

CHAPTER 27

AN ACT concerning the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, amending P.L.2013, c.45 and P.L.2016, c.11, and supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.44:10-97.1 New Jersey SNAP ETP participation not required to receive SNAP benefits; information provided to recipients.

1. a. The NJ SNAP ETP shall be a voluntary program, and the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services or a county welfare agency shall not require participation in a NJ SNAP ETP activity or in a New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Provider 50/50 Match Project, as established under P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.), in order to be deemed eligible for SNAP benefits.

b. The division and each county welfare agency shall ensure that all recipients of SNAP benefits are provided information regarding, and the opportunity to participate in, employment and training opportunities consistent with federal SNAP ETP reimbursement requirements.

c. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the division or a county welfare agency to impose penalties for noncompliance with federal SNAP work requirements.

d. The division shall submit, in a timely manner, any necessary revisions to the State Employment and Training Plan to the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture, as required pursuant to federal regulations, in order to effectuate the provisions of this section.

e. As used in this section:

“NJ SNAP ETP” means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program that assists SNAP recipients with acquiring the skills, training, work, or experience necessary to obtain regular employment, as established under the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and as described in the most recent State Employment and Training Plan submitted to the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture.

“New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Provider 50/50 Match Project” means the project established pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.).

“Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” or “SNAP” means the program established pursuant to the federal “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

“SNAP ETP” means the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program administered by the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture and established pursuant to the federal “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.) and any regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

2. Section 2 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-96) is amended to read as follows:

C.44:10-96 Definitions relative to the “New Jersey SNAP Employment and Training Provider 50/50 Match Project Act.”

2. As used in P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.):

“Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Human Services.

“Department” means the Department of Human Services.

"Eligible participant" means a SNAP recipient who qualifies for participation in NJ SNAP ETP.

"New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Provider 50/50 Match Project" or "project" means the project established pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.).

"NJ SNAP ETP" means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program that assists SNAP recipients with acquiring the skills, training, work, or experience necessary to obtain regular employment, as established under the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and as described in the most recent State Employment and Training Plan submitted to the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture.

"Non-federal resources" means any of the following resources, provided that the resources are not from a federal source or used as a match for other federal funding purposes:

(1) cash donations from private firms, charitable foundations, or non-profit organizations received by partnering providers;

(2) local tax levy funds received by partnering providers;

(3) certain eligible in-kind contributions received by partnering providers that are public entities, including property or services which support the provider's NJ SNAP ETP activities and which are contributed by non-federal public entities without charge to the partnering provider; or

(4) any other non-federal resources that are currently allowed by the federal government.

"Partnering provider" means a qualifying agency selected to participate in the project.

"Project participant" means an eligible participant who elects to participate in the project established pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.).

"Qualifying agency" means a local government, non-profit entity, institution of higher education, foundation, or other eligible community-based organization that qualifies for allowable federal SNAP ETP reimbursements pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.) by providing allowable services that help SNAP recipients acquire the skills, training, work, or experience necessary to obtain regular employment. A qualifying agency may also include a consortium of organizations.

"Service area" means the geographic area of the State in which a partnering provider provides NJ SNAP ETP services under the project established pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.).

"SNAP" means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, established pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

"SNAP ETP" means the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program administered by the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture and established pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.) and any regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

"Work First New Jersey TANF benefits" means Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits provided under the Work First New Jersey program established pursuant to P.L.1997, c.38 (C.44:10-55 et seq.) in accordance with the federal "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," Pub.L.104-193 (42 U.S.C. s.601 et seq.).

3. Section 5 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-99) is amended to read as follows:

C.44:10-99 Collaboration between partnering providers and county welfare agencies.

5. a. A county welfare agency shall collaborate with all partnering providers whose service areas include the county to: inform all eligible participants, upon determination of their eligibility

for SNAP benefits, of all project activities operating within the county; permit all eligible participants to participate in any project activities available within the county; and assist eligible participants with contacting partnering providers operating project activities. A county welfare agency may advise an eligible participant as to the applicability and appropriateness of specific activities to the eligible participant's case, but the county welfare agency shall not assign an eligible participant to project activities without the eligible participant's consent.

b. A partnering provider shall collaborate with all county welfare agencies within the provider's service area to: inform all eligible participants, upon determination of their eligibility for SNAP benefits, of the availability of project services; and assist the county welfare agencies with identifying those eligible participants for whom participation in the partnering provider's NJ SNAP ETP activities would be most applicable and appropriate.

c. A partnering provider shall serve all eligible participants residing within the provider's service area who elect to participate in the provider's project activities. Except as provided in this section, a partnering provider shall not deny or terminate the participation of any project participant.

d. Eligible participants who are required to register for work and are required to fulfill SNAP work requirements may elect to participate in a partnering provider's project activities.

e. Eligible participants who are required to register for work and are required to fulfill SNAP work requirements who elect to participate in project activities but who subsequently do not cooperate with, or participate in, those activities shall not be subject to penalties for noncompliance with SNAP work requirements during their participation in the project. Partnering providers shall terminate the project participation of any such non-cooperating or non-participating eligible participants and refer the non-cooperating or non-participating participants to the applicable county welfare agency. The applicable county welfare agency may assign, at a participant's request, the non-cooperating or non-participating participant to another NJ SNAP ETP component outside of the project, as available.

f. Nothing in P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.) shall be construed to limit the authority of the county welfare agencies or the department to impose penalties for noncompliance with SNAP work requirements on eligible participants who are required to register for work and are required to fulfill SNAP work requirements.

g. A partnering provider may deny or terminate the participation of any project participant who is not appropriately matched to the partnering provider's project activities upon obtaining approval from the applicable county welfare agency.

4. Section 6 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-100) is amended to read as follows:

C.44:10-100 Programmatic functions required by partnering provider.

6. a. Each partnering provider shall be required to perform the following programmatic functions and to maintain sufficient capacity to perform these functions effectively:

(1) assist project participants with obtaining and retaining employment;

(2) provide project participants with appropriate NJ SNAP ETP services and participant reimbursements that fulfill the purposes of NJ SNAP ETP and that qualify for federal SNAP ETP reimbursements. These services and participant reimbursements may include, but are not limited to: job search and placement services; job readiness assistance; education or training that improves basic skills and general employability; specific job skills training or vocational education; work experience that improves the employability of project participants; subsidized employment; workfare; self-employment training; services related to the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Pub.L.105-220 (29 U.S.C. s.2801 et seq.); job retention services; or reimbursements for

project participant expenses, including dependent care costs, transportation expenses, books or training manuals, fees, uniforms, equipment and tools required for employment, or personal safety items required for program participation;

(3) assess and place project participants into appropriate NJ SNAP ETP services, as defined in paragraph (2) of this subsection;

(4) provide project participants with support services, including case management, early intervention, career counseling, and referrals to additional programs and services;

(5) verify whether potential project participants are receiving SNAP benefits and make referrals, as appropriate, to assist potential project participants with applying for SNAP benefits;

(6) collaborate with county welfare agencies to develop processes and materials that: inform eligible participants regarding project activities within each county, in accordance with each partnering provider's service area; facilitate eligible participants' communications with partnering providers regarding participation in project activities; and assist eligible participants with rendering decisions regarding their participation in project activities;

(7) assist project participants with continuing to meet administrative requirements, work requirements, employment and training requirements, and other requirements for maintaining SNAP eligibility;

(8) coordinate with the department and county welfare agencies on a monthly basis to verify that project participants are receiving SNAP benefits and are not receiving Work First New Jersey TANF benefits;

(9) coordinate with the county welfare agencies and the department to distinguish eligible participants who are required to register for work and are required to fulfill SNAP work requirements from eligible participants who are exempt from the work registration and work requirements associated with receiving SNAP benefits;

(10) provide uninterrupted NJ SNAP ETP services and participant reimbursements to eligible participants through changes in the participants' SNAP work registration and work requirement status, subject to the provisions for terminating project participation pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-99);

(11) maintain program records and report to the department and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development the following monthly information for each claimed NJ SNAP ETP participant: program, participant name, participant Social Security number, services and reimbursements received, and weekly hours;

(12) prepare and submit to the department invoice and certification letters each quarter for the total non-federal resources and program expenditures qualifying for federal SNAP ETP reimbursements for the quarter;

(13) monitor project participants and subcontractors and provide detailed reports of participants, activities, and outcomes to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development on a regular basis;

(14) devote sufficient staff time and expertise to fulfill NJ SNAP ETP administrative and reporting requirements;

(15) collaborate with the department and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to ensure that federal SNAP ETP reimbursements received under the program are expended in accordance with all applicable federal laws and regulations; and

(16) report to the department and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and county welfare agencies on a monthly basis the identities of any eligible participants who are required to register for work and are required to fulfill SNAP work requirements and who are not cooperating with, or participating in, assigned services or work.

b. Each partnering provider shall be required to perform the following financial functions and to maintain sufficient capacity to perform the functions effectively:

(1) maintain cash flow necessary to manage the delay from program outlays to SNAP ETP reimbursements;

(2) manage federal grants, track expenditures, and ensure that non-federal resources and program expenditures qualify for federal SNAP ETP reimbursements;

(3) perform cost allocation using multiple funds;

(4) track staff time devoted to NJ SNAP ETP activities under this project; and

(5) maintain records for State audits.

c. Partnering providers may establish agreements with subcontracting organizations to support their NJ SNAP ETP activities under this project.

d. The department shall consider educational activities serving eligible participants at community colleges as qualifying for federal SNAP ETP reimbursements to the greatest extent allowable under federal laws and regulations. In accordance with section 273.5 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, individuals enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education who are assigned to, or placed in, an NJ SNAP ETP educational activity and who meet all SNAP eligibility requirements shall be determined eligible for SNAP benefits and shall be eligible for participation in the project.

5. Section 7 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-101) is amended to read as follows:

C.44:10-101 County welfare agencies, departments to assist partnering providers.

7. a. The county welfare agencies, under the oversight of the department, shall assist partnering providers by:

(1) collaborating with partnering providers, the department, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to conduct outreach to potential project participants and to refer potential project participants to the partnering providers;

(2) collaborating with partnering providers to develop processes and materials that inform eligible participants regarding: the availability of project activities within each county, in accordance with each partnering provider's service area; the option for eligible participants to participate in project activities; the applicability and appropriateness of specific activities to the eligible participant's case; and the means by which eligible participants may contact partnering providers regarding project participation;

(3) determining potential project participants' SNAP eligibility and providing the results of eligibility determinations to partnering providers;

(4) developing and implementing a process to verify that potential project participants are receiving SNAP benefits and not receiving Work First New Jersey TANF benefits and ensuring that this verification process adheres to all applicable federal laws and regulations restricting the unauthorized disclosure of information concerning applicants for, and recipients of, SNAP or TANF benefits;

(5) determining each potential project participant's status regarding SNAP work registration and employment and training requirements, in coordination with partnering providers;

(6) confirming each project participant's SNAP eligibility on a monthly basis; and

(7) collaborating with partnering providers to develop criteria and procedures for terminating the participation of eligible participants in a partnering provider's project activities including, but not limited to: eligible participants who are not appropriately matched to a partnering provider's project activities; and any eligible participants who are required to register for work and are

required to fulfill SNAP work requirements and who are not cooperating with, or participating in, assigned services or work.

b. The department shall, in consultation with the county welfare agencies and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development:

(1) assist partnering providers with understanding the administrative requirements, work requirements, employment and training requirements, and other requirements for project participants to maintain SNAP eligibility;

(2) assist partnering providers with understanding the requirements for non-federal resources and program expenditures to generate federal SNAP ETP reimbursements;

(3) submit requests for federal SNAP ETP reimbursements and fulfill all reporting and other SNAP ETP administrative responsibilities required by the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture;

(4) distribute federal SNAP ETP reimbursements received by the State under this project to the partnering providers whose non-federal resources and program expenditures generated the federal reimbursements, in accordance with the provisions of section 8 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-102);

(5) collect data concerning partnering providers and project participants, activities, and outcomes; and

(6) audit partnering providers on a routine basis to ensure fiscal and program integrity.

6. Section 8 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-102) is amended to read as follows:

C.44:10-102 Submission of revised State Employment and Training Plan.

8. a. The department shall submit a revised State Employment and Training Plan to the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture, in accordance with section 273.7 (c) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, in order to expand NJ SNAP ETP to include project partnerships with qualifying agencies. The revised State Employment and Training Plan shall define the services to be provided under NJ SNAP ETP, including, but not limited to, the project services provided pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.) and shall ensure that under no circumstances shall a recipient of SNAP benefits be disqualified from SNAP participation solely due to nonparticipation in a SNAP ETP activity. The department shall submit the revised State Employment and Training Plan to the Food and Nutrition Service as soon as practicable but no later than the first day of the seventh month next following the effective date of P.L.2022, c.27 (C.44:10-97.1 et al.).

b. The commissioner shall take such additional steps as may be necessary to secure approval from the Food and Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture for this project and to ensure that the State and partnering providers are in compliance with all applicable provisions of federal and State laws and regulations.

c. The department may reserve up to five percent of the federal SNAP ETP reimbursements generated as a direct result of the activities of the partnering providers and received by the State pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.) for operating expenses and staff directly related to the administration, oversight, and evaluation of this project. The remaining federal SNAP ETP reimbursements generated as a direct result of the activities of the partnering providers and received by the State pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.) shall be distributed to the partnering providers whose expenditures generated the federal SNAP ETP reimbursements on a pro-rata basis and in accordance with the performance-based system for distributing federal SNAP ETP reimbursements established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-98). Within the

request for proposals issued pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.), the department shall describe the performance-based system for distributing federal SNAP ETP reimbursements and indicate the net percentage of federal SNAP ETP reimbursements that shall be distributed to partnering providers.

d. The department shall apply for any additional federal funds which may be available to implement the provisions of P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.), including, but not limited to, any unobligated, unexpended federal SNAP ETP funds originally allocated to other state agencies and available for reallocation pursuant to section 273.7 (d) of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations.

e. The Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development may solicit, receive, and accept grants, funds, or anything of value from any public or private entity and receive and accept contributions of money, property, labor, or any other thing of value from any legitimate source to support the project, provided that the commissioner does not have reason to believe that the entity may have a vested interest in the decisions of the commissioner or the department concerning the selection of specific partnering providers.

7. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved June 30, 2022.