



Expanding Economic Opportunities for Noncustodial Parents through SNAP Employment & Training

February 2023



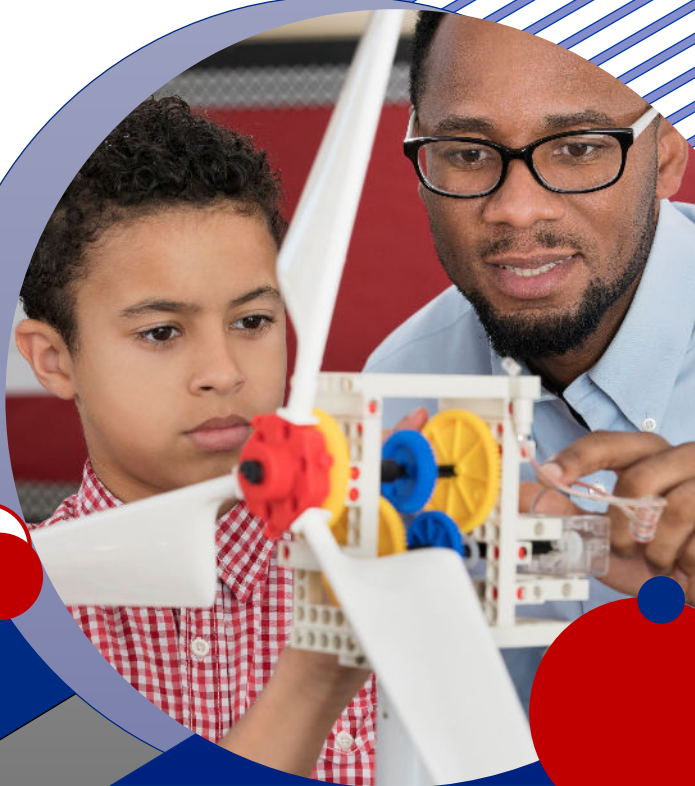
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training

Approximately [25 percent](#) of parents paying support are also dealing with the challenges of low incomeⁱⁱⁱ and may be eligible for the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) employment and training \(E&T\)](#) alongside food assistance. SNAP E&T not only increases employment outcomes but also offers a pathway to sustainable income through traditional employment and training services such as employment-focused case management, job search assistance, and skills training. SNAP is an excellent resource for parents paying support to provide meaningful access to food assistance—empowering them to fulfill their child support obligations.

Overall, SNAP recipients paying support benefit from employment and training services. In 2012, the National Child Support Noncustodial Parents

Child support is an essential resource for many families with low income as it is designed to support children financially, emotionally, and medically.ⁱ Unfortunately, though there are other issues preventing compliance with child support orders, the highest barriers are financial in nature.

Barriers to Compliance ⁱⁱ	Level of barrier
Lack of financial Resources ▪ Poverty ▪ Criminal Background ▪ Limited Education ▪ Limited Work History ▪ Mental Health and Behavioral Issues ▪ Substance Abuse	Highest
Mistrust and suspicion of child support enforcement	High
Use of Informal support	High
Disputes with custodial/parents receiving support	High





Employment Demonstration (CSPED)—a five-year federal demonstration project—evaluated promising programs in eight states. The final [CSPED report](#) indicated that parents benefited from participating in services. Over one-third of parents participating in the final evaluation also received SNAP.

By forging partnerships with state or local child support offices, child support and SNAP programs can:

- ✓ Ensure [eligible](#) parents paying support are identified and are connected with both SNAP and [SNAP E&T](#) to place them on a path to economic mobility.
- ✓ Evaluate child support policies to promote success for parents participating in SNAP E&T, such as delaying enforcement or driver's license suspensions.
- ✓ Recruit E&T providers that meet the unique needs of parents paying support through employment and training, supportive services, and case management.
- ✓ Braid and blend funds to maximize impact. Although federal funds, including state maintenance of effort (MOE), are not reimbursable through SNAP E&T, TANF, WIOA, or federal child support, funds can be used to build and develop employment and training programs, and can support contiguous services.

States Leading the Way

Maryland

In 2016, Maryland passed a bill establishing [STEP Up](#), a Baltimore city-wide pilot program that offers parents paying support job training and support services to overcome employment barriers. At completion child support arrears owed to the State of Maryland are forgiven. SNAP E&T partially funds programming for participating SNAP recipients.

Tennessee

The Tennessee Child Support Employment & Parenting Program (TCSEPP) and the Non-Custodial Parent Initializing Meaningful Programs for Parents and Children Together (IMPACT) Program serve over 950 participants with employment services, parenting classes, and referrals to other needed services.

Rhode Island

Through [Project Restore](#), parents paying support who are no longer able to meet their payments receive an array of services, including assistance with filing motion for relief and referrals to services such as job training, counseling, and parenting classes. Programs like Project Restore ensure eligible parents are screened and referred to SNAP.

Washington

Washington State leveraged its existing SNAP E&T program, the Basic Food Employment and Training Program (BFET), to implement [Resource to Initiate Successful Employment \(RISE\)](#), a federally funded three-year pilot program designed to evaluate the effectiveness of SNAP E&T. RISE targeted parents owing child support to improve their employment outcomes. One of the five target populations for RISE was parents paying support who had payments in arrears. The pilot was designed to evaluate both BFET (the control group) and the enhanced SNAP E&T services in RISE (the treatment group).

i. M Cancian, Maria, Mi-Youn Yang, and Kristen Shook Slack, *The Effect of Additional Child Support Income on the Risk of Child Maltreatment*, Social Services Review (2013).
ii. Daniel Schroeder and Nicholas Doughty, *Texas Non-Custodial Parent Choices: Program Impact Analysis*, The University of Texas, (2009).
iii. Joseph Llobera, *Child Support Cooperation Requirements in SNAP Are Unproven, Costly, and Put Families at Risk*, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (2020).