**Minnesota SNAP Employment and Training Provider Handbook for DEED Contracted Partners**



MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development

**January 2023**



**PROVIDER HANDBOOK FOR DEED CONTRACTED PROVIDERS**

# Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program in close partnership with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Minnesota’s SNAP E&T program is county-administered and requires a joint effort between counties, tribes and their employment service providers (ESP), which encourages maximization of the use of funds and resources available in each local area. Our success is built on the foundation of a strong collaborative culture amongst partners.

The Provider Handbook includes guidelines for roles and responsibilities of each third-party provider (TPP) contracted with DEED. DEED/DHS will update the Provider Handbook periodically and provide updates to this Handbook to our partnering organizations.

**VISION**

Minnesota envisions a SNAP E&T program where Minnesotans with low incomes have clear pathways in developing marketable and in-demand skills, leading to career advancement and self-sufficiency.

**MISSION**

Through strong partnerships, our mission is to help recipients fully utilize their SNAP benefits, gain the essential skills needed for gainful employment, and successfully transition off public assistance.

# Program Contacts

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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### PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND POLICY

# Basics of SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, helps Minnesotans with low incomes get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. The program provides support to help stretch the household food budget. It is not intended to meet all food needs of the household; it is a supplement.

If approved for the program, a person is issued an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. It is like a debit card. Each month of eligibility, benefits will be credited to the EBT account. The card can be used to purchase food at stores that display a poster or sign that reads: "We Accept EBT." Grocery stores and convenience stores must sell a variety of foods to be approved to accept EBT. The card also may be used at authorized sites for Meals on Wheels and congregate dining. Many farmers markets also accept EBT.

## Applying for SNAP

**Household Income, Expenses, and Assets**SNAP eligibility depends on income, expenses, and the number of people in the household. Most types of income are counted. There are many deductions from income that are allowed under SNAP. A county or tribal eligibility worker can provide more information on income limits and deductions.

**Screening Tool**The [screening tool (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/public/DHS-3529-ENG) asks a few questions to help a person find out if they may qualify for SNAP. The screening tool is only an estimate of eligibility. The only way to know for sure if a person qualifies is to complete the application process.

The screening tool is also available in:

[Hmong - screening tool (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/public/DHS-3529-HMN)

[Russian - screening tool (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3529-RUS)

[Somali - screening tool (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/public/DHS-3529-SOM)

[Spanish - screening tool (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/public/DHS-3529-SPA)

**Emergency SNAP**A person may receive food benefits within five days of application if their household meets one of the following criteria:

* Households with monthly gross income less than $150 and liquid assets less than $100
* Migrant or seasonal farmworker households that have low income and $100 or less in liquid assets
* Households in which the combined monthly gross income and liquid assets are less than their monthly housing costs and the applicable standard utility deduction, if applicable.

**Application**

A person can apply:

* **Online** at [ApplyMN.dhs.mn.gov](https://applymn.dhs.mn.gov/online-app-web/spring/public/process-login?execution=e1s1)
* **On paper** using the [Combined Application Form (PDF)](http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223-ENG) for families and people under age 60; individuals and couples who are 60 or older should use the one-page [Senior SNAP Application (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223F-ENG). Mail or bring the completed form to your local [county or tribal office (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-0005-ENG).

The Combined Application Form is also available in:

[Hmong - Combined Application Form (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223-HMN)

[Russian - Combined Application Form (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223-RUS)

[Somali - Combined Application Form (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223-SOM)

[Spanish - Combined Application Form (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223-SPA)

[Vietnamese - Combined Application Form (PDF)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223-VIE)

When a person’s benefits begin depends on the date the county or tribe receives the application through ApplyMN, or the first page of the paper application. The county or tribe cannot decide if a person will receive benefits until the entire application is completed and required verifications are provided. An interview will also need to be completed with an eligibility worker.

# Basics of SNAP Employment and Training

The SNAP E&T program helps SNAP recipients improve their employment prospects and wage potential through participation in job search, training, education or work activities. The goal is to assist recipients in obtaining a livable wage, leading toward self-sufficiency.

The federal government requires each state to develop and implement an [employment and training program](https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/federal-jobs-training-programs) for SNAP recipients. States have the flexibility to shape the size and scope of their programs.

The program requires annual local area plans be developed which reflect service strategies and coordination of services.

In Minnesota, SNAP E&T participants and services provided are tracked by the Statewide Workforce Center System, known as Workforce One (WF1). Eligibility for SNAP benefits are determined by counties and some tribes with the automated eligibility system, MAXIS.

As of December 1, 2018, Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program. In a voluntary program, time-limited SNAP recipients are not sanctioned if they choose not to participate in employment and training activities during their three counted months of eligibility. These time-limited individuals, however, must work or participate in employment and training activities for at least 20 hours per week to maintain their benefits beyond the three counted months. Those that are time-limited are SNAP recipients between the ages of 18 to 50, have no dependents under age 18, and are considered mentally and physically fit for work.

The state also offers employment and training services to SNAP recipients who are not time-limited, but who choose to participate in SNAP E&T. These participants are SNAP recipients who qualify for a federal or state exemption, and elect to participate in a SNAP E&T component(s).

The program provides orientation, assessment, development of an employment plan, as well as support services to program participants along with a range of activities.

Additional program guidance can be found in the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) [Employment and Training Toolkit](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ET_Toolkit_2013.pdf).

# SNAP E&T Eligibility

An individual can receive SNAP E&T services if they:

* Receive federal food assistance;
* Are age 16 or older (there are additional requirements to serve 16-17 year olds); and
* Have the physical and mental ability to work at least 20 hours per week, or able to do so within the next year; and
  + For clients with a verified disability, such as active SSI recipients or temporary workers compensation recipients, client statement or client-provided documentation can be used to determine SNAP E&T eligibility.
* Can participate in SNAP E&T immediately.

An individual cannot receive SNAP E&T services if they:

Receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or other cash assistance under Title IV such as Tribal TANF.However, an individual participating in the Diversionary Work Program (DWP) can participate in SNAP E&T as they are not a TANF or Title IV recipient.



A third-party provider (TPP) can serve an individual as long as they are receiving SNAP and meet the above stated criteria. The participant does not need to be listed in the MAXIS system as the “01” (primary individual on the case) as long as they are part of the food unit.

## Time-Limited Recipients (TLR)

Time-limited recipients are eligible for SNAP only three months in a 36-month period unless the individual meets the work requirements defined below. The three-month time limit does not apply to individuals who are:

1. Under age 18 or 50 years of age or over;

2. Medically certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment;

3. Responsible for a dependent child or residing in a household where a household member is under age 18;

4. Exempt from SNAP work requirements; or

5. Pregnant. All other SNAP participants are considered ABAWDs.

## Time-Limited Recipient Work Requirements

Time-limited recipients can meet the work requirement by:

* Working 20 or more hours per week in paid employment, averaged monthly (80 hours per month); This includes in-kind or unpaid work;
* Participating in and complying with the requirements of a work program for 20 or more hours per week; or
* Participating in and complying with the requirements of a workfare program.

More information on qualifying activities can be found here: [Minnesota SNAP E&T Components and Activities](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/Service%20Components%20and%20Activities_tcm1053-328031.pdf).

A time-limited participant who has lost SNAP eligibility by exhausting their initial three out of 36 months may qualify for a second three-month period if they have worked or participated in work activities for 80 hours during any 30 consecutive days. If the person’s job or work activity ends, or if the hours are reduced below 80 hours per month, the person may qualify for the additional three-month period of eligibility ([CM 11.24](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=CM_001124)). This provision does not apply if the person voluntarily quit the job without good cause ([CM 28.30.09](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=CM_00283009)).



The work requirement does not apply to time-limited recipients who reside in areas of the State that are granted a waiver of the 3-month time limit by FNS.

### DEED THIRD PARTY PROVIDER (DEED-TPP) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DEED third party provider (DEED TPP) agencies are responsible for delivering SNAP E&T services to SNAP recipients. Individuals must participate in SNAP E&T knowingly. It is important for providers to determine a process for documenting program intentionality. When program intentionality is not documented, this may be considered data matching. Data matching occurs when a provider reviews their agency’s non-federally funded programming, looking for individuals receiving SNAP, and considers the SNAP recipients to be SNAP E&T participants. Additionally, participant enrollments should begin no earlier than the program orientation date.

SNAP E&T services provided include a participant assessment to determine necessary E&T activities and case management. The assessment is an in-depth evaluation of employability skills, participation in skills development opportunities and supports needed to successfully complete training and job placement. Based on the assessment, the agency places the participant in the appropriate SNAP E&T activities to move the participant toward employment. Verification of receipt of the SNAP benefit, by the provider, must be done each month that a recipient participates in SNAP E&T activities. If an individual is not receiving SNAP, they cannot participate in SNAP E&T.

DEED TPPs are responsible for tracking costs, maintaining records, and invoicing according to federal and state regulations. In the DEED TPP reimbursement model, a provider agency puts forth the cost of program operations, including assessment, case management, SNAP E&T activities, and support services. Provider funds used to leverage the SNAP E&T program funds cannot originate from a federal source and cannot supplant another funding source. DEED then reimburses the provider at 50 percent of allowable SNAP E&T expenditures.



Intentionality can be documented in a variety of ways. Two examples are the inclusion of an additional statement on enrollment forms or a WF1 case note documenting a conversation with the participant.

# Enrollment

Prior to referral to an E&T program, a SNAP participant is screened to determine whether they are exempt from E&T requirements, however, even exempt individuals may volunteer to participate in SNAP E&T. Screening is not an allowable E&T expense as this is completed by the county during the eligibility determination process. Services may begin as early as the date SNAP eligibility is approved. DEED TPPs utilize the User Generated Program Sequence as it is completed without a referral from MAXIS. Prior to the enrollment, a series of pre-assessment questions must be answered, and information must be entered into WF1. For more information on the User Generated Program Sequence see the SNAP ET WF1 User Guide found in WF1 under **Resources**---**User How- to Guides**.

## Reverse Referral

Most participants in the 50% reimbursement model will come through the doors of service providers first (DEED TPPs); this is often referred to as a “reverse referral.” Contracted providers should assess participants up front to ensure appropriateness of referral into their own SNAP E&T program. If a potential participant is not currently receiving SNAP, an application should be completed with the county or tribe of residence.

# Case Maintenance

## Participant Files

A provider must document all activities and services provided to a participant in WF1. Files must be kept for all SNAP E&T participants. The files may be kept in paper or electronic formats and are reviewed as part of the annual monitoring visit. Files should be organized according to the provider’s standards, but at a minimum must contain information about the assessment; release of information/consent form (if applicable); eligibility verification; employment plan; participant progress; and participant reimbursements.



Appendix A is a case management checklist. This is a tool to assist in ensuring all required documentation is completed and retained for participants. The checklist can also be found on [Minnesota's SNAP E&T website](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/Employment%20and%20Training%20Checklist_tcm1053-357421.pdf).

**Orientation**

Third-party providers must provide an orientation to the SNAP E&T program for each time-limited participant referred to the program within 30 days of benefit approval. The purpose of orientation is to explain participation requirements, describe available services, and explain how SNAP E&T can help meet eligibility and work requirements, and encourage the participant to move to self-sufficiency through employment. Orientations may be provided either individually or in a group setting. It may be provided through audio-visual methods as long as the participant has the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with program staff.

For time-limited participants, orientation must inform the participant of:

* The work or work program activities that may enable able-bodied adults to receive more than 3 months of benefits in a 36-month period;
* The name and phone numbers of the SNAP E&T service provider;
* The services, including support services, available through SNAP E&T;
* The date, time, and location to report for SNAP E&T services;
* Encouragement to view public assistance as a temporary means of supplementing the unit’s needs as it moves toward self-sufficiency through employment.

As non-time-limited participants do not have the same eligibility and work requirements as time-limited participants, non-time-limited participants are not required to complete the same type of orientation, but must be provided with information relevant to their participation in SNAP E&T.

**Employability Assessment**

A SNAP recipient must be assessed prior to placement in an E&T component. An employability assessment should include an in-depth evaluation of employability skills coupled with counseling on how and where to search for employment. This can be done by an E&T counselor, case manager, or an E&T service provider. Please note that the employability assessment is to evaluate the employment skills of an E&T participant, not to determine whether the participant is subject to the SNAP work requirements. The latter is part of the SNAP certification process. The employability assessment is an allowable E&T expense, but it is not an E&T component.

Based on the employability assessment, both time-limited and non-time-limited participants must be evaluated to determine whether or not it is appropriate to refer the individual to a specific E&T component. E&T components are meant to assist members of a SNAP household in obtaining relevant training, education and/or skills that will increase the likelihood of securing employment.

An employability assessment can be completed in a variety of ways; providers may use existing assessment tools. Regardless of how the assessment is given, the following is a list of skills and knowledge that could be examined with suggested assessment tools:

* **Literacy Level -** Standardized tests, one-on-one interview/observations (i.e. participant’s ability to read and complete forms in case file);
* Communication Skills (including English proficiency) - Standardized test, one-on-one interview;
* **Education -** Questionnaire, resume or one-on-one interview;
* **Employment History -** Questionnaire, resume or one-on-one interview;
* **Employment Related Skills, Abilities, and Interests -** Questionnaire, one-on-one interview, or online assessment;
* **Employment Barriers and Steps Necessary to Overcome Barriers** - Questionnaire or one-on-one interview.

**Eligibility Verification**

Participant eligibility verification is required prior to enrolling an individual in SNAP E&T and before requesting reimbursement for services each month. A participant must be on SNAP at the time the cost was incurred, regardless of when billing for the service took place. It is the responsibility of the DEED TPP to verify, with DEED staff, participant eligibility each month.



In addition to monthly MAXIS verification of SNAP eligibility for each participant, TPPs can choose to verify SNAP eligibility before providing support services to participants to ensure expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

**Employment Plan**

SNAP E&T providers must complete an Employment Plan (EP) for each SNAP E&T participant. The EP shall be the result of assessing each individual’s career goals, skills, abilities, family obligations and any other job-relatable assets and barriers and include steps that will help the participant overcome identified career barriers while supporting the participant’s strengths and goals. The EP outlines the responsibilities of both the participant and the service provider as the participant prepares to achieve the program goal of full-time, long-term, unsubsidized employment at the most realistic and highest possible wage. The EP must be updated and revised as the participant’s circumstances change, but not less than once per year.

At a minimum, EPs must contain:

* Date the EP was created;
* Proposed E&T activities;
* Any assessed employment barriers;
* Employment goal(s);
* Referrals, if any, made to other service providers;
* Participant signature; and
* Any other information relevant to employment and training.

Training, support services, and intensive services cannot be incurred, obligated, or distributed until after the participant is enrolled AND the participant and employment counselor have signed and dated the Employment Plan. SNAP E&T programs can use their existing EP templates upon DEED review and approval.

For time-limited participants, it is expected that the DHS-6020 be utilized or a plan with comparable information. The plan must outline how a participant can meet the work requirements to gain an additional month of benefits.

Service providers may house the EP electronically in WF1 or on paper in the participant’s file and reflect in WF1 that the paper EP exists. If using a WF1 Employment Plan, the service provider must attach a printed copy of the EP with signatures and date of signatures of the participant and service provider.

**Participant Progress**

Participant files must contain progress information, which includes the activity the participant is engaged in, the dates of participation in that activity, regular program progress notes, credential and certificate attainment, employment, wages and retention information. WF1 case notes should be entered, for each participant, at a minimum of one entry each month.

**Case Notes**

It is an expectation that each case in WF1 have one or more case notes each month. At minimum, case notes should contain the following:

* Date of the event;
* Type of contact (in person, over the phone, etc.);
* Purpose of contact (intake, employment plan meeting, monthly check-in).

**Participant Reimbursements**

Documentation or receipts of participant reimbursement(s) must be on file and listed in WF1 under Support Services and case noted.

**Closing a Case**

Cases in WF1 should be closed by the end of the month following the month of SNAP case closure, unless open in the Retention Services Activity. For reporting purposes, the exit date in WF1 should be the last day of the month preceding case closure. Ex. SNAP closed November 1st, case should be closed in WF1 by November30th with an exit date of October 31st.

When an individual is no longer engaged, the SNAP E&T record in WF1 should be closed within 30 days. The corresponding exit date should be entered in WF1. When the participant is time-limited or is a SNAP eligible student based on enrollment in SNAP E&T, the employment counselor should also communicate with the county or tribal point of contact.

# Collaboration

## Co-Enrollment

In some situations, participants can be shared with other providers. For example, a DEED TPP can work with a college to help the same participant achieve their individual employment plan goals. Both providers can work with the participant at the same time, but each use a different service activity code(s) in WF1.

It is the provider’s responsibility to coordinate services for co-enrolled participants to prevent duplication of service. Duplication of service means the participant receives the same component or the same support service from multiple providers.

Collaboration is encouraged between SNAP E&T providers to make referrals for services that are not available through the current provider. Each provider serving that participant can receive 50% reimbursement for allowable expenditures that are not duplicative.

# Release of Information

DEED TPPs are required to have a release of information document in each SNAP E&T participant file. The DHS release of information, the [DHS-2243A](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-2243A-ENG) may be used.

# Limited-English Proficiency

All forms and services to the participant must be communicated in the individuals preferred language.

### OPERATIONS

# Components

SNAP E&T services are designed to help SNAP recipients move promptly into employment. Providers are not required to deliver all of these services; this is a comprehensive list of Minnesota’s SNAP E&T components. Eligible individuals can participate in one or more components. [SNAP E&T Components and Activities](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/Service%20Components%20and%20Activities_tcm1053-328031.pdf) can be found on the Minnesota SNAP E&T website.



The term “component” is the federal term for what we often think of as an “activity.”

## Component to Activity

Components found on the Minnesota SNAP E&T website correspond to a specific activity listed in WF1 and are shown in the following table. Workfare

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SNAP E&T Activity** | **Adult Career Pathways (ACP) Activity** |
| Supervised Job Search | Supervised Job Search – Job Club |
| Job Search Training | Supervised Job Search Training |
| Workfare | Workfare |
| Work Experience | Uncompensated Work Experience |
| Work Based Learning   * OJT * Pre-Apprenticeship * Apprenticeship * Internship * Subsidized Employment * Other | OJT |
| Apprenticeship |
| Subsidized Employment |
| Educational Programs   * Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction * Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training * English Language Acquisition * Integrated Education Training (IET)/ Bridge Programs * Work Readiness Training | Adult Basic Education |
| Adult Diploma Program |
| Credentialed Training – Credential Coursework/Training |
| ESL/ELL Training |
| GED Training |
| Integrated Education Training (IET)/Bridge Programs |
| Remedial Education |
| Non-Credentialed Training – Life Skills Development |
| Self-Employment Training |
| Non-Credentialed Training |
| Pre-Employment Preparation |
| Work Readiness Skills Training |
| Self-Employment Training | Self-Employment Training |
| Job Retention | Retention |
| Employability Assessment *(reimbursable)* | Assessment- Assessment/Testing |
| Orientation *(reimbursable)* | Orientation |
| Employed Full-Time *(non-reimbursable)* | Employed Full-Time |
| Employed Part-Time *(non-reimbursable)* | Employed Part-Time |
|  | Self-Employment |
| Holding *(non-reimbursable)* | Holding |
| Local Flag *(non-reimbursable)* | Local Flag |
|  | Satisfactory Progress |
| Social Services *(non-reimbursable)* | Referral/Invite |
| Social Services |
| Personal Counseling |

## E&T Tip

## If a participant is engaged only in employment, consider Retention (see definition of Job Retention in [Minnesota SNAP E&T Components and Activities](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/Service%20Components%20and%20Activities_tcm1053-328031.pdf)). To continue providing services, a participant must be engaged in an eligible component, and employment alone is not one.

## NOTE: Only individuals who have received other employment and/or training services under the E&T program are eligible for job retention services.

## Participation Hours

Participation hours must be tracked in WF1 for time-limited participants by activity.

For the educational programs component, input the number of activity hours based on the number of hours the participant is expected to participate, not on credit hours. For example, if a participant attends vocational training for 6 hours per week and has an estimated 10 hours of homework or study time per week, the vocational training should show 16 hours per week.

The job retention component hours are the number of hours the participant participates in actual retention activities with the organization, not the number of hours the participant works.

For example, if the participant has a 2 hour weekly meeting with the organization to discuss the participant’s new job and to pick up a gas voucher, the retention component is 2 hours.

The State agency cannot mandate more than 120 hours per month, but both time-limited and non-time-limited participants can choose to participate for an unlimited amount of additional hours.

# Monitoring

Monitoring is conducted of grantees at least annually to ensure grantee(s)/subgrantee(s) are in accordance with the approved workplan, federal, local, and state policies.

SNAP E&T grantees can expect:

* Monitoring that follows guiding principles of: mutual respect, open communication, joint problem solving, valuing diversity and an ethical code of conduct.
* Monitoring includes reviewing the organization’s work plan, budget, goals and outcomes. A review of client eligibility and a fiscal reconciliation will occur. A sample size of the caseload will be reviewed to determine client eligibility for SNAP and subsequent E&T services will be reviewed. Fiscal reconciliation may also use a sample size of a random pull of specific months of invoices to determine allowability of costs and reimbursements requested.
* The Grantee will be contacted and suitable arrangements will be made as to the date, time of visit, and appropriate staff involvement. Forms will be shared in advance of the visit for preparation purposes.
* A report following the visit will occur within 30 days detailing any findings and a timeline for any follow up needed.

# Secure E-Mail

Email containing sensitive or private information must be sent via a secure email portal.



Do not send social security numbers via email.

# Workforce One

WF1 is the primary tool used to collect and manage participants' employment plans, participation hours, support services, and activities. Having accurate and timely participant information within the management information system is critical in evaluating outcomes and providing services to participants.

The following page contains general process flow charts describing provider and county processes for both time-limited and non-time-limited participants:

## Visual example of process for serving individuals who are time limited SNAP recipients.

## Visual for outlining the process of serving SNAP recipients volunteering to participate in SNAP E&T.

## Records Retention

The records retention policy utilized for the SNAP E&T program follows Bulletin #18-85-01 [County Human Services General Records Retention Schedule](https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&Rendition=Primary&allowInterrupt=1&noSaveAs=1&dDocName=dhs-298877). For the purpose of this program, agencies may choose an electronic or paper format. This includes the WF1 Electronic Document Storage (EDS) or an agency specific electronic storage system.

## Training

WF1 Training will be provided during the onboarding process and throughout the grant period, as needed.

Staff working in WF1 database must complete, and renew yearly, the seven data security trainings:

* Data Security and Privacy
* Managing Security Information Problems
* How to Protect Information
* Federal Tax Information
* Social Security Administration Information
* Protected Health Information
* Data Security for County Staff and Assisters

DEED has developed a SNAP ET WF1 User Guide to address all operations within the management information system. The SNAP ET WF1 User Guide can be found in WF1 under “Resources.”

Access to WF1 must be requested and approved by an agency supervisor and DEED’s WF1 staff. Access forms may be found in WF1 homepage; forms and directions to request access can be found in the SNAP E&T WF1 User Guide.

# MAXIS

MAXIS is the computer system used by state and county workers to determine eligibility for public assistance and health care programs. For cash assistance and food programs, MAXIS also determines the appropriate benefit level and issues benefits. DEED staff will have MAXIS access to assist DEED TPPs with SNAP eligibility and benefit months.

### FISCAL

# Budgets

Budgets must be submitted with each organization’s workplan with specific line items and calculations. Invoices will be sent each month utilizing the budget line items and calculations on the Participant Verification Form (PVF) and Reimbursement Payment Request (RPR) to the DEED Grants Coordinator.

## Cost Allocation Methodology

All DEED TPPs must provide a cost allocation plan along with their Work Plans each year.

## Budget Modifications

All budget modification requests must be submitted as soon as possible to the grants coordinator.

## Budget Tips

* Funds are from different pools and may not be moved from Administration to Participant Reimbursement or from Participant Reimbursement to Administration.
* The E&T program requires up-front funding from non-federal, eligible sources in order to receive 50% reimbursement for SNAP E&T eligible expenditures. Further, E&T Programs can leverage non-federal funds currently used for existing employment and training services.
* Budgets should only include dollar amounts for the 50% reimbursement your organization will receive.
* Funds for this must be claimed on a reimbursement basis. No payments in advance of or in anticipation of services or goods provided under this partnership shall be requested or paid.
* Federal regulations under OMB Super Circular A-21 (Cost principles for Education Institutions) or A-122 (Cost principles for Non-profit Organizations) require that employees whose salaries are charged to a federal grant must keep time or effort reports to substantiate the charges.

# Funding

The State’s 50 percent reimbursement program uses a third-party reimbursement model to fund the program. Funding is based on a 50 percent reimbursement basis, unless otherwise approved. DEED will reimburse 50 percent of all allowable SNAP E&T expenses. The cost of all program operations, SNAP E&T services, and participant reimbursements must be expended up front, and then billed to DEED for 50 percent of all eligible costs.

Funds received from reimbursement of SNAP E&T expenditures can be used as “local” match in future SNAP E&T invoices. This is known as reutilizing SNAP E&T funds. These funds must be received, spent on valid SNAP E&T costs, and invoiced through the regular invoicing process to reutilize SNAP E&T funds. There is no restriction on how reimbursed funds must be spent.

# Invoicing

DEED TPP contracted providers are required to submit reimbursement requests through Participant Verification Form (PVF) and Reimbursement Payment Request (RPR). This is to be completed by the 20th of the month following the month the expense was incurred in accordance with the terms of the contract.

# Quarterly Reports

Program reports are due to DEED Grants Coordinators by the second Friday following the end of the quarter. Information requested from the DEED contracted TPP includes number of participants served, trainings attended and support needed. An electronic copy of the quarterly report will be sent to the providers’ contact person.



One component of the Quarterly Report are Participant Success Stories. These stories are important tools for sharing the great work being done in SNAP E&T across the state.

# Participant Reimbursements

E&T expenses must be directly related to an approved E&T component. Costs must also be reasonable and necessary. A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which a prudent person would pay under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur this cost. Necessary costs are incurred to carry out essential functions, cannot be avoided without adversely affecting program operation, and do not duplicate existing efforts.

See [Guidance on Costs and Reimbursements](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/Guidance%20on%20Costs_tcm1053-398330.pdf) for a complete list of covered services.

Non-covered Services include:

* 4-year college;
* Transfer degrees;
* Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees;
* On the job training wages;
* Stipends provided in certain training programs.

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## Funding

**50 Percent Reimbursement**—An uncapped federal SNAP E&T reimbursement funding stream. The federal government reimburses 50% of non-federal funds used to serve non-TANF, SNAP recipients. Non-federal funds must not already be used as a match for other programs. Tribes are reimbursed at 75 percent for eligible SNAP E&T services administered on a reservation for residents of the reservation.

**Fiscal Year**—The state fiscal year (SFY) cycle begins July 1st and ends June 30th. The federal fiscal year (FFY) cycle begins October 1st and ends September 30th.

**Quarterly Report**--- Report includes agency-specific information for each quarter of the FFY. This includes number of participant served, agency accomplishments, best practices and success stories.

**Participant Verification Form (PVF)** –An Excel workbook utilized by third party providers to verify SNAP eligibility and preparing and submitting monthly Reimbursement Payment Requests to DEED.

**Support Services Dollars**—Dollars received from the federal government for support services are matched with state dollars and allocated and distributed to counties and their consortiums using the same criteria as the 100 percent funding, but uses a state fiscal year cycle.

## People

**ABAWD**—Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents. Based on current law, these participants are limited to receiving up to three months of SNAP food benefits within a three-year period, unless the individual meets the work requirement, earning additional months of eligibility.

**ABAWD Waiver**—In general, a request could be made to FNS to waive the time limit for a group of individuals in the state if it is determined that the area in which the individuals reside: (i) Has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent; or (ii) Does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals. Under (i), data must show a recent 12 month average unemployment rate over 10 percent; a recent three month average unemployment rate over 10 percent; or a historical seasonal unemployment rate over 10 percent; or under (ii) evidence that show an area is designated as a Labor Surplus Area (LSA), qualifying for extended unemployment benefits; has a low and declining employment-to-population ratio; has a lack of jobs in declining occupations or industries; has 24-month average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the same 24-month period.

Even if an area receives a waiver from the work and time limits for time-limited participants, these individuals can still volunteer to participate in the SNAP E&T program.

**Time-Limited Participant**--As of December 1, 2018, this is the title for “mandatory participants” and they are eligible for SNAP for any 3 months in a 36-month period (considered the 3-month time limit) unless they meet the ABAWD work requirements (see: Time-Limited ABAWD Work Requirements).

**Participant**—A SNAP recipient participating in SNAP E&T.

**Recipient**—A person receiving SNAP food benefits.

**Non Time-Limited Participant**—A SNAP recipient who is not required to participant in SNAP E&T, but chooses to enhance skills development or other employment activities and opportunities offered under SNAP E&T.

## Systems

**MAXIS**—Computer system used by state and county workers to determine eligibility for public assistance and health care programs.

**Workforce One (WF1)**—System used by the State of Minnesota for employment data.

**WF1 User Generated Program Sequence**—This is the process for enrolling a participant in WF1 if a referral from MAXIS is not generated. This process is used by all third-party providers contracted with DHS.

## Providers

**Third Party Provider (TPP)**—Term used to refer to providers who have a contract with the state to provide SNAP E&T services. This could include community-based organizations, counties or tribes, and other providers such as community colleges, tribal colleges, and Adult Basic Education (ABE).

**Sub-contracted Provider (SCP)**—Having a contract with an intermediary entity to provide SNAP E&T services to SNAP recipients.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Will DEED complete monthly participant verifications on behalf of my agency?

A. Yes. Third party providers will utilize the Participant Verification Form Workbook to complete monthly verifications. It is the expectation that, at minimum, participant eligibility verifications are completed each month before TPPs request reimbursement for services provided.

Q. May mental health services be provided under E&T?

A. Persons in need of mental health services would either be exempt from Federal work registration requirements as mentally unfit for employment (refer to 7 CFR 273.7(b)(ii)) or be eligible for a State to exempt from its E&T participation requirements due to difficulties of a lesser degree. Therefore, mental health treatment is not a necessary participant cost and may not be funded by E&T.

Q. Are there general guidelines that can be used to assess whether E&T expenditures are allowable?

A. To be allowable, expenditures must be valid obligations of the State, local government or sub-grantee and must be necessary, reasonable and allocable charges under an approved E&T plan.

A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the costs. Thus, reasonable costs:

* Provide a program benefit generally commensurate with the costs incurred;
* Are in proportion to other program costs for the function that the costs serve; and
* Are within the scope of E&T.

A cost is necessary if it is needed in the performance of the program. Thus, necessary costs:

* Are incurred to carry out essential functions of E&T;
* May not be avoided without adversely affecting program operations;
* Are a priority expenditure relative to other demands on availability of administrative resources; and
* Do not duplicate existing efforts.

Refer to [Guidance on Costs and Reimbursements](https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/Guidance%20on%20Costs_tcm1053-294682.pdf) for more information.

Q. What if an educational activity is normally available at no cost to participants because it is funded by a State or local government, but space and funds are limited and more classes would be required to serve E&T participants? Can a State agency use E&T funds to pay for additional classes?

A. No. If the educational activity is a State or local entitlement, E&T funds cannot be used to pay for expansion of classes or additional classes. For example, if a State or local government guarantees that all adults, age 21 and under, are entitled to a GED at no cost and the State funds this activity, E&T funds cannot be used to pay for these services nor can the funds the State provides be used as a match. In another example, a State commits to pay for 30 percent of the operational expenses at its universities and community colleges. In this example, E&T funds cannot be used to pay for or reimburse any portion of that commitment and the State commitment cannot be used as a match to draw down Federal E&T reimbursement.

Q. What is the difference between a State match and a reimbursement?

A. SNAP E&T is a reimbursement program and not a matching program. In a reimbursement program, in order to be eligible for payment, funds for allowable activities must be expended, after which FNS reimburses the State for 50 percent of expenditures. As long as the State agency records total outlays, FNS will reimburse the State agency 50 percent of the total outlays. In a matching program, the amount of funds made available to the State agency is simply matched on a dollar per dollar basis. This is an important distinction because under SNAP regulations, cash from nongovernmental sources cannot be used for administrative costs without a waiver.

Recommended changes/additions to the Provider Handbook should be directed to:

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