

NEBRASKA

Laying the Foundation for Building Pathways Between Eligibility and Workforce Systems



Project Description

Nebraska is using Data SAIL to lay the foundation for building pathways between its eligibility system, NFOCUS (Nebraska Family Online Client User System), and workforce case management platform, NEworks. While Nebraska has strong systems in place for eligibility and workforce, as well as an established Memorandum of Understand (MOU) for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T), NFOCUS and NEworks currently operate in silos. Currently, workforce staff is required to manually duplicate participation information in NFOCUS and exchange additional details through email. Nebraska is working to connect the two systems so eligibility staff can access workforce participation data directly. This connection would reduce duplicative data entry, limit reliance on email, and improve coordination across programs.

Establishing this connection now will prepare Nebraska for the planned integration of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Employment First (TANF EF) into NEworks, further strengthening alignment between eligibility and workforce programs. The goal is to prepare a technical build through careful design, collaboration, and documentation. The work of this project is focusing on discovery and planning, including mapping workflows, defining data elements, and engaging staff and customers through focus groups and listening sessions. This deliberate approach will produce comprehensive, user-informed requirements that reflect real-world needs.

Objectives

- 1 De-silo NFOCUS and NEworks so eligibility staff can confirm participation in workforce programs automatically rather than manually
- 2 Participate in a thorough discovery phase to identify the right data, workflow connections, and customer experience improvements before moving into the technical phase
- 3 Helping Nebraskans enter the workforce to achieve long-term self-sufficiency

Logic Model

Purpose: Use linked data and user experience insights to improve service delivery and advance the well-being of individuals and families across the state.

Constraints	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Fragmented systems / processes	Conduct discovery phases on the current state to inform the desired future state of alignment	Save staff time	Increased employment for Nebraskans
Limited staff time		Reduce errors	Seamless agency-customer interactions
Technical resources	Define technical and policy requirements	Understand existing processes, data flows, and pain points	
		Design and implementation plans	

Background & Context

Coordination between Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL) is limited. There is no direct communication pathway between eligibility staff and NDOL staff for verifying workforce participation or making referrals for potential involvement in NDOL workforce programs. Instead, workforce staff communicate with partners to support co-enrollments, and collaboration occurs during partner meetings.

An existing MOU establishes the use of NWorks for SNAP E&T and outlines expectations for data privacy and access. While this agreement allows SNAP E&T to leverage NWorks as a case management system, it does not create a data-sharing process with DHHS eligibility staff. As a result, Medicaid eligibility staff cannot directly access or use NWorks data when verifying participation in work programs.

Problem Identification & Target Population

Nebraska's eligibility system, NFOCUS (Nebraska Family Online Client User System), and its workforce case management platform, NEworks, currently operate in silos, preventing eligibility staff from easily confirming participation in workforce programs.

Workforce staff are currently required to manually duplicate participation information from NEworks into NFOCUS, and additional details are often exchanged through email. Third-party SNAP E&T providers also enter data into NEworks, but eligibility workers cannot see this information directly. As a result, staff must piece together information across multiple systems and communications, creating fragmented coordination and duplication of effort.

The lack of integration between systems is not just a technical issue; it has real impacts on both staff and customers. For staff, fragmented processes increase workload and slow down eligibility determinations. Workers who should be focusing on helping families achieve stability spend large portions of their day re-entering or relaying information that should already be available electronically. For customers, the impact is even more direct. A parent participating in SNAP E&T may have their hours verified by a third-party provider, yet still be asked to submit duplicative paperwork to Medicaid eligibility staff because the systems do not connect. Families juggling multiple programs such as Medicaid, TANF EF, and SNAP E&T often face repeated requests for the same information, leading to frustration, confusion, and delays in eligibility decisions.

Project Implementation Plan

Nebraska plans to conduct discovery phases to produce a roadmap that will inform better integration of NFOCUS and NEworks to support staff, reduce barriers for customers, and strengthen program integrity.

Plan A thorough discovery process is essential to identify the right data elements, workflow connections, and customer experience improvements before moving into technical development Establish a secure and automated data connection between NFOCUS and NEworks	 Collaborate Document how current processes function, mapping pain points, and engaging customers directly DHHS, NDOL, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) will work together throughout the project to ensure requirements reflect eligibility, workforce, and technical perspectives
 Implement Establish a secure, automated data connection between NFOCUS and NEworks Deliver services in a way that is both more efficient and more aligned with the state’s mission	 Evaluate Number of workflows, data requirements, and pilot plans completed Number of staff and customers engaged in project validation Reduction in processing time, duplicate entry, and data errors

Long-Term Goals



The vision is for staff to eventually verify participation at the push of a button within NFOCUS. Achieving that outcome requires a deliberate, step-by-step approach that begins with mapping workflows, defining technical and policy requirements, and integrating the customer voice. The most important deliverables for the Data SAIL period will be a set of detailed requirements, data mappings, and planning documents that fully prepare Nebraska to move into development with confidence.

By investing in a thorough discovery process now, Nebraska ensures that future integration will be efficient, sustainable, and built on a strong foundation. Success beyond Data SAIL will be measured by the state's ability to use the created roadmap to secure resources, move into implementation, and continue reducing duplication while improving the customer experience.