

SUNY Ulster Launches First SNAP Employment & Training Partnership Between a Community College and County DSS in New York State

Innovative Program Brings New Federal Workforce Investment to Ulster County While Expanding Educational Opportunity and Economic Mobility

July 22, 2026 - Stone Ridge, NY — SUNY Ulster and Ulster County have signed an agreement to launch the first SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) partnership of its kind in New York State. The innovative program creates a new pathway for federal workforce development in Ulster County and unlocks additional federal funding from the USDA while providing an educational foundation for eligible students.

SNAP E&T is a federally funded workforce development program that makes available support services to students at no cost, including transportation, childcare, technology, career coaching and training that helps students complete their education and enter the workforce. This comprehensive focus on education and workforce training to foster long-term stability and economic success is separate from traditional SNAP benefits, which primarily focus on addressing immediate food insecurity. Student support service providers are eligible to receive a 50% federal reimbursement. Programs participating in SNAP E&T at SUNY Ulster align directly with high-demand fields including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology, education, human services, clean energy, and public service careers.

The agreement follows more than three years of collaboration among SUNY Ulster, Ulster County, New York State, and national higher education partners. SUNY Ulster also worked directly with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance during the development of new state guidance that now allows community colleges to participate in SNAP E&T partnerships. Prior to the issuance of that guidance in 2024, there was no framework that permitted a community college to participate in this program through its local social service agency. The initiative also received technical assistance support from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), which has assisted other community colleges across the nation in developing effective community college SNAP E&T implementation models.

At a time when communities across New York are seeking innovative ways to meet growing workforce needs while making the most of available public resources, the partnership

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demonstrates how collaboration can bring additional federal investment into local communities without relying solely on local funding.

"Education is workforce development," said Dr. Alison Buckley, President of SUNY Ulster. "Community colleges are uniquely positioned to connect education, workforce development, and economic mobility. I want to thank County Executive Metzger who has been supportive of this initiative from the very start, as well as Ulster County Department of Social Services Commissioner Mike Iapoce who has been an invaluable advocate by collaborating with the College and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to make this possible. This has been a partnership which has led to innovation as it will help residents gain the skills, credentials, and support they need to succeed while bringing ongoing federal workforce investment into our community. It reflects the role community colleges can play, not only in educating students, but in identifying innovative solutions that strengthen our communities. We are proud that SUNY Ulster is helping create a model that other colleges and counties across New York may be able to build upon."

"SUNY Ulster's Board of Trustees has been proud to support this innovative work from the beginning as it reflects the very best of the community college mission, expanding opportunity, strengthening our workforce, and serving our community," said Robert R. Jacobsen, Esq., Chair of SUNY Ulster's Board of Trustees. "This is another example of SUNY Ulster putting students first by providing them with additional out-of-classroom supports, which break down barriers to education and place our students firmly on the path to success. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I commend President Buckley for her leadership and vision, as well as her team and our local and state partners for their persistence and collaborative approach, which has developed a state-wide model other counties and community colleges can follow."

Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger said, "This partnership between SUNY Ulster and the Ulster County Department of Social Services is an innovative and forward-thinking step for our community, and I'm thrilled to see it come to fruition after years of hard work. SNAP Employment & Training removes the barriers that too often keep people from completing their education — whether that's childcare, transportation, technology, or other basic supports. These are exactly the kinds of investments that help residents gain skills, earn credentials, and move into good jobs in high-demand fields. I want to thank President Buckley, Vice President for Workforce, Economic Development and Community Partnerships Chris Marx, and Ulster County Social Services Commissioner Mike Iapoce for their leadership in building this first-in-New-York-State model. It shows what's possible when county government and our

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community college work together with a shared commitment to opportunity and economic mobility. Ulster County is proud to help lead the way for the rest of the state.”

“Skyrocketing grocery prices in President Trump’s America have left too many individuals, especially young people and students, struggling to put food on the table,” said Senator Gillibrand. “I am thrilled that SUNY Ulster is giving students the tools they need to succeed beyond the classroom by helping individuals gain relevant job training and experience with their launch of their campus’ SNAP E&T program.”

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Barbara C. Guinn said, “Governor Hochul has made expanding economic opportunity and strengthening New York’s workforce a priority, and this innovative partnership reflects that commitment by creating new opportunities for SNAP recipients to gain the education, training, and support they need to secure good-paying jobs and achieve greater economic stability. As the first locally operated SNAP Employment and Training partnership between a community college and a county social services district in New York State, SUNY Ulster and Ulster County are creating a model that demonstrates how local partnerships can leverage federal resources to strengthen communities, support employers, and expand opportunity for New Yorkers across the state.”

State University of New York Chancellor John B. King Jr. said, “SUNY Ulster empowers New Yorkers with access to an affordable, excellent education that leads to upward mobility and economic opportunity. Supporting students throughout their academic journeys and ensuring they have the tools necessary to thrive after graduation is a top priority for SUNY, and this opportunity will help remove barriers so more students have a pathway to gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Congratulations to SUNY Ulster and Ulster County for this important partnership.”

“The ACCT Center for Policy and Practice launched the SNAP E&T community college project because our institutions are the ideal providers to help SNAP recipients,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. “By receiving education and training in an environment with the great variety of supports that only community colleges offer, students stand the best chance of meeting their educational goals and finding meaningful and sustaining work. We are excited to see SUNY Ulster become a SNAP E&T third party provider and expand the support for their students.”

By leveraging SNAP Employment & Training funding, SUNY Ulster is expanding educational opportunity, supporting regional employers, strengthening economic mobility, and

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bringing new federal workforce investment into Ulster County—creating long-term benefits for students, families, businesses, and the broader community.

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About SUNY Ulster

Established in 1961, SUNY Ulster is a community college of the State University of New York serving Ulster County and the Hudson Valley with academic programs, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities that support student success and regional economic vitality. This past year SUNY Ulster served over 6,000 students across 70 academic programs.

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