



Checklist for Social Service Providers

A desk guide for being a key advocate for SNAP households in Illinois

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

HYPERLINK

"[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/ABAWD-Questions-and-Answers-June 2015.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/ABAWD-Questions-and-Answers-June%202015.pdf)" [ABAWD FAQ from the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#)



Ensure proper documentation

If your client does not seem to fit the ABAWD description (i.e. does not meet one of the above criteria), 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. Use IDHS form [2340](#) to request an exemption. As per USDA [memorandum](#), there is wide flexibility in who can verify a SNAP applicant's inability to meet work requirements due to physical or mental health barriers. Examples of professionals able to verify work requirement exemptions include but are not limited to physicians, physician's assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, designated representatives of a physician's office, licensed or certified psychologists, social workers, or caseworkers at community based social service agencies.



Other key reasons your client may be exempt

- o If they are a regular participant in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program
- o If they are receiving unemployment compensation, including if they have applied for, but are not yet receiving unemployment compensation.
- o If they are taking basic education classes
- o 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. Use IDHS forms [2340](#) and [2341](#) to request an exemption.



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 keep a record of the number of hours worked each month.

Qualifying work activities include:

- o Working at least 20 hours a week, which includes working for goods and services,
- o Volunteering for at least 80 hours per month. Use IDHS form [3675](#) to verify volunteer hours every month.
- o 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.
- o 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.

