SNAP E&T PARTNER HANDBOOK

Revised: August 2024

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Introduction

The mission of the Department of Social Services (DSS) is guided by a shared belief in human potential. We aim to make a positive impact on the health and well-being of Connecticut's individuals, families, and communities. Our vision is a Connecticut where all are healthy, secure, and thriving. Our values include Pride in Public Service, Excellence and Integrity, Compassion and Empathy, Equity and Inclusion, Racial Justice, Collaboration and Communication and Learning and Innovation.

The SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program is part of Connecticut's comprehensive workforce development system, serving the needs of low income and unemployed individuals and Connecticut employers. The goal is to assist SNAP recipients in obtaining gainful employment. The program is skills based and offers education, job search training, and job retention components, all meant to improve the prospects of SNAP recipients.

This SNAP E&T Partner Handbook details a standard set of policies and procedures for delivering services to participants. While it is not possible to cover every situation or scenario that partners may encounter during day-to-day operations, the handbook provides lessons learned as the program has evolved since its inception.

Jobs and a robust economy are the best solutions for the public good. SNAP supports work by providing a 20% earned income disregard for employed SNAP recipients. SNAP employment and training (E&T) services help SNAP participants gain and sustain employment by providing a job ready workforce.

FNS allows state's great flexibility to design SNAP E&T programs that fit the needs of the local economy and SNAP participants. FNS seeks to promote promising practices that move the unemployed quickly into employment and the under-employed into better paying jobs. In Connecticut, we believe that a skills-based approach best serves the needs of our customers. The following guiding principles provide the framework, as we continuously seek to expand and improve SNAP E&T in Connecticut.

SNAP E&T Guiding Principles

- **SNAP E&T activities should focus on work.** SNAP E&T programs must have a direct connection to employment.

- **SNAP E&T programs must balance the short-term goal of moving participants into immediate employment and the long-term goal of moving households to self-sufficiency.** While the primary focus of SNAP E&T is to move participants into work, educational and vocational activities may be used to prepare participants for family supporting jobs. These activities can help working households gain skills and certifications that improve their job opportunities. Helping participants move into higher paying jobs increases the chance for these households to become self-reliant.

- **SNAP E&T programs should respond and adapt to the local economy.** DSS uses local labor market information (LMI) to identify growing job opportunities. LMI is used to structure E&T programs so that SNAP E&T participants gain relevant skills and knowledge necessary to prepare them for available jobs.

- **SNAP E&T programs can maximize both the financial capital and the expertise of local partners.** Private companies, public entities and community-based organizations already invest in training programs for low-income populations. DSS partners with these organizations to capitalize on this experience and use existing training programs to leverage additional federal investment. The third-party reimbursement model offers the opportunity to expand and enhance services to low-income households.

- **SNAP E&T programs should use measurable results to ensure program funds are used for efficient and effective components.** DSS uses outcome measures for completion rates, employment, and employment retention to identify high quality components that achieve program goals.

Program Contacts

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FNS E&T Toolkit

This handbook covers the required policies in the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) E&T Toolkit, but please refer to the actual toolkit for more detailed information. Providers must follow rules included in the most recent version of the FNS E&T Toolkit. This can be found online at SNAP E&T Program Toolkit | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

Employment and
Training Toolkit Jun

SNAP in Connecticut is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS). SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the country and helps low-income individuals and families obtain a healthy diet by supplementing their income with SNAP benefits on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.

The amount of the monthly SNAP benefit is based primarily on household size, income, and certain expenses, referred to as deductions. The benefit amount is irrelevant to determining eligibility for SNAP E&T, if you are an active SNAP benefits in an eligible household, you are eligible for E&T.

In addition to direct food benefits, States must provide employment and training services to SNAP recipients as part of the overall administration of the program. To be eligible for SNAP E&T, participants must be active SNAP recipients in any month they receive services, must not be receiving financial assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and be able and available to work upon completion of the SNAP E&T program.

Unless clients are exempt, there are mandatory work requirements for SNAP recipients. They include: work registration, accepting suitable employment and not quitting a job without good cause. Additional work requirements are in place for able bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) and include a 3-month time limit based on individual circumstances. However, it is important to remember that SNAP E&T in Connecticut is a voluntary program and therefore there are no mandatory participation requirements.

To learn more about SNAP and how to apply, visit the DSS webpage at: www.ct.gov/snap

Confidentiality

All partner staff with access to SNAP E&T participant information must sign a DSS W-1077 confidentiality agreement before accessing personal information of E&T participants. Copies of the W-1077 must be provided to DSS and maintained on site and be available during monitoring visits/performance reviews. Forms are available on the DSS CTPathways webpage.

Partners are prohibited from using DSS information or access to DSS systems for personal gain or potential conflicts of interest. Working on the case of a family member or personal acquaintance is not allowed.

Civil Rights

All SNAP-funded partners must display the "And Justice For All" poster (Form AD-475-B SNAP and FDPIR) prominently in areas where potential SNAP recipients can see it. Posters are provided by DSS.

All printed materials funded by SNAP E&T, paper or electronic, must include the USDA Non-Discrimination Statement (NDS). In some instances when space is limited you may use "This Institution is an equal opportunity provider" in place of the entire NDS. In addition, all SNAP funded partners must have a link to the NDS on their organization's website.

 Link to NDS:

https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/fns-nondiscrimination-statement

All staff that have direct contact with SNAP recipients must complete civil rights training annually. The link to the current civil rights training is:

https://portaldir.ct.gov/dss/SNAP/CivilRightsTraining2024

Partners should retain a record of those who complete training and will need to make it available during annual reviews.

Secure Email Portal

DSS uses Axway Secure Mailgate services to safeguard participant information. **Participant names and other identifying information should never be included on the subject line and ANY email with client identifying information must be sent securely.** When escalating e-mails including client information, please ensure the e-mail subject line includes [secure] to ensure encryption. DSS will provide Axway instructions to all partners, do not share this information as it is considered confidential and privileged access.

Confirming SNAP E&T Eligibility

SNAP recipients in Connecticut may self-enroll with E&T partners located throughout the state, but before SNAP recipients become CT*Pathways* participants, SNAP eligibility must be confirmed. To participate in CT*Pathways*, **persons must be active SNAP and not be receiving TANF, in any month in which they are receiving E&T services**. Partners should be mindful that participants, who are eligible at any time in a month, are eligible for that entire month. If persons lose their SNAP eligibility, SNAP is closed at the end of the month. For example, if a member of a SNAP household reports a job that puts them over the income limit on the 7th day of the month, the case is not closed until the end of the month.

Possessing a SNAP EBT card or an eligibility Notice of Action does not mean a person is an active SNAP recipient. There are three ways to confirm SNAP eligibility for potential participants before they become actual E&T participants.

1. **Daily files from ImpaCT**

    ImpaCT is the name of the DSS integrated eligibility system. E&T partners receive a daily file from ImpaCT that includes active SNAP recipients, who are not receiving TANF cash assistance, between the ages of 16 and 60. Each partner determines the service area included in the daily file. The recipients in the daily files are considered referrals to SNAP E&T providers, but persons 60 and over are also welcomed to participate if they meet all eligibility criteria.

    Files are provided securely via the following link: https://secure.mft.ct.gov/


    Each E&T partner is provided a username and unique password which are needed to access the files. **Only staff who have signed the W-1077 confidentiality agreement may access the files. DSS will provide the username and password after the form is received.** Once logged into the secure site, partners may access SNAP E&T referrals by double clicking on the SNAP folder.

And then double click the From ImpaCT folder.

Double click the most recent SNAP not TANF. The file is easily searchable and those included are eligible for E&T in the month the file was created.
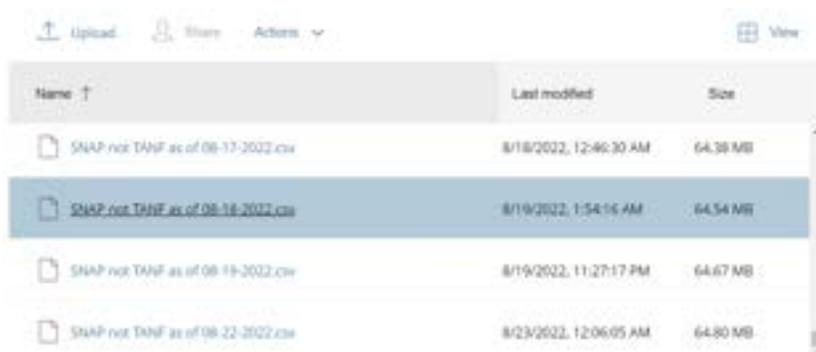
2. **_CTPathways_ should automatically pull in eligibility data the next business day after if the participant data is entered accurately.**

3. **Email to Program Contacts**

   The daily file from ImpaCT includes eligible SNAP recipients between the ages of 16 and 60. SNAP recipients who are 60 years of age or older, although exempt from the SNAP work requirements, may still participate in SNAP E&T. Please email the SNAP E&T program contacts at **SNAPET@ct.gov**, to confirm eligibility for participants aged 60 and older whenever eligibility is questionable. Please remember to use the Axway Mailgate secure email system or encrypted email security when confirming eligibility.

It is important that eligibility is confirmed in the month in which the component begins. For example, if a participant is assessed in the month of June but the component does not begin until July, eligibility must be reconfirmed in July prior to the start of the component.
If eligibility is in doubt, please reach out! These conversations should be internal only- between coordinators and DSS Staff.

Group Orientation

Partners have the option to conduct group orientations prior to completing individual assessments. Interest in CT Pathways is robust, and many partners have found it useful to conduct group orientations outlining items such as attendance policies, component requirements and the availability of support services. Group orientations help partners ascertain the commitment level of potential participants. Informing potential participants of program expectations prior to the individual assessment helps prepare participants for successful outcomes.

Individual Assessment

After SNAP E&T eligibility has been confirmed, partners must conduct an assessment for all prospective participants. **Meaningful assessments using SMART goals help determine the most appropriate SNAP E&T component in which to place the individual, even if that placement is not within the specific partner's organization.** Assessments are considered an essential program characteristic and help ensure that participants succeed. E&T assessments should include information such as literacy level, communication skills, education, employment history, and career goals. Recognizing strengths and barriers before the participant begins a component helps lead to success. Assessment and other intake documents must be maintained and become part of the case file. An assessment template is available on the CT*Pathways* website.

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) refers to SNAP recipients without dependents, between the ages of 18 and 52 who must meet work requirements in order to receive SNAP benefits. These individuals can only receive SNAP for three months in a thirty-six-month period (considered the three-month time limit) unless they comply with the ABAWD work requirements. The ABAWD must be working, in a work program or a combination of both at least 80 hours per month. SNAP employment and training is a voluntary work program that allows ABAWD's to continue receiving SNAP benefits while they are gaining skills needed to improve employment prospects.

The three-month time limit does not apply to ABAWDs who reside in areas of the state that have been granted a waiver by Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). A list of towns that are currently exempt from the time limits is on the DSS website.

ABAWD's subject to the three-month time limit must be closely tracked. DSS E&T contacts must be notified immediately when ABAWD's E&T participation stops or goes below twenty hours per week.

ABAWD's who have exhausted their three months of eligibility may regain eligibility based on an assumption of cooperation of E&T participation within thirty days. E&T partners may provide a letter to prospective participants stating the date the program begins. If the participant does not begin as scheduled, DSS E&T contacts should be notified immediately.

Participant Expectations and Commitment

In addition to a meaningful assessment, E&T participants **must be made aware of certain expectations and program requirements before participation can begin.** At its core, SNAP E&T is a work program, and all participants should understand that the goal is to increase their security and wellbeing by helping them become employed or finding better paying careers. The participant expectation and commitment document informs participants of program essentials, including participant reimbursements and information about special requirements for credit bearing programs. This mandatory form can be found on the CT*Pathways* website.

Participant Expectation and Commitment forms should be kept on file and held for 3 years, in accordance with the record keeping requirements.

Participants may enroll in <u>one opportunity</u> with stackable credentials (when applicable). When screening participants for their preferred and appropriate program, it should be noted that one opportunity is offered through SNAP E&T. If for some reason life circumstances prevent a student from completing or they request another opportunity for participation then the following information must be sent to Program staff at DSS through the inbox SNAPET@ct.gov along with any additional relevant information:

- Student's full name and client id.

- The program they previously enrolled in.

- Circumstances that prevented completion or detailed explanation of request for a second opportunity.

- Please review prior case notes indicating what happened in previous opportunity.

- Clearly state that the new class is being requested as second opportunity.

- Explanation of how circumstances have changed to allow for completion.

Provider Determinations

A provider determination is made when a SNAP E&T provider determines a participant is not a good fit for the component in which they are participating at any time during the SNAP E&T process. When this occurs, the provider must notify DSS within 10 calendar days of this determination and DSS will determine if there is a program or service that is a better fit for the participant. DSS will work with the provider(s) to determine the best outcome and notify the participant of the provider determination within 10 calendar days of receiving the notification.

Please review the SNAP E&T Provider Determinations document explaining the process in more detail and providing general examples of when a Provider Determination may need to occur.

SNAP E&T Provider
Determinations.pdf

CTPATHWAYS- Web Based Application

Entering Participants

Once participants have completed their assessment and signed the participant expectation agreement, they must be entered into the DSS web-based application known as CT*Pathways.* E&T partners may designate one or two CT*Pathways* users who will have access to the web-based

application to enter participant information. DSS will set up access for designated users and provide instructions for logging in. **Partners must notify DSS immediately of any staffing changes so the user may be closed out in the CT*Pathways* system.**

The data within CT*Pathways* is vital for federal reporting purposes. **It is important that all E&T participants are entered into CT*Pathways* in the month the program begins.**
*The start date will be very important for billing as well.

The link to the CT*Pathways* site is: https://ctdss.force.com/ctpathways

The user login page is shown below.
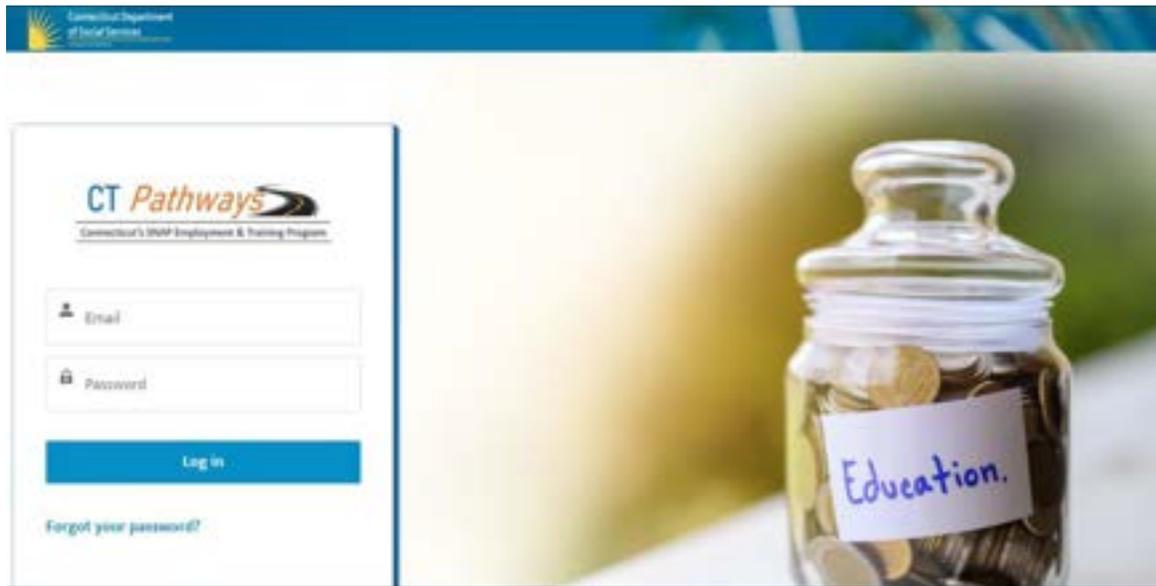
Upon entering the homepage, you will see the following dashboard:

Before entering participants in the web-based application, you must check if the participant is already in the system. To accomplish this, log into CT*Pathways* and you will be taken to the home page. You can search with a client name and/or DSS client identification number. Choose the option "Participant Information" from the top navigation.

Be sure to double check that demographic information (especially SSN), client id and all required fields are correct, otherwise you may create a duplicate record.

Once you've determined you have the right participant, you may select their record details and continue to navigate through the driver flow. **DON'T FORGET to click Save & Next on the bottom of each page or you'll lose the data you updated once you navigate away from the page.**

When the applicant has been found within CT*Pathways* and has been approved by DSS Staff for an additional program, please select the participant and update the information on the Component/Program Information screen. **The SNAP E&T program offers stackable credentials, which make participants more marketable in the job market. In CTPathways, all stackable credentials will pend for DSS approval once you enter them.**

Please note, partners will not be reimbursed for duplicated service(s). A duplicated service occurs when separate partners provide the same component and/or program to a shared participant within the same calendar month. This is not the same as co-enrollment, which occurs when separate partners share the same participant within the same calendar month, but each provide a different component.

It is important to complete each field with a red asterisk. This information is required for federal reporting purposes. Again, when all information on each page is completed, be sure to select the save and next button to save all information.

Component Field

Select the appropriate component from the component drop-down box. Choices include vocational training, supervised job search, job search training and job retention. Approved components are part of the contractual agreement between DSS and partner organizations.

In Connecticut, short term vocational training programs provide the bulk of E&T services and improve the employability of participants. There is a wide range of programs available within the vocational training component. Eligible SNAP recipients have access to both noncredit certificate programs and credit bearing programs, as long as there is a direct connection to employment.

There are special considerations for E&T participants in credit bearing programs which are eligible for federal financial aid. Participants in these credit bearing programs MUST complete the FAFSA before receiving any SNAP E&T funding.

Supervised job search improves the job readiness of participants through a variety of ways including job seeking techniques that motivate and create self-confidence. Services vary and may include resume writing, job clubs, job placements and case management.

Component Status Field

There are six choices available in the Component Status drop down box. Please update to reflect the participant's most current status:

1. Actively Participating- actively participating in an E&T component.
2. Archived- Record should be for archive purposes
3. Complete- successfully completed coursework/ earned certificate/ credential
4. Dropped- no longer participating, did not notify partner
5. Incomplete- did not successfully complete coursework/ earn certificate/ credential
6. Withdrew- no longer participating, formally notified partner

Program Cost Field

Partners should enter the amount you will be billing to DSS for the program.

Hours/Week Field

Component hours should be entered based on the number of hours the participant is expected to participate including classroom hours, study time, workshops, and travel time. For example, if a client is attending vocational training that has class time of 6 hours per week, 6 hours of study time per week, and travels an hour each day for class, 17 hours per week should be entered.

Start Dates and End Dates

In order to accurately report the number of SNAP E&T participants each quarter, it is critical that participant status, including start and end dates, be updated timely and on an ongoing basis. For example, if a participant starts a program on January 15th with an anticipated end date of April 30th but stops attending on March 7th, the end date needs to be updated from April 30th to March

7th and the status changed from active to dropped, withdrew or incomplete. **Updates must be entered in the month they occur.**

If your participant has never been entered into CT*Pathways*, please create a new record by entering all information on the assessment screen with a red asterisk.

After entering all required information in the fields above, select Save & Next to be taken to the next section of the participant record- Employability Plan. Once all the required fields on each page are completed, please continue to hit Save & Next to proceed to all the record pages.

Please note, updating components for the participants in a quarter will only be allowed for 40 days after a federal fiscal quarter ends. The system will have a hard stop after the 40 day grace period, and no updates will be allowed.

Employability Plan

The employability plan is now available in the CT*Pathways* system. Please update the participant's primary goal, target completion date, and goals using the SMART goal format. SMART stands for **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound**. Please select the blue plus sign

to add to the action plan and barriers to completion. These fields must be added to continue through this section.

Case Management & Case Notes

E&T coordinators are expected to include a case note for each participant when participation begins, each month of participation, and at completion. Case management is a requirement of SNAP E&T. Case notes should also include information related to participant reimbursements. For example, if your organization is providing a monthly bus pass, this should be noted. Case notes in CT*Pathways* are part of the case file and are a way for E&T partners to communicate with one another and DSS. SNAP E&T contracts include specific language requiring partners to enter monthly case notes.

Alerts

The *CTPathways* system will now notify a user when different actions are not taken on a participant's record. When a participant is missing case notes, the following banner will appear upon a user logging in. Case management and monthly case notes for each participant is a requirement of the SNAP E&T program.

Users will also receive email alerts if they have not logged into CT*Pathways* in over 30 days.

CT*Pathways* Reports

Many of the CT*Pathways* reports are for DSS federal reporting purposes. However, reports are a useful tool for partners. The *Active Past End Date* report should be reviewed monthly. Participants appearing on this report need to have their status and/or end date updated. **It is important that all E&T participants have their status and end dates updated in the month the change occurs.** For example, if a participant withdraws or completes on May 5th, their status and end date need to be updated no later than May 31st.

General Maintenance

Resetting Passwords/Unlocking Accounts

After three unsuccessful attempts to log in to CT*Pathways* your account will be locked. If this occurs please email SNAPET@ct.gov. Accounts will be unlocked within 24 hours and users will need to log in using a temporary password that will be provided by DSS. Users may then reset their account with their unique password.

Removing Participants

Occasionally, participants may decide not to start a program after they have been entered in CT*Pathways*. If this occurs, reach out to the DSS E&T contacts to have the component removed. To ensure accurate reporting, DSS must be informed the month the participant was scheduled to start a program.

Removing CT*Pathways* Access

Partners must notify DSS immediately when staff changes occur so the user may be closed out in the CT*Pathways* system to avoid unauthorized access to SNAP recipient data. New users may be added once a confidentiality form has been received by DSS.

Participant Reimbursements

In addition to tuition, the cost of the vocational training or job search and job retention services, E&T participants may receive reimbursements for expenses that are reasonable, necessary and directly related to participation in the E&T program. Many E&T partners roll the cost of certain expenses into the tuition or cost of the program. Allowable expenses that are not included will be reimbursed based upon identified needs and upon presentation of appropriate documentation to the E&T service provider. SNAP E&T funds will not reimburse for expenses that are covered by other funding sources, such as federal financial aid, grants, scholarships, or donations.

All E&T participants must be informed that they are eligible for reimbursement for allowable expenses for identified needs. Examples of allowable expenses are:

- Transportation:
    Bus passes
    Gas cards
    Uber/Lyft gift cards
- Clothing/Uniforms
- Child Care
- Certification Exam Fees
- Textbooks

Reach out to program contacts if you are unsure if an expense is eligible for reimbursement.

Financial Information

Billing and Invoices (Subject to change once fully implemented in CT*Pathways*)

SNAP E&T partners must submit **quarterly invoices and supporting documentation to program contacts so payments may be made timely.** The invoice template is available on the DSS CT*Pathways* website. All invoices must be accompanied by a participant billing roster, supporting documentation for expenditures including participant expenses and a transfer invoice* (for other state agencies only).

There are 3 different funding types:

- **100% funds** may be used for salary, fringe and in-directs
  - These should be used first, and once spent down, the remaining balance should be billed to (50% funds).
  - These *cannot* be used for participant expenses.

- **50% funds** may be used for anything including tuition/ salary/ fringe/in-directs, participant reimbursements etc.

- **Participant reimbursements** may be used things that are reasonable and necessary (books/ scrubs/ tools/ gas cards etc). for the participant to be successful in the program.
  - This is usually a very limited budget.
  - MUST be spent and invoiced to DSS by 5/31, and once expended 50% funds can be used.

PLEASE NOTE: NOT ALL PROVIDERS RECEIVE ALL FUNDING TYPES
If you have questions on the funding you receive, please reach out to DSS.

Payments are due quarterly: Q1 ending 12/31 due 2/10, Q2 ending 3/31 due 5/10, Q3 ending 6/30 due 8/10 and Q4 ending 9/30 due 11/10. Payments received after these dates may not be reimbursed.

Participants should be billed based on the date their component starts, not ends. Example: Student starts a program on 4/18 but program ends 7/18- student should be billed for Q3 not Q4. Any students not billed in the correct quarter will not be reimbursed in future quarters.

Annual Budget and Funding

Each year, DSS must submit a SNAP E&T state plan of operations to the USDA FNS by August 15th. Plans are built in part, on projections provided by E&T partners. All partners must submit a complete budget package **prior to June 15th** for the upcoming federal fiscal year. Budget package must include a budget;

SNAP E&T BUDGET PROPOSAL
Projected SNAP Participants:

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS				
Certificate Program	# of available seats/class	Xs course offered/yr	Tuition Cost Per Seat	Total Tuition Per Program
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
			Total Program Charges	$ -

SALARY					
Position	Hours per week	Rate per hour	Salary	Fringe	Total Cost
			$ -		$ -
			$ -		$ -
				Total Salary	$ -

FUNDING	
Indirect Cost @ %	$ -
Total Cost of Tuition, Salary and Fringe, and Indirect Cost	$ -
TOTAL @ 50%	$ -
100% Funding Requested	
TOTAL of 50% and 100%	$ -

The budget should include program offerings, projected number of participants, and program costs. For any staff allocated to the grant, time and effort, salary and fringe should be included. Participant reimbursements that may be provided must also be included in the budget.

Budget packages must also include a reimbursement certification form, and labor market information (LMI). Failure to submit a complete budget package may lead to reduced funding or termination of the partnership.

The reimbursement certification form identifies the non-federal funding sources partners have available to support the SNAP E&T program. Some common sources of non-federal funds eligible for reimbursement include state funds, foundation funds, tuition set aside/SNAP scholarships, social venture funds, and previous SNAP E&T reimbursement funds reinvested in the program. A state agency may claim a service or good as an in-kind if it is allowable, necessary, and reasonable for the delivery of SNAP E&T and is not charged to another federal grant.

The only funds that are reimbursable are non-federal funds. Therefore, if a credit bearing student has Pell/ or other federally funded resources those should be billed first, then the balance would be billed to SNAP E&T. The reimbursement certification is what the provider pledges to invest into the program. Non-federal grants can be reimbursed at 50%. Therefore, if you have a private foundation that offers tuition support, then those can be reimbursed at 50 cents on the dollar.

LMI to support existing and new programs must be provided. Only occupations showing positive growth will be approved. LMI is available on the state Department of Labor website.

Budget and reimbursement certification templates are available on the DSS CT*Pathways* website.

Although there are three funding sources for SNAP E&T, in Connecticut, funding will come from the 50% reimbursement target funds, unless otherwise approved. Under the third-party reimbursement model, partners provide the services and invoice DSS for reimbursement of 50% of the eligible costs. Allocations for each partner will be approved after FNS approves Connecticut's state plan of operations.

Adding programs

E&T partners may request adding additional programs for the next federal fiscal year. DSS program contacts determine appropriateness of the programs using Labor Market Information (LMI) provided by the State Department of Labor. LMI helps ensure that there will be jobs available at the end of the educational component.

How to Distribute Funds Based on Approved E&T Final Budget
(CT State Community College Instructions only)

1. Look at total students served in prior FFY & current slots for students projected for upcoming FFY
2. Total Reimbursement reinvestment funds + total foundation funds =50% funds match
   a. Contingent on meeting the prior year budgetary projections.
   b. Contingent on growth of participation year over year.
   c. Contingent on having an actionable plan to utilize the total funds in fiscal year.
3. When distributing 100% funds amongst the campus' there must be 3 tiers of distribution:
   a. **Large schools,** (over 100 students) should receive (10 % of total per campus)
   b. **Medium sized schools** (37-57 participants) should receive (8% of total per campus)
   c. **Small schools** (less than 35 participants) should receive (4% of total per campus)

4. The proposal should be submitted in accordance to the prescribed tiers, and may be revised based on State agency determination.

Annual Reviews

DSS is committed to completing an annual performance review for each E&T partnership. Onsite reviews consist of two major aspects, programmatic and administrative. An administrative review tool is provided to partners prior to the visit.

For the administrative portion of the review, DSS will request time and effort reports for staff charged to the grant. For full-time staff, time sheets must be certified/signed bi-annually by a supervisor. Part time employees must have time sheets certified/signed bi-weekly by a supervisor. Documentation of the sources of nonfederal funds listed on the reimbursement certification form received with the budget package must be provided to confirm partners have sufficient funds to draw down the 50% reimbursement. Any funds included on the reimbursement certification form cannot be used as match for any other federal program. DSS will review cost allocation plans and/or indirect cost rates that have been previously approved by a cognizant agency.

DSS will confirm that partners are in compliance with all USDA civil rights requirements. Any staff member who completes the civil rights training in accordance with the requirements should maintain this record on file at the establishment for 3 years.

The programmatic portion will include a review of E&T participants including completion rates, certificates or credentials earned, and employment. This review includes the CT*Pathways* application to ensure that all participant data has been entered such as start and end dates, status, and monthly case notes.

Results of the review including observations and findings will be shared in a close out letter. Based on the nature of the findings, DSS may require a corrective action plan.

The DSS administrative review tool is available on the CT*Pathways* website.

Case Files

SNAP E&T partners must keep case files for each participant. The files may be electronic, paper or a combination of both. Case files will be reviewed as part of the annual monitoring/performance reviews. E&T partners may organize files in a manner that best suits its own needs, but all files must contain the following information: assessment, signed participant expectation and commitment document, certificates/credentials earned, and case notes including information about participant reimbursements provided and employment. **Partners must retain case records for a total of three years after case closure.** Case files must be kept in a secure area and must be accessible for reviews.

Outreach and Marketing

One of the challenges with running a voluntary SNAP E&T program is making sure that SNAP recipients know about the program and choose to participate. DSS makes numerous efforts to raise awareness about the SNAP E&T opportunity. DSS eligibility staff, who are in a key position to share information about SNAP E&T, are prepared to discuss E&T when customers visit a DSS field office or call a DSS Benefit center.

Working with the DSS Office of Organizational and Skill Development (OSD) we provide information about SNAP E&T on the DSS Network (37 TV monitors in twelve field offices), the DSS webpage, E&T posters in field office interview booths, and DSS Publication 16-01 known as the DSS Bookmark and given to SNAP recipients. The E&T bookmark includes the names and contact information for all of our providers.

DSS conducts SNAP E&T outreach with a variety of community partners. These include American Jobs Centers, WIC offices, the judicial department, farmers markets and other governmental organizations. If you would like DSS to provide a SNAP E&T presentation in your service area, please contact the DSS program contacts and provide as much advance notice as possible.

SNAP E&T partners are welcome and encouraged to do their own marketing. SNAP E&T Partners provide a SNAP service and may therefore have access to SNAP recipients contact information. The same daily files used to confirm monthly eligibility include addresses and telephone numbers which partners may use to call, text, or send direct mailers to potential participants. It is important that partners identify themselves as partners with DSS when conducting marketing and it may only be used for SNAP E&T purposes. Identifying information of DSS customers may not be shared outside of your organization. E&T partners have chosen to advertise SNAP E&T on billboards and at bus stops.

FNS has also recently released a campaign—More Than a Job | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov) that can be personalized for each state and provider.

Reporting requirements

DSS must submit a quarterly report to FNS that includes the number of participants in each type of component offered. While DSS is responsible for the quarterly report, providers should be aware of the requirements and provide accurate information in the CT*Pathways*, web-based application

In addition to the quarterly reports, the 2018 Farm Bill included additional reporting requirements.

They include:

- The number of E&T participants employed, and their median quarterly earnings, during the second quarter after completion of SNAP E&T
- The number of E&T participants employed during the fourth quarter after completion SNAP E&T.
- ABAWD specific data related to participation and completion.
- The number of individuals provided with case management services

Additionally, we must report demographic information including; age, race, ethnicity, gender, language and education level prior to participation.

While the employment requirements are met through a data share agreement with our state Department of Labor, we rely on data entered into the CT*Pathways* web-based application to meet the demographic requirements. Therefore, it is vital that all fields on the client screen are completely filled in.

Communication

We know that E&T partners constantly evolve to improve the services they deliver. As you implement new services that lead to improved outcomes, please share them with DSS program staff. These best practices may be shared with other providers so that more E&T participants can benefit from them.

Participant success stories are a great way to maintain public support for SNAP E&T. While not every successful participant will want to share their stories, many do. DSS has a media team that can produce short videos that help tell how important SNAP E&T is in making a real difference in people's lives.

Human Centered Design Model

Human centered design is the concept where a program is designed with a person, and all their real life challenges in mind. It's about meeting people where they are with kindness and understanding and guiding them to a better position. At DSS one of the pillars of our mission is excellent customer service, and support. The population served by E&T has socio-economic barriers. As such, there are hidden challenges like food insecurity, limited access to transportation, mental health challenges, physical health, inconsistent childcare, language barriers, housing insecurity, criminal history and domestic violence. Our team wants to ensure that E&T is a safe space for SNAP recipients, where they can access the support they need to find their path forward.