THE PROBLEM

Too many Americans at poverty-level are trapped in a cycle.

They suffer from food insecurity and depend on SNAP to feed themselves and their families. Some of these men and women are work-capable, but lack access to adequate skills training to obtain a job that provides meaningful income and a chance to improve their future.

We want to change that by shifting the anti-poverty conversation from one purely focused on benefits to one focused on helping someone climb the economic ladder.

Currently, SNAP includes outdated work requirements for beneficiaries that are riddled with loopholes that create disincentives to work.

Two versions of work requirements exist: a general rule that applies to a broad segment of the SNAP population and a second rule that applies to Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs).

The general work requirement is an unenforceable and vague “requirement” that lets most states “check the box” by having a participant register for work simultaneous to applying for benefits.

The ABAWD requirement, which requires recipients to work or participate in a qualifying program for at least 20 hours per week, is antiquated and undermined by overblown waivers of those requirements promoted by welfare-insiders and bureaucrats.

For those who want to develop the job skills and training needed to find work, current Employment and Training (E&T) services are inadequately funded and inconsistent.

THE SOLUTION

Create a streamlined, simplified work requirement through meaningful investments in workforce training.

To do this we must stop treating ABAWDs as a separate population from other work-capable adults—doing so eliminates duplication and confusion.

Implement a realistic and supportive workforce solution for work-capable adults (aged 18-59), with exemptions for the caretaker of a child under 6, those who are pregnant and those who are mentally or physically disabled.

Require and fund sufficient E&T slots, guaranteeing access to all non-exempt SNAP participants subject to the work requirement.

Require 20 hours per week of participation in a combination of: work, a work program, or participation in SNAP E&T.

Modernize the components of SNAP E&T to include assessment and case management, and permit additional options including supervised job search, apprenticeships, time-limited unpaid or volunteer work, subsidized employment and financial literacy.

Standardize the ineligibility policy: after due process or appeal, 12 months for the first instance, 36 months for subsequent instances.

Allow states a two-year transition period to achieve these goals.
PROTECTING SNAP RECIPIENTS

For children, seniors age 60 and older, and the disabled – who represent nearly 2/3 of program participants – this requirement changes nothing.

For those working who may not be at the point of removing themselves from SNAP, they continue on their path.

Any work-capable, non-exempt SNAP beneficiary who would like to receive training will be guaranteed a federally-funded spot in a SNAP E&T program.

States must meet the minimum services requirement and provide E&T services to all non-exempt SNAP participants subject to the work requirement. If they do not, the state is subject to warnings, suspensions, and/or a disallowance of administrative funds. A state’s inability to offer a spot does not compromise an individual’s eligibility for SNAP.

States will maintain the authority to waive the requirement for individuals facing temporary obstacles.

Geographic waivers will be maintained to address areas with high rates of unemployment.

BOTTOM LINE:

Anyone receiving SNAP who is subject to the work requirement is guaranteed a spot through work E&T.

Individuals who actively choose not to participate are self-selecting to remove themselves from SNAP.