

# SNAP E&T A Brief History



# History of Food Stamp Work Programs



The **Food Stamp Act of 1964 (Public Law [P.L.] 88-525)** created the Food Stamp Program to allow families in need to have a nutritionally adequate diet using government-issued coupon allotments. The original Food Stamp Program did not include work-related provisions.

Congress amended the **Food Stamp Act in 1971 (P.L. 91-671)**, establishing certain work search requirements for food stamp recipients. Specifically, the amendment denied eligibility to any person between the ages of 19 and 60 who refused to:

- register for work;
- fulfill *inquiry-about-employment* requirements; or
- accept a job at a specified pay level.



If the head of household voluntarily quit work without good cause, the household was ineligible to receive food stamp benefits.

The statute also exempted from work requirements any person who:

- complied with work registration requirements set by the state;
- was employed a minimum of 30 hours per week; or
- received weekly earnings at a specified rate.



The amended Food Stamp Act did not mandate states to provide employment assistance.

**The Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198)** created FSE&T and required each state to implement it. The intent of the statute was to ensure that able-bodied food stamp recipients engaged in meaningful work-related activities that led to paid employment and decreased dependency on public assistance. This Act defined FSE&T components as job search, workfare, work experience, and training. The statute also gave states the option of exempting people from FSE&T requirements because of individual circumstances, the remote location of work opportunities, or unavailability of child care.



**The Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-435)** made further changes to the Food Stamp Program. **The Mickey Leland Domestic Hunger Relief Act of 1990** authorized demonstration initiatives to test the feasibility of combining FSE&T and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) services.

**In 1993, the Mickey Leland Child Hunger Relief Act (P.L. 103-66)** established a limit on the dependent care reimbursement amount paid to mandatory work registrants.



**The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) (P.L. 104-193)** and the **Balanced Budget Act of 1997** included significant changes to the Food Stamp Program. **PRWORA** imposed a new work requirement on food stamp recipients between the ages of 18 and 50 who have no dependents—known as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). To remain eligible for SNAP benefits for more than three months in any 36-month period, ABAWDs must be:

- engaged in work (paid or unpaid) for at least 20 hours a week; or
- participating in FSE&T.



**The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-33)** required states to target 80 percent of their 100 percent federal FSE&T grant funds to services for ABAWDs.



**The Farm Bill (P.L. 107-171)**, signed into law on May 13, 2002, significantly altered the FSE&T funding provisions of the **Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. §2025)** for Federal Fiscal Years 2002 through 2007.

Section 4121 of the Farm Bill:

- reauthorized FSE&T;
- set the basic amount of unmatched federal funding;
- provided an additional amount of funds to reimburse states that guarantee to serve all ABAWDs before their three months of benefits in any 36-month period expire;
- eliminated the requirement that states target 80 percent of their 100 percent federal funds for services to ABAWDs; and
- removed the \$25 cap on FSE&T reimbursements for transportation and other expenses necessary for participation in FSE&T.



**The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) of 2008**, enacted June 18, 2008, amended the **Food Stamp Act of 1977**, now named the **Food and Nutrition Act of 2008**.



The amendments included changing the name of the Food Stamp Program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

