

**Annual Report to Congress**  
**SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Pilot Projects**  
**Authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014**

**I. BACKGROUND**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is a critical work support for low-income households. SNAP's E&T program provides critical and needed skills and job training to non-exempt SNAP participants so they can obtain meaningful jobs that lead to self-sufficiency. SNAP E&T provides assistance to unemployed and underemployed clients in the form of job search, job skills training, education (basic, post-secondary, vocational), work experience or training, and workfare, but information is limited on what is most effective in connecting these participants to gainful employment.

Authorized and funded by section 4022 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the SNAP E&T pilot projects give Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and States the opportunity to test innovative strategies and approaches that connect low-income households to good paying jobs and thereby reduce their reliance on public assistance.

**A. Pilot Projects**

In March 2015, USDA awarded grants (ranging from \$8.9 million to \$22.3 million) to ten pilots through a competitive grants solicitation. Pilot projects in California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, Vermont, and Washington were chosen.

The pilots have designed and are building job-driven employment and training strategies that connect to in-demand and emerging industries, foster new partnerships, breakdown silos, and incorporate evidence-based strategies that are being tested for the first time among the target population. In most of the States, grantees are building new infrastructure and creating new capacity to support the pilot and its services. This includes creating new partnerships between State agencies responsible for the administration of SNAP, workforce development agencies, employers, community colleges, and community-based organizations. Most of the projects will complete preparation and launch operations in early 2016.

**B. The Evaluation**

The Act provides funding for rigorous longitudinal evaluation of the ten pilots. USDA contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, in partnership with MDRC, along with subcontractors Insight Policy Research, Kone Consulting, and Decision Information Resources, to conduct the evaluation.

The evaluation of each pilot includes four components: (1) a random-assignment **impact evaluation** that will identify what works and what works for whom, examining impacts on

employment/earnings, acceptance of public assistance, and other outcomes, such as food security, health, well-being, and housing; (2) an **implementation analysis** that will document the context and operations of each pilot as well as help interpret and understand impacts within and across pilots; (3) a **participation analysis** that will examine the characteristics and service paths of pilot participants and assess whether the presence of the pilots and their offer of services or requirements to participate affect whether people apply to SNAP (entry effects), and (4) a cost-benefit **analysis** that will estimate the return on each dollar invested.

Data to support the evaluation will come from multiple sources. The primary source of data on employment, earnings, receipt of public assistance, and service receipt for all the pilot project participants will come from administrative records on research participants obtained from SNAP, Unemployment Insurance (UI), and other agencies. Each consenting pilot participant will provide baseline data at time of enrollment prior to random assignment. In addition, surveys of a random sample of about half the pilot participants will be administered at 12 months and 36 months after random assignment. During three rounds of data-collection site visits, the evaluation teams will conduct indepth interviews with pilot project staff, conduct focus groups with program participants, observe operational activities, and review relevant documents. Service providers and employers will also be interviewed. All participating pilots will provide cost data on a quarterly basis and complete staff time-use surveys, annually, for the cost-benefit analyses.

### **C. Reports**

Study findings will be shared through annual progress reports to Congress, an interim report, and a final report. This first report describes achievements and accomplishments during fiscal year (FY) 2015 (the study's first year), cites activities planned for 2016, and provides the overall evaluation study timeline.

## **II. ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **A. Pilot Projects**

#### **1. Selection of grantees**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released the Request for Applications (RFA) on August 25, 2014. Applications were due November 24, 2014. FNS sought to award up to ten pilots that reflected a diverse mix of geographic locations, services in urban or rural areas, proposed pilot services, and targeted groups of SNAP participants. FNS also sought pilots testing programs that assign work registrants to mandatory and voluntary participation in E&T activities.

In addition, applications were reviewed with respect to their ability to address big-picture, policy-relevant questions as well as methodological and operational factors. Methodological and operational criteria included (1) adequacy of the size of the proposed research sample;

(2) existence of clear, distinct differences between the services offered to the program and control (business-as-usual) groups; (3) pilot capacity to mount the proposed new program approach well; (4) willingness to implement a random assignment design and to work flexibly with the evaluation team; and (5) pilot ability to collect or access the data needed to document program enrollment and participation and measure impacts. USDA announced the selection of the final ten pilots on March 20, 2015.

A grantee orientation was held at USDA’s FNS headquarters, in Alexandria, Virginia, on April 28-29, 2015. This meeting oriented grantees to the evaluation of the pilot projects and strengthened communication and working relationships between FNS, grantees, and the evaluation team. It also helped grantees begin to prepare for the implementation of their pilots and the evaluation.

The majority of grantees did not have the existing infrastructure to deliver the job-driven, skill-based services that their pilot proposed to deliver. Therefore, the first six months of the pre-implementation period have focused largely on establishing partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), refining appropriate curriculum and programs for the target population, and connecting to systems, programs, and employers with no prior experience in SNAP E&T. Additionally, grantees have been navigating the complex structure of the rigorous evaluation by working out policies to support the evaluation, securing data sharing agreements, and updating data systems to support a robust evaluation.

## 2. Overview of Pilot Projects

The ten SNAP E&T pilots were selected to represent and serve diverse geographic areas and target populations with innovative E&T services. Pilots vary in the mandatory or voluntary participation requirements and in the structure and types of enhanced services that the pilots will offer. This section summarizes the key characteristics and features of the pilots.

**Cooperative agreement recipient and amount.** The pilot grantees are the State agencies that administer SNAP. The amount of the grant awards ranged from \$8.9 million (Vermont) to \$22.3 million (Virginia) (Table 1).

**Table 1. Cooperative Agreement Recipients and Amounts**

State	Grantee	Award amount (\$)
CA	Fresno County California Department of Social Services	12,166,778
DE	Delaware Department of Health and Social Services	18,765,069
GA	Georgia Division of Family and Children Services	15,011,438
IL	Illinois Department of Human Services	21,857,568
KS	Kansas Department for Children and Families	13,509,167
KY	Kentucky Department for Community Based Services	19,987,148
MS	Mississippi Department of Human Services	20,505,890
VA	Virginia Department of Social Services	22,329,952
VT	Vermont Department for Children and Families	8,959,379
WA	Washington Department of Social and Health Services	22,000,000

**Geography.** The pilots are located in six of the seven FNS regions (Table 2): Western (California, and Washington); Mountain Plains (Kansas); Midwest (Illinois); Northeast (Vermont); Mid-Atlantic (Delaware and Virginia); and Southeast (Georgia, Kentucky, and Mississippi). Only the Southwest region is not represented in the evaluation.

**Coverage within the States.** The pilots cover various types of service areas within their States (Table 2). Two pilots (Delaware and Vermont—the smallest of the pilot States) are statewide, which means that eligible SNAP participants anywhere in the State can participate. The pilot in Fresno, California, is a large, single-county program, and pilot services will be offered everywhere in the county.<sup>1</sup> Five grantees are offering the pilot in multiple counties but not the whole State: Georgia is offering its pilot in 10 of the 27 counties that will soon provide SNAP E&T services; Kansas is offering its pilot in four regions of the State that make up 35 counties; Kentucky is offering its pilot in eight counties in the southeast corner of the State; Washington is offering its pilot in four counties; and Virginia is offering the pilot in 30 counties. Finally, the two remaining grantees' service areas are not defined by county. Mississippi is offering its pilot in five community college districts, and Illinois is offering its pilot in seven local workforce investment areas that are spread over 33 counties.

**Urban/rural areas.** There is also variation in whether the pilot areas will serve urban or rural communities (Table 2). Seven pilots are serving both rural and urban communities. For example, Virginia is delivering services in counties ranging from coastal Virginia Beach (about 440,000 residents) to central Cumberland County (about 9,000 residents). Georgia is the only pilot serving solely urban areas, focusing on its Atlanta and Savannah metro areas. Kentucky and Vermont are serving exclusively rural areas.

**Target populations.** All pilots are targeting work registrants who are unemployed or underemployed for services (Table 2). Some are focusing on able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) and even more specific populations within the ABAWD population. For example, Georgia is targeting ABAWD who have been unemployed for at least 12 months. Virginia is also targeting ABAWD, particularly those with low skills and noncustodial parents who owe child support and face potential time in jail. Several pilots are targeting more specific populations. Vermont is targeting the homeless, ex-offenders, and those with substance abuse problems, and Washington is targeting work registrants with significant barriers to employment, such as lack of housing or long-term unemployment.

**Number of pilot participants.** FNS's guidance in the RFA for grantees was 3,000 to 5,000 pilot participants per grantee to guarantee the necessary sample size to detect significant impacts from the pilot projects services. Table 2 shows the approximate sample size for each pilot project.

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<sup>1</sup> California is State supervised and county administered. In county-administered States, the policy is set at the State level, but the county runs eligibility and operations.

**Table 2. Overview of Pilots**

Site	Target population	Pilot location	Urban/ rural	FNS region	Sample size <sup>1</sup>
CA	Work registrants—families with children, unemployed/underemployed, high school dropouts, those with a criminal record, disadvantaged individuals, and those with limited work experience	9 locations in Fresno county	Urban and rural	Western	3,400
DE	New SNAP work registrants who are unemployed or underemployed and are low-skilled or have limited work experience	Statewide	Urban and rural	Mid-Atlantic	5,292
GA	Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) (18-49) who have been unemployed for at least 12 months	10 counties in Atlanta and Savannah metro areas	Urban	Southeast	5,000
IL	Work registrants who are unemployed/underemployed with low skills/limited work experience and those working 20+ hours/week, but needing skill upgrades	33 counties across the State (7 local workforce investment areas)	Urban and rural	Midwest	5,000
KS	Work registrants	35 counties organized into 4 regions	Urban and rural	Mountain Plains	3,890
KY	Work registrants	8 counties in eastern Kentucky Promise Zone	Rural	Southeast	4,000
MS	New and existing ABAWD with low skills or limited work experience	5 community college districts	Urban and rural	Southeast	4,950
VA	ABAWD, those with low skills, and noncustodial parents who owe child support and face potential time in jail	30 locations	Urban and rural	Mid-Atlantic	5,386
VT	Homeless people, individuals connected to the correctional system, substance abusers	Statewide	Rural	Northeast	3,000
WA	New work registrants with significant barriers to employment: long-term unemployed, homeless, limited English proficiency, veterans, noncustodial parents with delinquent payment history	4 counties (King, Pierce, Spokane, and Yakima)	Urban and rural	Western	14,000

<sup>1</sup>The sample size represents the sum of the treatment and control groups and, for most sites, is evenly split between the two groups.

**Mandatory or Voluntary E&T Services.** As a condition of eligibility for SNAP, nonexempt recipients must participate in E&T if assigned by the State. E&T programs may also serve SNAP recipients who are exempt but volunteer to participate. Two pilot projects are mandatory (Georgia and Mississippi), seven are voluntary (California, Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington), and one (Illinois) is serving both mandatory and voluntary participants.

**Pilot Services.** Table 3 summarizes the services provided for each pilot. The services available to the treatment group vary substantially across pilots, though there are a few common components, including:

- Comprehensive assessment is a skills and/or clinical assessment that ascertains the participants’ work readiness, skills, and barriers to employment. Barriers to employment generally include housing, transportation, child care, substance abuse, language, or education level.
- Case management services generally start by identifying a lead case manager. The case manager is selected to assure each participant receives the appropriate level of supportive services based on the comprehensive assessment. The case manager will develop a detailed individualized work and barrier-reduction plan for the pilot participant. Case management typically includes ongoing assessments of skills and barriers, regular meetings with the participant, and comprehensive tracking and referrals to services.
- Supportive services will address participants’ barriers to participation in the pilot and employment. These services will generally include rapid rehousing, transportation, financial literacy training, clothes for interviews, substance abuse treatment referrals, transportation, child care reimbursement, and others.
- Other E&T services. Grantees are offering a range of E&T services, including subsidized employment or internships, on-the-job training, job search assistance, occupational training, job readiness training, or basic education.

**Table 3. Pilot Services**

Site	Treatment intervention
CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and assessment</li> <li>• Subsidized and unsubsidized employment</li> <li>• In-house education and training, support and job retention services</li> <li>• Financial incentives for enrollment and participation</li> </ul>
DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Wraparound services to address barriers</li> <li>• Work-ready participants choose from four employment training tracks (three sector-based: construction, culinary arts, or manufacturing; or an enhanced broad spectrum job placement track)</li> <li>• Non-work-ready participants enter job preparation courses and then may move to other tracks when ready for work</li> </ul>
GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive work readiness assessment identifies work-ready and non-work-ready participants</li> <li>• For work-ready participants: job search, placement, and retention assistance for work-ready participants</li> <li>• For non-work-ready participants: pre-employment education and training services, followed by job search, placement, and retention assistance</li> </ul>

Site	Treatment intervention
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive services</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Substance abuse/mental health treatment</li> </ul>
IL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated case management</li> <li>• Comprehensive assessment leading to tailored services based on experience, education, skill, and interests</li> <li>• Job training in high-demand sectors; training includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adult education/ESL Bridge Program</li> <li>– Career and technical education</li> <li>– Short-term occupational skills training</li> <li>– Career pathways and enhanced on-the-job training (earn and learn)</li> <li>– Job search</li> <li>– Job retention services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
KS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Job training</li> <li>• Subsidized internships</li> <li>• Work-based learning</li> <li>• Job retention services</li> </ul>
KY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Coordinated supportive services</li> <li>• Employment/training services aligned with individual education plan</li> <li>• Success coaches at employers/providers</li> <li>• Reimbursement for monthly transportation and child care costs</li> </ul>
MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-week career assessment program (CAP) provided by community college</li> <li>• Then one of three career pathways based on individual career plan: academic (GED or college vocational education); life skills (additional work or behavioral skills); or work (subsidized or unsubsidized employment or more career training)</li> <li>• Supportive services, including transportation and child care reimbursement during CAP</li> </ul>
VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customizable career pathways to employment</li> <li>• In-depth assessment and adult career coaches</li> <li>• In-class and online instruction to improve basic academic skills, digital-literacy skills, and professional soft skills; occupational skills and other services; or expansion of PluggedInVA at seven community colleges, a training and contextualized GED instruction program and community college co-enrollment</li> </ul>
VT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical assessment</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Career-readiness training, basic education, and literacy services</li> <li>• Work-based learning, Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, job placement services</li> <li>• Wraparound services to address barriers</li> <li>• Job retention services</li> </ul>
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Comprehensive life skills course</li> <li>• Work-based learning opportunities, including subsidized employment and on-the-job training</li> <li>• Wraparound services to address barriers</li> </ul>

**Timing of Pilot Operations Startup.** The proposed start dates vary across pilots. One project began offering services in December 2015 (Washington), and the remainder will begin in January or February 2016. The first 3 to 4 months of pilot operations will pretest and assess pilot services and evaluation procedures. After this initial implementation phase, projects will move

into full implementation for the duration of their enrollment periods. Pilots will operate for 3 years from their date of startup.

### **3. Progress and near-future implementation goals of individual pilot projects**

Pilot projects have made substantial progress during the nine-month period, since grants were awarded. A more detailed summary of each pilot's accomplishments during 2015 can be seen at the end of this report in the section entitled **Update on Pilot Progress**. Below, we briefly highlight key changes in services, staffing, partners, and infrastructure made possible from pilot grant funding:

- **Fresno, California:** Reading and Beyond (RAB) will be implementing a new, subsidized employment program and will also offer retention and training incentives to treatment group members. RAB will be working with the Fresno Economic Development Corporation to help develop and support its subsidized job program and is in the process of developing the program framework for this relationship. RAB is increasing the number of program offices from three to nine, expanding from urban to both urban and rural locations, and finalizing lease agreements for the six new offices. RAB is also in the process of hiring new staff, including Career & Family Navigators.
- **Delaware:** The pilot will expand and deepen SNAP E&T services far beyond those currently offered in Delaware. In addition to comprehensive case management and barrier reduction services, treatment group members will receive training through four tracks. In three of the four tracks, program staff will provide industry-specific training and will connect individuals with subsidized employment, apprenticeships, or internships. Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is in the process of hiring outreach specialists to recruit participants and to provide treatment group members with ongoing case management services. They also hired outreach specialist supervisors, a program manager, data specialists, a contracts administrator, and a fiscal administrator. DHSS is negotiating leases on two new offices for the pilot staff.
- **Georgia:** Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (GDFCS) and Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) will be implementing a new coordinated multi-agency assessment and case management delivery system. This comprehensive system, along with the possibility for occupational skills training, as needed, will be available to eligible SNAP E&T pilot participants for the first time. GDFCS and GDOL continue to work together to develop this system for the delivery of services. In addition to GDFCS and GDOL's collaboration to provide services, GDOL is continuing to develop an agreement with the Local Workforce Investment Areas to provide occupational skills and other training services to pilot participants who will be identified as likely to benefit from them. GDOL completed hiring staff in early November 2015.
- **Illinois:** Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Illinois State Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) solicited for and selected pilot service providers; they released a Request for Applications (RFA) in mid-September and awarded contracts in December in each of the pilot regions. IDHS and DCEO have finalized details



for the pilot orientation, participant screening and referral procedures, and provider service requirements.

- **Kansas:** Kansas Department of Children and Families (KDCF) is in the process of selecting the service providers that will provide the pilot services in each of the pilot regions. Thus far, several service providers across these regions have been identified, and KDCF is working on preparing contracts for them. KDCF will continue to identify additional service providers. KDCF has hired or is hiring new staff for the pilot, including team supervisors for each of the four regions; a Senior Employer Liaison who will supervise the other four across the State; employer liaisons; a Data Liaison to work with the Kansas University team and the Department of Labor; a Senior Administrative Assistant; and Career Navigators.
- **Kentucky:** The Kentucky Department for Community-Based Services (DCBS) is working with most service providers in the pilot area, including the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment (KCC), the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (a regional training provider within KCC), Kentucky Adult Education, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and Kentucky vocational rehabilitation. DCBS and their partners also are developing Employer Resource Networks comprising many small to medium-sized area employers collaborating to provide workplace coaches and employment. Kentucky's pilot project will coordinate primarily the currently available services in the pilot area under one umbrella for SNAP clients to use; however, the pilot will offer comprehensive case management and additional support services to the treatment group. DCBS hired a new project manager to coordinate the pilot and work closely with the partners. DCBS will not open new offices in the pilot area, but SNAP E&T was not previously offered in these counties, so they are expanding the program services (treatment only) to this area of the State.
- **Mississippi:** The National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC), a center within Mississippi State University, and the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) are working with the five community colleges and Jobs for Mississippi Graduates on the pilot services. The pilot leadership team has completed the design of a four-week Career Assessment Program to assist participants in developing skills and a career plan. MDHS and nSPARC have executed an MOU with each of the five community colleges (the providers of the pilot services) and colleges have hired career navigators (about two per college) to deliver the pilot services.
- **Vermont:** On September 15, 2015, the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) received approval from the State Legislative Joint Fiscal Office to implement its pilot, which was required before DCF could start hiring pilot staff, establishing agreements with providers, or otherwise spending grant funds (including the purchase of a pilot management information system [MIS]). DCF will partner with five core service providers: Capstone Community Action, Vermont Department of Labor, VocRehab Vermont, Community College of Vermont, and Vermont Adult Learning. VocRehab Vermont will serve as the lead case management agency and will identify and execute agreements with providers of wraparound support services to the pilot target populations (homeless, substance abusers, and ex-offenders). DCF will hire a Pilot Director, Pilot Manager, and

Pilot Data Manager. DCF posted job announcements for Pilot Director the week of October 5, 2015, then interviewed for the position, and they plan to fill it by early November. DCF will post job announcements for a manager and data manager after they hire a pilot director. Provider agencies Capstone Community Action, Vermont Department of Labor, and VocRehab, are also hiring new staff for the pilot.

- **Virginia:** In partnership with the Virginia Community College System, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Virginia's Adult Education division, Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) will implement a pilot featuring three distinct service tracks that are tied to participants' literacy level, as established by the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), an assessment product in adult basic education. VDSS will be working with the seven State community colleges nearest their offices to deliver new pilot services. The agency will also partner with the Virginia Department of Child Support Enforcement, a division of VDSS, as an additional referral partner for prospective study participants who are noncustodial parents. The VDSS pilot project director and communication specialist have been hired. VDSS has completed hiring of some staff (e.g., local VDSS office coordinators; community college career coaches) and is in the process of hiring other staff (e.g., Data Analyst, and additional community college career coaches). Community colleges are currently working with VCU and their local Adult Education partners to create contracts for TABE services.
- **Washington:** The Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is launching a four-county Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE) pilot. DSHS developed a new comprehensive job readiness training curriculum for the pilot called Strategies for Success. DSHS has hired project staff and executed contracts with providers. Washington negotiated contracts with 16 community-based organizations, two community colleges, and six partners. The community-based organizations and community colleges will provide direct services to participants. The pilot's partners include four workforce development councils (WDCs), the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD), and the Seattle Jobs Initiative.

## **B. Evaluation Implementation**

To ensure a rigorous and independent evaluation of each demonstration project, FNS awarded a contract to Mathematica Policy Research in December 2014. After the contract award, the evaluation team provided a technical review of grantee applications for FNS and conducted a two-day orientation with the ten pilots. Since then, the evaluation team has focused on (1) preparing an updated evaluation and study plan, (2) obtaining Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and State Institutional Review Board (IRB) study approval, and (3) providing technical assistance (TA) to pilot projects to prepare the startup of pilot operations and their evaluations.

### **1. Preparation of updated study plan and Technical Working Group**

The evaluation team submitted to FNS an updated study plan describing the activities required to meet the evaluation objectives. The evaluation team also organized a technical working group

(TWG) made up of academics, experts in public policy, and leaders of private industry (who bring different perspectives on SNAP, employment and training, and program evaluation) and held the first TWG meeting on August 8, 2015. The TWG found the proposed evaluation design to be sound and offered constructive comments on how to improve it. Mathematica submitted to FNS the final TWG Meeting Summary Memorandum, which summarized issues raised by the TWG, guidance provided, decisions reached, and additional followup required.

## **2. OMB clearance and IRB study approval**

A notice of the proposed information collection and an invitation for public comment was published in the Federal Register, May 20, 2015, vol. 80, no. 97, pp. 28931-28936. The study's OMB clearance package, inclusive of all instruments and supporting materials, is currently under review by OMB.

Mathematica also submitted and received approval of a study clearance package to its IRB, the New England Institutional Review Board (NEIRB). Mathematica has obtained approvals from the IRBs of five States (California, Delaware, Georgia, Vermont, and Washington). Three other States require a separate submission to their State IRB, but proof of approval from NEIRB will expedite that clearance. In two States (Kansas and Illinois), NEIRB approval is sufficient.

## **3. Technical assistance provided to pilot projects**

Evaluation support of the ten pilots is a critical factor for successfully meeting the evaluation's objectives. Guidance and technical assistance to pilots from the evaluation team and FNS began with the grantee orientation at FNS on April 28-29, 2015. Since that meeting, through conference calls and in-person meetings, the evaluation team and FNS have been working closely and collaboratively with each site during Phase I (planning period) to refine program operational plans and evaluation design plans and to negotiate the MOU that will delineate the roles and responsibilities of the sites and the evaluation team. In addition, the team has been negotiating data agreements, as needed, with data providers (State SNAP agencies, State UI agencies); developing the random assignment system that all sites will use; and scheduling and conducting training and evaluation enrollment and random assignment procedures.

## **4. Progress to date for baseline data collection and implementation study**

Mathematica has developed the generic E&T pilot information system (EPIS), a Web-based data management and random assignment system that will support evaluation enrollment, consent, collection of baseline information, and random assignment to treatment and control groups. Mathematica will tailor EPIS to handle the specific requirements of each pilot, prioritizing work according to the planned startup date of each pilot. The evaluation team will also provide an evaluation procedures manual for each pilot project.

The implementation analysis will document the context and operations of each pilot, as well as help interpret and understand impacts within and across pilots. The evaluation team will conduct three rounds of implementation study data collection—one visit per year, with a specific focus: the first round of site visits will collect data on planning and early implementation and is

scheduled after the beginning of random assignment; the second round will collect data on operations and is scheduled for the midpoint of operations; and the third round will collect data on each pilot's full implementation and pilot closeout processes near the end of operations.

### **III. 2016 PLANNING**

The following are key activities planned for 2016:

#### **Beginning in January 2016**

- The evaluation team will complete the training of pilot project staff, and pilot operations will begin in the remaining nine pilots (California, Delaware, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Mississippi, Vermont, and Virginia).
- The evaluation team will collect baseline information through EPIS on evaluation participants enrolled during January-December 2016 across the 10 pilots.
- The evaluation team will conduct Phase II monitoring and corrective TA activities of all pilots, covering both pilot operations and evaluation procedures. Monitoring includes (1) review of reports and data from EPIS and pilot projects' MIS, and (2) in-person visits and conference call meetings with pilot project staff to ensure that pilots are operating successfully and following evaluation protocols and procedures.

#### **Beginning in Spring 2016**

- The cost data team will collect quarterly cost data from the ten pilots, beginning April 2016.
- The pilot evaluation teams will (1) conduct first-round implementation study site visits to the ten pilots, including focus groups, staff interviews, and document reviews, and (2) prepare memos summarizing findings.

#### **Beginning in Fall 2016**

- Mathematica and staff from Decision Information Resources, a firm subcontracting with Mathematica, will prepare for, train for, and begin administering the 12-month followup surveys to a random subsample of evaluation participants.
- Mathematica will submit renewal applications to the NEIRB and relevant State IRBs for continued clearance for the next year of study.

### **IV. OVERVIEW OF FUTURE STUDY ACTIVITIES**

The remaining activities and deliverables include the following:

- **Followup survey data collection.** For a sample of pilot participants in each site, Mathematica will administer followup surveys about 12 and 36 months after participants are randomly assigned.
- **Administrative data collection.** On an ongoing basis throughout each pilot, the evaluation team will obtain SNAP administrative caseload data, UI wage records, and SNAP MIS data on service receipt. The frequency and timing of data pulls will be specific to each site.
- **Cost data collection.** On a quarterly basis throughout pilot implementation, Mathematica will obtain cost data from each grantee through cost workbooks administered to each pilot. The first round of collection will occur immediately after the pilot planning period and will collect data on startup costs. Data on ongoing pilot implementation costs will be collected on a quarterly basis thereafter. Mathematica will submit to FNS memoranda on data quality of the cost data in early 2018 and late 2020.
- **Technical Working Group meetings #2 and #3.** Mathematica will conduct the second and third of three TWG meetings in Washington, D.C., in early 2019 and 2021. The second meeting will focus on interim findings and the third on final findings.
- **Reports and briefings.** The Mathematica team will prepare reports, including annual reports to Congress and interim and final reports for each pilot. It will also submit interim and final summary reports that synthesize findings across pilots (to be submitted to FNS in March 2019 and December 2020, respectively).

## UPDATE ON PILOT PROGRESS

### OVERVIEW

As noted in the report, the majority of States did not have the existing infrastructure to implement pilots immediately. All States demonstrated their capacity to deliver high quality education, employment, and training services. However, in the majority of pilot sites, these services were not connected to the existing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) system. In the preimplementation phase for the pilot projects, grantees have accomplished significant milestones in securing first-time ever partnerships across the statewide workforce development system. They have successfully executed interagency Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and new contacts for service delivery. Grantees have also worked to upgrade data systems and navigate complex data sharing requirements in order to provide the data necessary for the rigorous longitudinal evaluation.

The pilot projects do not change SNAP work requirements or who is subject to the work requirements. However, the pilots do include new activities, such as subsidized employment and drug or alcohol rehabilitation programs. As such, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and grantees have worked through policy implications to balance the needs of program integrity, the innovative and job-driven nature of the pilot project designs, and the evaluation requirements. During the preimplementation phase, FNS, grantees, and the evaluation contractor have held weekly conference calls to discuss progress, challenges, and next steps. FNS and the evaluation contractor have also had several site visits with each grantee to review services and procedures necessary to implement the project.

Several grantees have developed new curricula or adapted existing curricula to meet the unique needs of their target population. The pilots provide an opportunity to test proven strategies that have worked with other low-income, low-skill populations, and these strategies must be thoughtfully tailored for each project. Grantees have worked with a number of stakeholders and leveraged the expertise of workforce development experts, community colleges, research organizations, and community-based organizations to adapt these materials.

## FRESNO CALIFORNIA PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Planning for pilot services and evaluation design is going well and considerable progress has been made to prepare for the pilot launch in January 2016. The California State Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, recently approved the Fresno SNAP E&T pilot project, which helps pave the way for other agreements to be finalized.

**New Staff or Locations:** Reading and Beyond (RAB), the lead SNAP E&T provider in Fresno County, is increasing the number of offices from three to nine, expanding to both urban and rural locations, and finalizing lease agreements for the six new sites in November. RAB is also in the process of hiring 37 total new staff, including 28 new career and family navigators to staff the new offices that will provide enhanced pilot services, as well as “business-as-usual” CalFresh E&T services. RAB will also be hiring three lead career and family navigators, one financial liaison, one partnership manager, three education navigators, and one new employer liaison.

**New Services:** RAB will be implementing a new subsidized employment program and will begin offering retention and training incentives to program participants when the pilot launches. They are now in the process of developing and planning for those new services.

**Partners and Providers:** RAB will be working with the Fresno Economic Development Corporation to help develop and support a subsidized job program. RAB is in the process of developing the program framework and structure for this relationship.

**Training:** The Fresno Department of Social Services (DSS) is training its caseworkers on updated intake procedures for identifying work registrants in November 2015. The process for referring work registrants to RAB is also in place. The evaluation team will train RAB staff on enrollment-consent-baseline data collection and random assignment processes the first week of January 2016.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** RAB customized a service receipt data-tracking system (TRAX database), which is now up and running. RAB will use the system to track pilot participants when it starts delivering services.

## DELAWARE PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Planning for the Work Opportunity Networks to Develop Employment Readiness (WONDER) pilot services and evaluation design are moving forward well in advance of the pilot launch in February 2016. The Delaware Human Subjects Review Board has provided conditional approval for the study, and the evaluation team is working with them to obtain final approval.

**New Staff or Locations:** Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is in the process of hiring 19 case managers to identify potential participants and to provide treatment group members with ongoing case management services. They also hired two supervisors, a program manager, two data specialists, a contracts administrator, and a fiscal administrator, all of whom started between September and November 2015. DHSS is negotiating leases on two new offices, in Wilmington and Milford. These offices will house the case managers and job placement specialists, who will work with those clients in Track 4 (described below). The offices will also include computer workstations for use by pilot participants.

**New Services:** Treatment services will be far more extensive than the current SNAP E&T services offered in Delaware. In addition to comprehensive case management and barrier reduction services, treatment group members will receive training services through four tracks. Three service tracks provide industry-specific training and will connect individuals with subsidized employment, apprenticeships, or internships. Under the fourth track, participants will receive remedial education and soft skills training, if appropriate, as well as broad-spectrum job placement support services.

**Partners and Providers:** Delaware DHSS will work with CareerTeam to provide initial assessment of treatment group members and remedial education and soft skills training (Track 4). CareerTeam also will continue to provide control services. Construction preapprenticeship training services will be provided by Eastside Rising (Track 1). The Food Bank of Delaware's culinary school will provide culinary training and support to treatment group members in the culinary arts track (Track 2). Through Track 3, eligible treatment group members can enroll in manufacturing training provided by Delaware Technical College and can then enter subsidized employment with Kraft Foods. DHSS negotiated MOU with each of its pilot service providers and partners. These MOU will be executed in time for the pilot start date.

**Training:** Delaware DHSS and the evaluation team will train the pilot's outreach specialists on enrollment/consent/baseline data collection and random assignment. This training will occur in December in preparation for the start date. All other training DHSS provides will occur in December 2015 and January 2016.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** DHSS is in the process of implementing a new Management Information System (MIS) so little pilot-specific information can be added to this system. Instead, DHSS will track service receipt data in an external system, using an Access database. With DHSS assistance, the evaluation team is negotiating access to Unemployment Insurance (UI) records with the Delaware Department of Labor.



## GEORGIA PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Georgia continues to make progress in the development of service delivery plans in preparation for the launch of random assignment in January 2016. The evaluation team is working closely with the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) to streamline the planned service delivery to eliminate potential points of dropoff in the service sequence. The Georgia State IRB recently provided conditional approval of the Georgia SNAP E&T pilot project.

**New Staff or Locations:** No new locations will be established for the Georgia pilot. DFCS staff is currently in place. GDOL is in the process of hiring staff and expects to complete that process by the end of November.

**New Services:** DFCS and GDOL will be implementing a new coordinated multiagency assessment and case management delivery system, instead of providing completely new services. This comprehensive case management system, along with the possibility for occupational skills training as needed, will be available to eligible SNAP E&T pilot participants for the first time. DFCS and GDOL continue to work together to develop this new coordinated system for the delivery of services.

**Partners and Providers:** DFCS and GDOL are executing an interagency MOU, and once this agreement is in place, the project leadership will complete the agreements between GDOL and the project's three Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs). As part of this agreement, the LWIAs will provide occupational skills and other training services to pilot participants who are most likely to benefit from them. The project team anticipates these will be completed by the last week of November.

**Training:** DFCS and GDOL will be training their staff on pilot services during the second and third week of December. The Coastal Region staff will be trained in December 2015. The training will focus on effective case management techniques, essentials of case management documentation and tracking, familiarity with all assessment diagnostic tools and workshop curricula, hands-on training on GDOL's labor exchange system (Employ Georgia) and its MIS (Georgia Workforce System), and available local community resources. The evaluation team plans to conduct study enrollment/random assignment training in January 2016.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** Employ Georgia is Georgia's new public facing, Web-enabled labor exchange system with self-service access for job seekers and employers, and discreet administrative access for GDOL and partner staff. This system is complete and an enhanced employer self-service portal was deployed in November 2015. This system will allow job seekers and case management staff to track labor exchange activities of the participants, including resume development, job search, and job referrals.

**The Georgia Workforce System (GWS):** The GWS is a MIS that will also be used by GDOL/partner staff to track participant referrals and referral outcomes, service plans, and service outcomes between DFCS & GDOL and between GDOL & the LWIAs. These customized

project GWS transactions are nearly complete, with remaining changes having been made to accommodate evaluation data collection needs and suggestions made by DFCS.

## ILLINOIS PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Illinois has successfully developed a strong and collaborative partnership between the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to support its pilot project. Basing the pilot design on a proven model already used in the State, Illinois tailored this model for the project-specific requirements, has finalized the intake process for the pilot, and completed the system upgrades necessary to support project enrollment and service tracking. IL is on track to begin random assignment in February 2016.

**New Staff or Locations:** No new offices at the State level are needed. IDHS reassigned experienced and knowledgeable staff to support the pilot. IDHS leadership has been involved in working through the policy and participation requirements of the pilot. IDHS and DCEO are in the process of identifying pilot orientation locations and service providers will be identified in December.

**New Services:** Service providers will offer comprehensive and proactive case management, supportive services, bridge education programs, and on-the-job training for in-demand industries identified by the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

**Partners and Providers:** IDHS and DCEO released a Request for Application (RFA) in mid-September in order to select providers of program services in each of the pilot regions. Following the release of the RFA, IDHS and DCEO held a series of Bidders Conferences in September and currently have over 60 organizations showing interest in applying. Applications were due in late October and providers will be announced in December 2015.

**Training:** IDHS and DCEO will train staff on necessary policy or procedural issues in December, prior to pilot implementation in January. The evaluation team plans to conduct study enrollment/random assignment training immediately before pilot implementation.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** In October, the evaluation team requested source documentation from Southern Illinois University's Center for Workforce Development's data system, WorkNet, which will house pilot eligibility data, pilot service data, and data from providers who may serve control group members under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA). This documentation will help to identify relevant data variables to request for inclusion on data extracts that will be used to measure treatment group members' participation in pilot services and control group members' participation in community services. The evaluation team plans to request similar source documentation for IDHS's new integrated eligibility system (IES) to review once that system is in place, in or around January 2016. IES will house core service data in addition to SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid data. For the evaluation team to obtain UI wage records for pilot sample members, a standalone bilateral agreement between IDHS and DCEO will have to be drafted naming the evaluation team partners as subcontractors to the two agencies.

## KANSAS PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Kansas has made considerable progress implementing their pilot project and is planning to begin providing services in January 2016. It is using a Collective Impact model to develop and maintain partnerships across multiple agencies and organizations, an effort which has been instrumental in moving the project forward. Kansas has held partner meetings in each of the local pilot regions to develop agreements on the scope of services to be provided, discuss partner expectations, and explain data requirements. Kansas has also made significant progress in developing materials designed to educate eligible SNAP recipients about their participation in the program.

**New Staff or Locations:** The Kansas Department of Children and Families (KDCF) has hired, or is in the process of hiring, the following new staff for the pilot: four project team leaders (team supervisors for each of the four regions), one senior employer liaison (supervise the other four across the State), four employer liaisons, one data liaison to work with the University of Kansas team and the Department of Labor in-house, one senior administrative assistant, and nine career navigators.

**New Services:** New services will include intensive case management, including the identification and remediation of barriers to employment; work readiness training, including access to WorkKeys and other employability skills training; career-pathways training; subsidized internships; enhanced supportive services, including mental health support; dedicated job search assistance designed uniquely for project participants; and job retention services for up to 90 days, utilizing coaches and peer mentors.

**Partners and Providers:** KDCF is in the process of selecting the service providers that will provide the services in each of the pilot regions. Thus far, several service providers across the pilot regions have been identified, and KDCF is working on preparing contracts for them. KDCF will continue to identify additional service providers.

**Training:** KDCF is planning to train pilot staff on program services during the first and third week of November for a January pilot start date. The evaluation team will train pilot staff on enrollment, consent, baseline data collection, and random assignment processes prior to implementation.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** In October, KDCF shared data source documentation of its legacy system, KsCares, which will temporarily house pilot eligibility, core services, and pilot service data. This documentation will help to identify relevant data variables to request for inclusion on data extracts that will be used to measure participation in core and pilot services. The evaluation team plans to request similar source documentation for KDCF's new data system, KEES, once it is in place in or around summer 2016. The evaluation team will obtain UI wage records for pilot sample members through KDCF's interagency agreement with the Kansas Department of Labor.

## KENTUCKY PILOT

**Overall Progress:** The Kentucky Department for Community-Based Services (DCBS) hired a project manager who has worked closely with partners to develop work groups and finalize plans. DCBS plans to begin providing pilot services in mid-January 2016. They are working to meet this deadline, but issues with data collection, complications with other pilots and grants in the service area, and delays in planning may affect their ability to start in January.

**New Staff or Locations:** DCBS hired a new project manager to coordinate the pilot and work closely with the partners. DCBS will not open new offices in the pilot area. However, SNAP E&T was not previously offered in these counties, so DCBS is expanding the program services (for treatment group members) to this area of the State.

**New Services:** The pilot will primarily coordinate the currently available services in the pilot area under one umbrella for SNAP clients to access. Additionally, the pilot will offer comprehensive case management and additional support services to the treatment group.

**Partners and Providers:** DCBS is working with most service providers in the pilot area, including the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment (KCC), the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (a regional training provider within KCC), Kentucky Adult Education, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and Kentucky vocational rehabilitation. DCBS has negotiated and signed one-year contracts with each of its partners. It must renegotiate these contracts each year. DCBS and its partners also are developing an Employer Resource Network, comprising many small- to medium-sized area employers collaborating to provide workplace coaches and employment.

**Training:** A working group has just begun discussing training plans. Training will likely occur in January, prior to implementation.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** Kentucky is in the process of implementing a new MIS, so no pilot-specific information can be added to this system. Instead, DCBS and its partners are planning to track service receipt data in an external system. They are in the process of determining which system is best for their needs.

## MISSISSIPPI PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Planning for pilot services and evaluation design have been moving quickly, as Mississippi is preparing both to begin providing pilot services and to implement the 3 in 36-month time limit on SNAP participation for ABAWD in February 2016. As such, the State is reviewing changes to its existing SNAP E&T program and coordinating the rollout of the pilot with these changes. Although the State is moving fast, elements of the pilot services and evaluation are still in progress.

**New Staff or Locations:** As part of the pilot, each of the five community colleges (the providers of the pilot services) is hiring a program coordinator to lead implementation. They also are in the process of hiring career navigators (an estimate of two per college) to deliver the pilot services. A community college organization, Jobs for the Mississippi Graduates, will be hiring five career navigators, one for each college.

**New Services:** The National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (nSPARC), a center within Mississippi State University and the community colleges are designing the pilot's "expanded community college" set of services, which will include a four-week Career Assessment Program to help participants develop skills and create a career plan. Participants in this expanded community college study group and the "traditional community college" group will have the opportunity to receive vouchers for education and training services and for help with work-related expenses, childcare, and transportation. As part of its rollout of the ABAWD time limits and new E&T services, the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is also developing E&T opportunities for participants who will be in the control group or for clients who decline to participate. Many of the regular SNAP E&T services will likely be workfare opportunities.

**Partners and Providers:** MDHS and nSPARC are working with the five community colleges and Jobs for Mississippi Graduates on the pilot services. All of the colleges, except for one, are new SNAP E&T service providers.

**Training:** MDHS trained its workers on the mandatory ABAWD work requirements in November 2015. As part of this training, the evaluation team is developing a training module for the workers' role in the evaluation procedures. The team is also planning to train the community college staff who will be providing the pilot services.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** MDHS is developing new screens for its eligibility system for work registrants, which will include identification of pilot participants' study status. nSPARC is developing a system for workers to input the evaluation's registration data into the State's system. The data will be transmitted to the evaluation contractor's random assignment system for the participants' study assignment. nSPARC also is developing a case management module that will be used to track participants' receipt of services.

## VERMONT PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Vermont has made significant progress in outlining the project details and procedures necessary to support the pilot. In September 2015, the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) received approval to implement its pilot from the State Legislative Joint Fiscal Office. This was required before DCF could start hiring pilot staff, establishing agreements with providers, or otherwise spending grant funds (including purchasing a pilot MIS). DCF is on track to begin providing services in January 2016.

**New Staff or Locations:** DCF hired a Pilot Director in November 2015. DCF will post job announcements for the manager/monitor and data manager positions after they hire a pilot director. Provider agencies Capstone Community Action, the Vermont Department of Labor, and VocRehab Vermont will also hire new staff for the pilot, but they cannot do so until they have executed a MOU with DCF. DCF and its partners will not acquire any new offices for the pilot.

**New Services:** Vermont's model includes case management by an interdisciplinary team from VocRehab Vermont, adult basic education providers, homeless and housing service providers, and other agencies; an intensive clinical assessment conducted by VocRehab Vermont and participants' enrollment in the Governor's Career Readiness Certificate Program.

**Partners and Providers:** DCF will execute MOU with its five core service providers: Capstone Community Action, the Vermont Department of Labor, VocRehab Vermont, Community College of Vermont, and Vermont Adult Learning. VocRehab Vermont will serve as the lead case management agency and will identify and execute agreements with providers of wraparound support services to the pilot target populations (homeless, substance abusers, and ex-offenders). DCF is in the process of drafting its MOU for review by its legal department. The evaluation team will also review the MOU to ensure that they include necessary evaluation-related language. DCF anticipates executing these MOU in November 2015, at which time VocRehab can procure subcontracted wraparound support service providers.

**Training:** The evaluation team is planning to train pilot staff from DCF and all provider agencies in early January 2016. Final training plans are dependent on the timeline for DCF and provider MOU as well as hiring remaining pilot staff.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** DCF is procuring a new MIS software system to manage project data for the evaluation. The project team expects this system will be operational in November 2015.

## VIRGINIA PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Planning for the launch of pilot services intensified in late October and early November. Newly formed work groups are meeting regularly to solidify the services and service delivery strategies for each of the three components of the pilot treatment. Two of seven pilot locations are scheduled to launch services in early January 2016, with the remaining five phased-in during February and March.

**New Staff or Locations:** The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have both hired project directors as well as other key staff. One career coach is in place and the other is being recruited for the community colleges that will launch first; additional coaches will be hired and trained in time for the staggered launch dates.

**New Services:** In partnership with VCCS, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and State's Adult Education Division, VDSS will implement a pilot featuring three distinct service tracks that are tied to participants' literacy level, as established by TABE. The first component, featuring Emporium Learning Labs, lasts from 6 to 8 weeks and targets people with third- to fifth-grade reading proficiency. Participants will receive contextualized Adult Basic Education, Digital Literacy, and employment and soft skills training. The second component targets people who read at a fifth- to eighth-grade level, lasts 12 weeks, and includes sector-specific job training resulting in one or more industry credentials, soft skills, and Moral Reconciliation Therapy training. The goal of this component is to help participants secure employment that does not require a GED or High School Diploma. The third component targets participants with reading proficiency above the eighth-grade level. This component lasts 6 to 8 months and features sector-specific training resulting in one or more industry credentials, contextualized Adult Education training resulting in High School Equivalency, soft skills training, the opportunity to earn 12-24 credits toward continued education, and a capstone project.

**Partners and Providers:** VDSS will be working with seven of the State's community colleges that are near DSS offices to deliver new pilot services. The agency will also partner with the Virginia Department of Child Support Enforcement as a referral partner for prospective study participants who are noncustodial parents. Additional partners include the Virginia Department of Education, the Department of Adult Education and Literacy, and VCU. The MOU between VDSS and VCCS has been executed and agreements between VCCS and the two early-launching community colleges are currently under review by each institution. The remaining five agreements are under development and will be completed in early December. The VCCS agreement with Virginia Department of Education for Adult Education services is under development as is the agreement with VCU for pilot services.

**Training:** Virginia's training activities will take place prior to implementation in January 2016. VDSS will train caseworkers on their Employment Services Automated System case management system. VCCS will train Adult Education instructors to administer the TABE, and career coaches and Component 2 instructors will receive training in Moral Reconciliation Therapy treatment strategies. Career coaches will also receive training on the Virginia Education Wizard case management system and on the administration of the Employee Assistance Program Inventory (to identify hidden barriers). VDSS will provide training on pilot outreach strategies



in December. In January, before the start of the pilot, the evaluation team will train staff on research procedures, including strategies for pilot orientation, administering consent, baseline data collection, and random assignment.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** VCCS will use the Virginia Education Wizard Case Management System to capture activities and services provided, as well as detailed case notes on referrals and progress. The PeopleSoft Student Information System will provide information on educational progress and certificate or degree attainment for credit courses, while the Workforce Enterprise System will provide information on noncredit course completion and industry credential attainment. Agreements with the Virginia Employment Commission will allow the capture of employment and wage data. Given the lengthy application process required to secure approval to use this source and the fact that it is useful to researchers only once their full research sample has been established, the evaluation team will not use the Virginia Longitudinal Data System for real-time data matches for program monitoring or ongoing research purposes.

## WASHINGTON PILOT

**Overall Progress:** Washington is on track to launch its four-county pilot in December 2015. They continue to refine their service delivery flow, finalize marketing materials and outreach plans, and refine existing data systems to support the pilot project. The Washington State IRB recently recommended that the Washington State SNAP E&T pilot project be granted approval. Overall, preparation for the pilot is going as planned, with no significant obstacles in place at this time.

**New Staff or Locations:** The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) hired a project manager, as well as two project specialists, to support the overall implementation and oversight of the pilot program. DSHS also plans to hire a fiscal analyst to assist with cost data collection for the evaluation and financial reporting. Because service provider contracts were only recently finalized, provider organizations are still in the process of hiring staff to support the pilot. The four county workforce development councils (WDCs) are in the process of hiring one job navigator per county to assist with the development of work-based learning opportunities.

**New Services:** DSHS developed a new comprehensive job readiness training curriculum for the pilot, called Strategies for Success. This module-based course will cover employment-related topics, communication concepts, life skills, and wellness. DSHS collaborated with service providers and the State Employment Security Department to develop this new curriculum. In addition to the Strategies for Success curriculum, the pilot will offer work-based learning opportunities (subsidized employment, on-the-job training, etc.) and comprehensive case management to pilot participants.

**Partners and Providers:** DSHS negotiated contracts with 16 community-based organizations, two community colleges, and six partners. The community-based organizations and community colleges will provide direct services to participants. The pilot's partners include four WDCs, the Employment Security Department, and the Seattle Jobs Initiative. The WDCs will be hiring job navigators to develop relationships with employers and create employment and work-based learning opportunities for participants. The ESD developed and will be involved in delivering the Strategies for Success curriculum. The Seattle Jobs Initiative will create a training module for provider staff as well as tools to facilitate the referral of participants between providers.

**Training:** In late September 2015, DSHS conducted training for service providers and partner staff. The four-day session covered each component of the pilot program, including outreach, intake, comprehensive case management, Strategies for Success training, work-based learning, working with special populations, fiscal reporting, and activities related to the evaluation. Evaluation staff also attended to train on random assignment procedures and cost data collection requirements. Additional frontline staff training will occur in November.

**New or Updated Data Systems:** DSHS plans to track service receipt data in its current electronic eJAS data system. They are in the process of enhancing the system to modify its eligibility tools, barrier assessment, individual employment plan, support service reimbursement tracking tool, reporting function, and service component tracking.