

Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) Questions and Answers (Q&A)



HEALTH CARE
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This question and answers sheet will provide information on the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirements for SNAP.

It highlights important factors in determining what an ABAWD is, what their requirements and exceptions are, consequences for non-compliance, how to regain eligibility, and what counties in New Mexico will be impacted by the ABAWD time limit.

Reading this Q&A will help to ensure you are equipped with the knowledge to properly aid SNAP customers who may be an ABAWD and may reside in a mandatory ABAWD time limit county.

What is an ABAWD?

An ABAWD, or Able-Bodied Adult without Dependent, refers to an individual who is between the ages of 18 and 54, is physically able to work, and does not have any dependents (such as children or other individuals they care for).

Able
Bodied
Adult
Without
Dependents

What are the requirements for ABAWDs?

ABAWDs must meet specific work requirements. If they don't meet the ABAWD work requirements, they will lose their SNAP benefits after 3 months. To keep getting SNAP, they must:

- Work 20 hours per week averaged monthly or 80 hours total per month. Work can be for pay, in trade for something other than money, or as a volunteer; or
- Participate and comply with a work-program 20 hours per week averaged monthly or 80 hours total per month. A work program could be SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) if there are available ABAWD work activities or other educational or training activities; or
- Any combination of work and work-program hours for a total of 20 hours per week, averaged monthly or 80 hours total per month

Why are ABAWD work requirements going into effect?

Every year, each state must re-evaluate their waivers for their operation of SNAP, of which ABAWD work requirements are one set of requirements which must be re-evaluated.

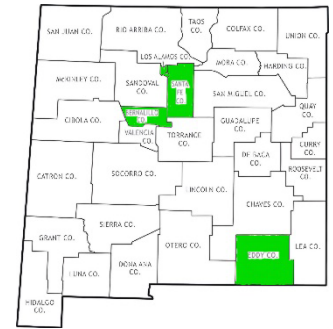
Changes in a state's economic landscape play a key part in determining if a state may continue to qualify for a waiver, or if adjustments must be made to their waiver requests prior to their submission to the federal government. Steadily improving unemployment rates in New Mexico has led to the implementation of ABAWD work requirements in 2025 for some SNAP recipients residing in specific counties of New Mexico.

Do the ABAWD work requirements apply to ABAWDs in the whole state of New Mexico, or only in certain areas?

The ABAWD work requirements and time limit will be waived in 29 counties and 18 pueblos and nations based on the areas having an average unemployment rate which is 20% above the national average for a 24-month period from February 2022 through January 2024.

Effective January 1, 2025, the mandatory counties, along with their mandatory population, will be:

1. Bernalillo - 9,709 individuals
2. Santa Fe - 1,223 individuals
3. Eddy – 882 individuals
4. Los Alamos – 11 individuals



The Pueblos which will be mandatory are:

1. San Ildefonso (only applies to 6 of the 1,223 individuals residing in Santa Fe County)
2. Pojoaque (only applies to 4 of the 1,223 individuals residing in Santa Fe County)
3. Santa Clara (only applies to 16 of the 1,223 individuals residing in Santa Fe County)
4. Laguna (only applies to 88 of the 9,709 individuals residing in Bernalillo County)

What exceptions are available to be exempt from ABAWD work requirements?

You would be excused from the ABAWD work requirement and time limit if you are any of the following:

- Any person who is younger than age 18 and older than 54
- Unable to work due to a physical or mental limitation
- Pregnant
- Have someone under 18 in your SNAP household
- Excused from the SNAP General Work Requirements
 - Responsible for the care of a child under age 6 or a person who needs help caring for themselves
 - Meeting the work requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Going to school, college, or training program at least half-time
 - Receiving or applying for unemployment compensation benefits
 - Working 30 hours or more a week or earning at least \$217.50 a week
 - Participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program
- A Veteran
- Experiencing homelessness
- Age 24 or younger and in foster care when you were age 18

How can I report to the HCA that I meet an exception for ABAWD work requirements?

If a customer meets any one of the exceptions from the ABAWD work requirements, they should contact the HCA by:

- Visiting an HCA Income Support Division Office.
- Calling the HCA Consolidated Customer Service Center (CCSC) at 1-800-283-4465, 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Reporting the exception online at yes.nm.gov.
 - To report an exception, customers should either create an account or login to their existing account and navigate to the “Report a Change” option.

What happens if I don’t complete my ABAWD work requirement?

If an individual is subject to the ABAWD time limit, they can only get SNAP for 3 months in a 36-month period if they don’t meet the ABAWD work requirements. The 36-month period is the same for all ABAWDs.

The current 36-month period began on June 1, 2023, and will end on May 31, 2026. The next period will run from June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2029.

As long as an individual is an ABAWD, each month that they get a full month of SNAP benefits and do not meet the ABAWD work requirements without good cause, it is a countable month. ISD tracks the countable months. Once the ABAWD receives 3 countable months in the 36-month period, they will lose their SNAP benefits.

Due to ABAWD work requirements being implemented beginning January 1, 2025, compliance with the work requirements will effectively be tracked from January 1, 2025, to the end of the 36-month period of May 31, 2026.

How do I regain SNAP eligibility?

An ABAWD denied eligibility for failure to meet the ABAWD work requirements, shall regain eligibility to participate in SNAP if, during any 30 consecutive days, he or she:

- Worked 80 or more hours;
- Participated in and complied with the requirements of a work program for 80 or more hours;
- Any combination of work and participation in a work program for a total of 80 hours;
- Becomes exempt.

There is no limit on how many times an individual may regain eligibility and subsequently maintain eligibility by meeting the work requirement.