

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services FAQs: Kent, Oakland, Ottawa, Washtenaw Food Assistance Work Requirement Changes November 2016

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES?

- Certain federal work requirements for able-bodied adults ages 18-49 without dependents go back into effect Jan. 1, 2017, in Kent, Oakland, Ottawa and Washtenaw counties.
- Able-bodied adults must meet these work requirements to continue receiving food assistance. They may receive food assistance for a maximum of three months within any 36-month period without meeting the work requirements.

HOW DO I KNOW IF THE CHANGE AFFECTS ME?

- You should be receiving a notice from MDHHS in the mail the week of Nov. 28 notifying you that you will be affected.
- You can also ask your MDHHS case specialist.

HOW DO I MEET THE WORK REQUIREMENTS?

- There are three ways you can meet the time limit work requirements:
 - Work an average of 20 hours per week each month in unsubsidized employment, at the state minimum wage.
 - Participate for an average of 20 hours per week each month in an approved employment and training program.
 - Participate in community service by volunteering at a nonprofit organization.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE?

You can choose to volunteer at a nonprofit. MDHHS can tell you how many hours
you must volunteer. You are responsible for finding a nonprofit site at which you
can volunteer and providing monthly verification of your participation hours.

HOW DO I PROVE I AM MEETING WORK REQUIREMENTS?

- You must provide income verification as directed by MDHHS.
- If you're participating in an Education and Training program, you must have your employment verified by a Michigan Works! Agency.
- You must show proof of community service hours by turning in a completed Community Service Activity Report every month to avoid interruptions in benefits.

HOW DO I FIND TRAINING PROGRAMS?

Approved training programs are available through Michigan Works! Agencies.
 Contact your MDHHS case specialist for a referral.

WHY ARE MY BENEFITS CHANGING?

- This is a federal changes.
- For many years, Michigan and other states received a federal waiver from certain time limit work requirements for able bodied adults. This was the result of high unemployment rates.
- Now that Michigan's economy has improved and the unemployment rate has dropped, the federal government no longer permits Michigan to receive the waiver.
- These four counties have lower unemployment rates. The changes will be phased in for other counties by October 2018 or sooner.

ARE THERE EXEMPTIONS TO THE TIME-LIMIT WORK REQUIREMENTS?

- Yes, you may be exempt if you are:
 - Physically or mentally unable to work 20 hours a week.
 - Receive Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance due to disability or blindness, or receives Supplemental Security Income or State Disability Assistance.
 - Receive or are an applicant for unemployment benefits.
 - o Participate in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program.
 - Attend training or college at least half-time and meet the student eligibility criteria to receive food assistance.
 - Care for an incapacitated person or a child under age 6.
 - Are pregnant
 - Live in a household with a child under age 18.
 - Are a victim of domestic violence.