



**DATE:** March 31, 2020

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #20-03-04**

**SUBJECT:** Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) Statewide Waiver for Time-Limited Participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

**TO:** Executive Directors

**FROM:** Inez Titus  
Director  
Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

This memo is to inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) that all ABAWDs are waived from time-limited participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This policy is effective April 1, 2020.

**BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

Federal regulations at 7 CFR §273.24 require able-bodied adults age 18 through 49 with no dependents (ABAWDs) to meet an ABAWD work requirement as a condition of ongoing SNAP eligibility. ABAWDs not meeting this requirement are time-limited to receiving three months of SNAP benefits in a 36-month period. On March 18, 2020, H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, was signed into law. Section 2301 of H.R. 6021 provides for a temporary waiver of ABAWD requirements for the duration of the public health emergency associated with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Effective April 1, 2020, a statewide waiver of this requirement will be implemented until further notice. No ABAWDs will be subject to time-limited benefits.

The system reference table TABW will be updated effective April 2020 to convert all ABAWDs in currently non-waived counties to the "EW" status code.

### **Procedures for Centre, Chester, Lancaster, and Montgomery Counties**

If an individual residing in Centre, Chester, Lancaster, or Montgomery County has a pending SNAP application or applies for benefits prior to April 1, 2020, and would be otherwise eligible for SNAP except that the ABAWD clock count is at three and the individual does not meet an ABAWD exemption (as defined in SHB 536.2), the CAO should manually reduce the ABAWD clock by the number of months needed to open the individual back to the date of application.

- For applications received between February 3, 2020, and March 31, 2020, reset the ABAWD clock to two months accrued.
- Applications received before February 2, 2020, may require additional adjustments.
- Applications received after April 1, 2020, do not require a clock reset.

**NOTE: This procedure only needs to be followed if the clock is at 3. If the clock is at 2 or lower, the system should allow the CAO to process using normal procedures.**

#### **Reducing the ABAWD Clock**

- In CIS, type “CSABWD” into Next Trans, and County/Record Number/Line Number into Parameters. Hit Enter. This will bring up the CIS ABAWD Tracking screen.
- Make sure this action brought up the CIS ABAWD Tracking screen for the correct individual.
- On the CIS ABAWD Tracking screen,
  - Enter your Worker ID at the top.
  - Enter today’s date in the “From” and “Through” section.
  - Enter “-1” in the Tracking Cnt section.
  - Enter reason code “24” in the Adj Rea section.
  - Transmit.

#### **Tracking Clock Reductions**

Attached is a tracking sheet for CAOs to use to track every ABAWD clock adjustment (Attachment 1). This form should be completed by each of the four CAOs on a weekly basis until all affected applications received prior to April 1, 2020, have been processed, and submitted to [RA-PWBEP.SNAP@PA.GOV](mailto:RA-PWBEP.SNAP@PA.GOV).

### **Processing Benefits After the Clock is Reduced**

The CAO must process the initial months covered by the clock reduction as a non-continuous eligibility (NCE). This procedure should be followed for all households containing an affected ABAWD.

**NOTE:** If the individual is eligible for Expedited SNAP benefits, normal Expedited SNAP processing should be followed as the Expedited SNAP ETP and Qualification Codes do not consider the ABAWD clock in determining eligibility.

**Example 1:** An individual applied on 2/28/2020. The ABAWD clock should be reset to 2, and the NCE period would be 2/28/2020-3/31/2020. The individual should be coded as an EB 20.

**Example 2:** An individual applied on 3/20/2020. The ABAWD clock should be reset to 2, and the NCE period would be 3/20/2020-3/31/2020. The individual should be coded as an EB 20.

After the NCE mentioned above is processed, ongoing SNAP benefits should not be processed prior to 3/26/2020. When ongoing benefits are processed, the individual should be coded EW 20.

### **NEXT STEPS**

1. Share and review this information with appropriate staff members. ABAWD clock adjustment steps should only be followed by Centre, Chester, Lancaster, and Montgomery CAOs.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.
3. This Operations Memorandum is in effect until further notice.

### **Attachments**

[Attachment 1: ABAWD Clock Reduction Tracking Sheet](#)