

**SNAP 3-Month Time Limit:**

**What You Need to Know**

Beginning April 1, 2020, the federal SNAP time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) will go back into effect in Pennsylvania. The time limit will likely apply to all counties in Pennsylvania except Forest County – **including Philadelphia.**

As of April 1, 2020, an ABAWD can only get 3 full months of SNAP in a 36-month period—unless s/he lives in a **waived part of PA,** meets an **exemption**, or is meeting certain hours in **qualifying work activities**.

If you are getting letters from the Department of Human Services (DHS) about ABAWD requirements, check below to see if you can be found exempt or, if not, how to meet the work requirements. Follow the **Action** item to make sure you can keep your SNAP benefits.

**Who is exempt?**

The 3 month SNAP limit does not apply if you meet any of the following:

* **Under age 18 or 50 and older**

**ACTION** → DHS should already exempt ABAWDs based on age. DHS should know when you turn 50 and become exempt. If they make a mistake, call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to let them know.

* **Physically or mentally unable to work 20 hours per week**

Many “able-bodied adults without dependents” are not actually “able-bodied,” but DHS may not know this if the person does not get a disability benefit. People can be exempt from the three month time limit if they have a physical or mental condition that “reduces their ability to work.” Being determined to be unfit for work has a much lower standard of disability than is required to get SSI. It does not require a specific diagnosis or submission of medical test results.

**ACTION** → Have a health care provider fill out a **Medical Exemption Form**.

See <https://clsphila.org/abawds> for copy of the PA 1921 form.

The form can be signed by many health care providers, including:

* Doctor, doctor’s assistant or representative of a doctor’s office;
* Nurse practitioner;
* Psychologist;
* Social worker;
* Mental health counselor;
* Any other medical provider whose services are paid for by Medical Assistance.
* **In a substance abuse treatment program**

**ACTION** → Have a program director or your counselor fill out a **Medical Exemption Form** and send the form to your County Assistance Office (CAO). This PA 1921 form can be found at <https://clsphila.org/abawds>.

* **Receiving a disability benefit**

This category includes people who receive SSI, SSD, VA benefits based on a disability, Medicaid based on a disability, or certain disability retirement pensions. This also includes certain temporary disability benefits, such as Worker’s Compensation.

**ACTION** → DHS has already exempted ABAWDs they know get a disability benefit. If you get a disability benefit and are not sure if DHS knows about it, call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930 (**or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to report your disability benefit.

* **Receiving unemployment benefits or have applied for unemployment benefits**

**ACTION** → DHS should already know that you are receiving unemployment compensation. If they don’t, call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to report that you are getting or applied for unemployment benefits. They should be able to look up information about your unemployment case, so you don’t need to send them proof.

* **Living with a child under age 18 who is part of your SNAP household**

This can be your own child or the child of a family member you live with.

**ACTION** → DHS should know already if someone in your SNAP household is under 18. If a child moves into your household call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to report a change in your household size.

* **Pregnant**

**ACTION** → Call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to let them know you are pregnant. Have a health care provider complete a **Medical Exemption Form** (PA 1921) or send other proof of pregnancy to your County Assistance Office. This form can be found at <https://clsphila.org/abawds>.

* **Needed in the home to care for someone**

**ACTION** → If you care for someone in your home who can’t look after themselves, call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to let DHS know. Additional proof may be needed.

* **A student enrolled at least half-time**

Students in any educational or training program, enrolled at least half time as defined by the program, are exempt. Many students in four-year colleages who do not have children and are able-bodied are not eligible for SNAP at all because of SNAP rules about student eligibility. But if a student qualifies for SNAP, he or she should not be subject to the ABAWD time limit.

**ACTION** → If you are enrolled in college or another educational program, at least half time, call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to report your student status. You will have to submit proof of your enrollment in school.

* **Homeless**

**ACTION** → If you do not have a regular place to stay at night, are staying in a shelter, or are doubled up with family or friends temporarily, call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia).** You may need to provide proof.

* **Experiencing domestic violence**

**ACTION** → Call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia).** You should not need to provide proof. If you must provide proof, ask for the Domestic Violence Verification Form (PA 1747). You do not need a Protection from Abuse Order.

**Who is meeting the work requirement?**

People who are working or volunteering for enough hours can keep their SNAP benefits. You qualify if you are:

* **Working at least 20 hours per week on average, including self-employment or in-kind work.**

If you are already working, participating in a qualifying work/training program, doing community service, or any combination of these activities, you are be meeting the work requirement and should be able to continue getting SNAP beyond the three month limit.

**ACTION** → Call the Customer Service Center at **1 877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** to report your work hours. Then, send proof of your work hours to your County Assistance Office. Below are examples of documents you can send as proof of income:

* Last four weeks of pay stubs
* A signed and dated statement from your employer about your weekly hours and pay per hour
* Proof of your self-employment, such as tax returns or ledgers.
* A signed and dated statement about your in-kind work including the number of hours worked each week
* **Participating in an eligible work training program for at least 20 hours per week on average**

**ACTION** → Call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** and tell them you are in a work training program, or that you want to sign up for one. If you are already in a program, send them proof of your participation in the program. This activity must be approved by DHS. To see a list of DHS approved activities, visit <https://clsphila.org/abawds>.

* **Doing volunteer work or community service for 26 hours a month or less.**

The number of required hours per month is the amount of your SNAP benefit divided by the minimum wage ($7.25). Typically this is 26 hours per month.

**ACTION** → You can choose a community service site to volunteer at or you can see if DHS can refer you to a site. If you are volunteering, fill out the **Community Service /Volunteer Participation Form** and send it to your County Assistance Office. It needs to be signed by staff at the community service site. The form can be found at [www.clsphila.org/abawds](http://www.clsphila.org/abawds). If you need help finding a volunteer site, the County Assistance Office may be able to help. Call the Customer Service Center at **1-877-395-8930** (or **215-560-7226 in Philadelphia)** and ask for an appointment at your local office.

**Resources and DHS Contact Information**

**For more information, including copies of all ABAWD forms**: Visit Community Legal Services of Philadelphia’s website at [www.clsphila.org/abawds](http://www.clsphila.org/abawds) or visit the Hunger Coalition’s site at [www.hungercoalition.org/abawds](http://www.hungercoalition.org/abawds).

**DHS website**: <http://www.dhs.pa.gov>. (Search for ABAWDs.)

**DHS Contact Information**: Statewide Customer Services Center: 1-877-395-8930, or Philadelphia Customer Service Center: 215-560-7226

**Legal services** (in case you can’t get DHS to keep your SNAP on): [www.palegalaid.net](file:///C:\Users\lhayes\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\VPS5BCT7\www.palegalaid.net).

*Send forms and proofs to your local County Assistance Office by mail, fax or in-person.*