

CalFresh ABAWD Rule Changes: Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: What is an ABAWD?

A: ABAWD stands for Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents. Under recent federal legislation, this refers to individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 who are physically and mentally fit to work and do not live with a dependent child under the age of 14.

Q: What happens if I am classified as an ABAWD?

A: Due to recent federal changes if you are considered an ABAWD, you are limited to three full months of CalFresh benefits within a 36-month (3-year) period. To continue receiving benefits beyond 3 months, you must meet monthly work, education, or community engagement requirements.

Q: What activities count toward the work requirement?

A: To keep your benefits, you must log at least 80 hours per month (an average of 20 hours per week). The following are qualifying activities:

- Working a paid job or self-employment (earning at least \$217.50 per week).
- Participating in an approved job training or workforce development program.
- Volunteering or participating in community service.
- Attending school or an education program at least half-time.
- A combination of these equaling 20 or more hours.

Q: Are there exemptions from these rules?

A: Yes. You are **exempt** from the ABAWD time limits and work requirements if you meet any of the following criteria:

- You are under age 18 or 65 and older.
- You are pregnant.
- You have a verified physical or mental limitation that prevents you from working.
- You are the primary caregiver for a dependent child under 14 or an incapacitated person.
- You are receiving or applying for Unemployment Benefits.
- You are enrolled in a recognized Native American tribe.

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Q: Did recent rule changes remove any past exemptions?

A: Yes, federal rule changes have narrowed or eliminated some previous exemptions. Automatic exemptions are no longer universally applied to veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, or youth aging out of foster care. These groups may still qualify for other specific exemptions but are now subject to work rules if they do not.

Q: When do these changes take effect?

A: The work requirement rules apply to new applications and current recipients at their annual recertification.

Q: What steps should I take to protect my benefits?

A: If you receive CalFresh, take the following steps:

1. **Update your information:** Log in to your [BenefitsCal](#) portal to ensure your contact information and case details are accurate.
2. **Review your renewal date:** Check your upcoming annual renewal date to see when your eligibility will be assessed under the new rules.
3. **Respond to notices:** Reply promptly to any letters or requests from your county social services office.

Q. How can I confirm this impacts me?

A. Use the state's [online prescreening tool](#) to determine if you are likely to be impacted.

Q: Who can I contact for help in my area?

A: Contact the **Ventura County Human Services Agency** at 1-888-472-4463 or visit an [HSA Community Service Center](#). to discuss your eligibility, report changes, or get screened for exemptions. You can also reach out to 211ventura.org (call 2-1-1) or FoodShare.org to find local food resources.