



Food and Nutrition
Service

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Date: March 20, 2020

Subject: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Impact on Time Limit for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

To: All State Agency Directors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The recently enacted Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which was signed by President Donald J. Trump on March 18, 2020, temporarily and partially suspends the time limit for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP). State agencies are prohibited from limiting ABAWDs' eligibility 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 declaration¹ by the Secretary of Health and Human Services based on an outbreak of COVID-19 is lifted.

As you are aware, section 6(o) of the FNA limits ABAWDs to no more than 3 months of SNAP benefits over any 3-year period unless they: work; participate in a work program at least 20 hours a week; participate in a workfare program, or; are otherwise exempt. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act suspends the time limit for ABAWDs, except in certain circumstances. If a State offers an ABAWD a slot in a work or workfare program, including a SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program under section 6(d)(4), the individual is still subject to the time-limit. ABAWDs who are not meeting the ABAWD work requirement by working, and who are not offered qualifying work opportunities by the State agency, must not be disqualified based on ABAWD requirements established in section 6(o) of the FNA. No one can be disqualified unless the State offers an available slot that meets the standards of 6(o)(2) of the FNA. In addition, the State still needs to determine whether the ABAWD who was offered a slot in the work or workfare program had good cause for failure to comply.

If a State requires an ABAWD to participate in a SNAP E&T program and the ABAWD fails to comply without good cause, the State must disqualify the ABAWD in accordance with 6(d)(1)(B) of the FNA and State policy and impose the ABAWD time limit in accordance with section 6(o) of the FNA.

¹ The declaration refers to the public health emergency declaration by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act based on an outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

All State Agency Directors

Page 2

The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

State agencies should contact their respective FNS Regional Offices with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jessica Shahin
Associate Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program