

Help protect SNAP by submitting comments to the USDA—due April 9!

The [USDA has requested public comments](#) on whether it should reconsider certain rules that govern SNAP's 3-month time-limit on childless adults (also known as ABAWDs).

A Message from Peter Woitock, Community Organizer at Hunger Solutions

We are concerned that the Administration will use this opportunity to expand the number of people who are subject to the time limit and take away the little flexibility states have to limit the damage of the time limit. Our goal is to generate at least 100 comments to USDA to send a strong message that we are not in favor of cutting off food assistance for unemployed or underemployed individuals in our state.

Comments must be submitted by April 9!

Here is how to submit comments:

- As an organization: Use the [two page template](#) from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
 - Once you customize the template, you can paste your comments into the online submission tool [here](#).
- As an individual: Feeding America created [a shorter template](#) to submit your comments.

Please let us know if you submit comments by sending an email to: pwoitock@hungersolutions.org

Please see next page for Work Requirements: A Minnesota Tale of Caution by Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid.



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MID-MINNESOTA LEGAL AID
Legal Services Advocacy Project

Work Requirements: A Minnesota Tale of Caution

In November 2013, Minnesota implemented mandatory work requirements for a large group of low-income single adults accessing food through SNAP.¹ Many exemptions were allegedly in place for anyone with a serious illness or disability.

Nearly 47,000 of these Minnesotans lost food within one year.²
Only 6,000 of these Minnesotans remain.³
This wasn't supposed to happen.

Work Requirements Only for Able-Bodied Adults

The State and counties attempted to implement a 20-hour per week work requirement exclusive to “Able Bodied” adults without children. Anyone with a serious illness or disability would be exempt; however, State and county systems were not equipped to implement exemptions for thousands of vulnerable Minnesotans. Many adults in this group face significant barriers to employment: illness, injury, disability, literacy challenges, addiction, homelessness, PTSD from military service, and a lack of reliable transportation. Half of the adults in this population have no income; and no adult was earning more than \$19,000 a year.

County Systems Predictably Collapsed Under the New Mandate

County workers and under-funded employment and training systems could not adequately handle the work requirement exemptions. Counties simply lacked the resources to ensure meaningful communication, outreach, and assessment before thousands of Minnesotans began to receive notices of termination of their benefits. In this highly mobile population, thousands of mailed notices were “returned to sender.” Counties were never funded to help thousands of vulnerable single adults get and keep jobs on such short timelines.

Thousands of Adults are Hungry

Today only 6,000 single adults without dependents (ABAWDS) are accessing SNAP benefits. Thousands more who lost food are visiting food shelves, homeless shelters, health clinics, and other safety net programs. The racial disparities with respect to who lost food are also stark, and a disproportionate number of people of color lost food assistance. According to DHS, 37 percent of individuals removed from help were black Minnesotans.⁴

Though the State and counties are well intentioned, re-engagement and re-enrollment have proven extremely difficult, time consuming, and expensive for everyone involved.

¹ Minnesota previously had a federal waiver for single adults without dependents, which the federal government terms “able bodied adults without dependents.” Minnesota lost the waiver in 2013 due to an improved economy and stabilized unemployment rate.

² Minnesota Department of Human Services, February 2014-February 2015 SNAP ABAWD data.

³ Minnesota Department of Human Services, SNAP ABAWD data, 2017.

⁴ Minnesota Department of Human Services, SNAP ABAWD data.