

# Vermont's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) Pilot



**A Pilot Program to Help SNAP Participants with Significant Barriers Obtain Employment and Increase Wages**

## Pilot Background

- The Agricultural Act of 2014 Set Aside \$200 Million to be Used for SNAP E&T Pilots
  - Statutory Goal: to test new methods for E&T programs and services to “increase employment and earnings and reduce reliance on public benefits”
  - A maximum of 10 States received funding as determined through a competitive grant application process
    - States/project areas awarded funding were: Vermont, Fresno County (CA), Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, and Washington.
  - States awarded between \$3.4 Million and \$22.3 Million per pilot



# Vermont's Grant Application Process

- Vermont's Proposal is a Product of Integrated, Inter-Agency Collaboration
  - Input and suggestions for pilot framework were solicited from multiple State Agencies and Community Partners
  - A pilot grant writing team was composed of representatives from various departments and partners
    - ✓ Community College of Vermont (CCV)
    - ✓ Department of Labor (DOL)
    - ✓ Department of Corrections (DOC)
    - ✓ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
    - ✓ Capstone Community Action (Capstone)
    - ✓ Department for Children and Families (DCF)

## Vermont's SNAP E&T Pilot (a.k.a. "Jobs for Independence")

- Focuses on individuals in Vermont with significant barriers to employment
  - Vermonters who are Homeless
  - Vermonters with Addiction and/or Mental Health Issues
  - Vermonters with Prior Criminal Convictions
- Participants Must be SNAP-only Recipients with Mandatory Work Requirements
  - A majority of individuals meeting this requirement are referred to as Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs)
- The pilot will seek to enroll at least 3,000 participants (with at least 1,500 in a "treatment group")

## Vermont's SNAP E&T Pilot (a.k.a. "Jobs for Independence") – Continued

- Vermont Will Receive \$8.9 Million to be used for Pilot Services and Administration
- The Pilot is Scheduled to Begin on October 1, 2015 and will last three years
- Pilot Monitoring and Evaluation to be Conducted by Mathematica Policy Research
  - Evaluation Subcontractors include: MDRC, Insight Policy Research, Kone Consulting, Decision Information Resources



## Pilot Partners and Stakeholders

- Department for Children and Families (DCF), Economic Services Division (ESD)
  - Oversees implementation and administration of pilot
- Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
  - Performs comprehensive psychosocial assessment of pilot participants to determine a participant's individual employment needs
- Department of Labor
  - Performs case management and service placement for pilot participants

## Pilot Partners and Stakeholders – Cont.

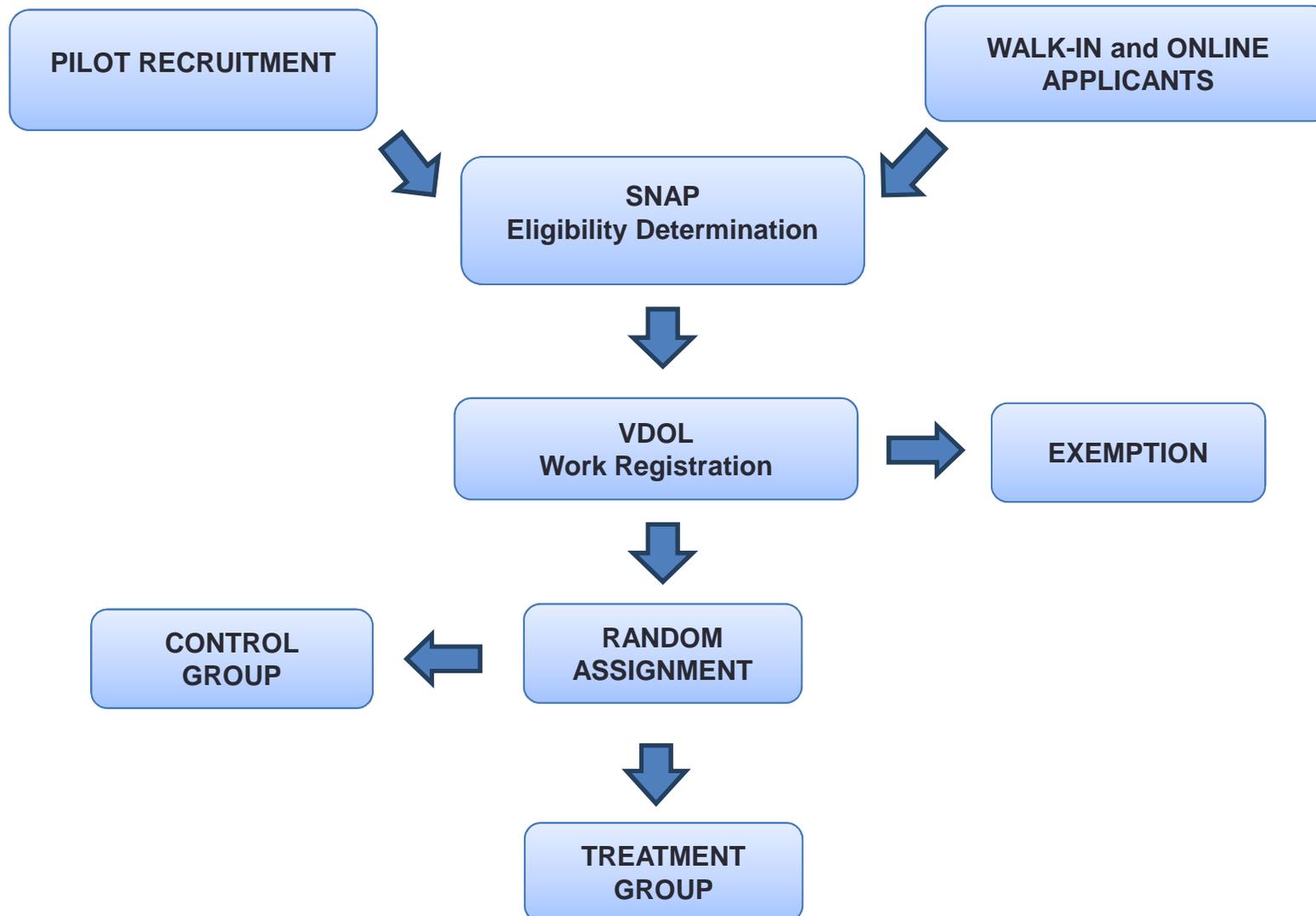
- Capstone/Community Action Agencies
  - Targeted participant recruitment
- Community College of Vermont (CCV)
  - Administration of Governor's Career Ready Certificate (GCRC) Program
- Other Non-Profit Training, Education, and Support Providers
  - Targeted employment support services (contracts to be put out to bid)



# Pilot Framework

- Recruitment
  - Participant enrollment will be obtained through a combination of targeted recruitment and agency referral
- SNAP Eligibility Determination
  - Those determined SNAP-eligible with mandatory work requirements will be referred for pilot
- Informed Consent/Random Assignment
  - Random assignment to control treatment groups
- Control Group
  - Will receive current SNAP E&T services
- Treatment Group
  - Will receive new SNAP E&T Pilot services

# Pilot Flowchart



## Control Group Services

- Control Group Participants Will Be Placed in Vermont's Current SNAP E&T Program Administered by DOL
- Services Include:
  - Vocational assessment
  - Access to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) employment services as resources allow
  - Monthly follow-up
  - 90-day post-placement support

# Treatment Group Services

- Individuals Will Participate in Inter-Agency Clinical Assessment to Determine Unique Barriers and Needs
- Case Management Services Provided by DOL Based on Clinical Assessment



## Treatment Group Services – Continued

- All Treatment Participants Will Have Access to “Cross-Barrier Services”
  - Financial Literacy Training
  - CCV’s Governor’s Career Ready Certificate (GCRC) Program
  - Basic Education and Literacy/GED Completion
  - “Progressive Employment” Services
    - ✓ Direct Job Placements
    - ✓ Apprenticeships
    - ✓ On-the-Job Training
    - ✓ Work Experiences with Training Allowance
    - ✓ Company Tour and Job Shadows
    - ✓ Temp-to-Hire Programs

## Treatment Group Services – Continued

- “Targeted” Services Will Be Available to Participants Assessed with a Corresponding Barrier
- Examples Include, But Are Not Limited To:
  - Homelessness
    - ✓ Rapid re-housing
    - ✓ Housing search and placement
    - ✓ Financial aid to prevent eviction
  - Addiction/Mental Health Issues
    - ✓ Recovery coaching
    - ✓ Substance abuse outpatient services
  - Criminal Convictions
    - ✓ Fidelity Bonding

## Treatment Group Services – Continued

- All Treatment Participants Will Also Have Access to Post-Employment Support Services
  - Transportation Assistance
  - Child Care Costs
  - Apprenticeship Tools
  - Uniforms
  - Reimbursement for Cost of Textbooks



## Desired Outcomes

- Once employed, at least 70% will retain their jobs for at least two quarters
- At least 50% will complete GCRC Program
- At least 30% will complete industry recognized certification and training programs
- At least 40% will complete financial literacy training
- Increase in earnings post-pilot compared to pre-pilot wages
- Reduction in pilot participants' dependency on public assistance
- Increase in enrollment in post-secondary education and training post-pilot compared to pre-pilot

## Next Steps

- USDA Pilot Orientation in Alexandria, VA April 28-29
- Pilot Planning and Implementation
  - Hiring of Pilot Personnel
  - RFPs for contracted services



## Budget Allocations

- Pilot Administration – \$2,140,862
- VDOL Case Management – \$1,589,985
- VR Clinical Assessment – \$960,000
- Capstone/Community Action Agencies – \$900,000
- Other Service Providers – \$1,706,532
- Subsidized Wages – \$750,000
- Supportive Services – \$900,000



# Target Populations in Vermont/Statistics

- Homelessness
  - In 2014, over 1,500 Vermonters found to suffer from homelessness
- Prior Criminal Convictions
  - In 2013, over 8,000 criminal offenders found to be participating in each of the following post-conviction correctional activities
    - Re-entry
    - Probation
    - Parole
    - Intermediate Sanctions
- Addiction/Mental Health Issues
  - In 2013, over 9,000 Vermont adults were treated for substance abuse