

How to Use the LDSS-4826C Employment Requirements for SNAP Applicant and Recipients - Script for Eligibility Workers

What is the purpose of this script?

This script is meant to serve as a guide for eligibility workers to explain the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work requirements and the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program to households. It is written in simple, user-friendly language and consists of four sections:

- General SNAP Work Rules,
- Mandatory SNAP E&T Assignments,
- Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) Rules, and
- SNAP Employment and Training (E&T).

The script should be used when eligibility workers are explaining the SNAP work requirements to households that include individuals subject to any of the three categories of SNAP work rules and providing information about voluntary participation in the district's SNAP E&T Program. The script is designed to include the same plain language terms used in the LDSS-5193 Important Information about SNAP Work Rules (General, Mandatory SNAP E&T, and ABAWD) and the LDSS-5193A Important Information about SNAP Work Rules (General and Mandatory SNAP E&T).

When should the script be used?

Eligibility workers should use this script after they have screened for exemptions to determine which SNAP work requirements apply to which household members at certification, recertification, and after any previously exempt household member or new household member becomes subject to a work requirement during the certification period. For example, if the household reports a change that causes a household member's SNAP employability status to change from exempt to nonexempt, the script should be used to explain the applicable SNAP work requirements.

How should the script be used?

Eligibility workers should use the script as a guide, adapting it as needed to address the specific circumstances of each household. For example, if, based on the initial screening for exemptions, the eligibility worker has determined that the household does not contain any members who are subject to the ABAWD Rules, the section pertaining to the ABAWD Rules should not be discussed with the household at that time. ABAWD Rules should be explained if a household member becomes subject to the ABAWD Rules during the certification period or at recertification. Additionally, if household members who need to follow SNAP work requirements are not present when the eligibility worker is delivering the script, the eligibility worker should explain the work requirements for each household member to a household representative and emphasize that the absent members must follow the information in the appropriate notice, (LDSS-5193 or LDSS-5193A), once it is received by the household.

Employment Requirements for SNAP Applicants and Recipients - Script for Eligibility Workers

Section 1: General SNAP Work Rules

Note to worker: If the household has at least one member who is subject to the General SNAP Work Rules, identify the individual(s) by name and explain the following:

A. Requirements

First, I will review the General SNAP Work Rules. Based on information you shared during the eligibility interview, these people in your household need to follow the General SNAP Work Rules to keep receiving SNAP benefits.

To follow the General SNAP Work Rules a person must:

- Accept any job offer received, unless there is a good reason they can't.
- Tell us about their job and how much they are working.
- Not quit their job without having a good reason if they work 30 or more hours each week or earn at least 30 times the federal minimum wage (This is currently \$217.50 per week). Also, a person who works 30 hours each week should not reduce their work hours to earn less than \$217.50 without a good reason.

A person may lose their SNAP benefits if they don't follow these work rules without having a good reason.

B. Exemptions

Note to worker: Discuss the exemptions from the General SNAP Work Rules to ensure that your initial evaluation of each individual's SNAP employability status is accurate. If any additional members of the household claim to be exempt from the General SNAP Work Rules, identify the individual(s) and obtain documentation to support the exemption (at certification, recertification and change in status).

Some people don't have to follow the General SNAP Work Rules. I am going to go over the reasons that may excuse a person from the General SNAP Work Rules. Please let me know if any of the reasons on the list apply to you or someone in your household. The person may need to provide proof to show they should be excused from following the General SNAP Work Rules. People in your household may not have to follow the General SNAP Work Rules if they are:

- Younger than 16 or 60 years of age or older,
- A 16 or 17-year-old who is not the head of the household OR who is in school or in an employment program at least half-time,
- Unable to work because of a mental or physical health reason,
- Taking care of a child younger than 6 that lives in the household (*Note: More than one adult in the household may be excused using this exemption when the household contains more than one child under the age of 6 and childcare needs of the household are identified and documented.*),
- Taking care of an incapacitated person (*Note: The incapacitated person does not need to live in the same household.*),
- Meeting the work rules under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program,
- Receiving or applying for unemployment benefits,
- Participating in a drug or alcohol addiction treatment program,
- Enrolled in a school, training program or college at least half-time (*Note: Students may be subject to other eligibility rules.*),
- Already working at least 30 hours a week,
- Already earning 30 times the federal minimum wage (currently \$217.50) or more a week,
- In receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or

- Applying for SSI.

Note to worker: A person who claims an exemption but does not provide documentation must not be denied SNAP benefits but would be subject to the SNAP work rules.

Let us know as soon as possible if you think one of these might apply to you or someone else in your household. You can tell me or call the District Contact Number. If we find that one of these reasons does apply to someone in your household, they will not need to follow the General SNAP Work Rules.

C. Consequences

It is important for you to know that there are consequences if someone who must follow the General SNAP Work Rules does not do so:

- The first time a person does not follow the General SNAP Work Rules, they can't get SNAP benefits for 1 month.
- The second time a person does not follow the General SNAP Work Rules, they can't get SNAP benefits for 3 months.
- The third time (and any additional time after that) a person does not follow the General SNAP Work Rules, they can't get SNAP benefits for 6 months.
- And, the person must start the reapplication process. This can happen by asking to add the sanctioned person back to the case or by filing an application if the case is closed. Also, the person must meet all other eligibility requirements before receiving SNAP again.

You should also know that a person who loses their SNAP benefits because they did not follow the General SNAP Work Rules must be allowed to start receiving SNAP benefits before the end of the time periods noted above if they prove they should be excused from following the rules.

If a person does not follow the General SNAP Work Rules, they will be sent a Conciliation Notification. The person will be offered a meeting with the district to explain why they did not follow the rules. A person who receives a Conciliation Notification must contact the district by the date on the Conciliation Notification. If the district decides the person had a good reason for not following the rules, the household's SNAP benefits will not be reduced or stopped. If the district decides the person did not have a good reason, the district will offer the person a chance to comply by accepting a job offer, returning to work, or getting a new job. The person can also increase their work hours above 30 hours a week or their earnings to \$217.50 or more each week. By doing one of these things, the person can keep their household's SNAP benefits the same. If the person cannot show a good cause reason or do one of these things, their household's SNAP benefits may go down or stop. If your SNAP application is denied, or your SNAP benefits are reduced or stopped because you or another person in your household did not meet the General SNAP Work Rules and you disagree with the decision, you have the right to ask for a fair hearing. Information on how to ask for a fair hearing is available on all notices about changes to your benefits or eligibility for SNAP.

You can also ask for a fair hearing in cases where your SNAP benefits are affected if you disagree with:

- The district's decision not to excuse someone in your household from following the SNAP work rules, or
- The district's decision not to find that a person in your household had a good reason for not following the SNAP work rules.

Note to worker: Determine if anyone in the household is serving a sanction for not complying with SNAP work requirements at the time of the interview. A SNAP sanction may be ended before the end of the durational sanction period if the person demonstrates that they qualify for an exemption from the SNAP work requirements.

D. Good Cause Reasons

People in your household may have a good reason for not following the General SNAP Work Rules. Good reasons include issues a person can't control, such as getting sick, not having childcare for a child younger than 12, or working in conditions that are unreasonable. These are some examples of good reasons, but there are others too.

If you think a person in your household has a good reason for not following the General SNAP Work Rules, you need to let us know right away. You can tell me or call the District Contact Number. Once you contact us, if we agree that the person has a good reason, there will be no change to your SNAP benefits.

Section 2. Mandatory SNAP E&T Assignments

Note to worker: Discuss Section 2. Mandatory SNAP E&T Assignments ONLY with households where at least one household member is required to complete a mandatory SNAP E&T assignment. If the household has NO members who are subject to mandatory SNAP E&T assignments, skip this section. If the household has members who are subject to mandatory SNAP E&T, identify the individual(s) and explain the following:

A. Requirements

We just discussed the General SNAP Work rules. As you or someone in your household must also complete a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment, I will explain the Mandatory SNAP E&T rules next. SNAP E&T stands for SNAP Employment and Training. I will explain what SNAP E&T is shortly. In addition to following the General SNAP work rules, the following member(s) of your household must also participate in a SNAP E&T assignment to continue to receive SNAP benefits:

The SNAP E&T program is designed to help people gain skills and find work. People assigned to SNAP E&T may be required to participate in supervised job search, job readiness activities, work experience, job skills training, vocational training, educational training, apprenticeships, or other work activities. SNAP E&T participants receive case management services which may include assessments, personalized employment plans, progress monitoring, and coordination with other service providers.

A person who is required to complete a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment cannot be required to participate in SNAP E&T work activities and/or employment to meet the SNAP work requirement for more than 30 hours per week (no more than 120 hours per month). A person may choose to participate in activities for more than 30 hours per week but cannot be required to do so.

Note to worker: Individuals who are also receiving TA benefits may be required to participate in work activities for up to 40 hours per week. The assigned work activity for them is generally a combined TA and SNAP work assignment. A person who receives TA and SNAP and does not comply with assigned work activities willfully and without a good reason may be subject to a TA work sanction. However, if the person participates in the assigned work activities for at least 30 hours a week (120 hours per month), the household's SNAP benefits will not be affected.

Any person in your household who is required to participate in a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment will receive a notice with information about the assignment. It is very important that the person follows all the steps as explained, like going to an orientation and completing an assessment. If the person cannot keep their appointment, they must reschedule.

B. Exemptions

A person may be excused from a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment if they meet one of the exemptions from the General SNAP Work Rules we talked about earlier.

Note to worker: Discuss the exemptions for the General SNAP Work Rules. If any additional members of the household claim to be exempt from the General SNAP Work Rules, identify the individuals and obtain documentation to support the exemption (at certification, recertification and change in status).

Let us know as soon as possible if you think one of the exemptions we discussed might apply to someone in your household. You can tell me or call the District Contact Number. If we find that it does, that person may not need to participate in a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment. A person who believes they should be excused from following the SNAP work rules may need to provide proof if asked.

C. Consequences

Again, there are consequences if a person who is required to participate in a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment does not comply with the requirements. These consequences are like those that I described before for the General SNAP Work Rules:

- The first time a person does not participate in a SNAP E&T assignment, they can't get SNAP benefits for 1 month.
- The second time a person does not participate in a SNAP E&T assignment, they can't get SNAP benefits for 3 months.
- The third and any additional time after that, a person does not participate in a SNAP E&T assignment, they can't get SNAP benefits for 6 months.
- And, if the person is not excused from following the SNAP Work Rules, the person must follow these work rules before they can get SNAP benefits again.

You should also know that a person who loses their SNAP benefits because they did not follow the rules or complete a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment must be allowed to start receiving SNAP benefits before the end of the time period noted above if they prove they should be excused from following the General SNAP Work Rules. Also, the person must meet all other eligibility requirements before receiving SNAP again.

If your SNAP application is denied, or your SNAP benefits are reduced or stopped because you or another person in your household did not meet the General SNAP Work Rules or did not comply with a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment and you disagree with the decision, you have the right to request a fair hearing. You can request a fair hearing in cases where your SNAP benefits are affected, if you disagree with the district's decision not to excuse someone in your household from following the SNAP work rules or if you disagree with the district's decision not to find that a person in your household had a good reason for not following the SNAP work rules. Also, in cases where your benefits are affected you can appeal the district's decision to require someone in your household to follow certain SNAP work rules you don't believe they are subject to. Information on how to request a fair hearing is available on all sanction notices.

D. Good Cause

Remember, individuals in your household may have a good reason for not participating in a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment. If you think a person has a good reason for not participating, you need to let us know right away. You can call the District Contact Number. Once you contact us, if we agree that the person has a good reason, there will be no change to your SNAP benefits.

Good reasons for not participating in a Mandatory SNAP E&T assignment include issues you can't control, such as getting sick, not having childcare for a child younger than 12, or not having a way to get to the assignment. These are some examples of good reasons, but not all of them. If we find that the person has a good reason, there will be no change to your SNAP benefits. However, we will discuss why the person cannot participate in the assigned work activity to see how we may be able to help so the person can participate or to see if another work activity is more appropriate.

E. Participant Reimbursements

We must pay costs for you or people in your house that are necessary and reasonable to participate in a SNAP E&T activity. These costs may include things like transportation to participate in work activities, personal safety items and equipment, and other costs such as tools, books, and uniforms.

If we agree that these costs are necessary and reasonable, but we can't pay these costs, the person who is required to complete a SNAP E&T assignment will be excused and will not need to participate in SNAP E&T. But please wait to hear from us before leaving whatever program you are in unless you have a safety concern about remaining in the program.

If you think a person in your household has costs from participating in a SNAP E&T activity we need to pay, call the District Contact Number.

Note to worker: Discuss SNAP E&T assignments and participant reimbursement needs with the household and note in the case record all necessary participant reimbursements.

Section 3. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Rules

Note to worker: Discuss Section 3. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Rules ONLY with households where at least one member is required to follow the ABAWD Rules. If the household has NO members subject to the ABAWD Rules, skip this section. If the household has members who are subject to the ABAWD Rules, identify the individual(s) by name and explain the following:

A. Requirements

We will now discuss the rules for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents also referred to as ABAWDs. Based on the information you shared with me so far, I was able to evaluate that these people in your household must also follow the ABAWD Rules to keep receiving SNAP benefits for more than 3 months in a 3-year period. These rules are also sometimes called Time Limit Rules.

The ABAWD Rules apply to a person who is aged 18 to 64, does not live with a child under 14 in the SNAP household, and is considered physically and mentally able to work.

To follow the ABAWD Rules a person must:

- Spend **at least 80 hours every month** doing one or more of the following activities:
 - Working (including "in-kind" work),
 - Participating in a work/training program approved by the district,
 - Participating in an employment and training program for veterans operated by the Department of Labor or the Department of Veterans Affairs,
 - Participating in a program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or Trade Act which may include job search, job readiness, occupational skills training, and education activities,
- OR
- Participate in a Work Experience Program (WEP) or volunteer in a community service program for the number of hours per month equal to the household's SNAP benefit divided by the higher of the federal or State minimum wage.

If an ABAWD in your household has been working more than 80 hours a month and their work hours drop below 80 hours a month, you must call the District Contact Number within 10 days after the end of the month.

Note to worker: If the ABAWD(s) is not participating in ABAWD qualifying activities, inform the household the ABAWD(s) will receive the LDSS-5127 ABAWD Work Activity Letter with the offer of assistance in obtaining an ABAWD qualifying activity. If an individual(s) subject to the ABAWD Rules is currently engaged in one of the ABAWD qualifying activities, record the name of the individual, the type of work activity, the number of hours spent in the activity, and request supporting documentation.

B. Exemptions

Note to worker: Discuss the exemptions from the ABAWD Rules with the household to ensure that your initial evaluation of each individual's ABAWD status is accurate.

People in your household may not have to follow the ABAWD Rules if they meet any of the exemptions we talked about earlier for the General SNAP Work Rules (with one exception, noted below), or if any of the following applies to them:

- They are younger than age 18, or age 65 or older (*Note: a person aged 60-64 is exempt from the General SNAP Work Rules but not the ABAWD work rules*),
- They live with a child under age 14 in the SNAP household,
- They are pregnant,
- They are Indian, Urban Indian, California Indian, and/or other Indian who are eligible for the Indian Health Services,
- They receive disability benefits from a public or private source, such as NYS disability benefits,
- They can't work at least 80 hours a month because of a physical or mental health reason (*Note: A medical statement or other documentation is required*),
- They are obviously mentally or physically unfit for work (*Note: No documentation is needed. Review status at recertification.*)

C. Consequences

There are important consequences if a person does not follow the ABAWD Rules.

- We will count each full month when the person subject to the ABAWD time limit receives SNAP benefits but does not meet these rules without a good reason.
- Once we have counted 3 full months of SNAP benefits, the person will lose their eligibility for SNAP until the end of the current 3-year ABAWD period. The current period ends on September 30, 2026.
- Remember, a person who must follow the ABAWD Rules can only get SNAP benefits for 3 months in a 3-year period unless they meet the ABAWD Rules. The three months during which the ABAWD is receiving SNAP benefits without following the ABAWD rules are also called ABAWD countable months.

Note to worker: An ABAWD is only eligible to receive SNAP benefits for 3 months in the 3-year period unless the individual is following the ABAWD Rules, they live in an area of the State covered by a ABAWD waiver or they receive an exclusion from the requirements. In New York State, the current 3-year period is October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2026. Review the SNAP eligibility for each ABAWD in the household and record if any household member who is an ABAWD has received SNAP benefits in any other state or county since October 1, 2023.

For applicants or recipients who resided in any other county in New York State and are an ABAWD, review the ABAWD tracking information available through Screen 17 of WMS to identify the months each ABAWD received SNAP benefits without meeting the ABAWD Rules. For applicants and recipients who resided in another state and are an ABAWD, confirm if each individual received SNAP benefits without meeting the ABAWD Rules

while residing outside New York. To verify whether the individual has accrued any countable ABAWD months outside New York, use the National Directory of Human Services (available in Centraport) and follow the directions for contacting each State where the ABAWD indicated they have received SNAP benefits. Document the case by recording:

- 1) the name of the individual;
- 2) State/county where SNAP benefits were received;
- 3) whether the person had any ABAWD countable months;
- 4) ABAWD countable months accrued in other States during the 3-year period and how information was verified;
- 5) number of ABAWD countable months in New York (from Screen 17 of WMS); and
- 6) total number of ABAWD countable months during the 3-year period.

D. Good Cause Reasons

People in your household may have a good reason for not following the ABAWD Rules. Good reasons include issues you can't control, such as getting sick or not having transportation. These are some examples of good reasons, but there are others, too. Call the District Contact Number as soon as possible if you think someone in your household has a good reason for not following the ABAWD Rules. If we determine that the person has a good reason, there will be no change to your SNAP benefits. However, we will discuss why the person cannot participate in the ABAWD qualifying activities to see if we may be able to help so the person can participate and continue to receive SNAP benefits beyond the 3-month time limit.

E. Regaining Benefits

If a person loses SNAP benefits and then starts meeting the ABAWD Rules, they can start getting SNAP benefits again. Also, the person must meet all other eligibility requirements before receiving SNAP again. A person can also get SNAP benefits again if something changes in their life, and there are reasons they no longer need to follow the ABAWD Rules. For example, a person may get their SNAP benefits back if they have a new physical or mental health reason for not working or because of any other reasons we have discussed today.

Note to worker: Any ABAWDs ineligible for SNAP benefits due to not meeting the ABAWD Rules must be offered an ABAWD qualifying activity to reestablish eligibility. Document the case by recording the names of the ineligible ABAWDs, the ABAWD qualifying activity the district offered to the individuals to reestablish eligibility for SNAP, and the date when the activity was offered. Inform the household that the ABAWD will receive the LDSS-5127 ABAWD Work Activity Letter with an offer of assistance in obtaining an ABAWD qualifying activity.

If an ABAWD who was previously determined ineligible for SNAP benefits due to not meeting the ABAWD Rules does not reestablish eligibility, they remain ineligible for SNAP.

Section 4: SNAP Employment and Training (E&T)

Note to worker: Inform the household of the district's voluntary SNAP E&T program by providing the information below. If any household member is interested in participating, refer them to E&T and document the referral to E&T in the case record.

If any of the people in your household need help finding a job, the district's SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program can help! The SNAP E&T program includes case management services that may make it easier for a person to find and keep a job. The SNAP E&T program is voluntary for

everyone who doesn't have a Mandatory E&T assignment. Let me know if you need help finding a job or training for a job, and I will connect you to someone who can help.