

Talking Points for CalFresh Outreach Workers

Some people on CalFresh have an ABAWD time limit.

- ABAWD stands for able-bodied adults without dependents.
- The ABAWD time limit may apply to CalFresh recipients who have CalFresh-only cases and are between the ages of 18 and 49, are considered able-bodied, and do not have dependents.
- People with an ABAWD time limit can only get three full months of CalFresh until January 1, 2020 unless they are working at least 80 hours per month, qualify for an exemption, or are living in a waived county or area.
- If the time limit applies today it does not mean that it will apply tomorrow. It's important for someone with a time limit to let their worker know if they start working or if their circumstances change because they may be able to keep getting CalFresh.
- People with a person under 18 in their CalFresh household are exempt and do not have an ABAWD time limit. This is true even if the child is not eligible for CalFresh or a family member.

California is re-implementing the ABAWD time limit.

- California has been under a statewide ABAWD waiver since 2006. The waiver was granted by USDA in response to the recession. Because California's unemployment rate is decreasing, the state will re-implement the time limit in three counties beginning September 1, 2018.
- The three counties re-implementing the ABAWD time limit on September 1, 2018 are San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara.
- CalFresh recipients in California's other 55 counties remain waived from the ABAWD time limit as long as they continue to live outside of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

People with an ABAWD time limit can only get three full months of CalFresh every 36-month period.

- CalFresh recipients with an ABAWD time limit who don't meet the work requirement or an exemption will be eligible for another three full months of CalFresh beginning January 1, 2020.
- California's current 36-month period began January 1, 2017 and will end December 31, 2019.
- The three full months are referred to as "countable months." They do not have to be used consecutively. Countable months can also be removed retroactively if it was found that the CalFresh recipient was exempt or met the work requirement during a month that they received a countable month of benefits.

People with an ABAWD time limit can remain eligible for CalFresh.

- People with an ABAWD time limit can get CalFresh for more than 3 full months if they are working or participating in a qualifying work activity for at least 80 hours per month or are exempt from the time limit. CalFresh outreach workers play an important role in helping people with an ABAWD time limit identify work activities, good cause eligibility, and/or exemptions.
- CalFresh outreach staff will be asking a few more screening questions to ensure that people with an ABAWD time limit can keep CalFresh benefits. Questions might seem personal but the answers will be kept confidential and will only be used to help get CalFresh.
- Different work activities can satisfy the ABAWD time limit work requirement. The work activities must total 80 hours per month and may include a job, self-employment, in-kind work, volunteering or community service, CalFresh employment and training (E&T), WIOA program participation or a program under section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974.
- Workfare can also be used to satisfy the ABAWD time limit work requirement. The hours required of workfare are typically less than 80 hours per month and based on the recipient's local minimum wage.
- CalFresh recipients may qualify for good cause for not meeting the work requirement due to situations outside of their control, including illness (self or family member), lack of transportation, disaster or an emergency. Outreach workers can help clients with an ABAWD time limit identify whether they may be eligible for good cause.
- There are many exemptions from the time limit. Exemptions include but are not limited to:
 - Pregnancy.
 - Being physically or mentally unable to work 80 hours per month. People may be able to work some hours, but fewer than 80 hours per month.
 - Participating in an Office of Refugee Resettlement Training Program at least half-time.
 - Being exempt from CalFresh work registration.
 - Qualifying for a 15 percent exemption. Each county has discretion to exempt people with an ABAWD time limit for other circumstances it deems appropriate.
- People with an ABAWD time limit who move to other counties from San Francisco, Santa Mateo or Santa Clara counties are not limited to three months of CalFresh and don't have to meet the work requirement or qualify for an exemption to maintain eligibility for CalFresh.

People with an ABAWD time limit can regain eligibility after using their three countable months.

- In order to regain eligibility, a person with an ABAWD time limit must meet the work requirement for 30 consecutive days prior to application or qualify for an exemption at any time.
- A person with an ABAWD time limit who has already used their three countable months can get three consecutive months of CalFresh if they regain eligibility by meeting the work requirement and then stop meeting the work requirement. The first consecutive month is given when the work

requirement is no longer met and the months run consecutively regardless of whether the work requirement is met.

- The three countable months and three consecutive months can only be given once per 36-month period.
- A person with an ABAWD time limit who has used their three countable months and three consecutive months can get CalFresh in the future any time they meet the work requirement or qualify for an exemption.
- Moving from a non-waived county or area to a waived county or area makes someone with an ABAWD time limit eligible to regain CalFresh benefits.

CalFresh outreach workers can help.

- CalFresh outreach workers can help clients understand the ABAWD time limit, facilitate communication with the county if needed, and help identify qualifying work activities, good cause, and time limit exemptions.
- Clients who have used their three countable months should be referred to their local food bank or 211.
- Reference the [Guide to the ABAWD Time Limit](#) for more information and sample scenarios.
- Capture and elevate any trends and challenging client or county issues to CAFB.
- Additional resources: [ACL 18-08](#)