
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

FNS 265 ABAWD SERVICES PROGRAM

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Change #18-2021

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265.00 ABAWD SERVICES PROGRAM

The Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) Services Program is an optional program that counties may participate in to help ABAWDS become employable and maintain eligibility for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits beyond the three-month limit described in FNS 260 Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD).

All local county departments of social services (Employment and Training [E&T], 15% Exempt, Remote, and Workfare) have the authority to draw down 100% E&T ABAWD funds to pay the cost of operating a program for ABAWDS that results in their placement and participation in an education, training, or work experience (work site). The federal funds are capped and must be earned through the placement of ABAWDS in approved activities.

Local county departments of social services are not required to participate in this program; however, the Division strongly encourages each county to implement services for ABAWDS. Counties that wish to implement the ABAWD Services Program must contact the Food and Nutrition Services E&T Coordinator in the Economic Services at (919) 527-6300 prior to implementing the program.

265.01 COMPONENT ACTIVITIES FOR ABAWDS

The following activities are optional for each county. It is not required that counties carry out the activities either as a function of the department of social services or under contract. The local department of social services has the authority to contract with local providers to carry out these activities.

- A. An ABAWD is placed in and actively participates in a program under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for a minimum of 20 hours each week.
- B. An ABAWD is placed and actively participates in a community college program or programs (i.e., Pathways to Employment, HRD, GED, ABE, AHS) for a minimum of 20 hours each week.
- C. An ABAWD is placed and actively participates in community work experience (work site) for the required number of hours a month. Determine the number of hours that are required monthly by dividing the FNS benefit amount by the current federal minimum wage.

EXAMPLE: A FNS benefit of \$123 divided by \$7.25 = 17 hours a month work site obligation.

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1. If the ABAWD is a member of a household where others are receiving FNS benefits, divide the entire household FNS benefit amount by \$5.15 (current hourly minimum wage).

EXAMPLE: An ABAWD is in a FNS unit with two non-ABAWDS. The household benefit is \$321. Divide \$321 by \$5.15 to determine the number of hours the ABAWD must work. The \$321 benefit divided by \$5.15 equals 63 hours.

2. In a household with more than one ABAWD member or a household with more than one ABAWD member and non-ABAWD members, the county may determine how the required hours are distributed among each ABAWD.
3. Regardless of the total household obligation for community work experience work hours, an ABAWD cannot be required to work over 120 hours per month.

NOTE: When performing calculations, round down to the nearest whole number. ABAWDS must not work beyond the number of required hours unless it is voluntary and strictly for training.

D. Self-initiated Community Work Experience (work sites)

If an ABAWD reports that he is working as a volunteer at a public or private non-profit agency, the work may qualify as a self-initiated community work experience work site. In order for the work site to qualify as an E&T work site, the ABAWD must work the required number of hours as described in C. above, and the agency must be under a work site agreement with the local department of social services.

265.02 ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

- A. It is allowable to combine work and participation in the ABAWD Services Program for a portion of the month as long as there is an average of 20 hours of work and participation per week.
- B. The Food Stamp Act specifically excludes job search and job search training programs as qualifying work programs that will keep ABAWDS eligible for FNS benefits. However, the act does not preclude local departments of social services from requiring ABAWDS to conduct some job search activities while participating in the ABAWD Services Program. In any given month, education and training activities must account for the majority (minimum of 75% or 15 hours) of the time spent in the component.