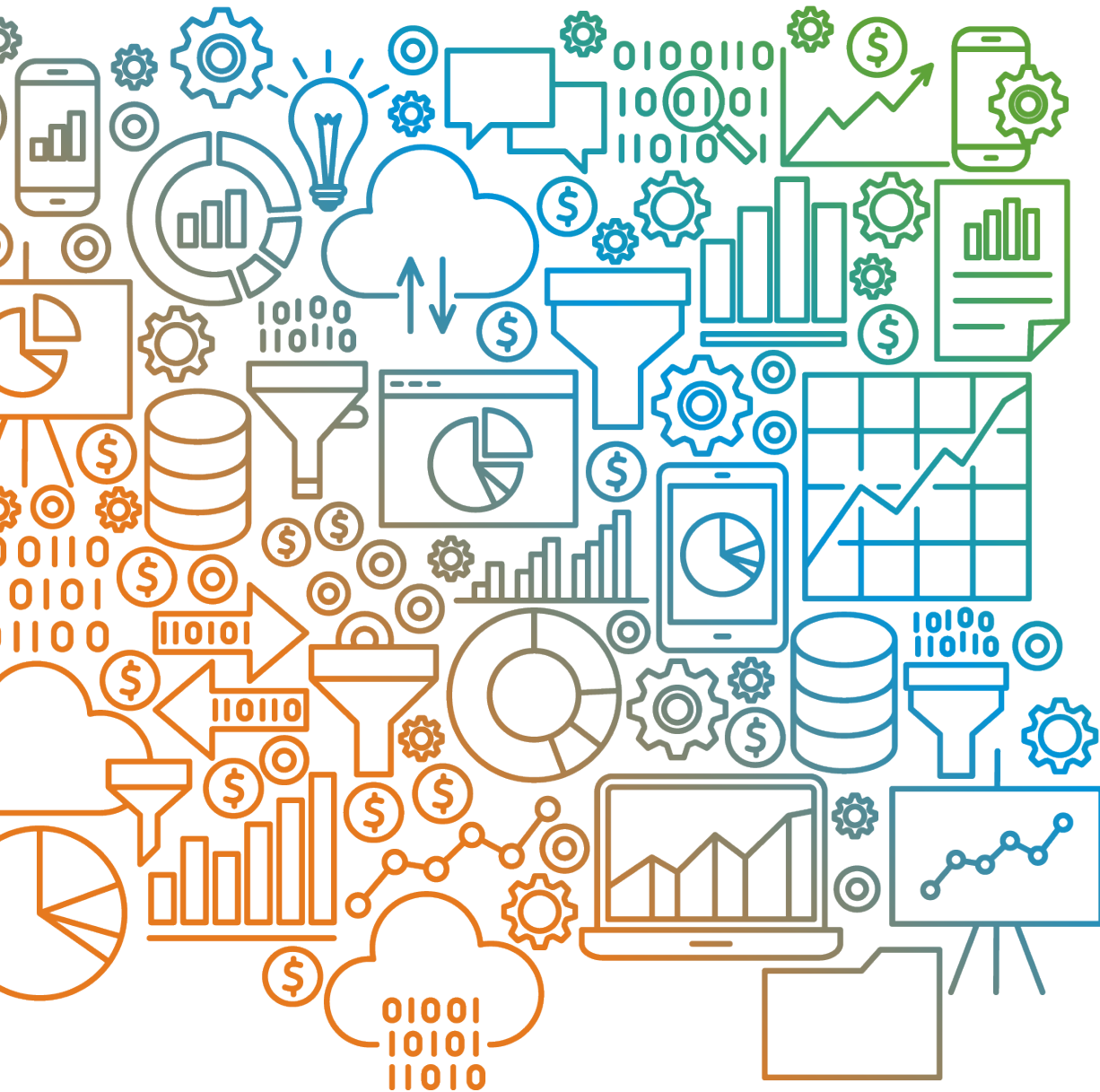
**YOUR FUTURE.**



Microsoft Imagine Academy



IT Career Lab is a division of National Able Network, Inc.



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- 16-week IT vocational classroom training program focusing on Microsoft and Cisco certifications
- Classes are comprised entirely of unemployed/underemployed individuals
  - Funding in classes is braided depending on participant eligibility: WIOA, SNAP 50/50, Voc Rehab, Veterans Admin
- At the start of training, students are issued a new laptop which they get to keep upon successful program completion

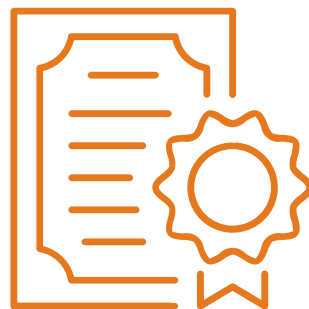


# OVERALL PROGRAM STATS



93%

Program completion rate



88%

Of training participants **earned one or more certifications**

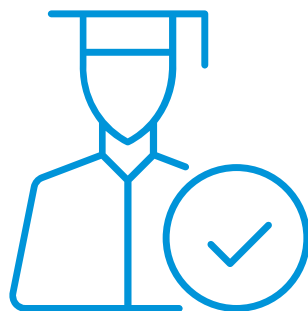


\$18.37/hour

Average **starting wage** for all graduates



# SNAP PARTICIPANT STATS



77%

Program  
completion rate



73%

Of training  
participants **earned one  
or more certifications**

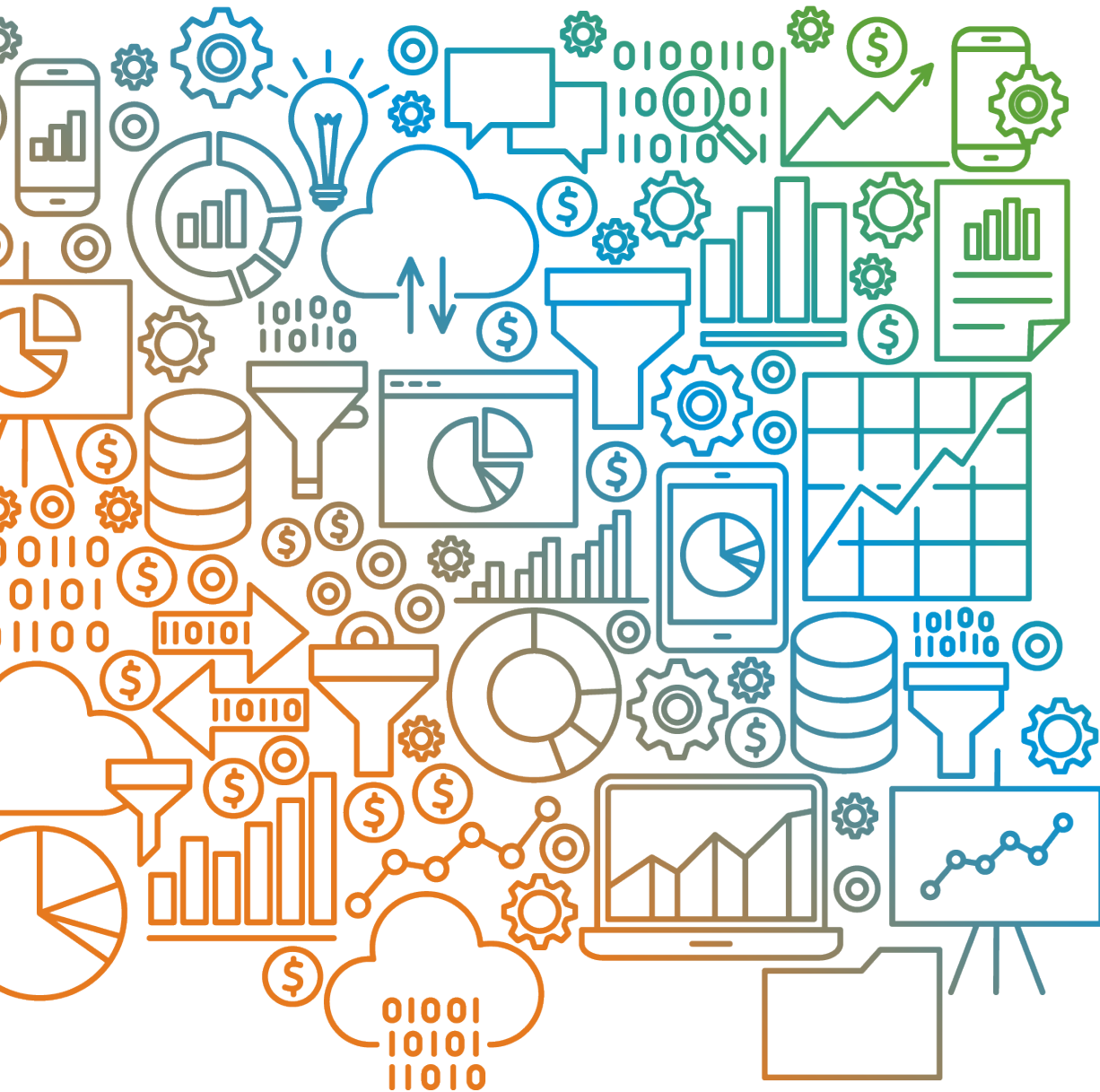


\$18.49/hour

Average **starting wage** for  
SNAP graduates



- 



## HOW WE FIND PARTICIPANTS

- Online (Craigslist, Facebook, other ads)
- Mass transit advertising/print media
- Job fairs
- Partnerships with various public benefit offices (UI/Wagner-Peyser, DHS, American Job Centers)
- Network of other service providers—refugee agencies
- Former participant referrals
- Meet participants where they are—participant surveys

# ELIGIBILITY

Outreach  
Sources

Information  
Session

Students

# SUITABILITY



- 60





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[MWEIS@NATIONALABLE.ORG](mailto:MWEIS@NATIONALABLE.ORG)

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# Questions?

# Thank you!

<https://snaptoskills.fns.usda.gov>