

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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February 8, 2017

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to eligible low-income households. As a condition of SNAP eligibility, recipients must comply with SNAP work requirements unless otherwise exempt. While the majority of SNAP clients are exempt due to age, ability, and availability, federal data shows that about 15 percent of all SNAP participants have been subject to the work requirements in recent years. Each state operates a SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program that is in part federally-funded, and federal law defines the purpose of these programs as providing SNAP recipients with opportunities to gain skills, training, or experience to improve their employment prospects and reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. Earlier research, however, by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and others found that SNAP E&T programs had limited success in achieving this goal. Further, although state waivers during and after the Great Recession allowed some SNAP recipients to receive benefits without fulfilling work requirements, which may have reduced participation in E&T programs, many of these waivers have been discontinued in recent years. In response, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized up to \$200 million for the development, implementation, and evaluation of up to 10 E&T pilot projects designed to reduce dependency and increase work effort under SNAP.

While some states operate their SNAP E&T programs independently, others partner with other public, private, and nonprofit agencies to design, fund, and provide E&T services. Research has shown that promising job training strategies involve a mix of employment services, job training, and supportive service, which requires coordination and collaboration across systems that provide specialized services or training. These systems may include workforce development agencies, schools and community colleges, and public and non-profit human services and employment services agencies. States with E&T programs that do not collaborate with other entities may be less effective and duplicate E&T services provided through other programs, potentially wasting taxpayers' money. As GAO has previously noted, various federal agencies administer federally-funded employment and training programs, and almost all of these

programs overlap with at least one other program in that they provide similar services to similar populations.

To improve understanding of the federal investment in SNAP E&T programs, we would like GAO to examine:

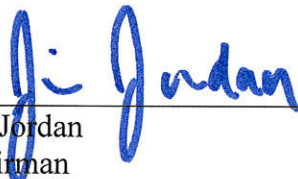
1. How has the number of SNAP recipients participating in E&T programs, and federal expenditures on those programs, changed over time?
2. To what extent have state SNAP E&T programs coordinated with other programs offering similar services?
3. How has USDA supported and overseen state E&T programs?

If you have any questions about this request, please have your staff contact Kevin Eichinger of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Jim Jordan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health Care,
Benefits, and Administrative Rules



Mark Meadows
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits, and Administrative Rules

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations