



United States Department of Agriculture

SNAP E&T REVIEW



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PRACTITIONER SPOTLIGHT: DR. ALICE PRITCHARD, CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (CSCU)

Practitioner Spotlights are an opportunity to hear directly from individuals working successfully to improve SNAP E&T programs across the country.



What is CSCU?

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, comprised of 12 community colleges, four state universities, and one fully-online college, contribute to the creation of knowledge and the economic growth of the State by providing affordable, innovative, and rigorous educational programs. Our learning environments transform students and support an ever-increasing number of individuals to achieve their personal and career goals. We offer an array of

programs from short- term workforce or enrichment offerings to certificate and degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

What is Your Current Role with CSCU?

I am the Chief of Staff/Chief Operations Officer at the CSCU Systems Office, which serves under the direction of the Board of Regents for Higher Education and supports all 17 colleges and universities through finance and grants, policy and research, government relations, public affairs and marketing, human resources, and IT.

How has your work with and prior to CSCU intersected with SNAP E&T?

I came to my current position as a former non-profit leader and advocate for workforce education and training. SNAP E&T was underutilized in Connecticut at that time and I urged lawmakers to expand this important federal program. Once at CSCU, I, along with my President, met with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and encouraged them to expand the program beyond the 3 colleges already serving as SNAP E&T partners. We promised to expand SNAP E&T to all 12 community colleges under our leadership. Working with DSS, we were able to accomplish this goal as well as expand program offerings available to students.

What is the importance of SNAP E&T to CSCU colleges and students?

We have so many Connecticut residents who need training to improve their employment opportunities. If they don't qualify for other federal or state programs, they must pay for their training on their own, which severely limits their enrollment and opportunities for better jobs. SNAP E&T is a great resource for these individuals. It also supports the engagement of a SNAP Coordinator who helps students participating in SNAP E&T to address personal and academic issues that may impact their ability to complete programs. This one-on-one attention is vital for student engagement and success and is often not available to students who are on other forms of assistance or paying for their own education.

Want to read the rest of the interview? Access the full Spotlight [HERE](#).

Participant Engagement Tip: Review the Communications You Send From the Participant Perspective

These Behavioral Science Tips are provided to give SNAP E&T Review readers ideas to improve participation and engagement in the SNAP E&T program.

You are an expert on your SNAP E&T program--but most of your participants are not! Things that seem easy and obvious to you and your staff are bewildering to those less familiar. **This is especially important as processes have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and are likely to change some more.** So, talk to participants about what is and isn't working for them. Have clients walk through the enrollment process and share what they found confusing or burdensome. Start with individuals who are participating in E&T services. Be sure to talk to individuals who may sound less interested. If possible, get in touch with those who started but then stopped participating or those who never participated. This latter group may be harder to contact, but they may provide some of the most valuable information.

Caseworkers talk to participants every day, **in person and/or by phone**. They could use some of this time to learn about client experiences, which may spark new ideas and test assumptions. Ask questions such as, did we provide too much information about SNAP E&T or not enough information? Did the information help participants understand what SNAP E&T is and/or how they might benefit from participating? **Effectively reaching participants becomes even more of a challenge if they cannot be reached in person.** To get started, check out this article on [Elevating the Voices of Program Participants](#), which outlines more on when and how you might apply this approach.

To learn more about behavioral science and how it can be used to address common challenges in engaging participants in SNAP E&T, please visit the S2S website.

Access the website [HERE](#).

Upcoming Events, Important Dates & Resource Links

Recordings from the SNAP E&T National Forum Now Available!

The 2020 SNAP E&T National Forum, hosted by USDA on Oct. 13-15, 2020, brought together 1,700 SNAP E&T stakeholders from across the country to share and learn best practices for promoting and increasing employment among SNAP households through State SNAP E&T programs. Plans for another forum in Fiscal Year 2022 are already underway.

Access the recordings [HERE](#).

About the SNAP to Skills Project

Launched in October of 2015, 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](#).



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