

June 1, 2026: Federal Budget Changes to ABAWD Work Requirements

Summary/Talking Points

1. Federal budget rules took effect June 1, 2026, expanding CalFresh work requirements for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD).
2. Most adults 18-64 without children must now work, go to school or volunteer for 80 hours each month to receive continuous benefits. These changes remove some prior exemptions and expand the impacted age range.
3. Clients who can't meet the compliance and documentation requirements may receive CalFresh benefits for only three months every three years.

What's Changed

- **Expanded Age Limits:** The work requirements now apply to adults up to age 64, previously 54, sweeping in thousands of older individuals who previously had an exemption due to age.
- **Removal of Vulnerable Protections:** Automatic exemptions that previously protected highly vulnerable populations—such as veterans, homeless individuals, and young adults aging out of foster care—have been eliminated.
- **Stricter Dependent Thresholds:** Parents and guardians are only exempt if their youngest child is under the age of 14, down from the previous age-18 limit.
- **Procedural Changes:** Qualifying individuals are strictly limited to only three months of benefits in a three-year period if they cannot find consistent employment or approved community service. Documenting and reporting these hours to local agencies may be a barrier to clients.
- **Local Impacts:** We expect to see an increased demand for community services as some clients with food insecurity will not meet the documentation or work requirements and will lose food benefits. HSA is referring people to FoodShare.com and 211Ventura.org (call 2-1-1) to find alternative local food resources.
- **HSA's Role:** We are using every opportunity to make sure people with food insecurity know about and can prepare for these changes with direct outreach to clients as well as broad outreach through electronic and print media.

Benefits staff will face more complex eligibility reviews and monitoring processes and we are making internal adjustments to meet these needs.

- **What Should Clients Do?** Visit [HSA.VenturaCounty.gov/budget-impacts/](https://www.hsa.venturacounty.gov/budget-impacts/) for updated information and links on benefit changes and a helpful [prescreening tool](#). Make sure that all contact information is up to date so you can stay informed.