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SNAP Policy Update #7 15-16'

DATE: January 29, 2016

RE: SNAP Time Limits – ABAWD Work-Based Eligibility Requirements

This policy update highlights information provided by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) through [15-INF-11](#). It is focused on the work-based requirements that individuals determined to be Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) must comply with. Included in this update is the following:

- Background Information
- Maintaining Eligibility for SNAP Participants Who Need to Adhere to ABAWD Work Requirements
- Reporting Requirements
- Notification about ABAWD rules to recipients and applicants

Background Information

On January 1st SNAP offices re-implemented ABAWD time limits in NYS. This means that people identified as ABAWDs must meet strict work requirements in order to continue to receive SNAP benefits for more than 3 months in any 36-month period.

ABAWDs are defined as people who are:

- 18 to 49 years old,
- not pregnant,
- not residing in a SNAP household with a child under 18 years of age,
- non-disabled (no documented disability that would preclude employment),
- physically and mentally able to work 80 hours a month, and
- not living in a waived area of the state.

Additionally, people granted a one-month exclusion from the local district or already meeting the ABAWD work requirements are not considered to be ABAWDs in that current month and can continue their SNAP eligibility.

For more information on exclusions to the ABAWD rules and other tools and resources to help individuals determine their ABAWD status, please see our dedicated ABAWD webpage listed below.

Maintaining Eligibility for SNAP Participants Who MUST Meet ABAWD Work Requirements

Beginning on January 1st, in order to remain eligible for SNAP for longer than 3 months in a 36month period, ABAWDs must complete and document a qualified work activity each month. Work activities can vary and include:

- Work, volunteer activities or “in-kind” work for at least 80 hours per month.
- Participation in a qualifying work/training program approved by the SNAP office for at least 80 hours per month. (Job search activities can be included, but they cannot exceed more than half of the total monthly hours.)
- Participation in an activity under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act or the Trade Act of 1974 for at least 80 hours per month. Activities can include:
 - job search and job readiness activities,
 - occupational skills training, and
 - adult education and literacy activities.
- Participation in a combination of the above listed work/training programs for at least 80 hours per month, OR
- Complying with a Work Experience Program (WEP) assignment. The number of hours is calculated by dividing the total SNAP allotment by the state minimum wage (\$9.00).

Reporting Requirements

SNAP recipients who are required to adhere to ABAWD work requirements will need to provide documentation of their participation in a qualifying work activity to their local SNAP office each month. These SNAP recipients **MUST** notify their local SNAP office if their work/training activities go below 80 hours in a month. The SNAP recipient has 10 days after the month of the decrease to notify the SNAP office of the change.

Notification of ABAWD Time Limits for Current Recipients and Future Applicants

SNAP offices were reminded of a letter sent by OTDA in December to all SNAP households that were identified as including an ABAWD based on information in the case file as of October 2015. This letter provided information on the January 1 changes to the ABAWD rules and advised individuals to contact the district if they:

- were exempt from the time limits, or
- needed information and help with securing an available qualifying work activity that will enable them to maintain their SNAP eligibility beyond three months.

OTDA encourages SNAP offices to continue to provide all potential ABAWDs with information regarding work-based eligibility requirements and the potential consequences for not adhering to the re-introduced ABAWD rules. SNAP offices have been advised to use the “Notice of ABAWD Status” letter that was developed by OTDA to assist SNAP applicants/recipients to understand the re-introduced

ABAWD policies and time limits. In addition, during the interview, SNAP workers should be explaining the SNAP ABAWD policies, including the rules regarding the time limits and compliance with work activities.

For more information on the notice that went out in December and the important role community organizations can play in helping their clients understand the ABAWD rules, see our SNAP Policy Update # 6, which can be found on our ABAWD webpage, linked below.

Links:

- [15-INF-11](#) – Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) Status Notification Letter
- [SNAP ABAWD Time Limits Tools and Resources](#) – Hunger Solutions New York ABAWD Website

Help for Your Clients

There are Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) Coordinators in many communities across NYS. NOEP Coordinators are available to help potentially eligible individuals and families apply for SNAP benefits by:

- conducting confidential pre-screenings to see if a family may be eligible for SNAP,
- assisting with completing the application, including the online version,
- answering any questions, and
- working with current recipients around recertification or other issues with their SNAP case (including NYSNIP recipients).

NOEP Coordinators can also come to your community site to help your clients.

To find out if there is a NOEP Coordinator in your community, go to: <http://www.foodhelpny.org>.

Visit <http://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp> for a listing of SNAP offices and contact information outside of NYC or call 1-800-342-3009.

Visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/services/snap_centers.shtml for a listing of SNAP offices in New York City or call 311.

For More Information

If you have any questions about this SNAP update or SNAP time limits in general, please contact Dawn Secor via phone at (518) 436-8757 ext. 112, or by e-mailing dawn.secor@hungersolutionsny.org.