

New Requirements for Adults Without Dependents Receiving Food Stamps (ABAWDs)

What You Need to Know About Work Requirements

The federal work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) who are receiving food stamps (Basic Food/SNAP) go into effect January 1, 2016 in certain parts of Washington. Individuals considered “ABAWDs” might only receive food stamps for three months out of every 36 months unless they meet an exemption or comply with certain work requirements.



An ABAWD is an able-bodied individual between the ages of 18 and 50 who is not disabled, pregnant, or living in a household with minor children.

Who is exempt from the 3 month time limit?

You are exempt from the time limit if you are:

- ♦ Working 30 hours or more per week, including self-employment or in-kind work
- ♦ Receiving a disability-based benefit (SSI, SSDI, ABD, Worker Comp, etc.)
- ♦ Certified as physically or mentally “unfit” for employment by a health professional
- ♦ Homeless and cannot find work because of this
- ♦ Receiving—or has applied for— unemployment benefits
- ♦ Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program
- ♦ A student enrolled at least 1/2 time in a high school or college
- ♦ Living in a Basic Food/SNAP household with **any** child under 18
- ♦ Pregnant—at any stage of pregnancy
- ♦ Providing care for a disabled person or a frail elder who is incapacitated

OR

- ♦ Living in any county **other than** King, Snohomish, or parts of Pierce Counties. In Pierce County, anyone who lives in Tacoma or Lakewood is exempt.



I'm not exempt. How do I meet the work requirements?

If not exempt, there are several ways an ABAWD may be able to meet the Basic Food work requirements:

1. Working for pay at least 80 hours/month - roughly 20 hours/week
2. Participating in an eligible work training program for at least 20 hours/week **OR**
3. Volunteering with a public or private non-profit organization for 16 hours per week, or a lower number of hours determined by DSHS.

You can claim “good cause” for not meeting the work or community service hours if, for example, you were sick, transportation broke down, or there was bad weather that shut down the workplace.

Contact DSHS at 1-877-501-2233 or visit your local CSO for more information about:

- ◆ BFET, RISE, or another state-approved employment or training program
- ◆ Approved agencies for volunteer hours
- ◆ Obtaining an exemption for physical or mental impairment that prevents working full time
- ◆ Exemptions for “chronically homeless” individuals

My food stamps were terminated for not complying with these requirements—can I appeal?

YES! Every food stamps applicant or recipient has the right to ask for an administrative hearing to challenge any DSHS decision he or she disagrees with. This includes if DSHS denies or terminates food stamps benefits for alleged failure to meet an ABAWD exemption, a work, or volunteer requirement.

**You can find legal help by calling 2-1-1 in King County or calling CLEAR
statewide at 1-888-201-1014.**