



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

NICK LYON  
DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Nov. 28, 2017

**CONTACT:** Bob Wheaton  
517-241-2112  
[wheatonb@michigan.gov](mailto:wheatonb@michigan.gov)

**Food assistance work requirements for able-bodied adults reinstated in Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Clinton, Eaton, Grand Traverse, Ingham, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Livingston**

LANSING, Mich. – Able-bodied adults without dependents in 10 Michigan counties will be required by the federal government to meet work requirements that have been waived for more than a decade to continue receiving food assistance benefits.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services this week is notifying approximately 16,000 people who will be potentially affected by the change, which is effective Jan. 1. The counties being affected are: Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Clinton, Eaton, Grand Traverse, Ingham, Ionia, Kalamazoo and Livingston.

Able-bodied adults without dependents in the 10 counties have a three-month federal time limit for receiving food assistance benefits without meeting reinstated work requirements.

Michigan began receiving a waiver from the requirements in 2002 due to high unemployment. The significant reduction in the state's jobless rate over the last several years means the state is no longer eligible. In January 2017, the requirements were reinstated in Kent, Oakland, Ottawa and Washtenaw counties.

Now the second phase of the reinstated requirements is beginning. Counties are in the first two phases because of their lower unemployment rates. MDHHS expects the waiver to be phased out statewide by October 2018 or sooner.

Able-bodied adults are recipients ages 18 to 49 who do not have a disability that prevents them from working or who meet other federal criteria that exempts them from requirements. They can meet the reinstated work requirements to receive food assistance by:

- Working an average of 20 hours per week each month in unsubsidized employment.
- Participating for an average of 20 hours per week each month in an approved employment and training program.
- Participating in community service by volunteering at a nonprofit organization.

"MDHHS will work with individuals affected by this change and our community partners to assist them in meeting the reinstated work requirements," said MDHHS Director Nick Lyon.

-MORE-

The federal government determines work requirements and other eligibility criteria for individuals to be eligible to receive food assistance under the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MDHHS administers federal food assistance benefits through the state's Food Assistance Program.

Phasing out these work requirements goes along with the MDHHS goal of assisting Michiganders in finding employment to achieve self-sufficiency, end generational poverty and realize their dreams.

MDHHS this week is sending notices to able-bodied adults without dependents in the 10 counties notifying them of the upcoming change.

In nine counties, MDHHS and its partners at Michigan Works! Agencies and the Talent Investment Agency will provide resources – such as approved training programs – to help affected residents meet work requirements. In the 10<sup>th</sup> county – Grand Traverse County – MDHHS will pilot an approach that includes employment and self-initiated community service rather than including the Michigan Works! Agencies Employment and Training program. This is due to limited funds for Michigan Works! Agencies to serve this county, as well as the relatively small number of affected individuals in the county.

Rolling out the waiver changes in phases allows MDHHS and its partners to implement changes on a smaller level, so the department can evaluate the actions taken and make improvements before statewide implementation. In addition, this provides an opportunity to properly train staff to prepare them for the changes in order to provide effective and positive customer service.

Some federal exemptions to the reinstated work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents will remain. They include exemptions for individuals who are physically or mentally unable to work for 20 hours, are pregnant or care for a child under age 6 or someone who is incapacitated.

Able-bodied adults without dependents can call their MDHHS case specialist with questions or visit [www.michigan.gov/FoodAssistance](http://www.michigan.gov/FoodAssistance) for more information on the work requirements, exemptions and other information.

# # #