



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICE**  
P.O. Box 11699 • Tacoma, Washington 98411-6699

January 20, 2016

On January 1, 2016, DSHS (Department of Social and Health Services) rules will change that affect Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) within the Basic Food Program. These rules will require ABAWDs to participate in work-related activities in order to remain eligible for food assistance. (WAC 388-444-0030)

For the past few years, Washington State was allowed to waive the work requirement for all ABAWDs due to our high unemployment rate. We are no longer able to waive the work requirements in certain areas of the state due to our improved economy.

ABAWD Basic Food recipients who don't meet an exemption (WAC 388-444-0035) will be required to participate in approved training programs or other work-related activities. Please refer to the attached document for information about approved training programs and other options to meet work requirements beginning January 2016.

You have been identified as an ABAWD and are required to participate in an approved work-related activity unless determined exempt by DSHS. You may qualify for three months of food assistance without participating. This means if you don't participate in January, February, and March 2016, your food assistance will end on March 31, 2016.

If your food assistance ends on March 31, 2016 for not participating, you can still participate for any one month to reapply and become eligible for food assistance again. Failure to participate leads to food assistance disqualification until January 1, 2018.

Please see the attached form 11-034b for more details.



ABLE BODIED ADULT WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)  
**Basic Food Eligibility Requirements:**  
**What You Need to Know to Keep Your Benefits**

**Your benefits are time limited if you are not working.**

Because you are able to work and have no children in your household, you are considered an Able Bodied Adult without Dependents (ABAWD) for Basic Food.

ABAWDs can only receive Basic Food benefits for three months out of every 36 months without meeting work requirements. Your benefits will close after three months if you do not meet the work requirements described below.

**How to keep your basic food benefits**

To keep your benefits for more than three months, you must do one or a combination of the following activities:

- Complete up to 16 hours of unpaid work in the community through Workfare each month. Your monthly benefits determine the number of hours you must work to keep your food benefits.
- Work at least 20 hours a week or 80 hours a month on average.
- Participate in a state approved employment or training program such as
  - Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET). For information about BFET, go to [www.dshs.wa.gov/bfet](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/bfet).
  - Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE) pilot (King or Pierce counties).
  - Programs included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
  - AmeriCorps VISTA
  - Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway
  - Refugee with Special Employment Needs (RSEN) project

**Things you must report to DSHS**

You must tell DSHS if:

- You have an illness, physical condition, or mental condition that prevents you from working 20 hours a week.
- You work but your hours at work drop below 20 hours a week.
- Your household's income goes over the limit in WAC 388-478-0060.

More information about the ABAWD requirements can be found at [www.dshs.wa.gov/abawd](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/abawd).

Call DSHS at 877-501-2233 if you have questions, need assistance, or need to report changes.

You can also visit DSHS at [www.washingtonconnection.org](http://www.washingtonconnection.org) to apply for benefits, submit a review, or report changes.