



# Checklist for Social Service Providers

For providers working with able-bodied adults without dependent children (ABAWDs):



Assess if your client is an ABAWD

*Are they?*

- Receiving SNAP Benefits
- Between the ages of 18 and 49
- Do not have children under 18
- Not pregnant
- Mentally and Physically able to work
- Working less than 20 hours a week

[ABAWD FAQ from the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#)



Ensure proper documentation

If your client does not seem to fit the ABAWD description, but is receiving SNAP benefits, it is important **to get in touch with the client's local Family Community Resource Center (FCRC)** to ensure that their information is up to date. The local office may not have all of the necessary documentation meaning that your client could still be at risk of losing their benefits.

This means if your client is over or under the age limit, already working, recently determined that they are pregnant, or another factor, your client should verify these details with their local office. You can search for local offices using the following link:

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>



Seek exemptions for physical or mental barriers to work

A client will be exempt if they are receiving temporary or permanent disability benefits from the government or private sources. In addition, [VA benefits must be accepted as an exemption regardless of the disability rating.](#)

For obvious mental and physical health barriers, caseworkers in local offices may exempt clients. For non-obvious mental and physical health barriers, clients will need to acquire proof. The current process involves getting the [IL 444-0183A health form](#) signed and returned to the local office. The local office sends the form to the Client Assessment Unit (CAU) in Springfield who will make the call. FNS policy [273.24\(c\)\(ii\)](#), states that documentation will be accepted from any of the following: “physician, **physician’s assistant, nurse, nurse practitioner, designated representative of the physician’s office, a licensed or certified psychologist, a social worker, or any other medical personnel the State agency determines appropriate, that he or she is physically or mentally unfit for employment.**”



### Other key reasons your client may be exempt

- If they are a regular participant in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program
- If they are receiving unemployment compensation, including if they have applied for, but are not yet receiving unemployment compensation.
- If they are taking basic education classes
- If they are attending vocational training

**You can be a key advocate and support for your clients by making sure that your client's FCRC has documentation of these qualifying exemptions.** The FCRC may require that the client periodically bring updated documentation as well as proof of hours completed in an education program or vocational training program.



Individuals 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 FCRC.

*Qualifying work activities include:*

- Working at least 20 hours a week, which includes working for goods and services, or volunteering
- Participate in an eligible work training program for 20 hours/week. Contact your **client's** local [Family Community Resource Center \(FCRC\)](#) to find out about the options in your county. To learn more about SNAP Employment & Training in IL please also visit [ilhunger.org](http://ilhunger.org).
- Any combination of the above for 80 hours/month

## Additional Resources

Check out the [USDA's webpage about ABAWDs](#) for a full list of resources and memorandums, particularly useful is the [memorandum](#) about time-limit policy and program access, which includes a clarifying section about physical and mental health exemptions.

If a non-exempt client misses an appointment with their local office or does not comply with a SNAP E&T program, they may be at risk of losing their benefits, unless they have “good cause” reasons for not complying. [A list of “good cause” reasons](#) can be found on the Illinois Department of Human Services webpage. Clients who do not comply, but are exempt, should not be sanctioned/lose their benefits if they bring proof of their exemption to their local office.



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

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