



SNAP ABAWD Rule Talking Points

On December 20, 2018 the Administration released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that, if enacted, would cut 8.5 billion meals from the tables of individuals facing hunger by changing longstanding SNAP policy. Feeding America believes this proposed rulemaking would force more adults into food insecurity by unreasonably limiting nutrition benefits. You can find additional resources and updates on [HungerNet](#).

What is the current law?

At present, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) face a strict time limit for receiving benefits if they are unable to find work.

- Adults ages 18-50 who do not receive disability benefits and do not have children, can only receive SNAP benefits for three-months, over the course of a three-year period, unless they are working at least 20 hours per week or taking part in comparable workforce/job training.
- This is often mischaracterized as a work requirement, but is more accurately labeled a “time limit.” Even in its current form, this harsh time limit does not help someone find or keep a job, but rather takes away their food assistance after a specific period of time.
- Presently, states are able to waive this time limit for people, temporarily, in areas with elevated unemployment. This allows states to be nimble around economic fluctuations.
- Nearly every state in the U.S. has opted to utilize these waivers at some time.

What would the proposed action do?

The executive action would restrict states’ ability to waive the harsh time limit, in turn making the time limit on SNAP benefits for ABAWDs even more severe.

- The proposed rulemaking would both tighten the criteria for qualifying for a waiver request and expand the ground upon which it can be denied.
- USDA’s own estimates show these changes would cut SNAP benefits to an estimated 755,000 individuals and increase food insecurity.
- **This rule would result in a loss of 8.5 billion meals over ten years from the tables of individuals facing hunger.**

Who does this impact?

This rule would target the people most in need of Feeding America’s help – the poor, jobless and unemployed.

- The average income of ABAWDs participating in SNAP is just 18 percent of the poverty line or about \$2,171, annually, for a single person household.
- That household’s SNAP benefit equates to roughly \$170 per month.

What happens next?

Over the 60 days after the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is published, the public has the opportunity to generate comments on this proposal and Feeding America and its network member food banks will play an active role in soliciting feedback.