



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance*

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor


MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary


KARYN POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

JEFF McCUE
Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2016-36
September 30, 2016**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  **Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Program and Policy Implementation**

 **Paul Sutliff, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**

Re: SNAP: General SNAP Work and Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Work Program Requirements Updates

Overview

As a condition of eligibility, all non-exempt SNAP recipients aged 16-59 must comply with General SNAP Work Requirements by:

- registering for work at application and every 12 months thereafter;
 - providing information to the Department regarding employment status or job availability when requested;
 - reporting to an employer when the Department has made a referral to a suitable position;
 - accepting a legitimate offer of employment when the work meets suitability requirements;
 - not voluntarily quitting a job of more than 30 hours a week or reducing work hours to less than 30 hours a week without good cause; and
 - participating in the SNAP E&T Program if assigned by the state.
-

**Overview
(continued)**

SNAP recipients between the ages of 18 and 50 who are subject to General Work Requirements may also be subject to the Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) Work Program requirement. To receive SNAP benefits for more than 3 countable months in a 3 year period, an ABAWD must:

- work 80 hours each month;
 - participate in a qualifying Employment and Training (E&T) activity 20 hours each week;
 - volunteer at a public, quasi-public, or nonprofit organization for the number of hours equal to his or her portion of the household's monthly SNAP allotment divided by the state minimum wage; or
 - qualify for an exemption.
-

Purpose

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of changes that have been made to seven pages in the SNAP Work Requirements chapter of the Online Guide. The changes outlined below have been made to reinforce, clarify, and/or update SNAP policy and/or procedure related to general SNAP work and ABAWD work program (WP) requirements.

**Summary of
Updates &
Reminders**

During all SNAP application or recertification interviews, SNAP case managers must:

- inform the client whether or not s/he is subject to the general SNAP work requirements;
 - explain exemption criteria;
 - explain the consequences of not complying with general SNAP work requirements if applicable; and
 - explain that the client may elect to participate in an Employment and Training (E&T) program on a voluntary basis regardless of exemption status.
-

General SNAP Work
Requirements

SNAP Voluntary Quit
and Reduction of
Work Hours

A SNAP client is considered to have voluntarily quit a job when s/he has voluntarily quit a job of at least 30 hours per week (or the federal minimum wage equivalent) without cause.

A SNAP client is considered to have voluntarily reduced his/her work effort when s/he has reduced work hours voluntarily and without good cause and, after the reduction, is working less than 30 hours per week.

General SNAP work requirements dictate that a SNAP client who quits a job or reduces work hours voluntarily be disqualified for up to twelve months unless:

- the quit or reduction occurred more than 60 days before the SNAP application date;
- the client resigned from a job or reduced work hours at the demand of the employer;
- the client terminated a self-employment enterprise;
- the quit is recognized by the employer as retirement;
- the client had good cause for quitting or reducing work hours; or
- the client was exempt from general SNAP work requirements at the time of the quit or reduction.

Partial Disability
Based VA
Compensation &
Refugee Training
Program
Participation

While receipt of Veterans Association (VA) Compensation based on partial disability and participation in federally recognized refugee training programs do not exempt SNAP clients from general SNAP work requirements, both situations meet exemption criteria for the ABAWD work program requirement.

The *ABAWD Training Program Information Request* form is used by Central Office E&T Specialists to determine whether or not the client is exempt from or meeting the ABAWD WP requirement by education or training program participation

A client's ABAWD WP strike history must be reviewed:

- at SNAP reapplication of a client with any number of strikes;
- when a client contacts a case manager in response to a strike notice;
or
- when a client otherwise questions a strike.

ABAWD Strike
Review and Removal
of Sanctions

If the client proves that s/he was exempt from, meeting, or had good cause for not meeting the ABAWD WP requirement during any strike month(s), the applicable sanction(s) must be removed correctly to ensure that the ABAWD Clock History Summary and automated sanctioning process function properly.

Regaining Eligibility

If previously applied strikes cannot be removed, to become eligible for SNAP again during the current 36-month period, a sanctioned ABAWD must provide proof that s/he:

- is now exempt from the ABAWD work program requirement;
- has worked at one or more jobs for a total of 80 hours during a 30 consecutive day period;
- has participated in a qualifying Employment and Training (E&T) activity for 80 hours during a 30 consecutive day period;
- has worked at an approved community service site for a specified number of hours per month determined by dividing the anticipated monthly SNAP allotment by the state minimum wage; or
- will meet the WP requirement within a 30 day period.

When a level three sanction is removed because a client has regained eligibility due to an exemption or WP compliance in a 30 day period, level one and/or two sanctions should not be removed unless the client has provided proof that s/he was meeting, had good cause for not meeting, or was exempt, from the WP requirement during the participation month(s) for which the sanctions were applied.

**Updated Online
Guide
Books/Pages**

Topic: SNAP

Book: Work Requirements

Chapter: General SNAP Work Requirements

Page: General SNAP Work Requirements

Topic: SNAP

Book: Work Requirements

Chapter: Voluntary Quit and Reduction of Work Hours
(formerly Voluntary Quit)

Page: SNAP Voluntary Quit and Reduction of Work Hours
(formerly SNAP Voluntary Quit)

Topic: SNAP

Book: Work Requirements

Chapter: Voluntary Quit and Reduction of Work Hours
(formerly Voluntary Quit)

Page: Entering Voluntary Quit and Reduction of Work Hours Data
(formerly Entering Voluntary Quit Data)

**Updated
BEACON Online
Guide
Books/Pages
(continued)**

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: ABAWD Work Program Requirement
Page: ABAWD Work Program Exemptions

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: ABAWD Work Program Requirement
Page: ABAWD Work Program Participation

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: ABAWD Work Program Requirement
Page: Entering and Removing ABAWD Work Program Sanctions

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: ABAWD Work Program Requirement
Page: Regaining Eligibility after ABAWD Work Program Noncompliance

Questions

If you have any questions, please email the DTA Mailbox.
Systems questions should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
