



# The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Presentation to the Indian Affairs Committee  
Sean Pearson, Deputy Secretary  
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# What is SNAP?

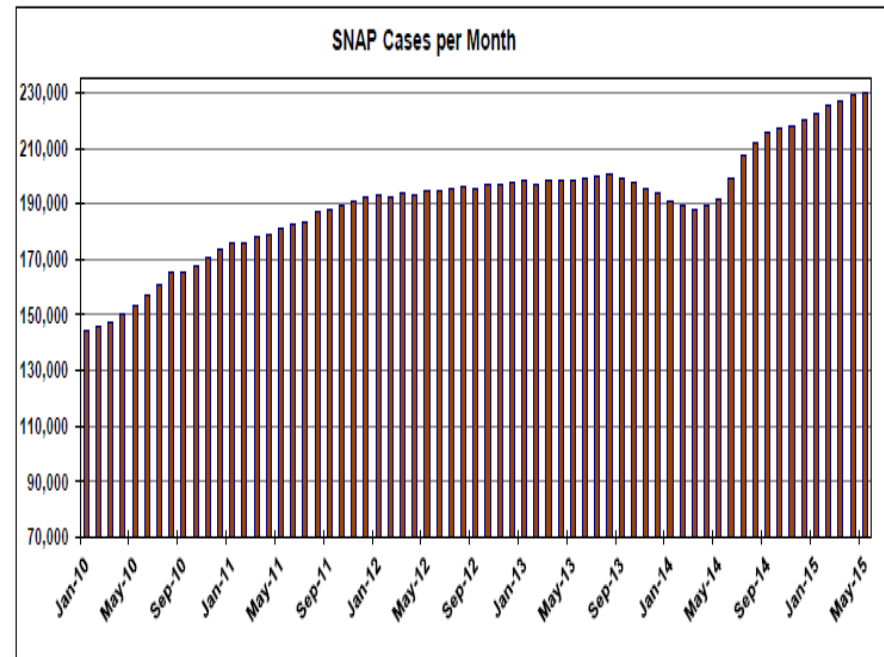
- ▶ Essential safety net program to help low-income individuals supplement their food budget
- ▶ Federally funded program administered by the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD)
- ▶ Benefits are provided through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card

## Basics of SNAP Eligibility

- Reside in New Mexico
- Be a citizen or a qualified legal immigrant
- Be at or below 165% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
  - e.g., \$2,163 per month for a household of two

# SNAP Statistics

- ▶ 496,927 SNAP recipients as of June 2015
  - 12.8% increase from June 2014
  - Over 87,000 are Native Americans
- ▶ \$675.5 million in SNAP benefits issued in FY15
  - 6.4% increase from FY14
  - Average case benefit is \$278 per month



# SNAP Employment and Training (E&T)

- ▶ Federal law requires states to operate a SNAP E&T program
  - The Food Stamp Act of 1977, as most recently amended by the Agriculture Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79).
  - Federally administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).
  - Funded through a combination of formula grants and reimbursements to states for qualifying expenses.
  - Designed to encourage states to increase the number and percentage of SNAP recipients enrolled in education and training, as well as the number of participants earning degrees, certificates, and other credentials with value in the labor market.
- ▶ Federal government encouraging the integration of SNAP E&T and other work support programs with state workforce development systems

# SNAP E&T and Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs)

- ▶ Work requirements signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996 under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)
  - Effectively limits SNAP participation for healthy adults without kids (aka ABAWDS) to 3 months in a 3-year period unless participating in work program for 20 hours per week
- ▶ Requirements were in effect in New Mexico from 1997 until 2009, when they were suspended with the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- ▶ NM likely will not qualify for suspension or waiver of these federal rules by the end of 2015.

# New Mexico's Proposed E&T Rules

- On May 29, 2015, published a proposed rule, outlining the policy, and the NM FFY 2016 State Plan, outlining the implementation of the E&T program.
- Public comment period occurred through July 17, 2015.
- A public hearing was held on July 17.
- HSD has conducted two roundtable discussions with members of Tribes, Pueblos and Nations on May 8 and June 19, 2015.
- The proposed effective date of the final rule is October 1, 2015
  - ABAWD limits on October 1
  - Rolling implementation of mandatory E&T by March 1, 2016.
- Financial assistance for childcare and transportation cost available.

# SNAP E&T as Proposed

- ▶ Two categories of recipients
  - Healthy adults without dependents (ABAWD)
  - Healthy adults with dependents
- ▶ Waived counties based on unemployment rate
- ▶ Individual exemptions based on pregnancy, physical or mental disability, half or full-time student, or drug or alcohol program participation
- ▶ Good cause exceptions based on individual circumstances
- ▶ Support services available for transportation and dependent care

# SNAP E&T as Proposed

- ▶ Allowable work activities
  - Individual or group job searches
  - Community service
  - Work experience
- ▶ Work activities are based on individual assessments and chosen by the recipient
- ▶ Work activity requirements vary based on the recipient's category





# E&T Eligibility

The mandatory SNAP participants are separated into two groups.  
(Federally required)

- **Healthy Adults without Dependents.** This means the SNAP recipient is:
  - Age 18 to age 49;
  - Living in a SNAP household without a child under 18 or an individual who requires care;
  - Not physically or mentally disabled;
  - Not pregnant.
  
- **Healthy Adults with Dependents.** This means the SNAP recipient is:
  - Age 16 to age 59;
  - Not responsible for a child under the age of six;
  - Not physically or mentally disabled;
  - Not pregnant;
  - Not already working more than 30 hours a week;
  - Not in a drug or alcoholic rehab program;
  - Not a Student enrolled at least half time.

# Healthy Adults with Dependents: Waivers

- ▶ Federal regulations allow the states to establish exemptions that are no more restrictive than federal law.
  - NM has proposed waiving the following Counties, Tribes, Pueblos and Nations due to having an average annual unemployment rate of 10 percent, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Counties

Luna  
Mora

## Tribe, Pueblo, Nation

Pueblo of Acoma  
Pueblo of Jemez  
Pueblo of Laguna  
Mescalero Apache Nation  
Navajo Nation  
Ohkay Owingeh  
Pueblo of Picuris  
Pueblo of Sandia  
Pueblo of San Felipe  
Kewa Pueblo  
Pueblo of Zia

# Healthy Adults without Dependents: Waivers

- ▶ HSD is proposing to waive certain geographical areas within the state based on unemployment factors.
  - NM has proposed the use of a two-year average unemployment rate, 20 percent above the national average based on data from the bureau of labor statistics. Based on this information the following Counties, Tribes, Pueblos and Nations are being proposed to be waived from the E&T program:

**Counties**

Guadalupe  
 Luna  
 McKinley  
 Mora  
 Rio Arriba  
 Taos  
 Torrance

**Tribe, Pueblo, Nation**

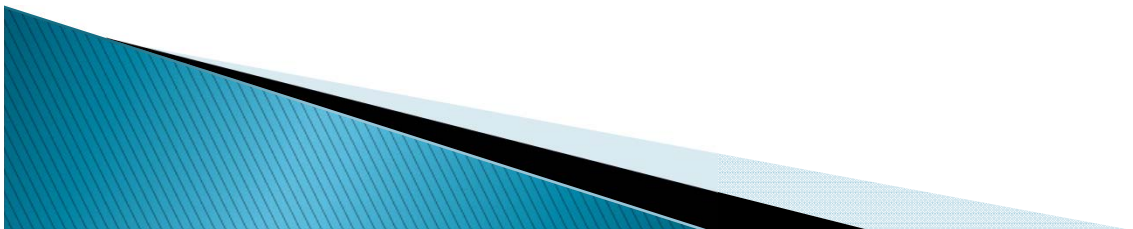
Pueblo of Acoma  
 Pueblo of Jemez  
 Jicarilla Apache Nation  
 Pueblo of Laguna  
 Mescalero Apache Nation  
 Navajo Nation  
 Pueblo of Nambe  
 Ohkay Owingeh  
 Pueblo of Picuris

Pueblo of Cochiti  
 Pueblo of San Felipe  
 Pueblo of San Ildefonso  
 Pueblo of Sandia  
 Pueblo of Santa Ana  
 Pueblo of Santa Clara  
 Kewa Pueblo  
 Pueblo of Taos  
 Pueblo of Zia  
 Pueblo of Zuni

# Activity and Hours Summary

- ▶ Mandatory participants can participate in one or multiple of the following activities:

Employment and Training Activity and Hours			
Allowable Activity	Adults without Dependents (36 months)	Adults with Dependents	
		Rural	Urban
Individual and Group Job Search	Cannot be primary and less than 1/2 the activity hours	12 contacts	24 contacts
Community Service	20 weekly hours	Up To 120 Hours	
Work Experience	Up to 20 hours weekly with FLSA standard		



# SNAP E&T by the Numbers: Participants

Based on the proposed changes, HSD estimates:

## Healthy Adults without Dependents Requirements

- 21,461 healthy adults without dependents subject to reinstated requirements.
- After geographic waivers, this number reduced to about 18,300

## Healthy Adults with Dependents Requirements

- 62,538 mandatory healthy adults with dependents.
- After geographic waivers, this number reduced to about 52,500

# SNAP E&T for Native Americans

- ▶ **Healthy Adults without Dependents**
  - Less than 150 mandatory participants
- ▶ **Healthy Adults with Dependents**
  - Less than 1,500 mandatory participants



# Waivers and Exceptions

- ▶ Proposed rules and state plan account for areas with high unemployment
  - State has flexibility in the method of calculation
- ▶ Proposed rules provide for a “Good Cause” exception to consider specific situations
- ▶ Examples of “Good Cause” exception for circumstances beyond an individual’s control:
  - Lack of transportation;
  - Distance to work activity; and
  - Individual is a victim of family violence.

# SNAP E&T Timeline as Proposed

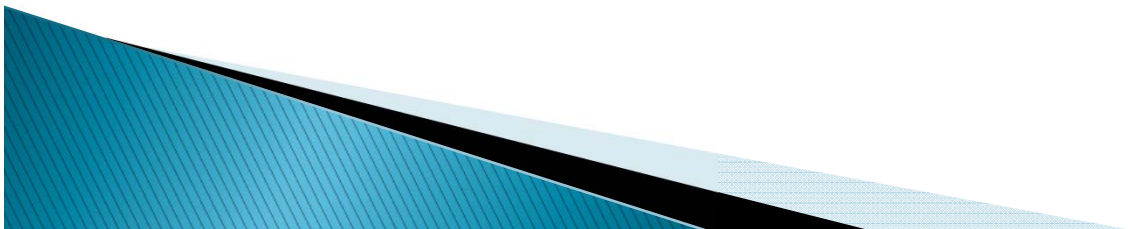
- ▶ October 1, 2015 – Healthy Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) E&T requirements go into effect
- ▶ March 1, 2016 – Healthy Adults with Dependents E&T requirements go into effect
  - Rolling implementation based on SNAP recipient's recertification date





# SNAP E&T Outcomes

- ▶ Develop a good understanding of the knowledge, skills and abilities that individuals will need to obtain gainful employment.
- ▶ Provide individuals with access to programs and services.
- ▶ Encourage individuals to gain skills, training, work or experience that will increase self sufficiency.



# Questions

