



Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
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DATE: February 10, 2023

SUBJECT: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Preparing for Reinstatement of the Time Limit for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs)

TO: All SNAP State Agencies
All Regions

Ahead of the lifting of the COVID-19 Federal public health emergency (PHE) declaration, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is re-releasing the [memorandum](#) titled “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Preparing for Reinstatement of the Time Limit for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs)” initially issued on September 21, 2021. This guidance provides important reminders and best practices for State agencies as they prepare to implement the SNAP time limit for ABAWDs once the temporary and partial suspension lapses.

During the PHE, the Family First Coronavirus Act (FFCRA) prohibited States from limiting eligibility for ABAWDs under section 6(o)(2) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (FNA) unless the individual is not complying with a work program or workfare program offered by the state that meets standards of section 6(o)(2)(B) or (C). This suspension applies during the period of April 1, 2020, through the end of the month subsequent to the month in which the public health emergency declaration is lifted.

The Biden Administration has announced that the COVID-19 Federal PHE declaration will end on May 11, 2023. Therefore, SNAP State agencies must reinstate the ABAWD time limit and start assigning countable months as of July 1, 2023. This memorandum highlights critical decision points and important resources State agencies should reference as they plan to reinstate the ABAWD time-limit, including:

- Resetting Countable Months to Zero
- Requesting Waivers of the ABAWD Time Limit
- Availability of Discretionary Exemptions
- FNS ABAWD Resources to Support State Agencies

FNS would also like to remind States that a sample, optional notice is available to notify impacted households of these changes (see [enclosure](#)).

In some cases, SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program services can help ABAWDs subject to the time limit maintain eligibility for benefits. FNS would like to remind State agencies of the requirement to screen SNAP participants to determine if it is appropriate to refer those individuals to the E&T Program. FNS is re-releasing a memorandum from July 13, 2022, titled

[“Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) Employment and Training \(E&T\) Screening and Referral Guidance.”](#) Appropriately screening participants before referral to E&T supports access to SNAP benefits, ensures E&T participants are referred to E&T programs where they are most likely to be successful, and can promote more efficient management of State administrative resources.

Additionally, as noted in a [March 2016 joint USDA-Department of Labor \(DOL\) letter](#), may be able to help ABAWDs maintain their SNAP eligibility by partnering with State and local workforce agencies to develop shared strategies that will better connect SNAP participants, including ABAWDs, to employment and training opportunities through American Job Centers (AJCs). FNS encourages State agencies to provide all available opportunities to help ABAWDs maintain SNAP eligibility and move into employment as the PHE ends.

FNS also reminds States of the importance of advising participants of all available employment and training opportunities to support increased self-sufficiency. Program rules at 7 CFR 273.14(b)(5) require State agencies to advise work registrants living in households without earned income and without an elderly or disabled member about employment and training opportunities in the community. As a best practice, FNS encourages State agencies to provide this information to additional households, including mandatory E&T participants for whom the State does not have an appropriate or available opening in E&T, to guide these participants toward other opportunities.

State agencies with questions should contact their respective Regional Office representatives.

Sincerely,

Moira Johnston
Acting Director
Program Development Division