 <p>DHS MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore MD 21201</p>	<p>Family Investment Administration ACTION TRANSMITTAL</p>
<p>Control Number: 19-06</p>	<p>Effective Date: January 1, 2019 Issuance Date: December 26, 2018</p>

**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.

<u>ABAWD – EXEMPT JURISDICTIONS</u>	<u>ABAWD– MANDATORY JURISDICTIONS</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allegany County 2. Baltimore City 3. Caroline County 4. Cecil County 5. Dorchester County 6. Garrett County 7. Harford County 8. Kent County 9. Queen Anne’s County 10. Somerset County 11. Talbot County 12. Wicomico County 13. Worcester County 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anne Arundel County 2. Baltimore County 3. Calvert County 4. Carroll County 5. Charles County 6. Frederick County 7. Howard County 8. Montgomery County 9. Prince George’s County 10. St. Mary’s County 11. Washington 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.


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.

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UPDATE                               ABAWD MAINTENANCE                               PAGE: 01  ABAWD
Month 01 19
AU Number 123456789

--Requirements-- -Waive/Exemp-
FIRST  Lst  Rl  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  R  S  M  A  T  R  C  St  St  St  Worker  --Date--  Ctr
ABBA   BEE  SE  RE  A  018  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  YE  YE  -  RAY28K 12 03 18  0

```



Message 2339
2339 REVIEW CLIENT'S ABAWD COUNTER
PF1-HELP PF2-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 [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#) found on Knowledge Base as shown in the screenshot below.

The screenshot displays the DHS Knowledge Base interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Administrations', 'Tools', 'Resources', 'Links', and 'Local Offices'. A search bar is present. The left sidebar menu lists various categories, with 'Family Investment Administration' and 'Contact us with your FIA Program Eligibility Policy Question' highlighted with red circles. The main content area features a heading 'Contact us with your FIA Program Eligibility Policy Question' and a sub-heading 'FIA Policy Information Request'. Below this, there is a paragraph explaining the request process and a link to the form. The right sidebar contains contact information for two staff members: Labelle Hillgrove, FIA Ombudsman, and Yolanda M. Dockery, FIA Chief of Staff, both with their addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.

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

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