

# SNAP ABAWD Time Limit in Illinois

## Background Information on ABAWD Policy

The federal Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limit Rule places a limit on how long certain individuals are eligible to participate in SNAP benefits, formerly known as food stamps. SNAP recipients considered “ABAWDs” may only receive SNAP benefits for a total of three full months within a 36-month period.<sup>1</sup>

### ABAWD Waiver

Illinois currently holds a statewide waiver to this rule that expires on December 31, 2017. Illinois is unlikely to qualify for a statewide waiver in 2018 but will likely qualify for geographic waivers in areas of high-unemployment or high labor surplus. To receive the waivers, the Governor must apply to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and there is no guarantee that he will do so.

### Can ABAWDs still lose their benefits under the current waiver?

Yes, despite the 2017 statewide waiver, Illinois operates a mandatory SNAP Employment & Training program (E&T) in 29 counties. ABAWDs in these counties are currently being called into local offices to be enrolled in the program. If the clients do not comply, they will be sanctioned and lose their benefits<sup>2</sup>. For more resources, please visit [ilhunger.org](http://ilhunger.org)

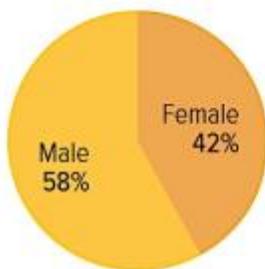
### Who is at risk?

SNAP Recipients who:

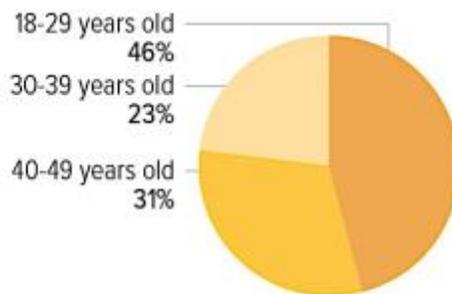
- are between the ages of 18 and 49
- are mentally and physically able to work
- do not have children under 18
- are working less than 20 hours a week

## Unemployed, Nondisabled, Childless Adults Are a Diverse Group

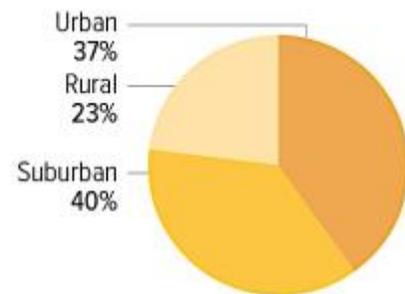
**Gender**  
Over 40 percent are female



**Age**  
Almost one-third are over age 40



**Residence**  
(for those who have indicated status)  
40 percent live in suburban areas



Source: CBPP analysis of the 2013 SNAP household characteristics data and March 2014 Current Population Survey data.

# Mandatory Counties<sup>2</sup>

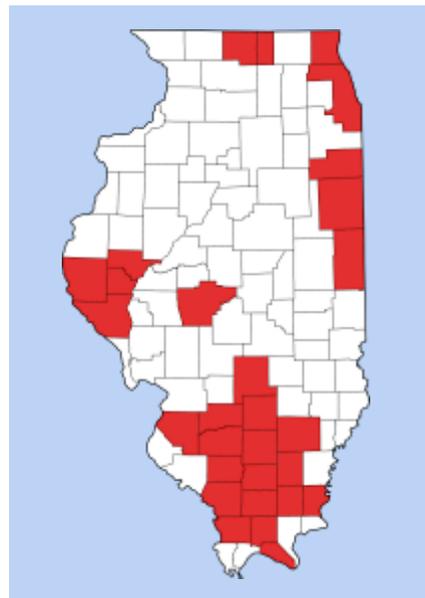
**Region 1: Cook**

**Region 2: Kankakee/Iroquois, Lake,  
Winnebago/Boone**

**Region 3: Vermilion**

**Region 4: Adams/Pike, Brown/Schuyler,  
Sangamon**

**Region 5: Franklin/Hamilton, Jackson,  
Jefferson/Washington/Wayne,  
Marion/Clinton/Fayette, Massac, Perry,  
Saline/Gallatin, St. Clair, Union/Johnson,  
Williamson**



## Exemptions

Time limits and mandatory SNAP E&T do not apply to individuals who meet the following:<sup>1</sup>

- Under age 18 or 50 years or older
- Working 20 hours or more per week, including self-employment or in-kind work
- Receiving a disability-based benefit from a government or private source\*
- Physically or mentally unable to work 20 hours a week
- Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program and unable to work 20 hours per week
- Receiving/applied for unemployment benefits
- Attending high school or a GED program, enrolled at least half-time
- Attending training or college at least half-time and meeting the student eligibility criteria to receive SNAP
- Living with a child under 18 who is part of the same SNAP household
- Pregnant—at any stage of pregnancy
- Caring for a person with a disability or a frail senior
- Living in a waived city or county\*\*

\*All individuals receiving VA disability compensations, regardless of percentage, are exempt.

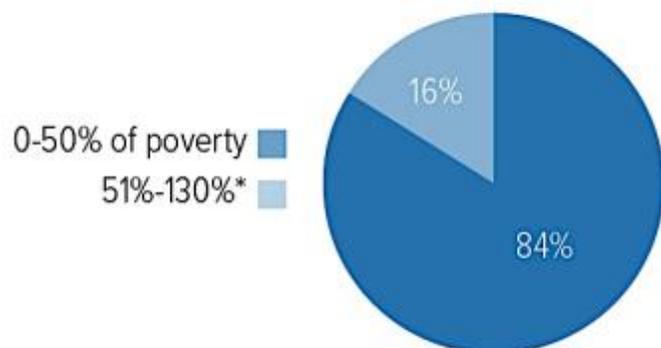
\*\*Illinois has a statewide waiver at least through December, 31 2017, which exempts ABAWDs from time-limits, but does not exempt them from mandatory SNAP E&T.

# Work Requirements

SNAP Recipients who do not meet any of the above exemptions can remain eligible for SNAP benefits past 3 months if they participate in a qualifying work activity and document the number of hours worked each month with their SNAP office. Qualifying work activities include:<sup>1</sup>

- o Working at least 20 hours/week, which includes working for goods and services, or volunteering
- o Participate in an eligible work training program for 20 hours/week. Contact your local [Family Community Resource Center \(FCRC\)](#)
- o Any combination of the above for 80 hours/month, or volunteering with private or public non-profit to “work for benefits” referred to as **EARNFARE in Illinois**. You can find out more at your local FCRC.

## Individuals Subject to the Time Limit Have Very Low Incomes



\*Less than 1% have incomes above 130 percent of poverty while on SNAP.

Source: CBPP Analysis of the 2014 SNAP Household Characteristics data.

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG

## What can you do?

As the graph to the left shows, SNAP recipients subject to the time-limit have very low-incomes. Please visit [ilhunger.org](http://ilhunger.org) to learn more about how to support these individuals and for additional information on:

- [SNAP Employment & Training \(E&T\) in IL](#)
- [EPIC: A USDA Pilot Project in IL](#)
- [Checklist for Social Service Providers](#)
- [Systemic barriers to SNAP Benefits for ABAWDS](#)

Call IHC's hunger hotline at 1-800-359-2163 to report loss of SNAP benefits for ABAWDs and to get involved in advocacy. You can also add stories and information to this [google form](#).

## Sources

1. [New York Hunger Solutions- ABAWD Resources](#)
2. [Illinois Department of Human Services Policy Manual](#)



Created by the Illinois Hunger Coalition  
Call our Hunger Hotline at 1-800-359-2163  
Se habla Español

Last updated 2/14/2017