

If you or someone getting Food Stamps with you are between the ages of 18 and 50, have no dependents, and are able to work, the Food Stamp Program considers you to be an **ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents)**. ABAWDs have special work rules to be able to get and continue to get Food Stamp benefits. If you are an ABAWD, you must:

- work;
- do a work activity, which means volunteer work for an agency; or
- be in a special work-training program, such as a training program at a community college.

You must be doing one or a combination of these activities for at least **20 hours a week (80 hours per month)**.

If you are an ABAWD (able to work and without children) and you are not complying with these ABAWD work rules, you can only get Food Stamp benefits for 3 months within a 36-month period. After that 3-month period of not complying with ABAWD work rules, your Food Stamp benefits will end. You will not be able to get Food Stamp benefits again, unless:

- the 36 months pass;
- ABAWD work rules are fulfilled; **OR**
- the ABAWD becomes *exempt* from ABAWD work rules.

**For ABAWDs who were getting Food Stamp benefits as of November 1, 2012, the count for the 36-month ABAWD period begins on November 1, 2012.**

**For everyone else, the count for the 36-month ABAWD period begins the month you first begin to get Food Stamp benefits after November 1, 2012.**

**ABAWDS MUST SHOW US THEY ARE COMPLYING WITH THE ABAWD WORK RULES.**

**IF THE ABAWD DOES NOT PROVE THEY ARE COMPLYING WITH THESE RULES, THE ABAWD'S FOOD STAMP BENEFITS WILL END IN 3 MONTHS.**

**If the ABAWD is getting Food Stamps with other people and doesn't comply with ABAWD work rules for 3 months, this is what will happen: The ABAWD's income and resources will still be counted along with the income and resources of the other people getting Food Stamps, but the ABAWD will not be included in the size of the group getting Food Stamps. This means the other people getting Food Stamps will get a smaller amount of benefits.**

Food Stamp benefits will not change or end if the ABAWD gives us proof that he or she is:

- currently working 20 hours a week or 80 hours per month;
- currently doing a work activity, a work-training program, or any combination of work, work activity, or work-training for 20 hours a week or 80 hours per month; **OR**
- *exempt* from ABAWD work rules.

An ABAWD is *exempt* from ABAWD work rules if the ABAWD is:

- Exempt from Work Registration rules (see Food Stamp Manual PART 809 for a list);
- Under 18, or is 50 or older;
- Pregnant;
- Getting Food Stamps with other people, and at least one of them is under the age of 18; **OR**
- Residing in certain areas with a high unemployment rate and/or lack of available jobs.