

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



HEALTH CARE
AUTHORITY

This question-and-answer 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/exemptions are, consequences for non-compliance, how to regain eligibility, and what counties in New Mexico are impacted by the ABAWD time limit.

What is an ABAWD?

An ABAWD, or Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents, refers to an individual who is between the ages of 18 and 64, is physically and mentally able to work, does not have any dependents under the age of 14 (such as children or other individuals they care for), and does not meet any other exception/exemption.

Able
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What are the requirements for ABAWDs?

If an ABAWD does not qualify for an exemption/exception, they must meet work requirements to keep getting SNAP. If they don't, then they will lose their SNAP after 3 months. They can meet their ABAWD work requirements by:

Working	At least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month . Work can be for pay, in trade for something other than money, unpaid, or as a volunteer.
Participating with a Work Program	At least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month . A work program could be SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) or another federal, state, or local work program. You can call the Income Support Division at 1-800-283-4465 to find out if a program complies with ABAWD requirements or if another program is available.
Any combination of work and a Work Program	At least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month .

Why are ABAWD work requirements going into effect?

Federal ABAWD work requirements changed on July 4, 2025. States must review their SNAP ABAWD waivers each year to determine whether work requirements can be waived.

Based on recent unemployment data, New Mexico no longer qualifies for a full waiver. As a result, starting in 2026, ABAWD work requirements will apply to some SNAP recipients in specific New Mexico counties.

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

Effective January 1, 2026, the ABAWD work requirements and time limit will be waived in 1 county and 4 pueblos and nations all other areas are subject to ABAWD requirements:

- Luna
- Laguna Pueblo Reservation
- San Felipe Reservation
- Taos Pueblo and Off-Reservation
- Tesuque Pueblo and Off-Reservation

If your address has changed and you have not yet reported it, contact ISD immediately. If you live in a part of the state that has an ABAWD waiver, you do not have to meet the ABAWD Time-Limit Rule while the waiver is in place.

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

If any of these apply to you, you do not have to meet the ABAWD Time-Limit rule:

- You are applying for or receiving disability benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or General Assistance (GA) Disability,
- You have a physical or mental disability that prevents you from working,
- You are complying with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families work requirement,
- You are caring for a child under the age of 14,
- You are caring for a household member who needs help caring for themselves,
- You have applied for or are receiving Unemployment Compensation Benefits (UCB),
- You are participating in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program,
- You are working or are self-employed a minimum of 30 hours a week or earning at least the minimum federal wage for 30 hours of work,
- You are a student enrolled at least half-time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education,
- You are pregnant, or
- You meet any of the following:
 - Are a member of a federally recognized tribe, or
 - An individual is an “Indian” as defined in 25 U.S.C. 1603(13),
 - An individual is an “Urban Indian” as defined in 25 U.S.C. 1603(18), or
 - An individual is a “California Indian” as defined in 25.U.S.C. 1679(a).

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

Contact ISD if you think one of the exceptions describes you or if you need help seeking an exception.

You can contact HCA by:

- Visiting an Income Support Division Office.
- Calling the 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 log into their existing account and navigate to the “Report a Change” option.

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

As an ABAWD there is a time limit on how long you can get SNAP unless you meet the work rules or qualify for an exception. If you do not meet the work rules or qualify for an exception, you can only get SNAP for 3 months in a 3-year period. After that, your SNAP will stop.

All ABAWDs have the same 3-year time limit, no matter when they apply for SNAP. The current 36-month period began on June 1, 2023 and will end on May 31, 2026. The next period will begin on June 1, 2026 and will end on May 31, 2029.

Each month you receive SNAP benefits without meeting the ABAWD work requirements and without good cause counts as a countable month. Once you have used 3 countable months within a 36-month period, your SNAP benefits will stop until you meet the work requirements, qualify for an exception, or a new 36-month period begins.

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:

- You work/volunteer or participate with a work program (such as the E&T Program) for at least 80 hours in a 30-day period.
- There is a change in your situation, and you now meet one of the exceptions to the ABAWD rule.

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