



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

VDSS – Office of Workforce Services

SNAP E&T Outreach and Engagement “Seeds of Success”

Spring 2024 BPRO Conference





As a voluntary program, the success of a local SNAP E&T agency is predicated on community outreach and engagement strategies. This session will equip participants with the “**Seeds of Success**” to ensure a positive impact in the areas of outreach and engagement.



Division

AGENDA

1. Define Community Outreach and Engagement
2. Offer strategies for SNAP E&T Outreach and Engagement - for the Community and E&T Participants
3. Explore SNAP E&T Tools and Resources for Outreach and Engagement
4. Q&A Session – Let's Hear How Other LDSS' Are Doing Outreach and Engagement

COMMUNITY OUTREACH vs COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OUTREACH

- Outreach is **one-way communication** that tells community members about an opportunity, issue, problem, or decision. Outreach can be via phone calls, letters/postcards mailed, flyers placed throughout a community, website postings, meeting announcements, etc.

ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement is **two-way communication** that seeks to involve and collaborate with individuals, groups, or communities to address issues, solve problems, and make decisions that affect them. Engagement seeks to build relationships, share information, and gather input to ensure that the perspectives and needs of the community are considered in decision-making processes.
- Community members go beyond just knowing about a program to participating in the outcomes—**with engagement, they become a part of the community of change.**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH vs COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Outreach and Engagement are not the same.

Outreach tends to be *in and out*.

Engagement tends to be a *relational and long-term effort*.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGIES

- Posting attractive flyers in the LDSS office and throughout your local community
- Social Media/Website Postings
- Postings on Community Boards
- Placing “Yard Signs” throughout the community
- Marketing via “Agency Vehicle/Van Wraps”

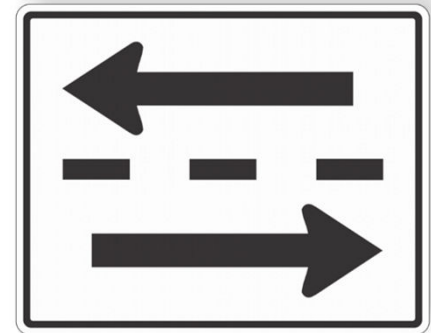


Outreach/Marketing **cannot promote applying for SNAP but rather **can** promote SNAP recipients to participate in SNAP E&T.*

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

LDSS E&T Program Staff Attending and/or Spearheading:

- Community Events (Career/Health Fairs, Festivals, Night Outs, Mall Events, etc.)
- Virginia Career Works (VCW) Meetings
- Virginia Community College System (VCCS), Universities, Apprenticeship Programs
- Re-Entry Council Meetings, Town Halls and Public Forums
- Hosting LDSS Open House Events
- Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development Meetings
- School Board Meetings, Head Start Programs
- Civic Group and Non-Profit Organizations
- Churches, Schools, Hospitals, Libraries, Housing Authorities
- Food Pantries, Clothing Closets
- **Locality Specific Initiatives, ARPA Funding, Grant Programs**



“Get Out Into The Community!”



COMMON ISSUES IN PROGRAM COMMUNICATION FOR E&T PARTICIPANTS

- Long letters or e-mails, full of jargon and lists of “requirements.”
- Next steps are unclear or buried in jargon
- No reminders
- Long, complicated forms to fill out



Small steps (“snags”) can become large stumbling blocks

- Assuming that explaining complex participation requirements one time is sufficient
- Giving someone a form to take home and fill out without any assistance
- Asking someone to check their schedule and call back to make an appointment
- Giving deadlines and not sending reminders



EFFECTIVE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- **Use behavioral science principles to redesign, rewrite communication (letters, e-mails, flyers, marketing materials)**
- Use inclusive, understandable language in communication materials (no jargon!)
- **Use reminders (text messages, e-mails, phone calls etc.)**
- Feature past participants “Success Stories” in recruitment materials
- **Understand your audience (values, barriers, who they trust, where they get their info, what’s happening in your community)**
- Simplify forms and help fill them out if necessary
- **Change Verbal Communications** – provide staff with [scripts](#), talking points, approaches for interacting with participants
- **Change Processes** – alter steps a participant takes to enroll often with goal of reducing lag time for participant or shifting difficult steps from being participant’s responsibility to Employment Service Worker responsibility



EFFECTIVE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- In a voluntary program, it's important to give participants the **W.I.F.M.**
The **“What's In It For Me?”**

“What's available to me if I participate?”

“How does participating in SNAP E&T benefit me?”

- Explain Supportive Services available
- Explain how education and training opportunities can lead to Careers and Self-Sufficiency.
- Give examples of program “Success Stories”

- Use of an attractive marketing flyer such as the [VDSS SNAP E&T Flyer](#) or an approved agency specific flyer. Consider the use of modern graphics, white space for easier readability, QR codes, and information on how to get started!

“Would your agency's current SNAP E&T flyer appeal/stand out to you?”



VDSS SNAP E&T Flyer

[Location: SNAP E&T Forms \(Fusion Page\)](#)

[Direct Path: Fusion>Portfolios>Benefit Programs>BP Home>Workforce>SNAP E&T Forms](#)

SNAP EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (SNAP E&T)



What is SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)?

SNAP E&T is a voluntary employment and training assistance program that helps SNAP recipients gain the skills, training and work experience necessary to find work that leads to self-sufficiency.

SNAP E&T Services Include:

- » Job training
- » Job search help
- » Work experience
- » Educational assistance (to obtain a GED and/or certificates, learn computer skills, etc.)
- » Resume help and practice interviewing
- » Transportation, work uniforms and tools
- » Referrals to community partners
- » And more!



Is SNAP E&T in my area?

Find the local department of social services closest to you participating in SNAP E&T.



How do I get started?

No additional application is needed! If you are a SNAP recipient interested in employment and training services, just tell your SNAP caseworker that you want to enroll in SNAP E&T. From there, a dedicated SNAP E&T worker will contact you with next steps.



THE E&T ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP



1. **First Contact** - *when person initially learns about E&T services, often when first applying for SNAP benefits.*
2. **Service Matching** - *when a SNAP participant is assessed and matched to appropriate E&T services.*
3. **Handoffs Throughout Process**- *SNAP participant is asked to meet with different agencies, interact with different staff, or physically go to different locations for services.*
4. **Reverse Referral**- *individual who seeks out services with a SNAP E&T provider is connected to a local E&T agency for eligibility verification for SNAP, then enrollment into E&T.*

SNAP E&T 50-50 PROVIDERS

Equus Workforce Solutions: serves as an intermediary providing on-the-job training, soft skills development, job search training, GED & Basic Education.

Partners: CARITAS, HumanKind, Ways to Work.

Service Areas: Central Virginia

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys: Offers Career Navigation services: case management, supervised job search, job search training. Career Navigation is suitable for individuals who desire to develop their skillsets, complete trainings, and earn credentials that empower them to reach their career goals.

Service Areas: 

Moving Forward Agency: Work-readiness assessment, ACT Workeys, Remedial Education, Job Skills Training, Tuition Assistance, Job Retention Services.

Service Areas: Focus is on all areas south of Richmond: Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Charles City, Dinwiddie, Hopewell and Petersburg.

Provides services to all localities of Virginia

Northern Virginia Family Services: provides participants enrolled in housing program with employment and career services.

Services Areas: Fairfax County

Virginia Community College System: Training: FastForward (credentials and certifications for regional in-demand industries), FANTIC (funding for FastForward training), Great Expectations (serving former foster youth), Single Stops (provides benefit eligibility determination to every student).

Service Areas: All 23 community colleges statewide.

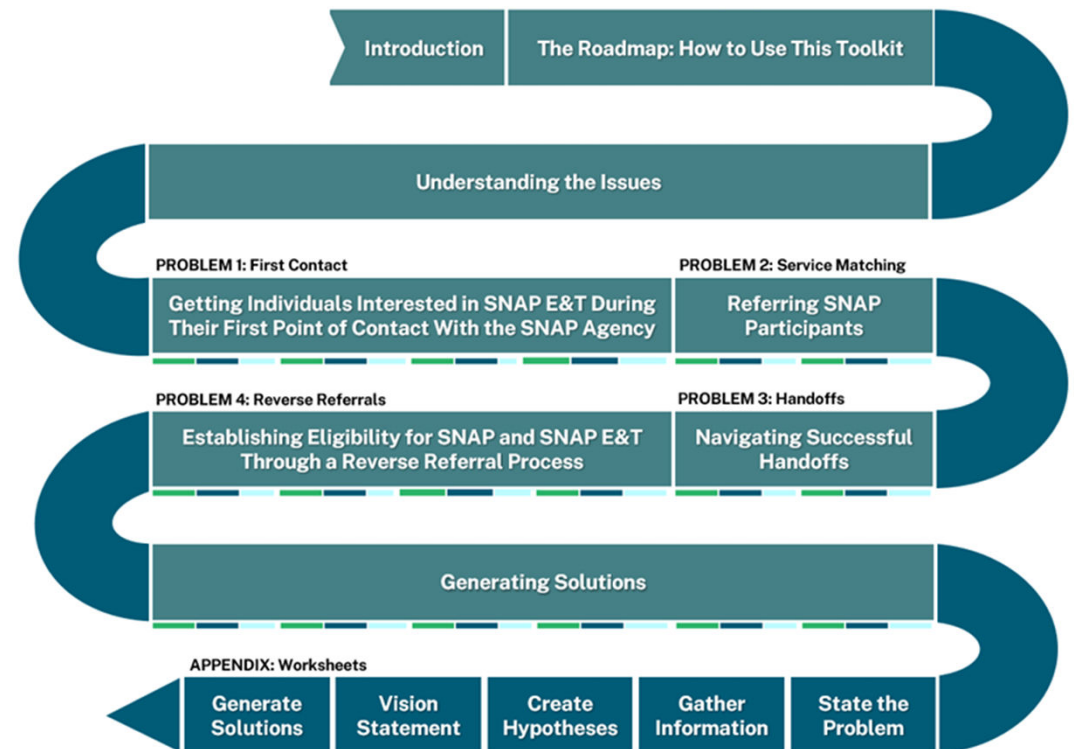
Program Services Map



Goodwill Industries of the Valleys service map

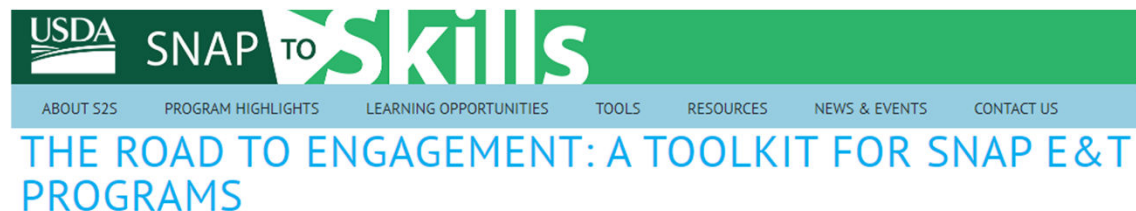
The E&T Engagement Roadmap

Can be found in the *SNAP to Skills - Road to Engagement: Toolkit for SNAP E&T Programs*



SNAP E&T ENGAGEMENT TOOL #1

#1) The [SNAP to Skills - Road to Engagement: Toolkit for SNAP E&T Programs](#) features 56-pages of engagement strategies to improve E&T programs.



The [Road to Engagement: A Toolkit for SNAP E&T Programs](#) offers State SNAP agencies and their partners a systematic approach – along with accompanying examples and worksheets – for employing human-centered design and behavioral science to identify and generate solutions to problems that may be limiting engagement and participation in SNAP E&T programs.

As an organizing feature, the Toolkit describes four key junctures, or problem areas, identified by MDRC/SJI in their work with States participating in the SNAP to Skills project, where lack of engagement is common within SNAP E&T delivery systems. These problem areas include:

- First contact (getting individuals interested in E&T during their first point contact with the SNAP agency);
- Service matching (assessing individuals and referring them to appropriate E&T services/providers);
- Handoffs throughout the process (navigating handoffs from one agency or organization to another);
- Reverse referrals (helping individuals who first interact with E&T through a provider to work through the SNAP agency to verify SNAP and/or E&T eligibility).

The toolkit is available [here](#).

SNAP E&T ENGAGEMENT TOOL #2

#2) The [SNAP E&T Toolkit](#) features 100-pages of guidance and resources to assist E&T programs.

Introduction

The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide state agencies with guidance and resources to plan and implement Employment and Training (E&T) Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called the Food Stamp Program). In 1987, Congress established the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program to assist able-bodied food stamp recipients in obtaining employment. From its conception, the purpose of the E&T Program has been to help SNAP households gain skills, training, work, or experience that will increase self-sufficiency and help participants move into better jobs.

Since the publication of the previous version of the Toolkit, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (also known as the 2014 Farm Bill) and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (also known as the 2018 Farm Bill) made several significant improvements to E&T. Through these pieces of legislation, Congress tasked the Department and state agencies with reviewing and bolstering the quality and accountability of E&T programs for SNAP participants, while retaining state flexibility. Many state agencies are stepping up to provide targeted trainings and work supports to help SNAP participants gain the skills needed to succeed in an ever-changing labor market.



SNAP E&T ENGAGEMENT TOOL #3

#3) *More Than a Job* is a recent national SNAP E&T campaign to raise awareness about E&T services and opportunities and encourage enrollment among eligible SNAP participants.

MORE THAN A JOB is a national campaign from the SNAP Office of Employment & Training (OET) to raise awareness about SNAP E&T services and opportunities and encourage enrollment among eligible SNAP participants. This community-informed campaign was developed through a series of listening sessions and concept testing with SNAP E&T participants, state and E&T provider staff, and other stakeholders.

The campaign tagline MORE THAN A JOB is a nod to the flexibility and reality of the program. SNAP E&T is more than a job—it provides a wide range of services and supports that can lead to a career. SNAP E&T programs across the country can empower SNAP participants to build new skills, go back to school, or take steps toward a new career path. SNAP E&T services and resources can be a catalyst to help SNAP participants reduce their need for SNAP over time.

Features:

- ✓ Customizable Flyers
- ✓ Social Media Graphics
- ✓ Short Marketing Videos



Campaign
Materials



Campaign
Guidelines



State QR
Codes



Poster | Flyer



Poster | Flyer



Poster | Flyer



Poster | Flyer



Poster | Flyer



Poster | Flyer

SNAP E&T ENGAGEMENT TOOLS #4 and #5

#4) The [SNAP E&T Open Referral Report](#) was created by VDSS to assist LDSS' with the influx of Queue referrals. (Slides 4-7)

#5) The [SNAP E&T 50-50 Participants Spreadsheet](#) was created by VDSS for LDSS' to initiate reverse referrals from our Third-Party Partners. (Slides 9-10)

RESOURCES

1. [VDSS SNAP E&T Manual](#)
2. [Spending Funds Guide for VIEW and SNAP E&T](#)
3. [BL844 SNAP Employment & Training Purchased Services](#) (Budget Line and Cost Code Descriptions)
4. [SNAP E&T Forms](#)
5. [SNAP E&T Script for BPS Workers](#)
6. [SNAP E&T Training and Professional Development](#)
7. [SNAP E&T 50-50](#)



CURRENT TRAINING RESOURCES

[SNAP E&T Training and Professional Development \(Fusion Page\)](#)

Direct Path: Fusion>Portfolios>Benefit Programs>BP Home>Workforce>SNAP E&T Training and Professional Development

Training Resources

[SNAP E&T Manual](#)

[SNAP E&T Finance Guidelines Manual - BL844 Cost Code Descriptions](#)

[SNAP E&T - Post Work Requirement Implementation Check-In \(8/10/2023\) - Presentation - Recording \(password: KcFdngp9\) - Q&A](#)

[SNAP E&T - Work Requirement/Work Registration Training \(6/8/2023\) - Presentation - Recording \(password: bPMNQCx5\) - Q&A](#)

[SNAP E&T After The Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) - Spring 2023 BPRO - Presentation](#)

[FY24 USDA/FNS Mid-Atlantic Region SNAP E&T 101 Training - Presentation - Recording \(password: mMDFJx8\)](#)

[VDSS DBP SNAP E&T - Phase I Training Presentation](#)

[VDSS DBP SNAP E&T - Phase II Training - Presentation - Recording \(password: 8iRew6zp\)](#)

[SNAP E&T and VIEW ESP Training - Presentation](#)

[Maximizing Efficiency With Your SNAP E&T Program - Fall 2022 - Presentation](#)

[SNAP E&T Client Engagement - Recording \(password: wKMCKM8E\)](#)

[SNAP E&T Expansion Q&A - Presentation - Recording \(password: 5mY8BzcR\)](#)

[SNAP E&T Screening, Referral and Provider Determinations - Presentation - Q&A - Resource Tool - Session 2 Recording \(password: pNFX6H9x\), Session 3 Recording \(password: hM33hFGx\)](#)

[Benefit Programs Required Scanning Documents](#)

[SNAP E&T and VIEW Combined ESP Forms Training 2022](#)

[Combined ESP Forms Training Presentation PowerPoint - 11/9/2022](#)

[Combined ESP Forms Training Presentation Q&A](#)

[Combined ESP Forms Training Presentation Recording PW: RfmMeRQ7](#)

Relatable Workforce Training and Resources

[Workforce Partnerships: Utilizing Your Local Virginia Career Works \(VCW\) Center and Leveraging the Federal Bonding \(11-30-23\) - Presentation - Recording \(pw: rFpfJUB8\)](#)

[VDSS Employment Services Programs \(SNAP E&T and VIEW\) Partnership with Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\) Introductory Presentation 10-25-23](#)

[VIEW and SNAP E&T in the Virtual World - Motivational Interviewing](#)

[SNAP to Skills - The Road to Engagement Toolkit](#)

[Virtual & Online Learning Resources](#)

[Information Session with the Data Recognition Corporation \(DRC\) and the Virginia Department for Education \(VDOE\) - Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education \(6/21/23\) - Presentation - Recording \(Pw: Afq2wRCp\)](#)

SNAP E&T Quarterly Meetings

[January 25, 2024 - Presentation Q&A - Recording PW: PfbY5JHU](#)

SNAP E&T CONTACTS

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Q&A Session

“What are some Outreach and Engagement strategies that your agency is having success utilizing?”