

SNAP Work Requirements

Are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, recipients required to work?

All SNAP recipients ages 16 to 59 are required to work, unless they meet at least one of these conditions:

- Responsible for the care of a child under age six;
- Unable to work due to a physical or mental health condition;
- Needed to provide full-time care for an incapacitated individual; or
- Applying for or receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

What are the requirements?

Those subject to SNAP work requirements must:

- Accept suitable employment when referred or offered;
- Respond to requests from the social services district regarding employment status and availability for work; and
- Participate in work activities for up to 30 hours per week, if assigned.

SNAP participants may receive assignments, including:

- **Work Experience:** Work assignments at public or not-for-profit entities designed to improve the chances of getting a job by demonstrating and developing workplace skills;
- **Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance:** Help locating available jobs and preparing for work by learning to prepare a résumé, complete job applications, interview for jobs, explore careers and other activities;
- **Education:** Activities such as literacy training, High School Equivalency Diploma preparation, English-as-a-Second-Language study, and other education activities; and/or
- **Job Skills Training:** Help learning job-specific skills, often obtaining a credential to demonstrate to employers that the training was completed.

What happens if someone refuses to comply?

Anyone who refuses or fails, without good cause, to comply with SNAP work requirements is subject to a penalty and will be ineligible to receive SNAP while that penalty is in effect. The length of the penalty depends on the number of times an individual has been previously penalized for not complying with SNAP work requirements.

What is an ABAWD?

ABAWD stands for “able-bodied adult without dependents.” Federal law requires ABAWDs to meet additional work requirements to receive SNAP benefits for more than three months in a 36-month period. They must participate in qualifying work activities for at least 80 hours a month, be granted an exclusion consistent with their social services district’s ABAWD exclusion policy, or reside in an area with a waiver approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The federal government has strict rules regarding which areas of the state may waive the work requirements, generally requiring that the area has a high unemployment rate.

Are there any exceptions?

SNAP recipients who meet any of the following criteria are not subject to ABAWD work requirements, but they may still be required to participate in work activities that are assigned under Temporary Assistance and/or SNAP Employment and Training programs:

- The parent or other adult resides in a SNAP household with an individual under 18 years of age;
- Under 18 or 50 years of age or older;
- Pregnant;
- Unable to work for at least 80 hours per month due to a physical or mental limitation;
- In receipt of Veterans Affairs disability compensation; or
- In receipt of disability benefits from a public or private source, such as New York State disability benefits.

What are the requirements for ABAWDs?

To maintain eligibility for SNAP benefits for more than three months in a 36-month period, ABAWDs must complete and document participation in at least one of the following each month:

- Work (including volunteer work) for at least 80 hours;
- Attendance at a qualifying work/training program approved by the social services district for at least 80 hours;
- Compliance with a Work Experience Program (WEP) assignment for a number of hours equal to the monthly SNAP benefit, divided by the higher of the federal or State minimum wage;
- Participation in a program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or Trade Act, which may include job search, job readiness, occupational skills training or education activities for at least 80 hours; or
- Participation in a combination of work or qualifying work programs for at least 80 hours.

Any ABAWD who needs help finding a job or participating in a work activity so they can continue to receive SNAP benefits beyond three months, should ask the social services district for help. The district will make sure the individual has the opportunity to participate in an activity to retain SNAP benefits.

What is the SNAP E&T Program?

The SNAP Employment and Training, or E&T, Program provides opportunities for SNAP recipients to gain skills, training or work experience to help them get a job.

The program is aimed at supporting individuals faced with barriers to employment, such as criminal or substance abuse history, low literacy, limited work history, unemployment or underemployment, limited English proficiency, or lack of a high school diploma. The program also benefits eligible youth between the ages of 16 and 24. Providers work closely with local Workforce Investment Boards to assist participants in achieving a credential that is in demand by local employers.

This fact sheet is intended to provide general program information and is not intended for use to determine eligibility or define program requirements for any individual or household.