



Department of  
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor  
Michael B. Colbert, Director

**Family Assistance Letter # 127**  
**OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE**  
September 16, 2013

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Kara B. Wentz, Deputy Director  
Office of Family Assistance

**SUBJECT: Federal Fiscal Year 2014: Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents**

### **Background**

Food assistance recipients not subject to one of the exemptions described in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule 5101:4-3-11 are required to be registered for work and to comply with the Food Assistance Employment and Training (E&T) program. In addition, able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) have an additional work requirement that must be met as a condition for receiving food assistance. ABAWDs are required to participate in a work program for 20 hours a week, or 80 hours a month, to receive more than three months of benefits in a three-year period. In Ohio, the additional work requirement was waived for all ABAWDs during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2013. That statewide waiver will expire on September 30, 2013.

### **Change in Policy**

Based on unemployment data obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has requested a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), in the following 16 counties: Adams, Brown, Clinton, Coshocton, Highland, Huron, Jefferson, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Ottawa, Perry, Pike and Scioto. In each of these, the 24-month average unemployment rate was greater than 120 percent of the national unemployment rate during the same 24-month period. Once approved, the waiver will be effective October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014. ABAWDs in the 16 counties will continue to be subject to the same work registration and employment and training requirements as all other food assistance recipients, but they will continue to be exempt from the additional ABAWD work requirement.

Effective October 1, 2013, ABAWDs residing in counties that are no longer subject to the waiver will be subject to the work requirement and time limit described in OAC rule 5101:4-3-20.

### **Assignments and Required Hours**

There are several ways recipients can comply with the ABAWD requirements. An ABAWD can participate in paid employment, participate in a work program, comply with the county agency's E&T plan or participate in a work experience program (WEP). Each assignment requires participation of 20 hours a week or 80 hours a month except participation in a WEP. Individuals

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participating in a WEP must not participate more hours than allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act. For possible assignments and information on required hours, see the chart below:

Options for Meeting the ABAWD Work Requirements		
Activity	Description	Required Hours
Work	Working in exchange for money or verified unpaid work.	20 hours a week/80 hours a month
Work programs include:		
1. WIA programs	Can include job search, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities, etc.	20 hours a week/80 hours a month
2. A Trade Act program	Training programs for workers that have lost or may lose their jobs because of increase imports from, or shifts in work to, foreign countries.	20 hours a week/80 hours a month
3. Food Assistance Employment & Training: education or training	Can include basic education, vocational or technical training, or on-the-job training.	20 hours a week/80 hours a month, alone or combined with other activities. Job search activities must be less than half of required hours.
WEP	Employment and training activity that provides experience and training for employable participants, who are not otherwise able to obtain employment, to enhance their ability to secure unsubsidized employment.	Hours equal to the result obtained by dividing a household's food assistance allotment by the higher of the applicable federal or state minimum wage.  <i>Example:</i> An individual receives \$189 a month. To determine the number of hours required, take the benefit amount (\$189) and divide by the state minimum wage (\$7.85). The result (24) would be the number of hours needed for the month to meet the ABAWD requirement.

### **Good Cause**

When an ABAWD fails to meet the ABAWD work requirement, the county agency must determine whether there was good cause. Good cause may not be granted prior to a failure and must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Good cause is intended to recognize that temporary barriers beyond an ABAWD's control may prevent participation in a given month. A lack of work sites or assignments is not good cause.

### **Regaining Eligibility**

An ABAWD who fails to meet the requirement and loses eligibility may regain eligibility at any time during the three-year period by meeting the ABAWD work requirements for 30 consecutive days or by meeting one of the exceptions to the ABAWD work requirements described in OAC rule 5101:4-3-20. An ABAWD who regains eligibility during the three-year period and then stops meeting the work requirement may receive an additional three months of eligibility. The additional three months must be used consecutively and will be granted only once during the three-year period.

### **Identifying ABAWDs**

County agency staff can determine the number of ABAWDs in their county by reviewing the GWP587RA "FSET Participation Detail Report." Anyone with an "R" in the "ABAWD Participation Status" column is subject to the ABAWD work requirement.

### **CRIS-E**

ABAWD participation is tracked on AEIFS in CRIS-E. This screen indicates an individual's ABAWD status, benefits and whether the ABAWD work requirement has been met. When an ABAWD fails to meet the work requirement for three months, the caseworker will receive alert 815, "ABAWD changes: AEABC/AEONG." This alert also is issued when there is a change in an individual's ABAWD status. When caseworkers receive this alert, they will need to review the case to determine what action needs to be taken. Control D report GWP911RA, "ABAWDs Alert Tracking Report," contains a list of cases that received this alert. It can be used to manage changes in ABAWD status.

When an individual has failed to meet the work requirement for three countable months, the individual will fail eligibility, and reason code 585, "Received Food Assistance in 3 of Last 36 Months," will be generated on AEWAA. ABAWDs who regain eligibility and then subsequently fail to meet the work requirement will receive reason code 586, "Additional Three Consecutive Months of Food Assistance Ending." No assistance groups will be terminated automatically.

### **Training**

The Office of Family Assistance conducted ABAWD training at the end of August. That training can be viewed online at <http://innerapp/Tutorials/CRIS-E/CollaborativeTrainingTopics/ABAWD/player.html>. The office also has scheduled three additional webinars: from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m. on October 22, 2013, and from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on October 24, 2013. Registration information will be coming soon. Staff also will discuss possible opportunities and tips for site development at the September 18, 2013, monthly videoconference.

Questions can be sent to Program Policy Services either by email at [TANF-FSTA@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:TANF-FSTA@jfs.ohio.gov) or by calling 1-866-886-3537 (option 6).

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