

Position Statement

2021

Align SNAP E&T Statute with Federal Policy

Proposal

Issue:

The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) requires individuals who do not have children or a disability to participate in SNAP employment and training activities, or lose benefits after 3 months.

Many states are under the false assumption that due to these work requirements the state has to run a sanction process on top of the work requirements. This is incorrect. Regardless of whether a state runs a sanction process, SNAP participants without children are limited to 3 months of SNAP benefits within a 36 month period unless they can demonstrate that they are in compliance with program work requirements.

Accordingly, the mandatory process is a costly redundancy that interferes with encouraging work. County workers must monitor work or their participation every month, and under current state law, issue a sanction if a person quits work or fails to participate without good cause. This includes issuing a notice, tracking responses to the notice, and considering any reasons the person provides, and if the county determines good cause was not present, issuing a 10-day notice and terminating the person's benefits after the 10 day period.

Not only is the additional work required of county staff to track and sanction participants ineffective in increasing the incentive to work, it is redundant and takes valuable time away from other participants who have taken the initiative on the pathway to self-sufficiency and shown up at the county in search of employment.

Implementation Strategy:

Modify language in MN Statute 256D.051: Subd. 8 to align federal policy and ensure compliance with policy changes at the federal level.

Systemic Priority Alignment (highlight all that apply and explain why)

Equity, Service Integration, and Fiscal Framework

Comments: It will simplify the process and allow clients to seek employment help if they need this. It will continue to reduce administrative burden on financial workers which impacts costs to counties.

Relevant Committee (highlight all that apply and explain why)

- Self-Sufficiency

Rationale/Background:

SNAP recipients without children are required to meet the work requirements found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, section 273.7, if they want to receive SNAP benefits for more than 3 months in a 36-month

period. If the person does not comply, his or her benefits are removed from the household's SNAP allotment. If the person is the head of household, the entire household is ineligible for SNAP.

On top of this, state law layers a sanction process, requiring a great deal of attention and specific tasks from county workers. It is confusing and difficult for workers. In 2017, Hennepin County estimated the amount of staff time spent on this process. At that time it was estimated that 140 individuals that fall into this category per month, and staff time to do the work would be approximately 4,200 hours per year. **Statewide that was estimated to be over 14,500 hours a year.**

The administrative burden on counties is substantial, and does not improve the incentive to work for the participant. At least 26 states have removed this requirement. Minnesota should do likewise.



MACSSA
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Submitted by:

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