Navigating Work Requirements: Pathways For Parents

Participates in a safety net program

1a

Qualifies for an exemption

2b

Qualifies for an exemption

2a

Subject to work requirement

3a

Already working enough to meet requirement

4a

Is their exemption documented?
✓ documented?
✓ approved?

RED TAPE & ADMINISTRATIVE ERRORS

4b

Is their compliance documented?
✓ documented?
✓ approved?

3b

Not working enough or at all

3c

Can they access supports to increase work and comply with requirements?

YES

YES

YES

YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

HOW RECEIVING ASSISTANCE (OR NOT) AFFECTS PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Receives benefits

Loses or does not access benefits

* Receiving supports like child care and transportation could help some people increase their work hours and wages enough that they lose benefits because they no longer qualify for safety net programs. However, the limited funding available for work supports suggests that they will not be available to many people who need them.

Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
For more detailed evidence, please visit www.urban.org/research/publication/navigating-work-requirements-safety-net-programs
1a. Which Safety Net Programs May Include Work Requirements?

Key safety net programs supporting low-income families include TANF, SNAP, housing assistance, and Medicaid. Each program now includes work requirements in some states.

1b. Does not apply

2a. Family is eligible for safety net program

2b. Not working enough or at all

3a. Not working enough or at all

3b. Already working enough to meet requirement

3c. Subject to work requirement

4a. Is their exemption documented? ✓

4b. Is their compliance documented? ✓

5. How receiving assistance (or not) affects parents and children

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## 1b. Do Work Requirements Affect Benefit Applications by Potentially Eligible Families?

Some potentially eligible people may not apply for benefits or continue to participate in safety net programs because of concerns or confusion about work requirements.

### 1a. Participates in a safety net program

- Yes: Family is eligible for safety net program
- No: Does not apply

### 1b. Qualifies for an exemption

- Yes: Not working enough or at all
- No: Already working enough to meet requirement

### 2a. Is their exemption documented?

- Yes: Not working enough or at all
- No: Already working enough to meet requirement

### 3a. Is their compliance documented?

- Yes: Can they access supports to increase work and comply with requirements?
- No: Receives benefits

### 4a. Is their compliance approved?

- Yes: Can they access supports to increase work and comply with requirements?
- No: Receives benefits

### 5. How receiving assistance (or not) affects parents and children

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2a. What Are the Current Work Requirement Policies?

The hours participants are required to work, what activities count as meeting the work requirements, and the consequences for not complying vary by program and state.

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How receiving assistance (or not) affects parents and children

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**3a and 3b. Are People Subject to Work Requirements Already Working Enough to Comply?**

Studies show that most parents receiving public assistance are already working if they can, but they may not consistently work enough hours to satisfy work requirements. Though personal challenges, such as disabilities, health issues, or low education and skill levels, may limit employment opportunities, job availability in the local economy and unstable low-wage work also create challenges to gaining and maintaining steady employment.
How receiving assistance (or not) affects parents and children

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How receiving assistance (or not) affects parents and children

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5. How Does Assistance Affect Parents and Children?

Safety net programs like SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, and housing assistance can mitigate the effects of poverty; reduce food insecurity and financial burdens; and improve not only mental and physical health but children’s long-term health, education, and economic outcomes. Further, receiving assistance, even without requiring work, can support parents’ employment by improving their physical and mental health, reducing their food insecurity, and stabilizing their housing.

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