Vision

Minnesota envisions a SNAP Employment and Training (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.

Priorities

1. Develop a continuum of evidence-based employment and training services though our partnerships.
2. Make available services that are responsive to participants’ needs, motivation, culture and abilities.
3. Build a range of support services to help participants succeed.
4. Work inclusively with our diverse partners and employers.
5. Share progress publicly as we work aggressively, but thoughtfully, to grow SNAP E&T to serve recipients.

Goals

Goal 1: Build a diverse network of 50/50 training providers that serve eligible participants across the state

Need: Priority under Goal 1 is to develop a continuum of evidence-based employment and training services though our partnerships. The SNAP program serves a very diverse population with low to average marketable skills and educational achievements. There is tremendous need to engage an assorted set of providers to increase skill development opportunities for this diverse population. The range of providers could include counties and tribes, community-based organizations (CBOs), employment services providers (ESPs), community colleges, tribal colleges and adult basic education (ABE) providers. Building a network of providers will create more market-driven, skills development opportunities and increase the number of

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access points for recipients while capitalizing on the federal 50/50 reimbursement funding opportunity.

**Strategies**: DHS/DEED and partners will:

- Engage local providers whose services are responsive to SNAP recipient skills development and employment needs
- Create continuous opportunities for existing and potential partners to be assessed for training and skills development programs that are responsive to local market needs and having the capacity to effectively serve diverse recipients
- Provide assistance to providers so that service training and educational programs are aligned with local industry and employment needs
- Work with providers to ensure their programs and services are connected to their local communities and economies
- Develop a shared responsibility model and incentives so that reimbursement funds are reinvested to expand training and skills development opportunities for more Minnesotans
- Create the capacity to increase the number of state-wide providers available to serve recipients each year
- Set annual strategic targets to grow federal financial participation to increase state investments and educational and employment opportunities for low income individuals and families.

**Measures of success**:

- Increase the range of SNAP E&T services and/or options available for SNAP recipients.
- Increase (over baseline) the number of recipients served by 50/50 E&T funds.
- Increase (over baseline) federal financial participation funds reinvested in E&T for SNAP recipients.

**Goal 2: Connect SNAP participants to appropriate skill development and training programs through a shared and strong referral/request referral process**

**Need**: Priority under Goal 2 is to make available services that are responsive to participants’ needs, motivation, culture and abilities, and connect participants to those opportunities. Having a diverse network of training providers and services across Minnesota is an important first step. Connecting participants to skills development programs is a critical next step. Currently, just over a tenth of recipients who had referrals to see an employment services provider were engaged and served. A large portion of SNAP recipients have less than or no more than a high school education. On average, these individuals earn far less and are more likely to be unemployed than those with postsecondary credentials. Skills
development and other employment preparation opportunities can greatly benefit these individuals and families. Connecting and engaging recipients to participate in and complete market-driven skills development programs is key to helping them on the path to becoming successful. Whether a recipient shows up at a county office or a provider, they should be served effectively and seamlessly.

**Strategies:**
DHS/DEED and partners will:
- Develop a combination of outreach and/or marketing products to inform current and potential participants of job skills development opportunities and employment services
- Work together to determine the best assessment and/or strategies to match and connect participants with the best possible opportunities to grow their skills and advance towards their employment and career goals
- Provide assistance to service providers to enroll recipients, and provide coaching and assistance to support participants in their training
- Work with counties, tribes and service providers to integrate cross-provider collaborations and referral processes when the needs of participants can be met by other providers.

**Measures of success:**
- Increase access to a range of training opportunities.
- Increase of recipients enrolled in employment and training programs.
- Increase of recipients who meet work requirements, maintain benefits and earn additional months of eligibility.
- Increase in recipients who improve their skills, obtain employment, retain employment and increase their employment earnings.

**Goal 3: Create an array of essential support services that address barriers, and support participation in training and employment activities**

**Need:** Priority for Goal 3 is to build a range of support services to help participants succeed in their training and employment preparation activities. SNAP recipients face a number of key challenges such as access to transportation; homelessness; ex-offender records; and child care. Growing evidence shows that individuals with low foundational skills are more likely to succeed in programs that offer flexible scheduling, contextualized and accelerated instruction, and supportive services, which assists recipients in participating and completing skills development and employment programs.
**Strategies:**
DHS/DEED partners will:
- Create the capacity and identify funding to maintain a continuum of support services participants need to successfully participate and complete education and training programs
- Facilitate regular meetings with E&T providers to make sure participant supports are addressed within the network of providers without duplication of services
- Build and expand the current array of participant support services related to employment and training — transportation, uniforms, books, safety equipment, interview clothing, test fees and supplies.

**Measures of success:**
- Increase the number and percentage of participants enrolled in and completing Employment and Training programs.
- Increase (over baseline) federal financial participation funds reinvested into SNAP E&T for recipients.

**Goal 4: Establish strong connections with local and regional employers**

**Need:** Priority for Goal 4 is to work inclusively with our diverse partners and employers to form strong partnerships to help participants succeed. Placing participants in the workforce with opportunities for upward mobility is a key goal of SNAP E & T. Building strong connection and establishing partnerships with local employers is key to building robust placement programs. Employer-service provider partnerships are critical in ensuring skills development program align with employer needs.

**Strategies:**
DHS/DEED and partners will:
- Guide the range of training providers to deliberately integrate employer engagement into the core decision-making of programs and students
- Provide ongoing jobs market information to providers to inform their training and employment activities to be responsive to local industry and market needs
- Work with providers to host ongoing job fairs with local area employers
- Identify and promote strategies for service providers to involve local employers in their skills development and training programs and share SNAP information with them; discuss their employment needs, invite them to visit students and learn of the training programs, and identify how their strengths can be used to help build effective service provider programs and partnerships.
Measures of success:

- Increase of participants who are placed in the workforce after completing their employment and skills development programs.
- Increase of participants who obtain employment, retain employment and increase their employment earnings.
- Increase in the average wage gains of SNAP E&T participants.
- Increase participants who successfully transition off of SNAP (exceeds income requirements).

Goal 5: Evaluate to measure success and share results

Need: Priority for Goal 5 is to share progress publicly as we work aggressively, but thoughtfully, to grow SNAP E&T to serve recipients. Evaluating how well E&T is assisting participants in entering and succeeding in the workforce is critical to the success of our shared vision and mission. SNAP E&T program is integrating an evaluation component to gauge how well E&T is working for Minnesotans, including program efficiency, effectiveness and the impact on moving families toward self-sufficiency. Evaluation will also include accountable and returns on the public and private funds being invested in E&T programs and services.

Strategies:
DHS/DEED and partners will:

- Develop a plan to evaluate SNAP E&T’s effectiveness in growing participant skills, increasing points of access for participants, participant placements and increases in earnings
- Identify and share evidence-based practices leading to positive outcomes for participants
- Share the state performance on the federal national reporting measures
- Publish an annual executive summary on recipients, participation in E&T and data on the measures of success
- Share with the public the annual state plan submitted to the federal government by posting on the SNAP E&T Resource Center Website.

Measures of success:

- Share Minnesota’s performance on the national reporting measures.
- Continuous publication of the state E&T annual executive summary.
- Sharing of the state plan with state government leadership, stakeholders and the public.

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