*Welcome to LLA Reports, a podcast produced by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s office. This podcast is intended to be an oral representation of the written report it highlights and is primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature.*

This is Kristen Jacobs. I’m a senior auditor for LLA’s Performance Audit Services. This episode of LLA Reports focuses on our new report titled “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment and Training.”

The purpose of this audit was to analyze participation, costs, and the Department of Children and Family Services’ – or DCFS’ – administration of the employment and training portion of the Supplemental Assistance Program – or SNAP E&T.

We found that DCFS increased the number of SNAP E&T providers that offer voluntary services from four in federal fiscal year 2018 to 29 in federal fiscal year 2022.

As a result, the number of parishes with in-person providers increased from 12 to 42. However, not all SNAP recipients had in-person access to these E&T services. We found that 22 of Louisiana’s 64 parishes with 155,698 adult SNAP recipients did not have in-person employment and training services available.

In addition, we found that the number of SNAP E&T participants decreased 93 percent from 19,628 in federal fiscal year 2018 to 1,370 in federal fiscal year 2022 because the program became voluntary in October 2020.

However, the number of voluntary participants increased 181.9 percent from 486 to 1,370 over the same timeframe. SNAP E&T expenditures also increased from $1.8 million dollars in federal fiscal year 2018 to $8.3 million dollars in federal fiscal year 2022, in part because of an increase in the number of providers and, according to DCFS, because of federal requirements that case management be provided.

As of federal fiscal year 2021, SNAP E&T consisted of five components in Louisiana. The most commonly offered and provided component was job search training. While supportive services such as transportation and childcare are important to the success of SNAP E&T participants, we found that more than half of the participants did not receive such services through the program.

For example, only five participants received childcare assistance, and only one participant received temporary housing assistance in federal fiscal year 2021, despite more than half of SNAP E&T providers indicating these are common challenges to serving participants.

We found as well that federal performance outcome measures reported by DCFS showed mixed results during federal fiscal years 2018 through 2021. For example, median quarterly wages after program completion increased from $3,225 dollars in federal fiscal year 2018 to $3,614 dollars in federal fiscal year 2021, but the percentage of participants completing program components decreased from 70 percent to 40.8 percent.

In addition, while the purpose of SNAP E&T is to increase recipients’ ability to obtain regular employment and ultimately become financially self-sufficient, neither the United States Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Services nor DCFS has developed specific targets for what defines “success” in the program.

Additionally, we found that costs to serve participants varied greatly by provider and that some participants exceeded the amount of services they could receive or received duplicative services from multiple providers. The average cost per participant for the SNAP E&T program was $4,559 dollars in FFY 2021, ranging by provider from $225 dollars to $35,664 dollars.

We also found that 25 – or 33.8 percent – of 74 participants who received job retention services received them for longer than allowed, which is prohibited by federal law. In addition, we identified 21 instances in which nine participants received the same component during the same month from different providers.

As a result of our report, we developed eight recommendations.

We recommended that DCFS identify more ways to improve access to SNAP E&T services across the state and to conduct outreach to recipients to increase the number of those receiving SNAP E&T services.

We also recommended that DCFS work with providers to identify SNAP recipients who could benefit from the employment and training services and ensure they receive the necessary support to use these services.

In addition, we recommended that DCFS periodically analyze data from the SNAP Works system to assess whether the supportive services for participants are sufficient.

We recommended as well that DCFS establish performance measure targets for the SNAP E&T program to determine whether the program is meeting its purpose and goal.

Additionally, we recommended that DCFS ensure each provider contract has performance measures and targets and that DCFS evaluate the SNAP E&T program and individual providers to determine whether targets are met.

Finally, we recommended that DCFS use service and expenditure data to routinely monitor the SNAP E&T program and ensure compliance with program requirements.

As part of its response, which is included in the report as Appendix A, DCFS agreed with all eight of our recommendations.

*We hope you found this podcast informative, and that you’ll follow future episodes of LLA Reports.*

*This podcast was created as part of the audit report just discussed and is intended primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature. Both the full report and the podcast can be found on the LLA’s website at* [*www.lla.la.gov*](http://www.lla.la.gov)*.*

*Thank you for listening.*