



A WORKFORCE FOR ALL: PROTECT FOOD SECURITY & QUALITY JOB ACCESS

BACKGROUND

Federal workforce training programs strive to make the workforce stronger by increasing access to quality employment and training opportunities and prioritizing populations who are underrepresented in the workforce. Programs like SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T), and those administered under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), are all tools used by individuals who have challenges obtaining quality employment due to certain barriers, like a prior incarceration term, to access job training and a higher paying job.

However, as a result of unintended consequences of expanded training opportunities, individuals frequently risk losing their SNAP benefits by receiving temporary wages provided by these training programs. Trainees are then forced to decide between food security and employment advancement opportunities. By calling on Congress to fix this technical issue through the *Training & Nutrition Stability Act*, we can support underrepresented populations on their employment journey and build a resilient, diverse economy.

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYMENT SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Many individuals connect to federal workforce training programs and other key supports through employment social enterprises (ESEs). ESEs are businesses reinvesting their earnings into developing future talent and achieving transformative impact by providing jobs, training, and wraparound support to people breaking through barriers to employment. [Research from Mathematica](#) on ESEs shows that these organizations more than double job retention and significantly increase wages and total income for those they engage. ESEs bolster their programs by partnering with federal workforce training programs (and often more than one), to support the individuals in their program. One of these ESEs is **Conservation Corps of Long Beach** (CCLB) which helps youth find their potential for environmental careers. On the importance of strong, accessible federal workforce training programs, **Deputy Director & COO David Sall** said:

“By strengthening federal workforce training programs, we will ensure that young adults looking for a pathway out of poverty and food insecurity will be able to sustainably make that transition. We need to make sure we remove as many barriers or obstacles that might hamper their efforts, and improving these federal workforce training programs is a significant way to do that.”

Many of participants at **Conservation Corps of Long Beach** qualify for SNAP, so to better serve them, CCLB became a SNAP E&T provider which allowed them to add a construction training program. One of their corpsmembers, **Felipe**, participated in their urban lumber program under this new training which opened his eyes to new job opportunities he'd never thought of pursuing. He received his S-212 Wildland Firefighter Chainsaw certification and is pursuing a career with CalFire or the U.S. Forest Service as a result.



THE JOB TRAINING VS NUTRITION CHALLENGE

Despite all the ways federal workforce training programs support people with high barriers to employment, the issue of one's SNAP benefits being at risk through program participation looms large and puts many in an impossible situation.



For example, CCLB reported that only about 10% of their corpsmembers participate in SNAP E&T despite their estimates that well over 50% are eligible for SNAP upon entering their program. This lack of enrollment is, in large part, because temporary wages members make on their on-the-job training disqualifies them from receiving SNAP benefits, putting their food security at risk. **Laura Zumdahl, President & CEO of New Moms** (a Chicago-based non-profit that supports young moms experiencing homelessness and poverty), reports a similar problem with the temporary wages they offer through paid job learning at their ESE candle company, Bright Endeavors:

“Imagine making the decision between joining a program to learn skills that lead to a career that supports yourself and your family or continuing to get food benefits so you can feed your child today. Participants in job training programs shouldn’t be punished for engaging in programs that expedite their earning potential and career pathways, rather they should be encouraged on their journeys to economic mobility and independence.”



New Moms and their clients rely on SNAP E&T and WIOA to support their comprehensive job training program, and provide crucial food security to their clients. Young moms in their program develop confidence in their skills and are able to pursue careers they are passionate about. **Yuli**, a mom of two boys, came to New Moms determined to lead her family into a thriving future. Interested in the medical field, New Moms connected her to pharmacy technician opportunities and was hired for a position at Advocate Trinity Hospital. She is currently preparing for her certification through a program offered by her employer.

Joel, a Policy Committee member and current employee at **Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)** in New Orleans – which supports formerly-incarcerated individuals reentering the workforce, explained how important maintaining SNAP benefits was to his successful reentry; “It really helped my spending budget. Otherwise, I would’ve had to spend most of my income on food. With the extra money, I was able to focus on my stability and getting back on my feet.”



TRAINING & NUTRITION STABILITY ACT (H.R.3087 & S.3190)

The life-changing impact of accessible federal workforce training programs on our communities is why stakeholders like CEO, REDF, American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and many other organizations and individuals agree that **Congress must pass the bipartisan Training & Nutrition Stability Act (H.R.3087 and S.3190) in the upcoming Farm Bill which would allow individuals to retain their SNAP benefits while completing federal workforce training programs.**

“The Training and Nutrition Stability Act would ensure the SNAP E&T program meets its Congressionally authorized mission of helping participants gain new skills and transition smoothly to permanent employment and self-sufficiency, all while maintaining critical nutrition support during their training program.” reiterated Sam Schaeffer (Chief Executive Officer of CEO)

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