



Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) New SNAP Time Limit Rules and Exceptions

You Must Follow ABAWD Work Requirement Rules to Continue to Receive SNAP

Beginning on September 1, 2023, there will be changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rules for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). This letter tells you what the rules are, who they apply to, and what you may need to do.

Who is an ABAWD?

An ABAWD is a SNAP recipient between the ages of 18-49 who has no minor-age children in the home, does not meet one of the exemptions described below and is required to work at least 80 hours a month. An ABAWD can only receive SNAP benefits for three (3) months in a 3-year period unless they are working or have a reason for not being able to work.

Rhode Island's current 3-year period is September 1, 2020, to August 31, 2023. A new 3-year period will start on September 1, 2023. This means that if an ABAWD has any countable months, their countable months will reset back to zero on September 1, 2023. A countable month is a month that an ABAWD received SNAP but did not meet the ABAWD work requirements or have an exemption. Any ABAWD who is not working at least 20 hours a week or who does not have an exemption to the work requirements will only be able to get 3 months of SNAP benefits between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2026.

What do you need to know?

In June of 2023, the Federal government made changes to who is considered an ABAWD. **Beginning on September 1, 2023, individuals who are 50 years old will be subject to the 3-month time limit** unless they are working or meet one of the exemptions described below.

On October 1, 2023, individuals who are aged 51 or 52 will also be subject to the 3-month time limit unless they are working or meet one of the exemptions described below.

How can an ABAWD receive SNAP benefits for more than 3 months?

ABAWDs may be able to receive benefits for more than three (3) months during the 3-year period if they qualify for any of the following exemptions:

- A parent (natural, adoptive, or step) of a household member under age 18, even if the household member who is under 18 is not eligible for SNAP benefits
- Residing in a household where a household member is under age 18
- Pregnant
- Unable to work due to physical or mental health reasons (including drug or alcohol treatment)
- Working and/or volunteering for at least 80 hours a month

- Participating in certain training programs for at least 20 hours a week
- Exempt from the general work requirements for one or more of following reasons:
 - Taking care of a child under age 6 or a person that needs help caring for themselves
 - Already working at least 30 hours a week or already earning weekly wages of at least equal to the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher, multiplied by thirty (30) hours
 - Receiving unemployment benefits, or you applied for unemployment benefits
 - Attending a school, college, or training program at least half time (but college students are subject to other eligibility rules)
 - Meeting work requirements for another program, like RI Works (TANF) or unemployment insurance

Beginning on **September 1, 2023**, in addition to the above reasons, ABAWDs can also receive SNAP benefits for more than three (3) months in the 3-year period if they are:

- Homeless- someone who lacks a fixed or regular nighttime residence or someone whose primary residence is a shelter, halfway house, a temporary residence (for not more than 90 days), or a place not ordinarily used a regular sleeping accommodation (a hallway, bus station, lobby, car, outdoors, or similar place)
- A veteran- an individual who served in the United States Armed Forces (such as Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, and National Guard), including an individual who served in a reserve component of the Armed Forces, and who was discharged or released, regardless of the conditions of such discharge or release.
- An individual aged 18 – 24 who was in foster care at the time they turned 18 years old or older.

Additionally, certain cities and towns were granted a special ABAWD location waiver by the federal government. **Residents of the following twenty-three (23) cities and towns are exempt from the ABAWD work requirements and time limits** (through June 30, 2024): Burrillville, Central Falls, Charlestown, Cranston, Cumberland, East Greenwich, East Providence, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, New Shoreham (Block Island), North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Providence, Scituate, Smithfield, Warren, Westerly, West Greenwich, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

What do you need to do?

To help keep your SNAP case active, please make sure DHS has all of your correct and current contact information like address, phone number, email address, work information, etc., as well as all correct and current case information, especially employment and work activities.

If you are an ABAWD subject to the 3-month time limit, you must let DHS know if you are working, participating in job training/work program or volunteering for at least 80 hours a month (approximately 20 hours a week) or if any of the above exceptions apply to you (i.e. you are homeless, a veteran, unable to work due to disability, pregnant, taking care of a child under age 6, live in a city or town that has the ABAWD location waiver, are age 18-24 and were in foster care, etc.)

If DHS does not have a record of you participating in any work activities or does not have information that would exempt you from the ABAWD time limit, you will lose your SNAP benefits after 3 months.

If you are subject to the time limit and **your work hours drop below 80 hours a month, you must let DHS know within 10 days.**

How do you contact DHS to update your information or submit documents?

Online: **Log in to your account** at <https://healthyrhode.ri.gov>, click “Report Changes” and use the **View/Upload Documents** link to upload your documents. To learn how to set up an account, visit: <https://dhs.ri.gov/resources/tech-resources>

Mobile: **Upload** the documents on the HealthyRhode Mobile App which you can download in the App Store® or on Google Play®

Mail: Mail copies of documents to RI Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 8709
Cranston, RI 02920-8787

In-Person: You may drop off copies of documents at any DHS regional office. Offices are open from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Each regional office also has a **drop box** which in many locations is accessible 24/7. The Providence Regional Office also has a **document scanning center** where customers can have documents scanned directly into their case file. A list of office and drop box locations can be found at <https://dhs.ri.gov/about-us/dhs-offices>. **Note: some drop box locations are not open 24 hours such as 1 Reservoir Avenue in Providence.**

Phone: **Call DHS at 1-855-MY-RIDHS** (1-855-697-4347)

The Call Center is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM

You can also reach out to the **SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program** for help in meeting your work requirements. If you need help getting your GED, improving your computer skills, or need training for a new or better job. Go to <https://risnapet.org> to find a training program or connect with SNAP E&T staff.

What happens if you do not follow the ABAWD Work Requirements?

DHS will count each full month that you receive SNAP benefits but do not meet these work requirements without a good reason as a countable month toward your 3-month time limit. Once you have received 3 full months for SNAP, you will lose your benefits.

What if you have a good reason for not meeting the ABAWD Work Requirements?

Contact DHS as soon as possible at 1-855-MY-RIDHS (1-855-697-4347) if you think you have a good cause exception for not being able to meet the work requirements. Good reasons include issues you cannot control such as getting sick or not having transportation. These are some examples of good reasons, but there are others, too. If you are determined to have a good cause for not being able to meet the work requirements, that month of SNAP benefits will not be included as part of the 3-month limit.

If you lose your SNAP benefits, how can you get them back?

If you meet the work requirements during any month, you may be eligible to receive SNAP benefits again. You can also get SNAP benefits again if something changes in your life, and there are reasons you no longer need to follow these rules. For example, you may get SNAP benefits back if you have a new physical or mental health reason for not working or because of other reasons listed above. You may also get SNAP benefits again if you move to one of the cities or towns that do not have a time limit.

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1. mail: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA 1320
Braddock Place, Room 334 Alexandria, VA
22314; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: FNCSIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov

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RI Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 8709
Cranston, RI 02920-8787

If you have questions or need more information, please call us at 1-855-MY-RIDHS (1-855-697-4347), Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. You may also visit our website www.dhs.ri.gov for more information.