

# SNAP WORK REQUIREMENTS

## WORK AND JOB SEARCH REQUIREMENTS ARE CENTRAL TO ELIGIBILITY

In order for someone to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, they must be employed, looking for work, or actively participating in a workforce training program, unless they qualify for an exemption.

Federal SNAP law allows for **three** separate work requirements to be imposed on people as a condition of receiving SNAP benefits:

- General Work Requirements
- Time Limits for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)
- Mandatory SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) Participation

*NOTE: Many SNAP recipients will be subject to all three sets of requirements.*

## WHAT ARE THE GENERAL WORK REQUIREMENTS?

According to federal law, if a person is age **16-59**, they must register for work, cooperate and respond to all notices from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and not voluntarily quit a job to qualify for and maintain their SNAP benefits.

## WHO IS EXEMPT FROM THE GENERAL WORK REQUIREMENTS?



Already working at least 30 hours a week



Taking care of a child under 6 or someone with a disability



Meeting work requirements for another program (TANF or unemployment)



Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program



Unable to work due to a physical or mental condition, as documented from medical professional



Students 18+ enrolled at least half time in higher education

## ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWDS)

Under federal law, if a person is age **18-64**, able to work, and doesn't have any dependent children under age 14, they must work, participate in a work program, or volunteer for at least 20 hours per week (80 hours per month).

Ways to Meet the ABAWD requirement:

- Work 80+ hours per month (paid, unpaid, volunteer)
- Join a qualifying work program (80+ hours/month) including WIOA, Trade programs, or a DOL or VA employment & training program
- Participate in workfare assigned through SNAP Employment & Training (E&T)

## WHO IS EXEMPT FROM ABAWD REQUIREMENTS?

- Pregnant
- Under the age of 18 or age 65 or older
- Indian, Urban Indian, California Indian or Alaskan Native
- Physically or mentally unable to work
- Living in a county without SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) services
- Part of a SNAP household with a person under 1

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## WHAT IS SNAP EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (E&T)?

SNAP E&T helps SNAP recipients meet work requirements while gaining employment and job skills by offering case-managed job search assistance, job readiness training, and vocational training.

In Texas, SNAP E&T participation is **mandatory** for individuals subject to the General Work Requirements who work fewer than 30 hours per week, as well as for most ABAWDs working fewer than 20 hours per week, unless they qualify for an exemption in either category.

## SNAP SANCTIONS

SNAP sanctions are penalties that are imposed when someone doesn't meet the General Work Requirement, ABAWD, and/or SNAP E&T requirements.

General Work Requirements: If a person doesn't meet the General Work Requirements, they are disqualified from receiving SNAP for at least a month and must begin meeting the requirements to regain eligibility for SNAP benefits.

ABAWD: If an ABAWD is not meeting the 20-hours-per-week work requirement, they become subject to a three-month "time limit." **After three months (consecutive or cumulative) of receiving SNAP but not meeting the work requirement, they become ineligible for SNAP until the end of the 36-month period.**

SNAP E&T: If a SNAP recipient does not comply with their mandatory SNAP E&T assignments, they are sanctioned. If the Primary Wage Earner gets sanctioned, the entire household is terminated from benefits, known as the Full Family Sanction. If any other household member is sanctioned, that individual is disqualified and their portion of benefits is removed from the household's allotment.

HHSC's self-evaluation report acknowledges SNAP E&T "participation levels are not at acceptable levels, and sanction levels are much higher than desired." **In FY24, Texas had 367,708 mandatory SNAP E&T participants and issued 245,703 sanctions, for a sanction rate of 67%.** Several factors may be contributing to low participation and high sanction rates, including limited job training opportunities, a lack of awareness of or failure to apply exemptions from the work requirement, and difficulty documenting hours spent searching for work.

### Sources

- Food and Nutrition Service - SNAP Work Requirements: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/work-requirements](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/work-requirements)
- Texas Health and Human Services Sunset Review: [www.hhs.texas.gov/about/hhsc-sunset-review](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/about/hhsc-sunset-review)

1st Sanction	Disqualified for a month
2nd Sanction	Disqualified for 3 months
3rd or more Sanctions	Disqualified for 6 months