

## Using Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T )Funds Effectively

Is your state one of the 23 states that spent less than 20 percent of their E&T funds last year? If so, this was the workshop for you. Two states that spent 100 percent of their E&T funds presented their state's successful methodologies.

Colorado State Workfare Coordinator, Nancy Partyka, said their E&T program serves every mandatory and voluntary participant on an annual E&T budget of \$4.9 million. Colorado is the only state in the nation to claim the alternative reimbursement rate (i.e., based on actual costs) rather than the standard \$175 (for a filled slot) and \$30 (for an offered slot). In addition, Colorado claims enhanced federal funding for their clients who are placed in unsubsidized employment.

The availability of enhanced funding was news to almost everyone in the workshop, even to FNS staff. The amount of the enhanced funds is equal to one and one-half times the amount of saved Food Stamp benefits and is subject to matching federal funds. Colorado also documents the value of in-kind funding, such as office space, and claims federal matching funds for those costs. "While it's tedious to document these costs, the additional money is worth it!" claims Nancy. Colorado also requests the reallocation of unspent E&T funds that other states don't spend for an additional source of funding.

Colorado puts every applicant into workfare immediately after they apply. "It can include stapling, sweeping, anything [that will count towards the client's hours of participation]," says Nancy. Colorado's five state staff also provide a lot of training and technical support to their 46 out of 64 counties that operate an E&T program.

California's E&T manager, Yvonne Lee, reports that California has an E&T budget of \$68.5 million in 2001. She highlighted two counties with the state's highest E&T budgets: Los Angeles and San Francisco. LA County's budget of \$41.6 million is used to primarily create workfare slots for all Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) who are not in work or training activities for the required 20 hours per week. LA County has 40 percent of California's caseload and over 470 workfare project sites.

San Francisco County's budget is much smaller, but is supplemented with funding from a variety of public and private sources to provide the most progressive work program in the state. SF County provides a 3-tiered work program that offers extensive supportive services to their ABAWD population. This includes: cash, housing assistance, mental health and substance abuse treatment, domestic violence services, and English as a Second Language classes. SF County has made a significant commitment of staff and funds to move their ABAWD population to self-sufficiency. Funding for their training programs is determined by labor market analyses of emerging growth industries and the skill sets sought by those employers.