



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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How DC Is Using the Food Stamps Program to Help Residents Get Jobs

By Ed Lazere

Mayor Gray is eager to get more DC residents into jobs, which is important in a city where unemployment is still painfully high [for some groups](#). One additional resource the Gray is tapping into to do this is through the federal food stamps program, now known as SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Through SNAP's employment and training component, the District will draw on federal funds to help non-profits expand their training programs, to provide assistance to families after leaving welfare for work, and to help residents exiting off of unemployment insurance.

While the SNAP program may seem like an odd place to look for funding for jobs, it really is a natural. Everyone who receives SNAP benefits, which are paid in full by the federal government, is low-income. So it makes sense that SNAP includes a component to help recipients get a job or to get a better job to provide for their families. Under the SNAP employment and training program (SNAP E&T), the federal government pays for half of the expenses of education, training, and additional supports such as transportation that lead to employment or help people keep a job.

How will the District use SNAP Employment and Training funds next year?

- **Supporting non-profit training providers.** Goodwill Industries, Strive DC, and the Latin American Youth Center will get \$300,000 collectively to enhance their training programs for residents who get SNAP benefits.
- **Helping residents who have moved from welfare to work.** The District will provide transitional support, including transportation assistance for those on TANF – DC's welfare-to-work program – to get jobs that allow them to exit the program.
- **Helping residents move off unemployment benefits.** The District will spend \$1 million to provide services to SNAP recipients exiting unemployment.

These changes represent a diverse set of ways to improve job opportunities for DC residents who need the most help. DCFPI applauds the Gray administration for pursuing these additional federal funds to help more residents get back to work.