



STATE HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARIES AND WORKFORCE DIRECTORS FROM THE SECRETARIES' INNOVATION GROUP SUPPORT THE A STRONG, WELL FUNDED SNAP E&T PROGRAM.

Eloise Anderson, Secretary WI Dept. Children and Families, Chair

Jason Turner, Executive Director

Secretariesinnovationgroup.org

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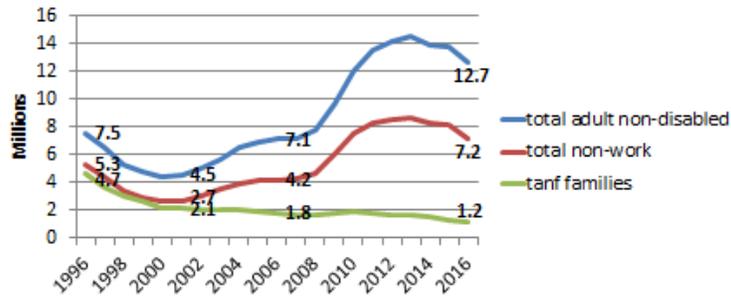
The Secretaries Innovation Group (SIG) is a network of human services secretaries and workforce directors from 22 states making up 48% of the country. SIG members meet to trade innovations state-to-state, and press for national policies which favor work, economic self-sufficiency, healthy families and efficient, prudent government. Last year nineteen SIG states met to make recommendations for the farm bill which included a large scale work program, and since then have reviewed the House SNAP E&T proposal. Below are the central recommendations, along with some comments.

1. *It is essential that parents and single adults work to support themselves and their children.*

The benefits of work go beyond increased income as important as that is. Work connects individuals to their families as providers, and to their communities as taxpayers.

Yet the number of idle non-working adult parents and singles has ballooned since 2002 because work requirements are weak, non-existent or unenforced. The blue line in the chart below shows the growth of SNAP households with working age adults, while the red is the subset of households with zero employment hours, or more than half of the total. By contrast TANF has been stable (green), because work obligations have been a constant obligation of program eligibility.

Numbers of non-working SNAP households closely mirrors TANF trends for the first five years after welfare reform, then diverges
Millions of households 1996-2016



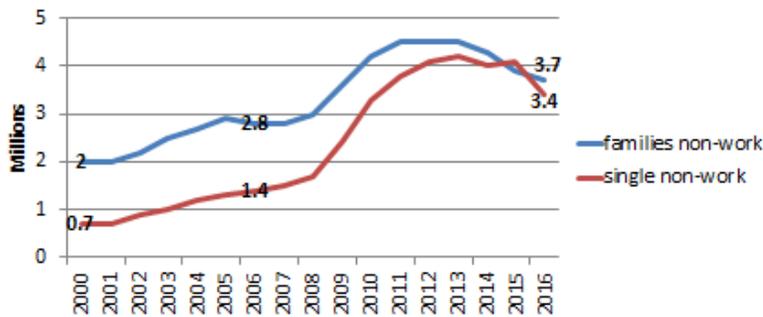
Source: FNS- SNAP Quality Control Sample & HHS- TANF Caseload Data

Sandra K, Kansas Department for Children and Families – *We took a deep dive and looked at our current caseload - - we have roughly 135,000 adults receiving SNAP. We looked at how many would be excluded from SNAP work because they are elderly or disabled, on TANF, receiving unemployment benefits, and how many were already working 20 or 30 hours a week at minimum wage. We still ended up with about 49,000 people that had no earned income, which amounts to 36 % of all the adults on SNAP here in Kansas that are not working [and could work].*

Taylor H, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity - *Strong and persistent work policies are critical for success in our state, and we will continue to assist individuals to find good jobs that will help them. Our mission with adults on public benefits is to assist with resources that will allow them to find the best version of their American Dream. It is our core mission.*

2. For years, SNAP E&T has been underfunded and underutilized thus sidelining 7 – 10 million work-capable individuals. States have been successfully running TANF work programs since 1997 to help parents of children succeed in employment, but for similar non-working parents just receiving SNAP, they have been largely ignored because there are insufficient funds to run a dedicated E&T program. As for singles without dependents (ABAWDs), low funding combined with geographic waivers have kept this easy to serve population idle for far too long. Non-working SNAP households of both singles and parents have sharply increased since 2000.

Growth of non-working households (millions) 2000-2016



Source: FNS- SNAP Quality Control Sample & HHS- TANF Caseload Data

Sandra K, Kansas Department for Children and Families - - *We spent \$350 million on benefits in 2015 and yet only \$125 THOUSAND was available for employment and training, so that shows how little the current federal emphasis is on getting people to work.*

Larry T, Texas Workforce Commission – *We decided to fully fund our E&T program [using additional FNS funds as a “pledge state”]. We started with 56 out of our 254 counties. We got in and looked and said, we want this to be state- wide, and in just a couple of years we’ve become state- wide. It wasn’t any problem at all. It has been easy program to administer.*

3. A misconception is that states will not have sufficient time or resources to develop the SNAP E&T system as it is envisioned. However, all states are already operating work programs for TANF, UI and vocational rehabilitation along with their small FSET programs. This is just a build-out for systems already in operation, with knowledge and experience in place. SIG states are prepared to use their technology and other programs to be responsive, supportive, and efficient.

Beth K, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services - *The point I think is critical is that the proposed SNAP E&T funds are not stand alone dollars. They link to other systems that those same participants rely on in the workforce system already and so [recipients] are not coming in to a brand new system that has to be created. We are building on the capacity of our career centers where we have the expertise. We are trying to not just have people come in for [benefits] but for employment and skills upgrades.*

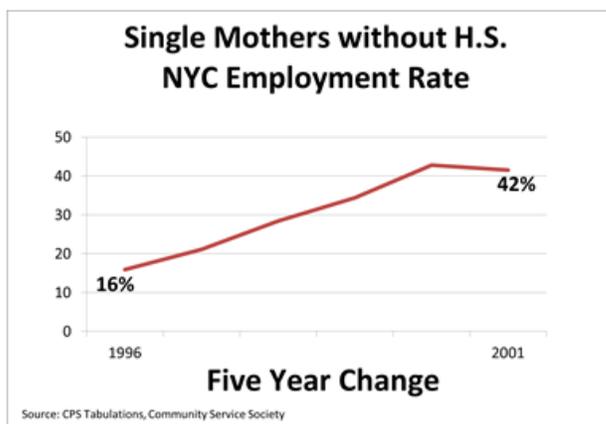
Adrienne S, Indiana Family & Social Services - *Our system has already been developed because we are serving the TANF population as well the ABAWD population on SNAP. We have the programs, we have the system that has already been developed to support the underserved and the hard to serve population with the extensive case management. So it is not just about closing cases it’s about ensuring that they have long term employment and sustainable jobs.*

4. With the unemployment rate at a near historic low, businesses in SIG states are asking their governors what the state can do to help get the remaining non-working population into the labor pool. Governors are faced with increasing proportion of adults enrolling in federal disability over which states have no control. On the other hand, properly funded, SNAP E&T managed by states has the potential to release millions of non-working adults into the economy, adding taxpayer dollars and relieving pressure on businesses caused by the labor shortage.

Taylor H, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity - *In 2011 we had an employment rate of 11.2 percent and we had 700,000 individuals that were receiving unemployment assistance (UI). Now, after the private sector has created 1.5 million jobs, our unemployment rate is 3.8 percent and we have only 60,000 receiving unemployment. Therefore one of the key components of our current re-employment assistance is a mandatory work search requirement. Partly as a result of this, our UI recipients are using on average only nine weeks of UI before finding a new job, vs. 15 weeks in the US average.*

5. Some have argued that there is insufficient evidence of likely effectiveness to proceed with a large scale SNAP employment program. They say Congress is better off waiting until the subsequent Farm Bill five years from now after the report of the ten state SNAP demo is completed. *Such procrastination serves no purpose other than to delay implementing the known steps necessary for states and SNAP recipients themselves to move to employment and reduce poverty.*

Jason Turner, former Giuliani NYC welfare commissioner - - *What we have learned from running large scale work programs for TANF and smaller scale for FSET is this - - a large segment of any caseload can be easily served and moved directly to employment with just job search assistance and sometimes job readiness training. This is effective and inexpensive, and it leaves more sizeable funding available for those who need more intensive services and case management. Using this approach, over five years the census showed mothers without a high school degree in NYC increased their labor force participation from 16% to 42%.*



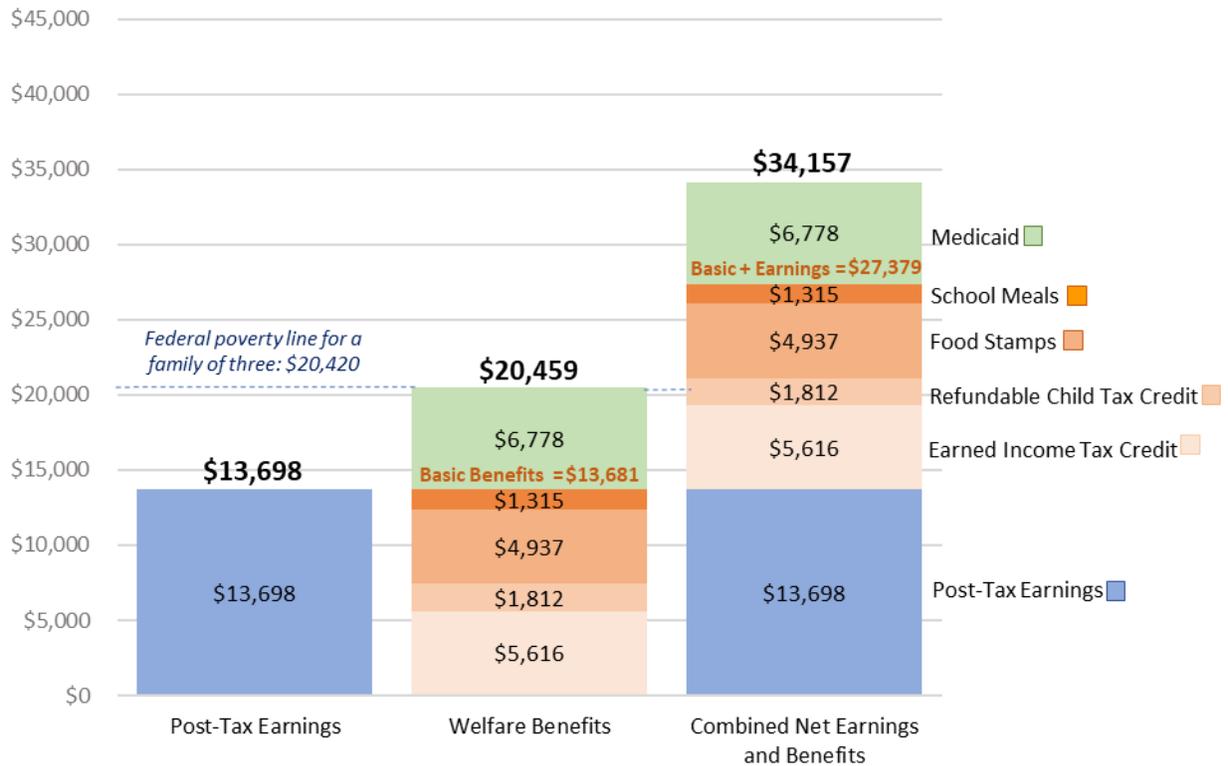
Conclusion

A mother with two children in Alabama taking a MINIMUM WAGE JOB has a net income of \$34,157 after refundable benefits (including Medicaid, or \$27,379 not counting Medicaid), which is well over poverty line of \$20,420 for that family size (see chart below). *Entry level jobs are plentiful everywhere.*

The Secretaries' Innovation Group believes it is high time to cease the endless pilots, invest in people and States, and allow non-working recipients to earn their own income and move beyond long term dependence on SNAP.

CHART 1: ALABAMA

Single Mother with Two Children Earning Minimum Wage for Full Year, Receiving Basic Cash, Food, and Medical Benefits in Alabama



NOTES: 2017 data using minimum wage of \$7.25. The children are school-age, and mom's employer does not provide health insurance.

SOURCES: Author's calculations using data from the U.S. Department of Labor, IRS, Alabama Department of Revenue, FNS, and CMS.