



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

YVONNE COPELAND • Director, Division of Child and Family Well-Being

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Time Limit Rules

You Must Follow These Rules to Continue to Receive FNS Benefits

This notice is to inform you that due to the end of the federal public health emergency, North Carolina will restart the **FNS Time Limit Rules** on July 1, 2023. The FNS Program, formerly known as Food Stamps, has a work requirement for some adults known as Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWDs). ABAWDs may only receive FNS for three (3) months in three (3) years' time limit unless they are working or meeting the ABAWD work requirement. **If you don't follow these rules, your FNS benefits may decrease or end.** Different people in your house may need to follow different work rules. This letter tells you what you need to do.

What do you need to know?

Beginning on July 1, 2023, you must follow the **Time Limit Rules**. These apply to you because you are ages 18 to 49, do not live with a child under 18, and are considered physically and mentally able to work. This is often called the Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirement.

You can only get FNS benefits for 3 months in 3 years unless you meet the Time Limit Rules. Keep reading to find out what to do.

What do you need to do?

After June 30, 2023, you **must** follow these **Time Limit Rules** to keep your FNS benefits:

Spend at least 80 hours each month doing one or a combination of the following activities:

- working,
- participating in a job training or work program,
- volunteering.

Please tell us if you are already doing one of these things, or if you begin doing one of these things. You can contact your caseworker at your local Department of Social Services (DSS). A list of local DSS offices is available at www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory.

If your work hours drop below 80 hours a month, you will need to contact your caseworker at your local DSS within 10 days. You may need to provide paystubs or a letter from your employer.

Does everyone need to meet these Time Limit Rules?

You **may not** have to follow **any** of these Time Limit Rules if you are:

- Younger than age 18, or age 50 or older,
- Living with someone in your house who is younger than age 18,
- Not working because of a physical or mental health reason,
- Pregnant,

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

LOCATION 5601 Six Forks Rd, Building 2, Raleigh, NC 27609

MAILING ADDRESS: 2416 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2420

www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-707-5800 • FAX: 919-870-4882

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- Taking care of a child younger than age 6 or someone who needs help caring for themselves,
- Already working at least 30 hours a week,
- Already earning minimum wage or more per week,
- Receiving unemployment benefits, or you applied for unemployment benefits,
- Going to school, college, or a training program at least half the full-time enrollment,
- Meeting the work rules for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in NC known as Work First, or
- Participating in a drug or alcohol addiction treatment program.

What should you do if you think one of these reasons applies to you?

Contact your local DSS. A directory of local DSS offices is available at www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory. If your caseworker finds one of these reasons applies to you, you **will not** need to follow these Time Limit Rules.

What happens if you do not follow these Time Limit Rules?

We will count each full month that you receive FNS benefits but do not meet these Time Limit Rules without a good reason. Once we have counted three (3) full months, you will lose your benefits until January 2025.

What if you have a good reason for not following these Time Limit Rules?

Contact your caseworker at your local DSS if you think you have a good reason for not following these Time Limit Rules. Good reasons include issues you can't control such as getting sick or not having transportation. These are some examples of good reasons, but there are others, too. If your caseworker finds that you have a good reason, there will be no change to your FNS benefits.

If you lose your FNS benefits, how can you get them back?

If you start meeting these Time Limit Rules, **you can get FNS benefits again.**

You can also get FNS benefits again if something changes in your life, and there are reasons you no longer need to follow these rules. For example, you may get FNS benefits back if you have a new physical or mental health reason for not working or because of other reasons listed above.

Why do I need to follow the Time Limit Rules now?

Congress suspended these rules due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the federal public health emergency is ending, which means that Time Limit Rules go back into effect starting July 1, 2023.

What if you need more help?

If you have questions or need more information, please call your local DSS (www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory) or the NC EBT Call Center: 1-866-719-0141. You may also visit our website www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being/food-and-nutrition-services-food-stamps for more information.

HOW TO GET A HEARING

You have the right to a fair hearing of your case if you do not agree with our decision. You can request a fair hearing by letting your local Food and Nutrition Services office or county Department of Social Services know of your request. You may request the hearing in person, by telephone, or in writing. The hearing may be requested by any member of your Food and Nutrition Services unit or by your representative, including an attorney obtained at your own expense. Free legal advice may be available. Contact your nearest Legal Services Office.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. People with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (833) 620-1071, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to:

1. **mail:**
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334
Alexandria, VA 22314; or
 2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
 3. **email:**
FNCSIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov
-

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
