**DATE: August 18, 2023**

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #23-08-04**

**SUBJECT:** Requirement to Attempt to Reengage SNAP Employment and Training Participants

**TO:** Executive Directors

**FROM:** William Schabener

 Acting Director

 Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

 To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) of new rules for SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) participants effective upon publication of this memorandum.

**BACKGROUND**

 Per [SNAP HB 535.1](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/535_SNAP_Employment_and_Training/535_1_General_Policy.htm), any adult SNAP recipient is eligible to volunteer to participate in a SNAP E&T program, regardless of work registrant or ABAWD status. After a SNAP recipient is referred to a SNAP E&T contracted program by the CAO, their participation in SNAP E&T continues until the program terminates their project enrollment. When a SNAP E&T program terminates an E&T participant, CAOs receive an ASAP 156 alert notifying them of either a positive or negative project termination. Because SNAP E&T is a voluntary program, CAOs have not been required to reach out to SNAP E&T participants after a negative termination to attempt to reengage them in programming. If a SNAP recipient wishes to reengage with E&T programming, they have typically had to contact the CAO to request a new referral.

**DISCUSSION**

 New federal regulations require the CAO to attempt to reengage SNAP E&T participants who have been negatively terminated from a SNAP E&T program.

**Negative Program Termination: Create Provider Determinations**

A provider determination is defined as a decision made by a SNAP E&T program to terminate a SNAP E&T participant program enrollment for a negative reason or because the participant requests to participate in a different SNAP E&T program.

**NOTE:** Provider determinations are not appealable by the participant.

Project termination codes which indicate a provider determination has been made include:

* Project Termination Code 3
* Project Termination Code 7 – SZ only
* Project Termination Code X – SD/SN only
* Project Termination Code W or Y – SK only

Effective immediately, the CAO will attempt to reengage SNAP E&T participants who have received a provider determination.

**Positive Program Termination: No CAO Action Required**

Project termination codes which indicate a positive outcome and require no CAO action, include Project Termination Codes 1, 5, and 8.

**SNAP E&T Program Responsibilities**

The SNAP E&T program is responsible for making provider determinations, with the assistance of guidelines issued by the Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP).

After making a provider determination, SNAP E&T programs must notify the CAO of the determination within 10 calendar days. The ASAP 156 alert is considered notification of the provider determination. The SNAP E&T program will provide any additional information to the CAO regarding the project termination.

**CAO Responsibilities**

The CAO will notify the SNAP recipient that a provider determination has been made within 10 calendar days of the date the ASAP 156 alert was received unless the individual is no longer receiving SNAP. The CAO must provide this notification even if the SNAP E&T program did not submit additional information regarding the termination.

* For non-ABAWD volunteers, the CAO will complete and mail the SNAP E&T Volunteer Program Exit Form (PA 1977) (Attachment 1) to notify the SNAP recipient of their situation and next steps.
* For ABAWDs who are not exempt, geographically waived, or otherwise meeting the work requirement, the CAO will complete and mail the SNAP E&T ABAWD Program Exit Form (PA 1978) (Attachment 2) to notify the SNAP recipient of the provider determination.

These forms also contain an optional questionnaire the recipient can choose to return to the CAO at any time to request re-enrollment in E&T or request an exemption from work registration or the ABAWD time limit.

The CAO will perform one of the following three actions within 15 calendar days of the ASAP 156 alert, regardless of whether the CAO has received a response to the above forms:

1. Refer the SNAP recipient back to the SNAP E&T program, or to another SNAP E&T program. Follow referral guidance in [SNAP HB 535.11](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/535_SNAP_Employment_and_Training/535_1_General_Policy.htm).
2. Reassess the SNAP recipient for exemptions from the ABAWD time limit (SNAP Qual Code) and general work requirements (SNAP ETP Code).
3. Inform the SNAP recipient that additional non-DHS sponsored workforce development services are available at PA CareerLink® Centers. Information about the PA CareerLink® is available at <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/>.

The CAO will perform the action that is most appropriate for the SNAP recipient based on the circumstances of their project enrollment termination from the SNAP E&T program, existing information in their case record, and additional information provided on the forms above (if those forms were returned to the CAO).

ABAWDs will not incur a countable month during the calendar month in which the CAO receives the ASAP 156 alert. However, the ABAWD will begin incurring countable months starting the next full calendar month unless they meet the work requirements, live in a waived area, or are otherwise exempt.

Because SNAP E&T is voluntary, the CAO must not sanction SNAP recipients for failing to accept a referral to a SNAP E&T program or non-DHS sponsored workforce development services following a provider determination (see: [SNAP HB 535.1](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/535_SNAP_Employment_and_Training/535_1_General_Policy.htm)).

**Example 1:** The CAO receives an ASAP 156 alert on January 10 for Dominique, a SNAP E&T participant. The alert indicates Dominique was terminated from the SNAP KEYS program with Project Termination Code Y. Dominique has an eligibility status code of “EW” and a SNAP Qual code of 03, meaning they reside in a geographically waived area and are exempt from the ABAWD time limit. The CAO sends Dominique the Volunteer Program Exit Form. Dominique returns the bottom section of the form and states that they are considering enrolling in Lock Haven University, a [KEYS Expansion school](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/Updated_KEYS_Program_Institutions.pdf). The CAO calls Dominique to complete an EDP over the phone and refers them to the SNAP EARN program. The CAO clears the ASAP 156 alert and enters a case narrative that the appropriate provider determination follow-up action (Action #1) was taken.

**Example 2:** The CAO receives an ASAP 156 alert on March 10 for Roberta, a SNAP E&T participant. The alert indicates Roberta was terminated from the SNAP 50/50 program with Project Termination Code 3. Roberta has an eligibility status code of “EB” and a SNAP Qual code of 06, meaning she is an ABAWD who has been meeting the work requirement through participation in E&T. Roberta’s ABAWD clock shows that she had previously used zero of her three months of time-limited benefits. The CAO sends Roberta the ABAWD Program Exit Form. The CAO receives additional information from the provider and Roberta’s completed ABAWD Program Exit Form. Both state Roberta suffered a head injury and Roberta provides a letter from her doctor stating she is disabled. The CAO updates the SNAP Qual code to 02. Since Roberta is now exempt, the ABAWD time limit will not apply to her. The CAO clears the ASAP 156 alert and enters a case narrative that the appropriate provider determination follow-up action (Action #2) was taken.

**Example 3:** The CAO receives an ASAP 156 alert on February 10 for Braydon, a SNAP E&T participant. The alert indicates Braydon was terminated from the SNAP EARN program with Project Termination Code 3. Braydon has an eligibility status code of “EB” and a SNAP Qual code of 06, meaning he is an ABAWD who had been meeting the work requirement through participation in E&T. Braydon’s ABAWD clock shows he had previously used two of his three months of time-limited benefits. The CAO sends Braydon the ABAWD Program Exit Form. Braydon never returns the ABAWD Program Exit Form to the CAO, and the CAO is not aware of any information that would indicate Braydon wishes to re-enroll in E&T or that he is now exempt from work registration or ABAWD requirements. The CAO updates the SNAP Qual code to 20. Since Braydon has discontinued participation in SNAP E&T, he will now be subject to time-limited benefits starting March 1 unless he establishes an exemption or starts meeting the work requirement again. Since the ABAWD Program Exit Form containing information about PA CareerLink® was mailed to Braydon, this is considered to satisfy the requirements for Action #3. The CAO clears the ASAP 156 alert and enters a case narrative that the appropriate provider determination follow-up action (Action #3) was taken.

**Example 4:** The CAO receives an ASAP 156 alert on April 10 for Simran, a SNAP E&T participant. The alert indicates Simran was terminated from a SNAP 50/50 program with Project Termination Code 3. Simran has an eligibility status code of “EB” and a SNAP Qual code of 06, meaning she is an ABAWD who had been meeting the work requirement through participation in E&T. Simran’s ABAWD clock shows she had previously used all three months of time-limited benefits. The CAO sends Simran the ABAWD Program Exit Form. Simran never returns the ABAWD Program Exit Form to the CAO, and the CAO is not aware of any information that would indicate Simran wishes to re-enroll in E&T or that she is now exempt from work registration or ABAWD requirements. The CAO reviews Simran’s case and determines that she had participated in E&T for at least 80 hours in a 30-day period prior to being terminated. The CAO updates the SNAP Qual code to 21. After the three consecutive month EB-21 period ends, Simran will no longer be eligible for SNAP starting August 1 unless she establishes an exemption or starts meeting the work requirement again. Since the ABAWD Program Exit Form containing information about PA CareerLink® was mailed to Simran, this is considered to satisfy the requirements for Action #3. The CAO clears the ASAP 156 alert and enters a case narrative that the appropriate provider determination follow-up action (Action #3) was taken.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Share and review this information with appropriate staff members.

2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.

3. This Operations Memorandum is in effect until further notice.

**ATTACHMENTS**

[Attachment 1 – SNAP E&T Volunteer Program Exit Form](https://pagov.sharepoint.com/sites/DHS-OIM/Attachments/Attachment%201%20-%20SNAP%20E%26T%20Volunteer%20Program%20Exit%20Form.docx)

[Attachment 2 – SNAP E&T Abled-Bodied Adult Without Dependent (ABAWD) Exit Form](https://pagov.sharepoint.com/sites/DHS-OIM/Attachments/Attachment%202%20-%20SNAP%20E%26T%20Abled-Bodied%20Adult%20Without%20Dependent%20%28ABAWD%29%20Exit%20Form.docx)