

NUMBER

#18-01-01

DATE

October 19, 2018

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors

Financial Eligibility Supervisors
and Staff

Employment Service Providers

Tribal Agencies

Community Based
Organizations

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information and
prepare for December 1, 2018
implementation

EXPIRATION DATE

October 19, 2020

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) to Operate an All-Voluntary Program

TOPIC

SNAP recipients subject to the time limit and work provisions can decide if they want to participate in SNAP Employment and Training services to help meet those requirements.

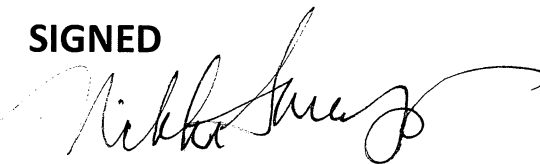
PURPOSE

This bulletin instructs counties on the procedures related to SNAP Employment and Training referrals for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents as well as other SNAP recipients required to register for work.

CONTACT

Policy questions related to this bulletin should be directed to PolicyQuest. Systems questions related to this bulletin should be directed to the TSS Help Desk.

SIGNED



NIKKI FARAGO

Assistant Commissioner
Children and Family Services

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

I. Background

Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) must meet strict federal work requirements in order to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Counties and community advocates voiced requests for administrative simplification and streamlining in administering those work requirements. In response, in 2015 the Department created the ABAWD Taskforce to review and improve policies and practices regarding the work requirements. Taskforce members included counties, community-based organizations and advocates, Legal Aid, and DHS staff. The Taskforce presented a set of recommendations to DHS leadership in February 2016. One recommendation was that Minnesota implement the federal option to make participation in employment and training services voluntary for the men and women who are subject to work requirements.

The rationale for the recommendation includes:

- Limited funding prevents the ability to provide meaningful services to everyone facing work requirements
- Focusing on the individuals who want and believe they would benefit from the services allows the investment of the limited resources where they could make the most impact
- Making the services mandatory creates significant paperwork and additional administrative steps for counties and tribal agencies, which did not result in significant numbers of mandatory members accessing the services

The Department accepted the recommendations of the task force.

Changes will be made to the Combined Manual, POLI: TEMP, the SNAP E&T Manual, and related forms.

II. What This Means for Eligibility Workers

Effective December 1, 2018, SNAP recipients can choose whether or not to seek employment and training services in order to help meet the program's work requirements. The choice to participate in services does not change the fact that all Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents will be eligible for SNAP benefits for only 3 months in a 36-month period unless they are meeting the program's work requirements.

Recipients subject to work requirements who work or participate in work activities for an average of 20 hours per week may earn one additional month of eligibility for every month they meet work requirements, and as a result, not use one of their three counted months. These do not have to be consecutive months.

See [CM 0011.24 \(Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents\)](#) for more information on earning additional months.

A. Which recipients are affected?

Able-bodied adults without dependents between the ages of 18 and 50.

Work registration exemptions and the policies defining who is an Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents have not changed. Refer to CM 0011.24 (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents) and CM 0028.06.12 (Who is Exempt from SNAP Work Registration) for more information.

Counties should still refer these recipients to employment and training services, but it should be clear that participation is not required. MAXIS is still programmed to automatically send referrals to Workforce One (WF1) for these time-limited ABAWDs.

Not all counties offer SNAP Employment and Training services. Due to high unemployment rates, some counties and tribal agencies are waived from the time limit provisions and work requirements.

B. Voluntary Participation

An automatic referral from MAXIS will refer time-limited adults subject to work requirements to SNAP Employment and Training when SNAP eligibility is determined or when the recipient's exemption from the time limit ends.

When the SNAP recipient states that he or she wishes to volunteer, add a worker comment to the MAXIS/Workforce One (WF1) referral stating the recipient is volunteering.

Encourage recipients to make use of employment and training services. The services can help participants meet work requirements in order to earn additional months of SNAP benefits and also improve their employment prospects and wage potential. The goal is to assist recipients in obtaining a livable wage, leading toward self-sufficiency.

Let SNAP applicants and recipients know that SNAP E&T can help meet their work requirements and often provide:

- free training
- supportive services, such as transportation assistance and other job related necessities
- help with job search

Attached to this bulletin is an example of a flyer that county and tribal eligibility workers can use to encourage participation in SNAP E&T. If your area has, or will be developing, marketing materials for SNAP E&T, please share these documents with Andrea McConnell, SNAP E&T Program Specialist, at andrea.mcconnell@state.mn.us.

C. Banked Months

Banked Months are additional months of SNAP benefits available to Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents who qualify. Banked Months will continue to be available. Follow policy and procedures in the SNAP Banked Months Guide, revised April 1, 2018.

D. MAXIS

Continue to code Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents on STAT: WREG.

Lift SNAP E&T sanctions on any Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents effective December 1, 2018.

Do not impose any SNAP Employment and Training sanctions after that date.

1. MAXIS Coding

Effective December 1, 2018, the following fields on the STAT: WREG panel cannot be used for sanctions due to failure to comply with SNAP E&T:

- FSET Sanction Begin Date: __ 01 __
- Reason for Sanction: __

If sanctions have been previously recorded in the "Number of Sanctions" field, do not change or delete the information. This information must be retained.

DHS will provide a report for active, pending, and re-instated cases having a sanction and send the report to counties and tribes. Upon receipt, eligibility workers must remove active SNAP E&T sanctions from cases in the footer month of 12/18.

Sanctions for November or prior must remain in place. Cases that are closed for 30 days or more must reapply.

If a DHS-3227 Failure to Comply notice, or something similar, is received with a sanction to be imposed 12/1/18 or later, do not impose the sanction. Retain the document in the case file and case note: Due to MN voluntary E&T participation, sanction for non-compliance for MM/DD/YY has not been imposed.

DHS will run a monthly query after the implementation date to ensure no new SNAP E&T sanctions are being applied.

There is no change to the WF1 automated referral process in MAXIS.

2. Ending E&T Sanctions

To lift an Employment and Training sanction, take the following steps:

- On STAT: WREG the "FSET Work Reg Status" field must be coded 30 - "Mandatory FSET Participant" unless the person reports that they now meet an exemption.
- If the person meets an exemption, code the field with the applicable exemption code.
- Remove the "FS Sanction Begin Date".
- Send the case through background. If all other eligibility factors have been met, the SNAP unit member is eligible. If the Principal Wage Earner (PWE) was sanctioned, the entire SNAP case is determined eligible.
- Review and approve results and complete detailed case notes.
- Upon SNAP approval, MAXIS will navigate to INFC: WORK to complete the referral to WF1.

See TE13.050 SNAP E&T SANCTIONS - SYSTEM PROCESS

3. MAXIS Notices

At this time, SNAP approval notices from MAXIS are not changing. Updates to notice text will be done in the future. The current notice states that if a time-limited SNAP recipient does not cooperate with SNAP

Employment and Training, their household's SNAP will be reduced or ended. Since this is not correct information, eligibility workers must add a specific worker comment (spelled out below) to every approval notice that includes a time-limited ABAWD: those coded as a 30 (Mandatory FSET Participant) on the FSET Work Reg Status Field and have one of the following ABAWD Status Codes:

- 06 (Employed Avg. of 20 Hours-Wk.)
- 08 (Other E&T Services)
- 10 (ABAWD Counted Month)
- 11 (2nd 3-Month Period of Eligibility).

Workers must add the following worker comment, for each individual time-limited ABAWD, to the notices referenced above:

Minnesota has changed the rules for time-limited SNAP recipients. *First Name, Last Name* is not required to participate in SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), but may choose to. Participation in SNAP E&T may extend your SNAP benefits and offer you support as you seek employment. Ask your worker about SNAP E&T.

4. Orientation

Do not schedule recipients for orientation unless the recipients state that they want to volunteer or participate. Coordinate orientation procedures for voluntary participants with your local E&T providers. The Notice to Attend Orientation (DHS-6930) will be updated to remove any language referencing mandatory participation.

III. What This Means for Employment and Training

A. Workforce One

MAXIS will continue to send automatic referrals for time-limited able-bodied adult recipients without dependents. Referrals that are not accepted and remain in the DHS Referral Que will expire after 90 days. Referrals that are accepted and not enrolled should continue to be monitored.

B. Orientation Materials

The online SNAP E&T Orientation video will be edited to reflect the change to an all-voluntary program. Agency specific orientation materials must be modified to indicate that participation is voluntary for all recipients, even able-bodied adults without dependents. Inform recipients of the benefits to participation, including the ability to earn additional months of SNAP benefits for meeting the 80 hour per month work requirement. The Notice to Attend Orientation (DHS-6930) will be updated to remove any language referencing mandatory participation.

If a recipient does not attend SNAP Employment and Training Orientation, do not impose a sanction. The recipient, however, should not be enrolled in Employment and Training.

C. Sanctions

Sanctions can no longer be imposed for failure to comply with SNAP E&T. The Failure to Comply Notice will no longer be available in WF1 or as a DHS eDoc.

In WF1, a person record should be exited from the Employment and Training program if the recipients is no longer participating.

IV. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4049 (voice) (division's general information phone number) or toll free at (800) 657-3739 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.

V. Attachment

Attachment A: SNAP Employment and Training Tip Sheet information

**A brighter future is
within your reach.**

If you receive

SNAP food benefits, the

**SNAP Employment and Training
Program**

may be able to prepare you for a
good-paying job.

SNAP Employment and Training
can often offer **FREE** training and
supportive services, such as help
with transportation and other
work related costs.

Your benefits will not be affected if you don't
participate – the choice is yours.

Ask your worker for more information about
SNAP E&T.

Contact:

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