



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 7, 2017

Alabama Counties Reinstate SNAP Work Requirement; Enrollment Plummet

Alabama counties have witnessed a marked reduction in food stamp participation after reinstating work requirements that mandate food stamp recipients be limited to three months of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits unless they are working or participating in a training program.

The SNAP program identifies Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) as anyone between the ages of 18 and 49 who has no dependents and is not disabled. These individuals are limited to just three months of SNAP in three years if they do not meet certain work requirements, including working at least 80 hours per month, participating in a qualifying education or training program at least 80 hours per month, or complying with a workfare program.

The Obama administration's suspension of this work requirement caused an explosion in the number of able-bodied Americans on food stamps. When President Obama signed his economic stimulus legislation into law, the number of able-bodied adults on food stamps more than doubled from 1.9 million in 2008 to 3.9 million in 2010.

Even upon expiration of that federal waiver, however, states were able to apply for waivers for some or all of their counties in the event of high unemployment or limited job growth. Alabama waived the requirement for 13 of its counties, but reinstated those requirements for 54 counties on January 1, 2016. On January 1 of this year, Alabama reinstated those requirements for the remaining 13 counties, and the results have been rather dramatic.

Alabama.com reports that as of May 1, 2017, the number of able-bodied adults without benefits receiving food stamps statewide dropped to 7,483, a sharp decline from 13,663 on January 1, 2017. This is an even more remarkable improvement from January 2016, when 49,000 people were receiving food stamps in the state.

The Alabama Department of Human Resources believes that the decline is only the beginning of a downward trend. "Based on the trend, the number of (able-bodied adults without dependents) recipients for SNAP benefits is expected to continue to decline statewide and in the formerly 13 exempted counties," stated Alabama DHR spokesman John Hardy.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration seeks to reduce the number of Americans enrolled in the SNAP program on a national level and has advocated for even more stringent work requirements for ABAWDs





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in its first major budget proposal, the *Washington Post* reports.

“If you are on food stamps and you are able bodied, we need you to go to work,” advised budget director Mick Mulvaney during a White House briefing last month. “There is a dignity to work,” he added, “and there’s a necessity to work to help the country succeed.”

The White House believes that reforms to the SNAP program could generate over \$190 billion in savings over a decade.

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