

# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Requirements

## Important Notice: SNAP ABAWD Work Requirements Coming Early 2026

### What You Need to Know

In the past, the District of Columbia (DC) received permission from the federal government to not impose work requirements for certain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) customers. Due to changes in federal law as part of H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, customers who meet the definition of Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (or ABAWD) may be subject to work requirements in DC beginning in early 2026. Customers who do not meet exemptions may be subject to ABAWD work requirements and time limits.

### Next Steps

The DC Department of Human Services (DHS) will send notification to SNAP customers in coming months, explaining in detail:

- When the changes begin
- Who is subject to the General work requirements (GWRs) and ABAWD work requirements
- How to report if you qualify for an exemption
- What activities meet the work requirements
- Where to get help or learn more

### What You Should Do Right Now

SNAP customers do not need to take action at this time to continue receiving benefits. **However, we highly recommend that customers start taking steps now if they believe they may be impacted by ABAWD work requirements when they take effect:**

1. Make sure your phone number, address, and household circumstances are current and up to date.
  - Submit updates via [District Direct, in person](#), or by mail/fax. Forms can be accessed on [District Direct](#), in [service centers](#) and on [online](#).
2. Open and read all mail from DHS
3. Participate in DHS' [SNAP Employment & Training \(SNAP E&T\)](#) or other training programs.
4. Learn more and stay informed about upcoming SNAP work requirements on this web page and by following us at DCHumanServ on X and Instagram.
5. Respond right away if you are asked for information.

# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Work Requirements

## SNAP Work Requirements Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. WHAT ARE SNAP WORK REQUIREMENTS?

SNAP has two types of work requirements: General Work Requirements (GWR) & Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) requirements outlined below:

- I. General Work Requirements (**GWR**): require customers who are ages 16-59 who are not eligible for an exemption to:
  - a. Register for work with DHS.
  - b. Accept any job offer, unless there is good reason to decline; and
  - c. Not voluntarily quit their job or reduce working hours below 30 hours
  
- II. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (**ABAWD**) work requirements: require customers ages 18-64 who are not eligible for an exemption to:
  - a. Work a minimum of 20 hours per week, averaging 80 hours per month; and/or
  - b. Participate in a qualifying work activity (paid, unpaid or work for goods and services) for a minimum of 20 hours per week, averaging 80 hours per month; or
  - c. Participate in SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) training programs or new workfare volunteer programs for a minimum number of hours calculated for each participating customer by SNAP E&T.

Please note: While GWR does not subject customers to time limits, ABAWD customers are subject to time limits. They can only receive SNAP benefits for 3 full months within a 36-month (3-year) period if they are not exempt and are not meeting the ABAWD work requirements.

### 2. WHY IS DC IMPLEMENTING WORK REQUIREMENTS AND WHEN WILL THEY START?

While DC has always had required General Work Requirements, it has had a federal waiver excusing it from imposing ABAWD work requirement time limits. Based on changes to federal law, DC expects it will not qualify for another waiver and will have to implement ABAWD work requirement time limits.

When ABAWD time limits are implemented in DC, customers not eligible for GWR or ABAWD exemption(s) and not meeting ABAWD work requirements may only receive 3-months of SNAP benefits within a 36-month (3-year) time limit. DHS will send notifications to customers explaining in detail when to expect these changes.

### 3. WHAT ARE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENTS AND TIME LIMITS?

Customer subject to the ABAWD work requirements must:

- I. Work 20 hours per week, averaging 80 hours per month, and/or
- II. Participate in a qualifying work activity (paid, unpaid or work for goods and services) for a minimum of 20 hours per week, averaging 80 hours per month; or
- III. Participate in a SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) training programs or new workfare volunteer programs for a minimum number of hours calculated for each participating customer by SNAP E&T.

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ABAWD SNAP customers not meeting work requirements without good cause and not eligible for an exemption can only receive SNAP benefits for up to 3 full months in a 36-month period (3 years). Customers will be screened for exemptions and qualifying work activities prior to being subject to time limits. This is the ABAWD time limit.

## 4. WHAT ARE QUALIFYING WORK ACTIVITIES THAT MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENTS?

SNAP ABAWD customers can meet ABAWD work requirements by working or participating in qualifying work activities for at least 20 hours per week or an average of 80 hours per month. This can include paid employment and self-employment, but also unpaid work for goods and services.

DHS is dedicated to expanding employment and training opportunities, including the workfare program to help SNAP customers meet work requirements through a variety of activities, not just paid employment.

SNAP customers can complete ABAWD work requirements by participating in (1) SNAP E&T training; (2) Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) programs, such as those through the DC American Jobs Center and the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES); (3) Trade Act Programs; (4) Veteran E&T programs; (5) other job training and education programs; or (6) the new SNAP E&T workfare program. This new workfare volunteer program differs as the minimum work hour requirement is based on the DC's minimum wage and the amount of the household's SNAP benefit.

A more thorough list will be provided in coming months.

## 5. HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM EXEMPT FROM THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENTS AND TIME LIMITS?

Before ABAWD time limits are imposed, DHS will notify customers and provide details on how to report exemptions for GWR and ABAWD work requirements. The GWR and ABAWD exemptions are listed below.

A GWR customer is exempt from GWR work requirements if they are any of the following:

- Age 16 or 17 and not the head of the household
- Age 16 or 17 and attending school
- Age 16 or 17 and enrolled in an employment and training program at least half-time
- Working at least 30 hours a week
- Working and earning weekly wages at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours
- Complying with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work requirements
- Caring for a dependent child under 6 or an incapacitated person
- Participating in a substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation program
- Enrolled at least half time in school, a training program, or an institute of higher education
- Participating in a federally recognized refugee training program at least half time
- Applying for or receiving unemployment compensation
- Facing physical or mental barriers to employment, such as illness, injury, or incapacitation (*this includes receiving disability benefits*)

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An ABAWD customer is exempt from ABAWD work requirements and associated time limits if they are any of the following:

- Age 17 or younger or age 65 or older
- Receiving temporary or permanent public or private disability benefits
- Responsible for a dependent child under 14 years of age
- Medically certified as facing mental or physical barriers to employment
- Pregnant
- An Indian, Urban Indian, or Californian Indian
- Otherwise exempt from the GWRs

## **6. If I am subject to the ABAWD work requirements/time limits, will it change the amount of my SNAP benefits?**

If individuals in your household comply with work requirements, there should be no change in benefit amount. However, if the composition of your household decreases/increases or if a household member is disqualified due to work requirements, the new benefit amount will reflect the number of eligible individuals in the household.

## **7. IF I AM 60 YEARS OLD, WILL I NEED TO COMPLY WITH WORK REQUIREMENTS?**

SNAP Customers age 60-64 years old are not subject to GWR work requirements but based on new federal rules will be subject to ABAWD work requirements unless they meet an exemption. They will be screened for GWR and ABAWD exemptions before ABAWD time limits are imposed.

## **8. WHEN WILL I LEARN MORE INFORMATION & WHAT CAN I DO NOW?**

DHS will provide customers with more details about SNAP work requirements and ABAWD time limits in the coming months. In the meantime, SNAP customers should make sure their household circumstances on file with DHS are complete and up to date.

**We highly recommend that all SNAP customers participate in DHS' [SNAP Employment & Training](#) or other training programs, especially if they believe they may be impacted by ABAWD work requirements when they take effect.**

To update DHS regarding household circumstances, please submit changes via [District Direct, in person](#), or by mail/fax. Forms can be accessed on [District Direct](#), in [service centers](#) and on [online](#).