

Work Requirements for Basic Food ABAWDs

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Economic Services Administration • Community Services Division

Able Bodied-Adults Without Dependents

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, also known as ABAWDs, are a subset of Basic Food recipients who are required to participate in specific employment-related activities to maintain their assistance (See WAC [388-444-0030](#)). These individuals must:

- Be age 18-52¹.
- Have no dependent children living with them.
- Be physically and mentally able to work.
- Have no exemptions from work registration.
(See WAC [388-444-0010](#)).

What are ABAWD work requirements?

To receive Basic Food assistance beyond three months of non-participation, **non-exempt** ABAWDs must complete one of the following activities:

- Work an average of at least 20 hours per week, or 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).
- Participate in an employment or training program such as Basic Food Employment and Training or volunteer in an unpaid work program or another state-approved program for an average of 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month.

Is there an ABAWD Waiver?

DSHS requests waivers annually from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service to exempt identified counties or areas of the state requiring ABAWD participation. These participation waivers are dependent on unemployment rates in comparison to the national average.

Under the current waiver, King and Snohomish Counties have ABAWD participation requirements. Within these two counties, the Muckleshoot and Tulalip tribes are exempt from these requirements. Remaining counties in Washington state are currently exempt through Jan. 31, 2024.

For more information, please visit Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents at dshs.wa.gov/abawd.

¹These changes are a result of [H.R.3746 - 118th Congress \(2023-2024\): Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023](#) | [Congress.gov](#) | [Library of Congress](#). Beginning October 2024, these requirements will expand to ages 18-54.

More information:

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