

B ABAWD Exemptions



This subject includes information about NA Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) exemptions.

This subject also includes ABAWD exemption tracking requirements.

Policy

When an NA participant meets an [Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents\(g\)](#) exemption, the participant is exempt from the work requirement. When exempt, the Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) participant is not limited to a three-month time limit. The entire month is exempt when an exemption occurs any time during the benefit month.

An ABAWD participant could qualify for more than one ABAWD exemption. The worker uses the ABAWD exemption that exempts the participant for the longest time. For exemptions that require verification, the participant is exempt once the proof is received.

The following participants are exempt from the ABAWD work requirement. FAA applies the exemptions in the following order:

1) Age

Participants are exempt from ABAWD work requirements when they meet **one** of the following:

- Under 18 years of age

The participant is exempt through the month in which they turn 18.

- Age 53 and over

The participant becomes exempt the month in which they turn 53.

2) Residing with a Minor Child (Under Age 18)

When a participant resides with a minor child, the minor is not required to be eligible for NA benefits but is required to be included in the same budgetary unit. This exemption applies through the month in which the minor turns 18.

3) Mentally or Physically Unfit for Work

Participants who are mentally or physically unfit for work are exempt from the ABAWD time limit and work requirements. Unfit for work can include anything that affects the ability to work, maintain employment, or restricts the range of employment opportunities including, and not limited to, **any** of the following:

- Mental conditions
- Learning disability
- Emotional challenge

- Difficulty handling stressful situations, or being around people
- Physical condition
- Recovering from surgery
- Physical limitations due to disability
- Receipt of temporary or permanent disability benefits from a governmental or private source
- Life circumstances
- Victim of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or stalking

A participant does not need to have a disability to be unfit for work. Unfitness for work may not always be visible. Unfitness for work may be temporary or permanent.

Participants considered temporarily unfit for work are exempt until renewal unless verification is received that specifies an expected end date for the exemption reason.

Participants with a long-term or permanent disability are exempt from the ABAWD work requirements and the ABAWD three-month time limit.

4) Pregnancy Exemption

Participants who are pregnant in any trimester are exempt from ABAWD work requirements.

5) [Homeless\(g\)](#)

6) Veterans

Participants who served in the United States Armed Forces and who were discharged or released, regardless of the conditions of the discharge or release. The United States Armed Forces includes **all** of the following branches:

- Air Force
- Army
- Coast Guard
- Marine Corps
- National Guard
- Navy
- Space Force

NOTE This includes participants who served in a reserve component of the Armed Forces.

7) Former Foster Care Youth Aged 24 or Under

A participant age 24 or under who was in the custody of [foster care\(g\)](#) when the participant turned age 18, or a higher age when the maximum age for foster care is higher than 18.

8) Exempt from the NA Work Requirements

See [NA Work Requirement Exemptions](#) for exemptions which can be used for ABAWD.

9) Geographical Exemption

Participants who reside in a geographical exempt area are exempt from the ABAWD work requirements.

The Geographic Exemption is applied when an ABAWD does not meet any other exemption and is living in an area that is exempt from the ABAWD time limit.

Beginning 10/01/2023, the Geographical Exemption is active for all areas of the state except Maricopa county.

NOTE When an ABAWD participant lives on American Indian Tribal Land in Maricopa county, the participant is geographically exempt.

Procedures

An obvious determination of unfit for work may be made during a face-to-face or telephone interview. When unfitness for work is obvious, documentation must include **one or more** of the following:

- Details of the interview with the participant that support unfitness for work.
- The reason a participant statement was accepted.
- Observations made during the interview such as cast, sling, wheelchair, or behavioral health issues.
- Why further verification was not requested.

Tracking ABAWD Countable Months

A countable month is any month in which an ABAWD participant receives a full month of NA benefits while not meeting an exemption or the ABAWD work requirement. AZTECS tracks countable months over the three years even while NA benefits have stopped.

Months from other states that have implemented ABAWD time limits are countable when received during Arizona's current three-year period which started 01/2022.

NOTE All months before 07/2023 are not countable due to the federal suspension of the ABAWD time limits as a result of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Contact the state agency that provided NA benefits when the budgetary unit includes an ABAWD participant who received NA in another state. The Verification of Out-of-State Benefits (FAA-1475A) form is sent to the state agency to verify any countable ABAWD months in another state. (See [Duplicate Participation](#) for state contact information.)

NOTE When an ABAWD participant has received countable months in another state, contact FAA Systems Help Desk to request the months be added to CODF. Do not include months before 07/2023.

AZTECS displays the benefit indicators on CODF depending on the Exemption Code keyed in the EXPT RSN field on WERE. CODF summarizes the months of benefits received by each participant as follows:

- X displays when the month is countable toward the three-month limit.

NOTE When an ABAWD participant has received an exemption in error and does not qualify for another exemption, contact FAA Systems Help Desk to request the month be changed to a discretionary exemption. (For more information, see [Discretionary Exemption](#).)

- E displays when the ABAWD participant has received an ABAWD extension month.
- F displays when the ABAWD discretionary exemption is applied (entered by Help Desk and designated staff only).
- O displays when the month is not countable toward the three-month limit due to one of the following:

The participant received prorated benefits

The participant qualified for an exemption

The participant met the ABAWD work requirement

The month was received during the statewide ABAWD time limit waiver

The month was received during the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

Complete **all** of the following at each interview or reported change to determine whether the participant received three-countable months of NA in the three years:

- Key Y in the TIME LIMIT DISPL FS column on the WERE screen.
- Press ENTER to access CODF. Review CODF to determine the countable months.
- Begin reviewing the month before the NA benefit month to be determined. Do not include months before 01/2022.

NOTE All ABAWD months received in Arizona during the statewide ABAWD time limit waiver which ended on 09/30/2023, are not countable.

Discretionary Exemption Requirements

ABAWD participants aged 50 through 52 may qualify for an ABAWD discretionary exemption and continue eligibility for NA benefits, when **all** of the following apply:

- Three full months of NA benefits have been received in Arizona or three full months in another state that applies the ABAWD time limit.
- Does not meet any other ABAWD exemption.
- Does not meet an ABAWD work requirement.
- Does not qualify for an extension period. (See [Extension Period](#) for more information about extension eligibility.)
- The participant has volunteered to be referred to SNAP CAN. (See [SNAP CAN Screening and Referral](#) for more information.)

NOTE For changes, update ABAWD information when the participant meets another exemption or an ABAWD work requirement.

Beginning with the month an ABAWD participant meets the discretionary exemption requirements, an automated AZTECS procedure assigns the DE Discretionary Exemption Code on WERE, and **all** of the following apply:

- The ABAWD participant is eligible to continue receiving NA benefits.
- The discretionary code remains on WERE until the next renewal or reported change.
- Updates the CODF screen with the indicator F for the months the ABAWD participant continues to be eligible for the discretionary exemption.

FAA also uses the discretionary exemption for any nonexempt ABAWD participants for months in which **all** of the following apply:

- The ABAWD participant does not qualify for any other exemption.
- The ABAWD participant is not meeting the ABAWD work requirement.
- The month is not an extension month.
- The ABAWD participant received more than three countable months of NA benefits.

NOTE Contact the FAA Systems Help Desk when CODF needs to be updated with the F indicator for months that exceeded the ABAWD three-month limit.

ABAWD benefit months that are classified as discretionary exemptions are not overpayments.

Discretionary exemptions are indicated as F months on the AZTECS CODF screen. Only FAA Systems Help Desk staff or designated staff can enter a discretionary exemption.

The CODF screen may show that an ABAWD participant who does not meet any exemption received more than three countable months of NA benefits. An ABAWD participant may receive an exemption in error, and does not qualify for another exemption.

When this occurs, contact the FAA Systems Help Desk and complete **all** of the following:

- Request that the month be changed on CODF to the F indicator, when the ABAWD participant did not meet an exemption.
- Explain why the ABAWD exemption given is not valid.
- Confirm that the information in the case file shows the ABAWD does not qualify for a different exemption.

NOTE Only FAA Systems Help Desk staff or designated staff can enter the discretionary exemption indicator F on the AZTECS CODF screen.

Verification

System interfaces and the [case file\(g\)](#) must be reviewed before verification is requested. No additional verification is needed when AZTECS interface or HEAplus hubs have verified the information.

The participant has the primary responsibility for providing verification. (See [Participant Responsibilities – Providing Verification](#) for additional policy.)

Participant statement verification can be used, unless questionable.

When the exemption is questionable, examples of acceptable verification that can be used include, and are not limited to, **any** of the following:

- ABAWD Homeless
 - Proof of homelessness includes, and is not limited to, a written statement or collateral contact completed by an individual aware of the participant's circumstances.
- ABAWD Veteran
 - Proof of veteran status includes, and is not limited to, **any** of the following:
 - Service department records, such as a DD Form 214.
 - Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, original Certificate of Discharge.
 - Report of Transfer or Discharge, Military ID Card indicating service in the armed forces.
 - Correspondence or contact from the Department of Veteran Affairs including benefit payment or award letter.
 - Veteran Affairs ID Card.
 - Correspondence or contact from the Department of Veteran Affairs indicating service in the Armed Forces.
 - Driver's license indicating veteran status.

- Foster Care Youth

Proof of foster care youth includes, and is not limited to, **any** of the following:

- Data sharing with other state or federal agencies.
- Collateral contact to other social service workers or agencies, such as the agency administering the foster care program or Medicaid.
- A written statement from or collateral contact completed with an individual aware of the participant's circumstances.

- ABAWD Exemption for Pregnancy or Unfit for Work

Proof of pregnancy or unfitness for work includes, and is not limited to, **any** of the following:

- Insurance or police reports supporting the claim.
- The Verification of Unfitness for Work for Adults (FAA-1533A) form.
- The Verify Unfit for Work for Adults (A024) notice.

NOTE When a completed A024 notice is in a [case file\(g\)](#), FAA may use the A024 notice as verification when FAA received the completed notice no more than 30 calendar days before an NA application.

- When not questionable, a written statement from, or collateral contact completed with an individual aware of the participant's circumstances.
- A written statement or collateral contact completed by a [medically qualified source\(g\)](#) that must include **all** of the following:

The condition, circumstance, illness or disability that impedes the participants ability to participate in employment or work.

The projected duration of the condition, circumstance, illness or disability.

When the duration for the condition, circumstance, illness or disability cannot be determined at the present time, includes an indication of re-examination and reevaluation.

- Proof of receipt of temporary or permanent disability benefits from governmental or private sources including, and not limited to, **one** of the following:

VA disability benefits

Workers Compensation

SSI (or pending application for SSI)

State-issued temporary or permanent disability benefits

Participation in a Vocational Rehabilitation program

Social Security Disability benefits

Maternity leave or disability leave pay from an employer

AZTECS Keying Procedures

ABAWD Time Limit Tracking on CODF

Before determining an ABAWD exemption, complete **all** of the following at each interview or reported change:

- Check to ensure that a month and year after 01/2022 is in the TI-Begin date field on CODF for each participant 18 years of age or older.

NOTE An asterisk displays on WERE, next to the participant's name, when the TI-BEGIN date field is blank on CODF.

- When there is not a date displayed in the TI-BEGIN field on CODF, complete **all** of the following for each participant, one participant at a time:

Key Y next to a participant on WERE, under the column, FED LIMIT DISPL in the FS field. Then press ENTER to access CODF.

In the TI BEGIN field, key the month and year (MMYYYY) of the first whole month of NA benefits issued on or after 01/01/2022.

NOTE When no date is in the TI-BEGIN field, AZTECS does not allow the authorization of NA benefits. The following message displays on FSAD:
ERROR INVALID TIME-LIMITED REQUIREMENTS (CHECK WERE/CODF).
Once keyed, AZTECS updates the TIME-LTD MONTHS USED field and updates the Xs and Os.

Keying ABAWD Exemptions on WERE

The ABAWD exemptions must be assigned in the following order:

1) Age

Keying an Exemption Reason Code on WERE is not required. AZTECS allows the age exemption based on the participant's identified age keyed on SSDO.

2) Residing with a Minor Child (Under Age 18)

Key CH in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE.

3) Mentally or Physically Unfit for Work

Key UF in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE.

AZTECS auto populates the UF Exemption Reason Code in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE and the PAR/EXEM field on WORW when the AZTECS screens include **one or more** of the following:

- Y in the DS/FS field on SSDO
- SI or SS DS income is keyed on UNIN

When verification of the unfit for work is requested for regular and expedited applications, do not key the UF Exemption Reason Code until verification is received. Leave the field as autopopulated by AZTECS.

- 4) Pregnant
Key PG in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE.
- 5) Homeless
Key LO in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE.
AZTECS auto populates the LO Exemption Reason Code in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE when a Y is keyed on the HOMELESS field on INDA.
- 6) Veteran
Key VA in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE.
- 7) [Foster Care\(g\)](#)
Key FC in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE.
- 8) Exempt from NA Work Requirements
See [NA Work Requirement Exemptions](#) for keying of the exemptions which can be used for ABAWD.
- 9) Geographical Exemption
Key GE in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE for an ABAWD participant who lives outside of Maricopa county or on American Indian Tribal Land inside Arizona.
NOTE Use the Geographical Exemption when an ABAWD participant does not meet any other ABAWD exemption during the ABAWD time limit waiver.
- 10) Discretionary Exemption
When the participant qualifies for the discretionary exemption AZTECS auto populates WERE.
Key DE in the EXPT RSN FS field on WERE, when needed.
NOTE Ensure an ABAWD participant meets all the eligibility requirements for the discretionary exemption. (See [Discretionary Exemption Requirements.](#))

Referring an ABAWD to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Career Advancement Network (SNAP CAN) Program

An ABAWD participant who is exempt or meets the ABAWD work requirements can still participate in the SNAP CAN program.

Determine whether the ABAWD is appropriate to refer to SNAP CAN. (See [SNAP CAN](#) for more information.)

When appropriate, key the Y indicator in the REF field on WORW.

DBME Job Aid in SharePoint

[Keying WERE for ABAWD – Job Aid](#)

Legal Authorities

7 CFR 273.24(b)(1)

7 CFR 273.24(b)(2)

7 CFR 273.24(b)(3)

7 CFR 273.24(c)

7 CFR 273.24(g)

FNS Waiver

[Prior Policy](#)

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