

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE**

**SNAP E&T Learning Academy
Call for Applications**

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to strengthening the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) nationally to ensure that all SNAP participants have the skills they need to work toward self-sufficiency.

Based on the success of the first *SNAP E&T Learning Academy* ("Academy") in 2017, FNS will again be offering a Learning Academy this upcoming year (2018). The Academy is an opportunity for a select number of individuals to gain technical expertise on SNAP E&T that prepares them to work within their State or across multiple States to build high-quality, employer-driven SNAP E&T programs.

This **Call for Applications** provides information on how interested individuals can apply for this unique experience. Applicants who were not accepted into the 2017 Learning Academy are encouraged to apply.

I. What is the SNAP E&T Academy?

The Academy is an 8-month engagement (February – September 2018, with some limited "pre-work" in January 2018). Academy participants will attend two multiple-day day workshops. The first workshop will take place in the Washington, D.C. metro area in Winter/Spring 2018; the second will take place in Summer/Fall 2018 in a location to be determined. In between workshop sessions, participants will take advantage of monthly virtual sessions. The Seattle Jobs Initiative, a national nonprofit that operates the SNAP to Skills Project, will work in partnership with FNS to operate the SNAP E&T Academy.

II. Why the SNAP E&T Learning Academy?

The Academy is one way in which FNS is striving to meet its goal of creating opportunities for SNAP participants to gain skills and work toward self-sufficiency. The purpose of the Academy is to increase national expertise and create new leadership capacity to build SNAP E&T programs that help individuals gain employer-valued skills and find good jobs.

Academy participants will develop expertise in building employer-driven programs, leveraging 50 percent reimbursement funding, and identifying and partnering with third-party organizations to deliver SNAP E&T services. Participants will develop a holistic understanding of SNAP E&T, which includes understanding the roles, perspectives, and responsibilities of all SNAP E&T stakeholders. This understanding will enable participants to effectively collaborate with stakeholders and drive SNAP E&T program development forward in a well-informed manner.

III. What Will Participants Do?

The Academy is designed to prepare individuals to work with States and counties to develop employer-driven SNAP E&T programs. Participants will:

- Study key topic areas essential to building SNAP E&T programs, including SNAP E&T policy and financial requirements; developing a strong State E&T plan; and identifying, recruiting, contracting with, on-boarding, and working with third-party providers;
- Learn the historical and current context of SNAP E&T nationally; and
- Learn project management, facilitation, and multi-stakeholder communication tools and techniques that will assist them in driving SNAP E&T program development forward.

Participants will gain hands-on practice by designing and completing an individual project during the E&T Academy. This project will be a specific activity or set of activities in at least one State to advance the expansion and/or adoption of employer-driven principles of a State's SNAP E&T program. Projects must be initiated and completed during the E&T Academy project period (February-September 2018). Projects should be:

- Actionable within the near-term;
- Specific, measurable, and discrete; and
- Generalizable or scalable.

FNS is looking for projects that are “generalizable or scalable”, meaning that the content developed or activities conducted are applicable to more than one provider or State. For example, a project should not be simply developing a SNAP E&T program at one community college. Instead, an individual might propose developing a project that can be generalized to support the development of E&T programs at community colleges in general.

Participants will be assigned to a SNAP E&T mentor to support them throughout their project work. (Applicants should be prepared to briefly describe their proposed project in their application, per the application requirements below.)

IV. Who Should Participate?

Individuals from a wide variety of organizations and levels of government may find participation in the Academy valuable to their work. Participants in the Academy may include individuals from State and local government (including counties and cities), National and State advocacy organizations, National and State research organizations, State workforce development providers, philanthropy, and other organizations that have a considerable stake in issues related to education and training strategies for low-income people.

FNS strongly encourages participation from individuals in States who are in the process of building an employer-driven SNAP E&T program or are seeking guidance on building a State's SNAP E&T strategy. Individuals from nonprofits who provide technical assistance to multiple State or localities on employment and training strategies for low-income individuals are also encouraged to apply. In addition, individuals in 2014 Farm Bill pilot States are allowed to apply.

Posted November 6, 2017

V. Is there a Cost to Participate?

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service will cover transportation, lodging, and per diem costs associated with participating in the Academy.

VI. How Do I Apply?

Applicants should submit a letter of interest to the *SNAP to Skills Project, Office of Employment and Training, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture* by 5pm ET on November 27, 2017 that includes the following information. Applications should be sent as a PDF or Word attachment to SNAPtoSkillsProject@seattlejobsinit.com.

- 1) Statement of interest (250 words or less) that addresses the following:
 - What are your reasons for applying to the SNAP E&T Learning Academy?
 - What impact will your participation in the Learning Academy have on your ability to advance SNAP E&T in your current role?
- 2) Description of proposed SNAP E&T Project (250 words or less, see description above)
- 3) Assurance that participants will commit to attending the two in-person workshops as well as the virtual sessions.

Organizations should plan to put forward only one candidate. Individuals most likely to benefit from the Academy are those who will be working directly with States in a technical assistance capacity or have influence over SNAP E&T policy in their State.

FNS anticipates selecting participants by the end of December. Questions about the application process or the Academy should be directed to Marcie Foster (Marcie.Foster@fns.usda.gov).