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**Statewide News Release**

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**Commonwealth Makes Job Training Programs Available to Help Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Find Work and Maintain Eligibility for SNAP**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Dec. 15, 2017) – Participation in Kentucky’s Employment & Training (E&T) Program recently changed for certain adults receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits in 20 counties, allowing the state to expand access to E&T services to more SNAP recipients statewide.

Effective October 1, 2017, able-bodied adults in these 20 counties who are between the ages of 18 and 49 and have no disabilities, no dependents and no other exemptions may choose to attend employment and training programs to learn the skills they need to find suitable employment, as well as to meet the federal requirement that they work 80 hours a month or 20 hours a week to be eligible for SNAP. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) also can volunteer or do community service to fulfill their participation requirement. In addition, the new changes provide the possibility to expand access to the E&T support to any SNAP recipient residing in a county with an E&T program, not just ABAWDs subject to meeting work participation requirements.

The federal welfare reform law passed in 1996 limits ABAWD eligibility for SNAP benefits to a total of three months in any 36-month period, unless the individual meets the federal work requirement or is otherwise exempt. The three-month time limit for SNAP benefits does not apply to people who are unable to work due to physical or mental health reasons, pregnant, caring for a child or incapacitated family member, or exempt from the work requirement for other good cause reasons.

Between 2008 and 2015, the federal government granted Kentucky and dozens of other states a statewide waiver of the work requirement when the economy faced significant challenges. Now that the economy is improving, that federal waiver no longer automatically applies to those Kentucky counties with unemployment rates above the federally-established threshold.

The 20 counties impacted by the October 1 changes are: Anderson, Bullitt, Calloway, Campbell, Daviess, Fayette, Franklin, Hardin, Henderson, Henry, Jefferson, Jessamine, Logan, Oldham, Owen, Shelby, Simpson, Spencer, Warren, and Woodford.



In the coming months, the voluntary employment and training program option for ABAWDs will be rolled out to a total of 112 of Kentucky's 120 counties. (The eight counties that are part of the Commonwealth's Paths 2 Promise program – Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry, or Whitley Counties – will not be affected by this change.) Counties will be assessed as to their readiness to support the employment and training program on a case-by-case basis during the statewide rollout.

To maintain eligibility for SNAP, ABAWDs participating in these programs must report their participation every 30 days. They must also notify the Commonwealth when their paid or unpaid work hours drop below the federal requirement of 80 hours per month or 20 hours per week. Members impacted by the change will be directly notified of their participation requirements and program changes.

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*