

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents

April 2020 Policy Changes

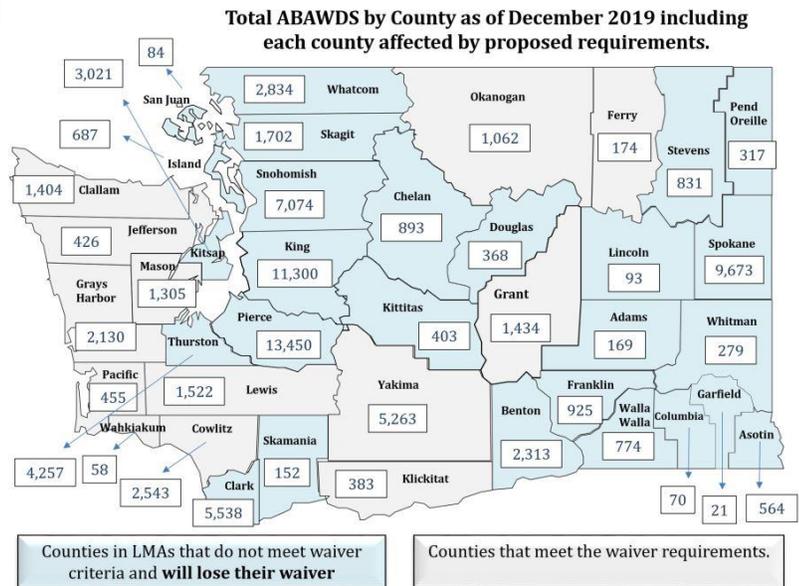
Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) are a subset of Basic Food recipients required to participate in specific employment related activities to maintain their assistance, per the Washington Administrative Code [388-444-0030](#). The Department of Social and Health Services annually requests waivers from the USDA Food and Nutrition Services, identifying counties or areas of the state requiring ABAWD participation, dependent on unemployment rates in comparison to the national average.

Who is an ABAWD?

An ABAWD is an able-bodied adult who:

- Is aged 18-49;
- Has no dependent children in the home;
- Is physically and mentally able to work and
- Has no exemptions from work registration.

Effective April 1, 2020, ABAWDs residing in 26 non-waived counties are required to participate in employment-related activities. ABAWDs residing in the 13 counties (refer to map) are exempt from these requirements, but encouraged to participate. This policy will affect approximately 68,000 Basic Food recipients in 2020. This does **not** mean that all ABAWDs will be terminated effective April 1.



What are the work requirements?

To receive Basic Food assistance beyond three months of non-participation, non-exempt ABAWDs must:

- Work at least 20 hours per week averaged monthly (80 hours per month);
- Volunteer in the community through an approved Workfare site monthly. The number of volunteer hours is determined based on the benefit amount; or
- Participate in a DSHS-approved employment or training program such as Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET).

If an ABAWD is not able to work due to a mental or physical barrier, they may relay this to DSHS for consideration of a participation exemption.

What happens if a client does not participate in work activities?

An ABAWD can only receive food for three months in a 36-month period without participating. If they do not participate and meet the requirements specified above, Basic Food assistance will close effective the end of the third month. An ABAWD may regain eligibility if they reapply and participate in activities, or show proof they have worked and/or participated in related work activities during the application month. DSHS can approve Basic Food benefits once the participation requirement is met and the ABAWD is otherwise determined eligible.



Transforming Lives

13 Counties in Washington are Eligible for a Waiver in April 2020 under the Final Rule



State Preparations

To support ABAWD clients, the Department of Social and Health Services has established partnerships with the Employment Security Department and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. These partnerships were established to provide ABAWD Navigators who can direct clients to resources and programs to meet work requirements. DSHS eligibility staff will be responsible for referring ABAWD clients to our partners for engagement.

DSHS continues to collaborate with BFET partners to increase capacity in preparation for the change in federal regulations.

Adams
Asotin
Benton
Chelan
Clallam
Clark
Columbia
Cowlitz
Douglas
Ferry
Franklin
Garfield
Grant
Grays Harbor
Island
Jefferson
King
Kitsap
Kittitas
Klickitat

Lewis
Lincoln
Mason
Okanogan
Pacific
Pend Oreille
Pierce
San Juan
Skagit
Skamania
Snohomish
Spokane
Stevens
Thurston
Wahkiakum
Walla Walla
Whatcom
Whitman
Yakima