



United States Department of Agriculture

## SNAP E&T REVIEW

SNAP

TO



August 2020

### 5 Steps to Improve SNAP E&T Participation and Engagement

This year, SNAP to Skills (S2S) is collaborating with seven States – Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island – to improve participation and engagement in their State SNAP E&T program. Using insights from behavioral science and human-centered design, S2S will work with State agencies and their partners to identify challenges that limit engagement and implement solutions to address these challenges, using metrics to improve performance.

The infographic below portrays the 5-step process S2S will use to work with participating States and uses an example to show how this process could be used in a real SNAP E&T program. Future editions of the SNAP E&T Review will dive deeper into each step of the 5-step approach.

# 5 Steps to Improve SNAP E&T Participation and Engagement



Every aspect of program delivery—from modes of communication, to staff protocols, to participants' life circumstances—affects whether and how SNAP participants engage with and succeed in SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) programs. A behavioral science approach to addressing these issues re-examines program services from the participant perspective and helps States create a better fit between program design and participants' capacities, needs, and goals.

## Example Engagement Challenge

The program offers a range of services to voluntary E&T participants, but orientation attendance is low. Only 2 people showed up to the last session.



### The Phase

#### 1 Define the Problem

Are there recruitment, enrollment, engagement, or completion challenges getting in the way of success?

#### Ask "Can We...?"

- Approach the problem from the participant perspective
- Gather a diverse range of program staff to share stories about what they've heard

#### For Example

Program staff create short problem statement/definition:  
"Only X% of the XX participants we informed about orientation actually showed up."

#### 2 Diagnose/ Analyze

Work toward a deeper understanding of the problem from the participant's perspective. What are the barriers?

- Identify each interaction a participant has with our program
- Collect data that reveal problem steps
- Collect participant feedback on interactions

Staff interview participants about their experiences and learn that some participants think the benefits and requirements of the program are not clear.

#### 3 Design

Create solutions to address the barriers uncovered in the diagnosis. Prototype the solution ideas.

- Brainstorm a range of potential solutions
- Prioritize one or more solution ideas and create "prototypes" of these solutions

Program staff develop a new checklist to outline steps in participation and potential benefits for participants.

#### 4 Implement

Launch new solutions to address the identified challenges.

- Try the solution we designed to see if it works
- Measure how the solution affects important outcomes
- Monitor how staff use/deliver new solutions

Program staff test the new checklist by sending it out to participants for 6 weeks. They get feedback from staff and participants during orientation and by holding a focus group.

#### 5 Review/ Refine

Assess implementation and measure outcomes to see how well the solution is working. Adapt solution for greater impact.

- Update the design based on feedback
- Launch the updated design and measure changes in attendance at orientation

Program staff revise checklist based on feedback from staff and participants. They begin using the revised checklist and review orientation attendance data to determine whether the revised checklist is having an impact.

A downloadable PDF version of this infographic can be found on the SNAP to Skills website [HERE](#).

## The Interagency Council for Economic Mobility Wants to Hear from You!

A new interagency Council (Departments of Agriculture, Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Treasury; the Social Security Administration; and the Council of Economic Advisors) seeks to create an effective structure for interagency collaboration and to use federal authorities to promote family-sustaining careers and economic mobility for low-income Americans. The Council has published a Request for Information (RFI) to get feedback on its priorities, working group activities, stakeholder engagement, and federal programs. The Council is seeking stakeholder input **by October 2, 2020**.

Access the RFI [HERE](#).

## Upcoming Events, Important Dates & Resource Links

### **Registration is Open for the SNAP E&T National Forum!**

The SNAP E&T National Forum on October 13-14 in St. Louis, MO will bring together SNAP E&T stakeholders from across the country to share and learn best practices for increasing employment among SNAP households through State SNAP E&T programs. To expand participation, the 2020 SNAP E&T National Forum will be a hybrid event. This means that there will be an option to attend in person, or virtually. The hybrid format will allow you to attend and participate in the forum in the way that is best for you.

Register for the SNAP E&T National Forum [HERE](#).

### **ICYMI: Adapting SNAP E&T Services for the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond**

This June 18 webinar hosted by S2S focused on how States and their provider partners have had to quickly re-tool their SNAP E&T services, shift to virtual delivery models and plan for a new normal that includes fewer options for in-person interaction to engage participants.

A recording of this webinar is available for streaming on the SNAP to Skills website [HERE](#).

The webinar slide deck is also available on the SNAP to Skills website [HERE](#).

## About the SNAP to Skills Project

SNAP to Skills (S2S) is a project of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), to provide States the tools and resources they need to develop job-driven SNAP E&T programs that help SNAP participants find jobs and work toward self-sufficiency. The project seeks to help advance SNAP E&T programs in all States through these tools and resources, while 7 States have been selected to receive enhanced technical assistance. In Federal Fiscal Years 20 – 21, these are: Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

Previous editions of the SNAP E&T Review are accessible [HERE](#).



In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room, 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.