

New Changes to the **SNAP** (Food Stamps) Program



Beginning February 1, 2026, participants in the SNAP program (sometimes called "Food Stamps" or "LINK") between the ages of 18 and 64 will be required to work or volunteer a minimum of 80 hours per month or participate in certain training or education programs to continue receiving their SNAP food benefits after April 30, 2026 for current recipients or after the first three month of benefits for new recipients.

To meet the SNAP work requirements a person must:

- Work (paid or unpaid) an average of 20 hours per week
- Participate in a SNAP Employment and Training activity such as basic education, vocational training, work experience, community workfare, or Earnfare
- Do self-initiated community service with a community-based organization for an average of 20 hours per week
- Any combination of the above

Most SNAP recipients need to meet the work requirements, but there are exceptions. The work requirements do **NOT** apply to anyone who is:

- Unable to work because of physical, mental, and or medical conditions (including temporary conditions and people receiving OR applying for SSI and SSDI)
- Alaskan Native, American Indian, American Urban Indian, or California Indian
- The main caretaker of a disabled person
- Living in a household with a child under 14 years old
- The main caretaker for someone under 6 who lives outside the home
- Enrolled in a school or training program at least half time (Note that there are other SNAP rules for full-time college students)
- Enrolled in a drug or alcohol treatment program (not AA or NA)
- Applied for or is receiving unemployment benefits
- Pregnant
- Chronically homeless
- Working and earning at least \$935/month (gross/total income)

People in the above categories need to provide documentation to IDHS proving that they fit into one of these categories and do not need to meet the SNAP work requirements. If you qualify for one of these exemptions, you can complete this form by checking which exemption(s) applies to you, signing and dating the form, and submitting it to IDHS: bit.ly/snapexemption

You can either:

- Upload the form to "Manage My Case"
- Fax it to your local IDHS Office
- Submit in person to your local IDHS Office

To find your local IDHS Office, use the IDHS Office Locator: bit.ly/idhsoffice



If you are mentally or physically unable to work or participating in a homeless service, domestic violence, or drug and alcohol program, you can also have your healthcare or social service provider complete this form and submit it to IDHS: bit.ly/unabletowork

Unless you are someone who does not need to meet the work requirements, you will only be able to receive SNAP benefits for a total of three months when you are not working or participating in another activity that meets the work requirements. After three months of not working, you will no longer be eligible to receive SNAP benefits and will be blocked from receiving SNAP benefits for three years. You can become eligible to receive benefits again if you prove that you worked the required 80 hours or took part in a training activity for 30 days.



QUESTIONS?



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