

Family Investment Administration ACTION TRANSMITTAL

Effective Date: January 1, 2019

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Control Number: 19-06

TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: NETSANET KIBRET, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA

RE: NEW 36-MONTH PERIOD BEGINS FOR ABAWDS

(JANUARY 1, 2019 - DECEMBER 31, 2021)

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

Summary

On January 1, 2016, work requirements began for our Food Supplement Program (FSP) recipients who are considered to be Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents are individuals aged 18 through 49 who must meet work requirements in order to be eligible for FSP benefits. These individuals can receive FSP benefits for only three months (consecutive or otherwise) in a 36-month period unless they comply with the work requirements. The 36-month period that began January 1, 2016 ends on December 31, 2018. A new 36-month period begins on January 1, 2019 and ends December 31, 2021.

Action Required

In Maryland, ABAWDs who are 1) not exempt from ABAWD policy and 2) who have used their three free months of FSP eligibility between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018, may apply for another three free months in the new 36-month period beginning January 1, 2019.

ABAWD – EXEMPT JURISDICTIONS	ABAWD- MANDATORY JURISDICTIONS
1. Allegany County	1. Anne Arundel County
2. Baltimore City	2. Baltimore County
3. Caroline County	3. Calvert County
4. Cecil County	4. Carroll County
5. Dorchester County	5. Charles County
6. Garrett County	6. Frederick County
7. Harford County	7. Howard County
8. Kent County	8. Montgomery County
9. Queen Anne's County	9. Prince George's County
10. Somerset County	10. St. Mary's County
11. Talbot County	11. Washington County
12. Wicomico County	
13. Worcester County	

CARES Procedures

CARES derives ABAWD status for each member of the Food Supplement Program assistance unit and displays it on the **ELIG** screen in the **SYSAB** field.

On the **ELIG** screen, the **YE** valid value indicates the system has determined an individual to be an ABAWD. A **NO** valid value indicates the system has determined an individual to be exempt from ABAWD rules. CARES identifies ABAWDs based on old policies; therefore, case managers must determine the ABAWD status independent of CARES and update the coding to reflect the correct status.

```
FINALIZE
         NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY RESULTS - ELIG
                                                       ELIG A
Month 12 18
                     RAK28L 12 03 18
AU ID 123456789
              Prog FS Prog Type S
                                     Med Cvrg Grp
Confirm y Two Parent MOE Reason Codes
                                           DHMH Ref
    AU Status AU Stat Appl Begin Pd Thru ---Penalty---
                    Date Date Type End Date
Stat
               Date
    Reasons
              120318
                    120118 120118
______
First Last Rel V Finl --Stat-- Rsn Appl Begin Pd Thru St Penalty
Name Name Resp Date Date Date MA Type Date
ABBA BEE SE OT RE A 120318
                           120118 120118
Message 2308
2308 BNFT CTR MUST BE ENTERED WHEN ABAWD STATUS = YE OR OVERRIDE = CY
 14-EDRS
                           20-ABAWD
```

To start the new 36-month ABAWD period in CARES, the case manager must update the **Bnf Ctr** field on the ABAWD Maintenance screen (ABWD).

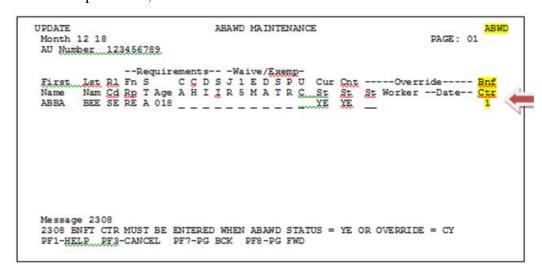
To do this, first ensure that YE is coded under the SYSAB field on the ELIG screen.

• Press Enter.

If a customer previously received benefits, the number of benefit months will reflect in the **Bnf Ctr** field.

- Change the number back to 0 in the actual month of application
- Press Enter

In the example below, the ABAWD AU received one month of full benefits for December.



As of January, 1, 2019, the ABAWD clock restarts. The case manager should change the **Bnf Ctr** to 0 (zero), making the household eligible for three free months.

```
UPDATE ABAWD MAINTENANCE

Month 01 19

--Requirements----Waive/Exemp-
First Lat R1 Fn S C C D S J 1 E D S P U Cur Cnt -----Override-------Bnf
Name Nam Cd Rp T Age A H I I R 5 M A T R C St St Worker --Date------
ABBA BEE SE RE A 018 _______ NEW YE ____ RAY28K 12 03 18 0

Message 2239
2239 REVIEW CLIENT'S ABAWD COUNTER
PP1-HELP DF3-CANCEL PF7-PG BCK PF8-PG FWD
```

Remember, if a previous month's benefit was a partial issuance, then the ongoing month should be 0 (zero) to allow for receipt of three full months of benefits.

Non-compliance with ABAWD work requirements

- 1. For one person households not complying with the ABAWD requirements:
- On the **STAT** screen enter the reason code **526** (did not meet ABAWD work requirements) in the **AU Status** field. Press enter.
- Fast path to the **DONE** screen.
- Confirm FS denial or closing on the **ELIG** screen. Press enter.
- Confirm **FSFI** screen with \$0 benefit.
- 2. For two or more persons in a FSP household non-compliant with ABAWD work requirements:
 - On the **STAT** screen enter the individual reason code **526** (DID NOT MEET ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENTS) for the non-compliant individual. Press **PF4**.
 - Fast path to the **DONE** screen.
 - Confirm the individual denial or closing. The non-compliant individual's Financial Responsibility code is **NM**. Press enter.

Reminder: Always clearly document case actions in the narrative by pressing **PF21** from the **ADDR** screen.

Customer notices

Continue to issue warning letters to customers whose cases are due to close at the end of 2018 for non-compliance with ABAWD requirements. The warning letter should also inform the customer that they are eligible for three additional months beginning in 2019 upon reapplying and approval for benefits.

Monitoring ABAWDs

Continue monitoring and tracking ABAWDs through ABAWD Direct. There are no procedural changes to the use of ABAWD Direct.

Policy Reminders

Meeting the ABAWD work requirement means:

- Working at least 80 hours per month, averaged to 20 hours per week.*
- If self-employed, working at least 120 hours per month, averaged to 30 hours per week.*
- Participating in and complying with a Workforce Investment Act program, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act program, or Employment and Training program (other than job search or job search training program) for 20 hours per week.
- Participating in a work experience program governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements.
- Participating in a Workfare program.
- Volunteering at a non-profit organization for a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- Any combination of the above for a total of 20 hours per week.

*Note: An employed or self-employed person working a minimum of 30 hours weekly or earning weekly wages at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours is exempt from the SNAP work provisions. Therefore, the caseworker must calculate if the customer's weekly wage is at least equal to the federal minimum wage times 30 hours. If the customer meets this exemption, he or she meets an exemption from the ABAWD work requirements

Since ABAWDs are eligible for only three free months of benefits during the new fixed 36-month period (from January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2021), we must identify those months very carefully using the following guidelines:

- Free months are months during which an ABAWD receives Food Supplement Program benefits for a full benefit month without meeting the work requirement (as described above).
- A prorated month does not count as one of the three free months of eligibility.
- A free month can occur at any time during the fixed 36-month period and the months do not need to be consecutive.
- If a customer is ineligible to receive FSP due to ABAWD rules, Expedited FSP should also be denied.

Refer to FSP Manual Sections:

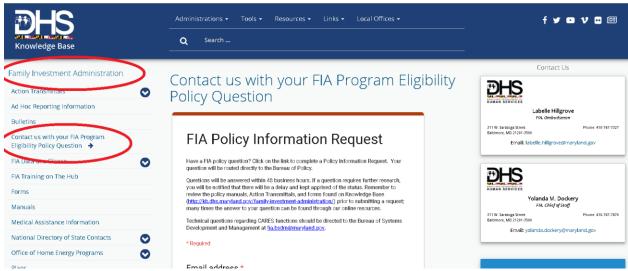
- FSP Section 106 ABAWDs
- FSP Section 130 Work Requirements

Payment Accuracy

Local departments must confirm that FSP applicants have not used their three free months in another state or another jurisdiction within Maryland. Issuing benefits to ABAWDs who are not in compliance with ABAWD requirements, and who have used their three free months in another state or jurisdiction during the new 36-month period will result in an agency error.

Inquiries

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the <u>FIA Policy Information Request Form</u> found on Knowledge Base as shown in the screenshot below.



For systems questions, please email fia.bsdm@maryland.gov.

cc: DHS Executive Staff
Constituent Services
DHS Help Desk
FIA Management Staff
DHS OIG