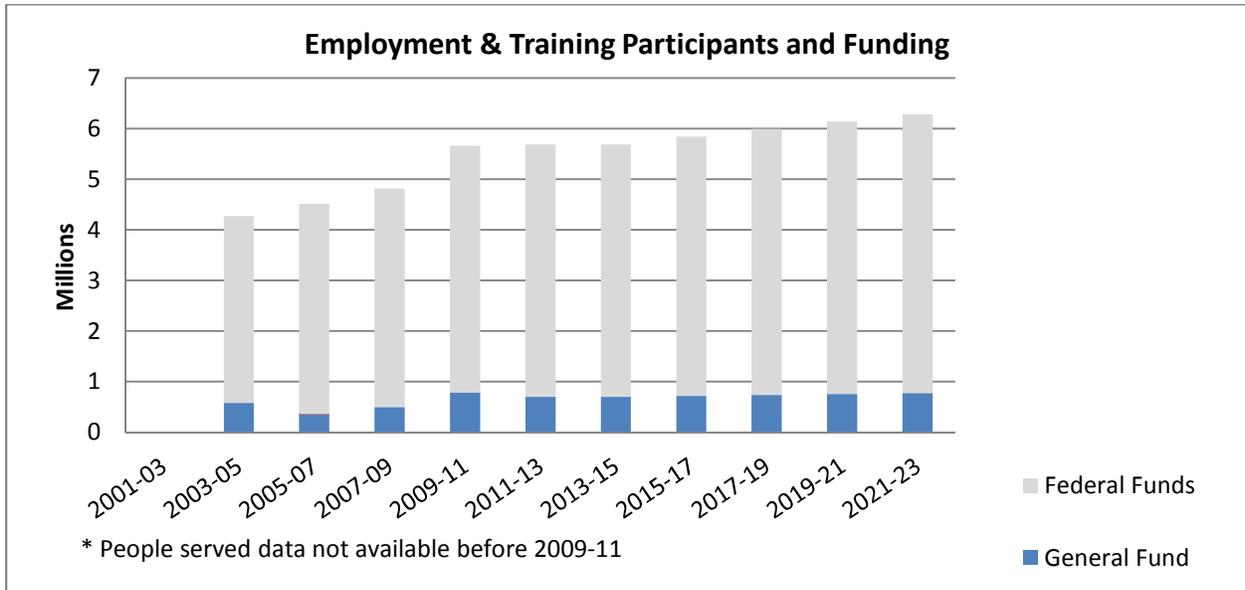


# Department of Human Services: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment and Training Self-Sufficiency Program

Primary Outcome Area: Economy and Jobs  
 Program Contact: Belit Burke, 503-947-5389



*Note: There are currently 19,833 adults participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) program. Approximately 46,342 SNAP recipients are eligible for this program, however, funding limitations restrict participation to about 42 percent of those eligible.*

## **Executive Summary**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has an Employment and Training (E&T) component known as the Oregon Food Stamp Employment and Training (OFSET) program. This program assists clients to gain valuable skills, training, or experience that will improve employment prospects leading to self sufficiency and a reduced reliance on SNAP benefits. This program provides employment-related services to federally defined mandatory adult SNAP clients. Mandatory clients are defined as those aged 18 to 59 (or age 16 and 17 if the client is the primary person/head of household) and who do not meet a federal exemption. Clients come from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds from across the State. The program is mandated by the federal government and adheres to strict requirements.

## Program Funding Request

	SNAP Employment & Training			
	GF	OF	FF	TF
LAB	701,925	0	4,987,216	5,689,141
ARB	701,925	0	4,987,216	5,689,141
Difference	0	0	0	0
Percent Change	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%

## Significant Proposed Program Changes from 2011-13

There are no proposed changes for 2013-15 in this program.

## Program Description

Oregon has 19 contracts with employment-related partners in all Oregon counties to deliver E&T components. Contractors specialize in workforce development and job placement. Components are designed to assist SNAP clients to move into employment. Typically participants have an assessment followed by job search training and supported independent job search. Participation is limited to a maximum of eight weeks per year. The two primary program components are:

**Job search training:** Trains participants on specific skills and strategies for finding and keeping a job. Information is geared towards the local labor market. Topics include resume building, interview skills, and other soft skills for finding or retaining employment.

**Job Search:** Includes job search techniques, referrals to the local Oregon Employment Department for I-Match registration and the assignment and monitoring of required monthly employer contacts. Clients are required to complete 12 employer contacts per month over the course of eight weeks.

Other allowable activities include Adult Basic Education (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), job retention activities, and short-term vocational training. At this time, contractors are not providing services in these areas due to funding limitations.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) determines the annual allotment of E&T administrative funding. FNS has a set amount of funding for all states. Each state's share is based on a formula using, in part, the state's SNAP mandatory client figure. Mandatory clients are defined as those aged 18 to 59 (or age 16 and 17 if the client is the primary person/head of household) and who do not meet a federal exemption. Federal exemptions include the following:

- Caretaker of a dependent child under age 6
- Caretaker of an incapacitated individual
- Physical or mental barriers to employment
- TANF participant
- Receipt of unemployment benefits
- Participation in alcohol or drug rehabilitation

- Eligible students enrolled at least half time
- Employed 30 hours a week at federal minimum wage.

The FNS annual allotment is the major cost driver for the E&T program. As this number is adjusted annually, services provided by contractors are scaled back to stay within budget. FNS is currently facing potential cuts to the E&T program due to the federal budget deficit which in turn would reduce the amount of Oregon's allotment in the next fiscal year.

A limited amount of support service funding is available to clients. Support services are provided to pay a clients' up-front transportation expense related to independent job search efforts, such as transportation to job interviews, submitting job applications and informal, in-person job search. The majority of reimbursements are vendor payments in the form of gas vouchers and bus tickets. Contractors use the lowest cost alternative available to maximize the number of clients who may receive a support service payment.

The support service budget is funded by 50 percent General Fund and 50 percent Federal fund per FNS regulations. Since 2009, the annual Oregon support service budget has been \$1.2 million. This figure is based on 20,000 anticipated participants using \$60 in support services per participant. Contractors historically serve more than 20,000 participants annually, which brings the average support service cost per person significantly down. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2012, the average support service payment per participant is \$28.

SNAP E&T contractors work to leverage resources with other workforce programs. While E&T dollars cannot be utilized for clients where there is a prior resource available (for example, job preparation activities for TANF clients would be funded with JOBS dollars and not E&T dollars). The program does work with programs funded through TANF and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to coordinate services and refer clients into services that may not be funded by E&T but could benefit the job seeker. An example of this would be a referral of a SNAP E&T participant to a WIA-funded training program or the leveraging of job openings and referrals with co-located job placement programs.

### **Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcome**

The SNAP E&T program's goal is to assist clients to gain skills that will improve their employment prospects and reduce reliance on SNAP benefits. Participants improve job skills, which add to the diversity and strength of Oregon's workforce. Using local contractors to deliver the E&T program results in a higher quality workforce because services can be tailored to the area and local economies benefit from these expenses. The program supports Oregon's 10-year focus on long-term economic prosperity and resiliency through people-based strategies.

### **Program Performance**

Current funding supports 19,833 individuals, or 1,652 people monthly. Each month, approximately 146 clients are placed into employment, about eight percent of those served. For FFY 2012, DHS projects a total of 46,342 participants are eligible for this program. However, the program is only able to serve about 42 percent of these individuals per year because of the amount of funding received.

While not all participants find employment after the eight-week E&T program, clients do become connected to employment specialists in their local area. Some clients choose to continue accessing other services available from local employment specialists once their mandatory participation in E&T ends. This link assists clients in continuing and enhancing job search efforts.

### **Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization**

This program is mandated by Federal legislation found in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. Program policy is reauthorized every five years though the Farm Bill and the next reauthorization is this year. FNS is facing potential funding cuts to the E&T program for the next FFY due to the federal budget deficit.

### **Funding Streams**

This program is funded primarily through Federal funds, with a small amount of General Fund dollars. E&T administrative costs are 100 percent Federal funds based on a fixed formula. For FFY 2012, administrative costs are estimated at \$2,264,516. E&T participant support service costs are funded through 50 percent General Fund dollars and 50 percent Federal funds. For FFY 2012, support service costs are \$600,000 General Fund. The total E&T program budget is \$3,464,516.