

# Basic Food Work Registration Requirements and 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 are a subset of Basic Food recipients who are required to participate in specific employment-related activities to maintain their assistance (WAC [388-444-0030](#)).

## Who is an ABAWD?

An ABAWD is an able-bodied adult who:

- Is age 18-49.
- Has no dependent children living with them.
- Is physically and mentally able to work.
- Has no exemptions from work registration (WAC [388-444-0010](#)).

## What are the 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 Training, volunteer in an unpaid work program or another state-approved program for 20 hours per week average or 80 hours per month.

## Is there an ABAWD Waiver?

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) requests waivers annually from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, to identify counties or areas of the state requiring ABAWD participation. This participation is dependent on unemployment rates in comparison to the national average.

Effective February 1, 2023, the current statewide ABAWD waiver exempting all counties in Washington state from ABAWD time limits expires. DSHS is preparing to submit a new waiver request to FNS prior to the expiration of the current waiver. Based on available data, it is likely the waiver will not be statewide, but there will be counties and tribal lands and reservations waived in 2023. DSHS will provide new waiver details to stakeholders and update the ABAWD website once it receives final approval. The information will be available at [www.dshs.wa.gov/abawd](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/abawd).

## What services are available for ABAWDs?

While ABAWDs are not currently required to participate in retaining their Basic Food eligibility, we continue to provide employment and training opportunities through:

- [Basic Food Employment and Training](#)
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)

For more information, please visit [Able Bodied Adults without Dependents-ABAWD](#)



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