

## **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Opportunities Employment and Training Initiative**

### **DESCRIPTION**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Opportunities program will provide up to \$3 million in federal SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) reimbursement funds to selected contractors, which may include both for-profit and non-profit employers, to provide job preparation and retention services to permit recipients of SNAP benefits, particularly those residing in the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Opportunity Area (s), to obtain and maintain employment. Eligible expenses may include job readiness training, job skills training, education related to employment, job coaching, and other services related to successful job placement and retention. Contractors are expected to partner with employers, or are the employers themselves, to ensure program participants have employment opportunities.

Awards of up to \$300,000 per applicant will be made, and up to one project from each of the 10 regions. Funding is contingent upon approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Awards made shall not duplicate any payment provided or funding otherwise made available by the Office of Temporary and Disability (OTDA) or any other federal, State, or local government entity. Should additional funds be made available to support this program, OTDA reserves the right to make awards in excess of the amount listed above. Conversely, if less than the expected \$3 million is available, OTDA reserves the right to decrease awards amounts.

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) title and number for FSP: 10.561, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*

### **NON-FEDERAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT**

Federal SNAP E&T funds are available to meet 50% of the costs of services. Each applicant must identify the source and amount of eligible non-federal funds they will use to support program services. If awarded funding under the SNAP Opportunities program through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), awardees will be required to complete the SNAP Opportunities budget as part of their negotiated contract with OTDA. The negotiated budget will include the SNAP E&T funds and the non-federal funds contributed by the applicant as planned to support program services.

#### ***Eligible Funding Sources***

- Non-Public Agencies (Including Employers):

Non-public agencies and employers must provide cash donations from non-federal third parties. This could include donations from a charitable foundation/organization, but cannot include private cash donations from an individual. Local tax levy dollars that are received by the agency could be used toward the non-federal funding requirement. Employers may use their own cash as the non-federal funding requirement.

- Government/Public Agencies

In addition to cash donation and tax levy dollars, government/public entities may also use eligible in-kind contributions to satisfy all or a portion of the local funding requirement. In-kind contributions are property or services which benefit the project or program and which are contributed by non-federal third parties without charge to the grantee. Examples of in-kind benefits may include:

- Use of classroom space from a school district when they do not expect payment for use of the space; and
- Teacher's time donated by a school district.

A governmental entity is defined as any organization of State or local government that is supported by funds derived from general tax revenues of a State or locality specifically allocated from appropriate budgetary authority, such as a State legislature, county or local government. Examples of governmental entities that may receive payments for in-kinds include school districts, BOCES, State universities and State community colleges.

### ***Ineligible Funding Sources***

- Federal funds (including, but not limited to, Title II, TANF, VESID, WIA and OASAS);
- Any local, State or private funding that is already otherwise being used as a match for federal funding purposes;
- New York City Adult Literacy Initiative (NYCALI) funded by WIA; and
- Support services such as childcare or transportation.

### **ELIGIBLE TYPES OF APPLICANTS**

- Non-profit organizations such as school districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), community colleges and community-based organizations;
- For-profit businesses, including corporations, LLCs, LLPs, etc.

Social services districts (SSD) are ineligible to apply under the CFA as they already have access to 50% SNAP E&T reimbursement funding.

Applicant organizations will be asked to secure SSD support of their proposal, and if selected, be required to coordinate with the SSD to develop a mechanism to accept referrals of SNAP applicants/recipients and confirm program eligibility and coordinate employment services as needed.

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Applicants will be given latitude in designing their programs to best meet the needs of their REDC's Opportunity Agenda strategic plan and may include the following activities/components:

- Job search and placement – supervised contact of employers in an effort to obtain a job placement in available, appropriate positions.
- Job readiness assistance – preparation for employment through training in areas such as employer expectations, appropriate work-place conduct, personal appearance, job application and resume writing, job interviewing techniques and job seeking skills.
- Job skills training/vocational education – instruction in a specific skill or occupation with a specific vocational objective.
- Education training related to employment – may include literacy training, GED preparation or English Language Instruction.
- Work experience – activity that improves the employability of participants through actual unpaid work experience in the public or non-profit sector. Individuals may not participate in SNAP work experience for hours that exceed the household's SNAP plus any safety net cash benefit divided by the federal or State minimum wage, whichever is higher.
- Subsidized employment – paid employment in the private or public sector and on-the-job training during a limited period of time during which the wages of the participant are subsidized. SNAP funds may not be used to pay the wages but may be used to support the administration of a subsidized employment program. Subsidized employment may not be counted toward the 90 day retention goal. Only 90 days in unsubsidized employment is considered.
- Job retention – provides support services for up to 90 days to individuals who have secured employment. Only individuals who have received other services under the SNAP program including job readiness assistance are eligible for job retention services. Note that SNAP funds cannot be used to provide retention services for those participants who were employed at the time of enrollment.
- Job skills training may be provided before and/or after job placement.

Program providers are encouraged to offer both “soft skills” training (workplace preparation training, teamwork, problem solving, time management, conflict resolution, etc.) as well as vocational/technical skills training. Individuals enrolled in any SNAP activity should also receive case management services including career planning, assistance with child care and transportation arrangements or other intervention necessary to support program completion, job placement and job retention.

Grant applicants are required to establish employer agreements with hiring commitments from partners as part of their application. In addition to providing local area employers with a trained employee, OTDA will work with the provider to identify possible tax credits area employers may be eligible for, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). OTDA Jobs staff will be available to assist contractors in pre-qualifying individual job applicants for available tax credits.

## INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Selected SNAP Opportunity program contractors may not expend any SNAP E&T funds or the non-federal funding on the following:

- Wage subsidies;
- Supervision of, or materials and equipment necessary to support, individuals participating in unpaid work experience;
- Medical services of any kind;
- Substance abuse services;
- Computers for participants or internet connections for participants;
- Activities that exceed 120 hours per month (unless the individual volunteers to participate for the additional hours);
- To supplant non-federal funds for basic educational programs normally available to citizens of a State, county or local jurisdiction and are supported by funds from those entities;
- Automobile purchase, insurance, and ownership and operator taxes (tag, title, license).

Additionally, the following are an illustrative, but not an exhaustive listing, of the types of items that are not allowable direct or indirect costs:

- Advertising costs, except for recruitment of personnel or procurement of scarce items, or those specifically required by the CFA;
- Capital expenditures for improvement or acquisition of facilities;
- Interest costs incurred by provider agencies;
- Costs of organized fundraising;
- Medical costs;
- Costs for attendance at conferences or meetings of professional organizations, unless attendance is necessary in connection with the project.
- Costs for preparation of continuation agreements and other proposal development costs; and
- Monetary incentives for participants.

## RECRUITMENT/REFERRAL OF SNAP OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

The initiative will serve low-income adult applicants for, or recipients of, SNAP benefits who are at least 18 years of age, or 16-17 and not in school, with a priority to serve unemployed and underemployed individuals. Priority should be given to individuals residing in the REDC Opportunity Area(s), including individuals in receipt of both SNAP and Safety Net Assistance. Individuals in receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded public assistance are **not** eligible for services under this program, according to SNAP program rules. Participation in a SNAP program may not exceed the allowable 120 hours monthly unless the additional hours are voluntary on behalf of the participant. It is the expectation that SNAP Opportunities contractors will have a marketing plan in place to recruit

eligible participants for the program, which may include working directly with the SSD for appropriate referrals.

All SNAP program participants will be required to sign the SNAP Opportunities Enrollment and Consent Form. This form will be provided by OTDA after applications are awarded and serves two purposes. The first is to advise applicants that they are enrolled in the SNAP Opportunities Program that is intended to improve their ability to secure and/or maintain employment. Its second purpose is to advise them that information regarding their participation may be shared with the local department of social services, and that income received as a result of their participation may result in changes to their current SNAP or Temporary Assistance benefits.

Additionally, federal rules require that those who fail to comply with program requirements without good cause (with the exception of volunteers) will have their SNAP benefit reduced or discontinued. Providers will be responsible for reporting noncompliance to the SSD along with available information regarding the circumstances of noncompliance, as required by federal regulations.

Coordination with the SSD - Respondents to the CFA are required to include a Letter of Support from their local SSD acknowledging their support of the SNAP Opportunities Program, and serving as the basis for ongoing coordination and exchange of information. Providers selected through the CFA will be required to report program noncompliance that is without good cause to the SSD, as required by federal regulations. Further, once a SNAP recipient becomes employed, awardees must submit proof of employment to the SSD for purposes of required SNAP budgeting and to OTDA to verify employment. It is important that each selected organization work with their SSD in helping eligible SNAP recipients gain access child care and child care subsidies.

It is recommended that selected contractors have a plan in place with the SSD for purposes of:

- Receiving referrals of individuals appropriate for the program and job openings;
- Determining participant eligibility; and
- Coordinating support services.

Additionally, applicant organizations need to be aware of and comply with the district's process for obtaining a letter of support and include sufficient time to obtain the document by the CFA close out period. For example, the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) requires that these requests be submitted to the Commissioner/Administrator and the Grants Officer in the Finance Office three weeks prior to the date the letter is required. At the time of the request, HRA also requires the submission of a complete or substantially complete proposal and a one-page summary of the proposal. A listing of Employment Coordinators by county is included on OTDA's website.

## **MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (MWBE) CONTRACT GOAL**

For purposes of this procurement, OTDA will establish an overall goal of 20% for MWBE participation, 10% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBE) participation and 10% for Women-Owned Business Enterprises (WBE) participation (based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs). Additionally, an overall 10-20% goal for Equal Employment Opportunity Participation will be established.

## **REIMBURSEMENT**

The initial contract period will run for a one-year period beginning January 1, 2014, with the option to extend for an additional two years. Depending on the outcome of this initial effort, OTDA may, at its discretion, determine that a new solicitation is necessary to most effectively meet the needs of the REDC Opportunity Agenda. OTDA may also decide to discontinue any funding it makes available through the REDC. Additionally, any further contract award may be limited based on program performance.

Contracts with providers will be 100% cost based with 20% of total reimbursement contingent on program outcomes. Selected contractors will earn 50% federal reimbursement through line item voucher submissions. All individual voucher claims must fit the classification of allowable costs that are reasonable and necessary as determined by OTDA.

OTDA will retain 20% of all voucher submissions. Upon successful completion of the 90 day job retention goals established through contract negotiations, OTDA will remit payment in full, or a proportionate percentage of, the retained award. Employment must be unsubsidized and, at a minimum, pay the equivalent of 30 hours per week at minimum wage to be considered toward contract goals. The New York State minimum wage will increase to \$8.00/hr. on December 31, 2013. Because this program is scheduled to begin January 1, 2014, the \$8.00/hr. will be used to calculate the total wages. Further increase of the minimum wage will change the equivalent wage total. The minimum wage that is in effect during the 90 day period will be used to determine if the job meets contract standards.

## **OTHER PROCUREMENT CONDITIONS**

Costs for SNAP Opportunities must be directly related to the delivery of the program, services and activities that will take place. Selected applicants will establish program budgets as part of contract negotiation. Only eligible expenditures that are defined by OTDA as reasonable and necessary to support the program will be allowed. The budget which will reflect the SNAP Opportunities funds requested and the required non-federal funding.

OTDA is requiring that no more than 15% of the total line-item budget be expended on non-program related expenses. The following table may be used as a tool to assist in distinguishing program from administrative costs, and is intended to provide guidance in the preparation of the SNAP Opportunities line-item budget:

Administrative Costs	Program Costs
<p>Costs for the general administration and coordination of this program, including contract costs for administrative functions. Examples of administrative costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The salaries and benefits of staff performing administrative and coordination functions;</li> <li>• Costs associated with the preparation of program plans, budgets, and schedules;</li> <li>• Costs involved in the monitoring or tracking of programs and projects;</li> <li>• Procurement activities;</li> <li>• Services related to accounting, audits, management of property, payroll and personnel; Costs for the goods or services required for the delivery of the administrative functions listed above, such as the costs for supplies, equipment, travel, postage, utilities, rental and maintenance of office space.</li> </ul>	<p>Examples of program costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary and benefit costs for staff providing program services and direct costs associated with providing direct services, such as costs for supplies, equipment, travel, postage, utilities, rental and maintenance of office space;</li> <li>• Work supports and case management, including the costs of contracts devoted entirely (including incidental administrative costs) to these activities.</li> </ul>

**SELECTION CRITERIA (OTDA will not fund any project that scores less than 60 total points.)**

***Project Summary (15 points)***

The application identifies the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies involved in the project, and includes a letter of commitment from at least one employer to hire participants either during or at completion of the program. The specific instructional programs, job readiness assistance, or job skills training that will be provided to help participants make educational advances and obtain job related skills are described. The job placement, retention and improvement strategies that will be used to enable participants to enter and retain employment are outlined. The application explains how each participant will be connected with the case management and support services needed to participate and retain employment.

***Recruitment, Referral and Outreach (5 points)***

The application describes how the program will be outreached and how potential participants will be identified and recruited. The proposal includes an outline of the process that has been developed with the SSD for the identification and referral of SNAP work registrants who would benefit from the program services.

***Employment Opportunities (20 points)***

The goal of SNAP Opportunities is to provide direct job opportunities to eligible SNAP applicants and recipients so they are better able to meet the financial needs of their household/families. The applicant must quantify the number of 90 day unsubsidized employment retentions they expect to achieve as part of this initiative. The applicant demonstrates a clear relationship with area employers who plan to hire program participants referred for interviews by the applicant. A description of the targeted job (job duties, wages) is provided with a description of job advancement opportunities, if any. Jobs with higher wages and/or advancement opportunities are preferred.

***Case Management (10 points)***

The application describes a case management approach to service delivery which strives to ensure that clients with complex needs receive timely and coordinated services to support program completion, educational advancement and/or job retention. Barriers and limitations of the participant are discussed, along with a strategy to address these issues. A detailed description of the case management portion of the program is presented. The description includes intake and assessment procedures, service plan development, and on-going monitoring of the participants' progress and needs. The key functions of the case manager are defined and include coordinating necessary services as defined by both the program participant and the case manager.

***Organizational Experience and Past Performance (10 points)***

The applicant provides evidence to demonstrate their capability and relevant experience in developing and operating employment and training programs and providing job placement/retention services for low-income individuals.

***Program Cost (20 points)***

The program cost will be weighted based on the award amount requested (including the non-federal funding) divided by the number of 90 day job retention outcomes to derive a "unit cost". Unit costs that fall within the following ranges will be awarded the associated points:

\$6,500 and under	-	20 points
\$6,501 to \$8,000	-	15 points
\$8,001 to \$10,000	-	10 points
\$10,001 to \$12,000	-	5 points
Over \$12,000	-	0 Points

Employment must be unsubsidized and, at a minimum, pay the equivalent of 30 hours per week at minimum wage.

***Regional Economic Development Council Endorsement (20 points)***

The REDC will review each application to determine if it aligns with priorities set for the region's Opportunity Area.

In addition to completion of questions in the Consolidated Funding Application, applicants must include the following items (as requested in the CFA question set):

- SNAP E&T Non-Federal Funding Agreement
- Letter(s) from employers with hiring commitments
- SSD Support Letter
- SNAP Opportunities M/WBE Forms

**Additional Resources**

<http://otda.ny.gov/contracts/2013/SNAPOPS>