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Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) and Work Requirements

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Welcome!

In the chat, please share:

- Whether you're joining as a resident or provider
- A question you're hoping gets answered in the training



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Objectives

Participants will be able to...

- Describe who is eligible for SNAP benefits
- Define work requirements and how to document work or exemptions
- Identify other food resources and how to reach them
- Learn how to contact D.C. Hunger Solutions and what we can help with



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Introduction to D.C. Hunger Solutions

Founded as an initiative of the Food Research and Action Center in 2002, D.C. Hunger Solutions seeks to create a hunger-free community and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of low-income District residents by:

- Improving public policies to end hunger, reduce poverty, promote nutrition, and increase the availability of healthy, affordable food in low-income areas;
- Maximizing participation in all federal nutrition programs; and
- Educating the public about both the stark reality of hunger's existence in the midst of plenty and the real opportunities for effective solutions.



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**True or False:
People are not
eligible for SNAP if
they are working.**



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**False! The majority
of SNAP households
include someone
who is working.**



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SNAP Eligibility

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SNAP Rules for Immigrant Households

To be eligible for SNAP benefits, you must be a U.S. citizen or have a certain lawfully-present non-citizen status.

- Citizens
- Adults who have had LPR (lawful permanent resident) status/green card for at least 5 years
- Kids under 18 with LPR status/green card (no waiting period)
- Asylees*
- Refugees*



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SNAP Rules for Immigrant Households

- In H.R.1, Congress changed eligibility rules for SNAP
- In the future, asylees, refugees, and others with certain humanitarian statuses will not be eligible for SNAP
- For now, residents in one of these categories should continue to apply for and recertify their SNAP benefits
- Once D.C.'s Department of Human Services (DHS) uses the new rule, we expect it to be applied at recertification



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Parents who are not eligible on their own can apply for SNAP benefits for their eligible children **WITHOUT** sharing information about their own immigration status.



IMPORTANT!

Work Requirements



Recent notice sent to current SNAP clients

Subject: **SNAP Work Rules: You Must Follow These Rules to Receive SNAP Benefits**

Why am I receiving this letter?

This letter is to tell you about different types of new work rules for the District of Columbia (“DC”) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) starting 5/1/2026. **If you are required to meet these rules and you don’t follow them, your SNAP benefits may decrease or end.** The DC Department of Human Services (DHS) Economic Security Administration (ESA) is required to screen everyone to see if they are exempt (excused) from meeting the requirements under these new work rules. **This means that changes to your benefits due to failing to comply are unlikely to occur until you recertify your SNAP benefits.**

People in your house may need to follow different work rules. DHS ESA will send you another letter next month to tell you which individuals in your household are required to meet the work requirements and what each of you need to do.



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Why was this notice sent out?

- USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) can approve waivers that pause SNAP work requirements for states that have high unemployment rates or few jobs available.
- These waivers are expiring, and federal rules now require all states (including D.C.) to enforce them.
- D.C.'s waiver expired **December 2025**.
- 20,000 D.C. residents are expected to be affected.



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What did Congress change?

- Made work requirements stricter
 - Changed age limits
 - Removed automatic exemptions for unhoused individuals, veterans, and youth under 24 aging out of foster care
 - Made it harder for states to get waivers based on "lack of sufficient jobs"



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Who received the notice?

- The notice was sent to all current SNAP clients, regardless of their age or status
- Many clients already meet the requirements or qualify for an exemption



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Who needs to meet the requirements?

Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents (ABAWDs) are required to complete work requirements.

- You are considered an ABAWD if you are...
 - between the ages of 18 and 64;
 - have no dependents under the age of 14 living with you;
 - have no medical or physical barriers to employment; and
 - are not pregnant



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What does this mean?

Any SNAP participant who is considered an ABAWD, and who has no other exemptions, **must** meet work requirements.

If work requirements are not met, SNAP participants will only be eligible to receive benefits for 3 months in a 36-month period.



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Who is exempt?

You may be exempt from work requirements, if you are:

- Under age 18 or over age 65
- Caring for a child under 14
- Receiving disability benefits
- Have a physical or mental health condition that limits your ability to work (with a form filled out by a medical provider)
- Caring for someone sick or elderly
- Pregnant
- A member of an Indigenous group
- Already working 30 hours a week
- Attending school, college, or a training program at least half-time
- Have barriers to work, like not having access to a shower or clean clothes



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Mixed Status Families and Work Requirements

Some families who apply for SNAP benefits have mixed-status

- For example, Sarah is a mom with a work permit. She is not eligible for SNAP, but she has a daughter who was born in the United States. Sarah applies for SNAP benefits for her daughter only.
- In this example, Sarah would not need to comply with the work requirements because she is not receiving SNAP benefits. Her daughter is the only person receiving benefits and wouldn't need to work because she's under 18.



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When will I be screened?

- Effective date is May 1, 2026
- New applicants applying for SNAP after May 1 will be screened for work/exemption status when they apply
- Current clients will be screened at their next recertification date after May 1, 2026
 - If you believe you meet an exemption, submit this documentation as soon as possible to make the process easier
 - For example, if you believe you might have a mental or physical health condition, talk to your doctor about documenting this



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How can you meet work requirements?

- Working a paid job for at least 20 hours or earning at least \$217.50 per week
- Working an unpaid job for at least 20 hours per week
- Volunteering for at least 20 hours per week
- Working in exchange for goods or services at least 20 hours per week (for example, working at your building's front desk in exchange for rent)
- Participating in a job training through SNAP E&T or another program for at least 20 hours per week
- Doing a combination of work, volunteering, or a job training program
- Participating in DC's SNAP Volunteer Program (also known as Workfare) for the number of hours assigned to you each month



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Option 1: Working at least 20 hours per week (paid, unpaid, volunteer work, or work done in exchange for goods or services)

- **Working 80 hours per month in a paid job:** Maria works 20 hours per week at a restaurant. Maria meets the ABAWD requirement by working at least 20 hours per week in a paid job.
- **Working 80 hours per month in exchange for goods or services:** Maria lives in an apartment building rent-free in exchange for working 25 hours per week as the apartment building concierge. Maria meets the ABAWD work requirements by working at least 20 hours per week in exchange for goods or services.



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Option 2: Be in an approved work or training program

- **Participating in a job training program for 80 hours per month:** Daniel participates in a hospitality training program through SNAP E&T for 20 hours per week (80 hours per month). Daniel is meeting work requirements by completing 80 hours of job training per month.



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Option 3: Combination of work and training

- **Working and participating in a training program** for 80 hours per month: Daniel works 10 hours per week (40 hours per month) at a convenience store. He is also participating in a hospitality training program through SNAP E&T for 10 hours per week (40 hours per month). Through these combined activities, he is meeting work requirements by working and training 80 hours per month



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SNAP Volunteer Program (Also known as Workfare)

If you choose to participate in the SNAP Volunteer Program, the number of hours you need to complete is determined by your monthly benefit amount.

$$\text{Your household's monthly SNAP benefit amount} \div \text{D.C.'s Minimum Wage (\$18.40)}$$

Note:

- The number of hours you get, can be split up between any ABAWD's in the household.



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Option 4: SNAP Volunteer Program

- Regina is the head of her household and has an 18-year-old son who lives and eats with her. They are both considered ABAWDs and don't meet any exemptions. They receive \$184 a month in SNAP benefits.
- If they choose to enroll in D.C.'s workfare program, they would need to complete **10 hours** between them to meet their work requirements.

$$\$184 \div \$18.40 = 10 \text{ hours}$$



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Option 4: SNAP Volunteer Program

- Diana receives \$298 per month in SNAP benefits. To meet SNAP work requirements, she can volunteer through the SNAP Volunteer Program 16 hours per month. She contacts SNAP E&T, gets matched to an approved volunteer site at her local animal shelter, and volunteers 4 hours per week (16 hours per month) to meet her work requirements.



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Good Cause

- If clients cannot meet the requirement for one month, they can report this to DHS and will not be penalized
- Examples: Temporary illness, eviction or foreclosure, sudden breakdown in transportation, sudden loss of childcare, court-ordered appearance or temporary incarceration, domestic violence
 - Taylor meets his work requirements by working 20 hours per month at a dry cleaner. It takes Taylor two hours to reach the dry cleaner via public transportation, so he drives instead. Taylor's car breaks down on March 23, and he is unable to get to the dry cleaner to work for the rest of the week. He will only have worked 60 hours that month. He calls his case worker to report "Good Cause". His Good Cause request is approved, and he receives a notice in the mail.



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Forms

Coming April 27, 2026, DHS will release 3 new ABAWD forms:

- SNAP Work Requirements Screening Form – screens for exemptions and good cause at application and recertification
- SNAP Verification of Employment Form – used to verify work activity history (filled out by the customer and signed by employer representative)
- SNAP Medical Report Form – used to report medical condition and to be signed by a qualified professional



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What should you do RIGHT NOW?

Make sure your communication methods are updated in your District Direct account.

Open and read all mail from DHS.

Submit a change of circumstance form to DHS to document exemptions.

Participate in DHS' SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) or other training programs.

Continue to follow existing guidance and continue to apply for, recertify for, and receive SNAP benefits.



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Other Food Resources

www.dchunger.org - (202) 640-1088 - info@dchunger.org



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2-min Exit Survey



<https://forms.gle/X6q9bsWWF>
[aVQQ6QZ6](https://forms.gle/aVQQ6QZ6)

www.dchunger.org - (202) 640-1088 - info@dchunger.org

Questions?

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Connect With Us!

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- FRAC H.R.1 Fact Sheet - [Budget-Reconciliation-2025-Impacts-Fact-Sheet.pdf](#)
- FRAC Blog on Time Limits - [Q&A: How Does the New SNAP Time Limits Policy Affect You? What States and Families Need to Know - Food Research & Action Center](#)
- FRAC H.R.1 Mitigation Hub - [SNAP Cuts Mitigation Hub: Responding to H^P](#)
[Food Research & Action Center](#)

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- TANF in D.C. - [TANF for District Families | dhs](#)
- SunBucks - [| sunbucks](#)
- DC Youth Meals Program - [DC Youth Meals Program | osse](#)



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