

SNAP Time Limits and Work Rules

If you are losing SNAP benefits because of the ABAWD rules, DON'T GIVE UP! You may still be eligible for more SNAP benefits if you work or participate in work activities—or if you are exempt from the rules.

The NJ SNAP (Food Stamp) program has work requirements and time limits that apply to some adults. The rules apply to “Able Bodied” adults who don’t have children under 14 in their SNAP household. These rules were “waived” for several years but starting in December, 2025, these rules are back in most of New Jersey.

Who is an ABAWD?

ABAWD stands for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents. It is an adult between 18 and 64 years old who is not disabled, not pregnant, and not living in a household with a child under 14. If you are an ABAWD, you can only get 3 months of SNAP (food stamps) in a 36 month period unless you meet an exception *or* follow work rules.

What are the ABAWD work rules?

You must be:

- ✓ working or doing volunteer work for 20 hours a week/80 hours a month OR
- ✓ doing SNAP employment and training or be in a workfare program.

Do the ABAWD rules apply to me?

The work rule and 3-month time limit DO NOT apply if you:

- are under age 18 or age 65 and older
- can't work 20 hours or more a week because of a physical or mental barrier to work
- are caring for a child in your SNAP household
- are receiving or applied for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability (SSDI)
- get Unemployment Benefits or have an application pending
- are pregnant
- can't work because you take care of an ill or disabled person in your household
- are enrolled at least half-time in school
- are in a drug or alcohol rehab program
- are deferred from the WFNJ/GA work program
- are working and earning at least \$217.50 per week

If your benefits stop and you think it is a mistake, you can ask for a fair hearing.

What if I disagree with the decision to cut my SNAP benefits?

If you lose SNAP because of the work rules, or because they say that you have used up your 3 months, but you do not agree, appeal right away. If you appeal within 15 days of the date of the notice, you can get SNAP during the appeal.

How do I get a fair hearing?

✓ *Call the State Fair Hearings Hotline at 1-800-792-9773*

✓ *Put it in Writing*

If you go to the agency office to ask for a hearing, you should still put your request in writing. Keep a copy for yourself and get a receipt. This way, you will have proof that you asked for the hearing.

✓ *Call the welfare office*

Speak with your SNAP caseworker or with the Fair Hearing Liaison and tell them that you want a hearing. Make sure you get the name of the person you speak to and write it down. Ask them to send you a letter confirming that you asked for the hearing.

How long do I have to ask for a fair hearing?

If you want to stop the welfare office from changing your SNAP benefits while you wait for a hearing, you must ask for a hearing within **15 days** of the day you get notice of a change in your case. Make sure that you say that you want your benefits to continue when you ask for the hearing. (If you lose your appeal you will have to pay the extra benefits back. Usually, the SNAP office will recoup this out of future benefits you may receive each month until this is paid back.)

For SNAP (aka food stamps), you have **90 days** from the date of the Division of Social Services' decision to ask for a "fair hearing." (You still must ask for the hearing within 15 days of the agency decision if you want your benefits to continue coming unchanged while you wait for a hearing.)

If you need help with SNAP benefits, contact LSNJLAWSM, Legal Services of New Jersey's statewide, toll-free legal Hotline, online or by phone:

www.lsnjlawhotline.org

1-888-LSNJ-LAW

(1-888-576-5529)

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