

**Policy Clarification**  
**Employment and Training - All - EPP-22542-535**  
**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - All –**  
**PFS-22542-536**

**Submitted:** July 6, 2026

**Agency:** CAOs

**Subject:** Verifying Community Service Participation

**Question:** At interview, a non-exempt Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipient says they want to meet Pennsylvanians with Employment and/or Engagement Requirements (PEER) requirements by doing community service.

1. Must the County Assistance Office (CAO) refer a PEER to SNAP Employment, Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) for their community service to count as meeting the work requirement?
2. How should the CAO verify the PEER is participating in community service?
3. Does the PEER need to complete an Employment Development Plan ([EDP](#)) to count the community service participation?

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**Response By:** BEP

**Date:** July 6, 2026

1. No. SNAP EARN (SD/SN) is one option for PEERs while participating in community service. If a PEER *does not wish to be referred to EARN while participating in community service*, they will have participation tracked through a SNAP CAO-Directed (SA) Project. The CAO must explain both options to the PEER and let the PEER choose what is best for their situation. Referral guidance may be found in [SNAP Handbook \(HB\) 535.11](#). As a reminder, SNAP Employment and Training participation is voluntary, not mandatory and is one option for PEERs to meet SNAP work and education requirements.

2. When a PEER chooses to participate in community service through SNAP EARN, the EARN provider is responsible for providing case management and verifying the PEER's hours of participation.

When a PEER chooses to participate in community service through a SNAP CAO-Directed (SA) project, the PEER must provide the CAO verification of participation.

- The PEER should request the non-profit organization they are doing community service at, to verify their hours, for up to six months in advance, using the [Community Service Verification Form](#).
- The CAO will:
  - Open a SNAP CAO-Directed (SA) Project in the Electronic Client Information System on the Employment and Training Program (ETP) Project Enrollment Screen, and
  - Track the PEER's community service hours in activity AC 90 on the ETP Activity Tracking Screen.

**Exception:** If the PEER is doing community service as a type of unpaid work, the PEER chooses not to be referred to EARN, and the PEER is not requesting Special Allowances (SPALs), the CAO will not open an ETP Project Enrollment Screen. See: [PFS 22328-535](#) and Answer 3 below.

3. Yes, in most cases. A PEER's participation in community service can be considered either "workfare" or unpaid work. See: [PFS 22328-535](#). Most commonly, a PEER will participate in community service as a form of "workfare." In these scenarios, an EDP is **always** needed, whether the PEER is participating through SNAP EARN or through a SNAP CAO-Directed (SA) Project. In the less common scenario, referenced in the above exception, an EDP is only necessary if the PEER is being referred to SNAP EARN or is requesting SPALs.

**Citation:** [SNAP HB 535.1](#)