Chapter 388-444 WAC

BASIC FOOD WORK REQUIREMENTS

WAC 388-444-0005  Am I required to work or look for work in order to be eligible for Basic Food?  Some people must register for work to receive Basic Food.

(1) If you receive Basic Food, we register you for work if you are:
(a) Age sixteen through fifty-nine with dependents;
(b) Age sixteen or seventeen, not attending secondary school and not the head-of-household;
(c) Age fifty through fifty-nine with no dependents; or
(d) Age eighteen through forty-nine, able-bodied and with no dependents as provided in WAC 388-444-0030.

(2) Unless you are exempt from work registration under WAC 388-444-0005 to be eligible for Basic Food benefits, we register you for work:
(a) When you apply for Basic Food benefits or are added to someone's assistance unit; and
(b) Every twelve months thereafter.

(3) If we register you for work, you must:
(a) Contact us as required; and
(b) Provide information regarding your employment status and availability for work if we ask for it;
(c) Report to an employer if we refer you;
(d) Not quit a job unless you have good cause under WAC 388-444-0070; and
(e) Accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment. We define unsuitable employment under WAC 388-444-0060.

(4) If we register you for work, you must meet all of the requirements under subsection (3) of this section. If you do not meet these requirements, we disqualify you from receiving benefits as described in WAC 388-444-0055, unless you meet the good cause conditions as defined in WAC 388-444-0050.

WAC 388-444-0010  Who is exempt from work registration while receiving Basic Food?  If you receive Basic Food, you are exempt from work requirements in chapter 388-444 WAC if you meet any of the following conditions:

(1) You are age sixteen or seventeen, not the head of household, and:
   (a) Attend school such as high school or GED programs; or
   (b) Are enrolled at least half time (using the institutions definition) in an employment and training program under:
      (i) The Workforce Investment Act (WIA);
      (ii) Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974; or
      (iii) Another state or local employment and training program.

(2) You are a student age eighteen or older enrolled at least half time as defined by the institution in:
   (a) Any accredited school;
   (b) A training program; or
   (c) An institution of higher education. If you are enrolled in higher education, you must meet the requirements under WAC 388-482-0005 to be eligible for Basic Food benefits.

(3) You are an employed or self-employed person working thirty hours or more per week, or receiving weekly earnings equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by thirty;

(4) You are complying with the work requirements of an employment and training program under temporary assistance for needy families (TANF);

(5) You receive unemployment compensation (UC) benefits or have an application pending for UC benefits;

(6) You are responsible to care for:
   (a) A dependent child under age six; or

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.120, 74.08A.903, and 7 U.S.C. 2015 (d)(1); 7 C.F.R. § 273.7. 10-18-048, § 388-444-0005, filed 8/26/10, effective 10/1/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04. 050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.510, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.903 and Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. 09-04-009, § 388-444-0005, filed 1/22/09, effective 2/22/09. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.08.090, and 7 C.F.R. 273.7 and 273.25. 07-14-125, § 388-444-0005, filed 7/3/07, effective 8/3/07; 06-24-026, § 388-444-0005, filed 11/29/06, effective 1/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057 and 74.08.090. 98-16-044, § 388-444-0005, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]

WAC 388-444-0015  How can the Basic Food employment and training (BF E&T) program help me find work?

When you apply for Basic Food benefits or are added to your assistance unit; and

(a) Contact us as required;
(b) Every twelve months thereafter.

WAC 388-444-0020  When must clients register for work but are not required to participate in the food stamp employment and training program (FS E&T)?

We register you for work:

(a) When you apply for Basic Food benefits or have an application pending for UC benefits; and
(b) Are enrolled at least half time (using the institutions definition) in an employment and training program under:
   (i) The Workforce Investment Act (WIA);
   (ii) Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974; or
   (iii) Another state or local employment and training program.

WAC 388-444-0025  What expenses will the department pay to help me participate in BF E&T?

We pay the following expenses when you register for work:

(a) We pay for reasonable employment assessments and related expenses, including:
   (i) Transportation expenses to where you will be employed or training; and
   (ii) Employment and training program costs, including:
      (A) Placement services; or
      (B) Fees, supplies, or materials.

(b) We will not pay for:
   (1) Transportation expenses to where you will be employed or training;
   (2) Expenses you can recover from the employer or training program;
   (3) Expenses you can recover from any UC benefits you are receiving; or
   (4) Expenses you can recover from unemployment compensation (UC) benefits.

WAC 388-444-0030  Do I have to work to be eligible for Basic Food work requirements?

We register you for work:

(a) When you apply for Basic Food, we register you for work:
   (1) If you receive Basic Food, we register you for work if you are:
      (a) Age sixteen through fifty-nine with dependents;
      (b) Age sixteen or seventeen, not attending secondary school and not the head-of-household;
      (c) Age fifty through fifty-nine with no dependents; or
      (d) Age eighteen through forty-nine, able-bodied and with no dependents as provided in WAC 388-444-0030.
   (2) Unless you are exempt from work registration under WAC 388-444-0005, we register you for work:
      (a) When you apply for Basic Food benefits or are added to someone's assistance unit; and
      (b) Every twelve months thereafter.
   (3) If we register you for work, you must:
      (a) Contact us as required;
      (b) Provide information regarding your employment status and availability for work if we ask for it;
      (c) Report to an employer if we refer you;
      (d) Not quit a job unless you have good cause under WAC 388-444-0070; and
      (e) Accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment. We define unsuitable employment under WAC 388-444-0060.
   (4) If we register you for work, you must meet all of the requirements under subsection (3) of this section. If you do not meet these requirements, we disqualify you from receiving benefits as described in WAC 388-444-0055, unless you meet the good cause conditions as defined in WAC 388-444-0050.

(b) Every time you are added to your assistance unit; and
(c) When you move your residence.

Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.903 and Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. 09-04-009, § 388-444-0005, filed 1/22/09, effective 2/22/09. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.903 and Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. 09-04-009, § 388-444-0005, filed 1/22/09, effective 2/22/09. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.08.090, and 7 C.F.R. 273.7 and 273.25. 07-14-125, § 388-444-0005, filed 7/3/07, effective 8/3/07; 06-24-026, § 388-444-0005, filed 11/29/06, effective 1/1/07. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057 and 74.08.090. 98-16-044, § 388-444-0005, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]
WAC 388-444-0015 How can the Basic Food employment and training (BF E&T) program help me find work? The Basic Food employment and training (BF E&T) program is the name for Washington's voluntary supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) employment and training program.

(1) If you receive federally-funded Basic Food benefits, you may choose to receive services through the BF E&T program in one or more of the following activities, if we currently provide the service in the county where you live:
   (a) Job search;
   (b) Paid or unpaid work;
   (c) Training or work experience;
   (d) General education development (GED) classes; or
   (e) English as a second language (ESL) classes.

(2) If you are eligible to participate in a BF E&T activity, there is no limit to the number of hours you can participate.

(3) If you receive benefits under the state-funded food assistance program (FAP), you are not eligible to participate in BF E&T.

WAC 388-444-0025 What expenses will the department pay to help me participate in BF E&T? (1) The department pays certain actual expenses needed for you to participate in the BF E&T program. We will pay for the following expenses:
   (a) Transportation related costs; and
   (b) Dependent care costs for each dependent through twelve years of age.

(2) We do not pay your dependent care costs if:
   (a) The child is thirteen years of age or older unless they are:
      (i) Physically and/or mentally unable to care for themselves; or
      (ii) Under court order requiring adult supervision; or
   (b) Any member in the food assistance unit provides the dependent care.

(3) We do not use the cost of dependent care the department pays for as an income deduction for your household's dependent care costs under WAC 388-450-0185.

WAC 388-444-0030 Do I have to work to be eligible for Basic Food benefits if I am an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD)? (1) An able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) is a person who:
   (a) Is physically and mentally able to work;
   (b) Is age eighteen through forty-nine; and
   (c) Has no child in the household.

(2) If you are an ABAWD, you must participate in employment and training activities under subsection (4) unless you are exempt from ABAWD requirements under WAC 388-444-0035.

(3) Nonexempt ABAWDs who fail to participate may continue to receive food assistance until September 30, 2012.

(4) Beginning October 1, 2012, an ABAWD is not eligible to receive food assistance for more than three full months in a thirty-six month period, except as provided in WAC 388-444-0035, unless that person:
   (a) Is exempt from ABAWD requirements under WAC 388-444-0035;
   (b) Works at least twenty hours a week averaged monthly;
   (c) Participates in on the job training (OJT), which may include paid work and classroom training time, for at least twenty hours a week;
   (d) Participates in an unpaid work program as provided in WAC 388-444-0040; or
   (e) Participates in and meets the requirements of one of the following work programs:
      (i) The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA);
      (ii) Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974; or
      (iii) A state-approved employment and training program.

WAC 388-444-0035 Who is exempt from ABAWD work requirements? Some persons receiving Basic Food are exempt from ABAWD work requirements. You are exempt from the ABAWD requirements under WAC 388-444-0030 if you are:
   (1) Under eighteen or fifty years of age or older;
   (2) Determined to be physically or mentally unable to work;
   (3) A member of a household with responsibility for a person who is incapacitated;
   (4) An adult in a household that has a member who is under the age of eighteen, even if the child is not eligible for Basic Food;
   (5) Pregnant;
   (6) Living in an area approved as exempt by U.S. Department of Agriculture;
Basic Food Work Requirements

388-444-0050

(7) Complying with the work requirements of an employment and training program under temporary assistance for needy families (TANF);

(8) Applying for or receiving unemployment compensation;

(9) A student enrolled at least half time as defined by the institution in:
   (a) Any accredited school;
   (b) Training program; or
   (c) Institution of higher education. A student enrolled in higher education must meet the requirements under WAC 388-482-0005 in order to be eligible for Basic Food.

(10) Participating in a chemical dependency treatment and rehabilitation program;

(11) Employed a minimum of thirty hours per week or receiving weekly earnings which equal the minimum hourly rate multiplied by thirty hours;

(12) Eligible for one of the annual federal-approved exemption slots under the fifteen percent exemption rule.

WAC 388-444-0040 Can I volunteer for an unpaid work program in order to meet the work requirements under WAC 388-444-0030? The department makes unpaid work programs available for persons who need to meet work requirements under WAC 388-444-0030.

(1) The following are considered unpaid work programs:
   (a) Workfare, which includes:
      (i) Thirty days of job search activities in the first month beginning with the first day of application, or sixteen hours of volunteer work with a public or private nonprofit agency; and
      (ii) In subsequent months, sixteen hours per month of volunteer work with a public or private nonprofit agency allows you to remain eligible for Basic Food benefits.
   (b) Workfare does not include enforced community service or for paying fines or debts due to legal problems.
   (b) Work experience (WEX) which provides supervised, unpaid work for at least twenty hours a week. WEX is intended to improve a person's work skills and make them more competitive in the job market. WEX must be for a nonprofit organization, government agency, or tribal entity.

(2) We may not require you to participate more than one hundred and twenty hours per month in an unpaid-work program, paid work, or a combination of activities. ABAWDs may volunteer to participate in activities beyond one hundred and twenty hours per month.

(3) The department may pay for some of the costs for you to participate in work programs. We set the standards for the amount we will pay for these expenses.

WAC 388-444-0045 How does an ABAWD regain eligibility for Basic Food after being closed for the three-month limit? (1) If you have used up your three months of benefits as an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) under WAC 388-444-0030, you can regain eligibility by:
   (a) Working eighty hours or more during a thirty-day period;
   (b) Participating in and meeting the requirements of a work program for eighty hours or more during a thirty-day period;
   (c) Participating in and meeting the requirements of the community service part of a Workfare program; or
   (d) Meeting any of the work requirements in (a) through (c) of this subsection in the thirty days after the date you have applied for Basic Food.

(2) If you regain eligibility for food assistance under subsection (1) of this section, you are eligible for Basic Food from the date you applied for Basic Food and as long as you continue to meet the requirements of WAC 388-444-0030.

(3) If you meet all other requirements for Basic Food and you have regained eligibility under subsection (1), you may receive an additional three consecutive months of Basic Food benefits when you:
   (a) Lose employment; or
   (b) Lose the opportunity to participate in a work program.

(4) We only allow the additional three months of Basic Food under subsection (3) once in each thirty-six month period.

WAC 388-444-0050 What is good cause for failing to meet Basic Food work requirements? (1) If we have registered you to work, you may have a good reason (good cause) for refusing or failing to meet work requirements under WAC 388-444-0005.

(2) Good cause reasons include, but are not limited to:
   (a) You were injured or ill;
   (b) A household member who needs your help was injured or ill;
   (c) A household emergency;
   (d) The unavailability of transportation; or
   (e) Lack of adequate dependent care for children six through twelve years of age.

(3) If we determine that you do not have good cause for failing or refusing to meet the work requirements under WAC 388-444-0005, you will be disqualified from receiving Basic Food as described under WAC 388-444-0055.

(8/31/11)

[Ch. 388-444 WAC—p. 3]
WAC 388-444-0055 What are the penalties if I refuse or fail to meet Basic Food work requirements? (1) If we register you for work you must meet the work requirements under WAC 388-444-0005 or 388-444-0030 unless you have good cause as defined in WAC 388-444-0050. If you do not follow these rules, you will become an ineligible assistance unit member as described under WAC 388-408-0035. The remaining members of the assistance unit continue to be eligible for Basic Food.

(2) If you do not meet work requirements and we find that you did not have good cause, you cannot receive Basic Food for the following periods of time and until you meet program requirements:
   (a) For the first failure, one month;
   (b) For the second failure, three months; and
   (c) For the third or subsequent failure, six months.

(3) If you become exempt under WAC 388-444-0010 and are otherwise eligible, you may begin to receive Basic Food.

(4) If you do not comply with the work requirements of the following programs, you cannot receive Basic Food unless you meet one of the conditions described under WAC 388-444-0010 except subsections (1)(d) or (e):
   (a) WorkFirst;
   (b) Unemployment compensation;
   (c) The refugee cash assistance program.

(5) Within ten days after learning of your refusal to participate in your program, the financial worker will send you a notice that your Basic Food benefits will end unless you comply with your program requirements.

(6) If you do not comply within ten days, you will be issued a notice disqualifying you from receiving Basic Food until you comply with your program, or until you meet the work registration disqualification requirements in subsection (2) of this section.

(7) After the penalty period in subsection (2) of this section is over, and you meet work requirements and you are otherwise eligible, you may receive Basic Food:
   (a) If you are alone in the assistance unit and apply to reestablish eligibility; or
   (b) If you are a member of an assistance unit, you may resume receiving Basic Food.

(8) During the penalty period, if you begin to participate in one of the programs listed in subsection (4)(a) through (c) and that penalty is removed, the work registration disqualification also ends. If you are otherwise eligible, you may begin to receive Basic Food.

WAC 388-444-0065 Am I eligible for Basic Food if I quit my job? (1) You are not eligible for Basic Food if you quit your current job without good cause as defined in WAC 388-444-0070, and you are in one of the following categories:

(a) You were working twenty hours or more per week or the job provided weekly earnings equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by twenty hours;
(b) The quit was within sixty days before you applied for Basic Food or any time after;
(c) At the time of quit you were applying for Basic Food and would have been required to register for work as defined in WAC 388-444-0005;
(d) If you worked or you were self-employed and working thirty fours a week or you had weekly earnings at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by thirty hours.

(2) You are not eligible to receive Basic Food if you have participated in a strike against a federal, state or local government and have lost your employment because of such participation.

Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.120, 74.08A.903, and 7 U.S.C. 2015 (d)(1); 7 C.F.R. § 273.7. 10-18-048, § 388-444-0060, filed 8/26/10, effective 10/1/10.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.120, 74.08A.903, and 7 U.S.C. 2015 (d)(1); 7 C.F.R. § 273.7. 10-18-048, § 388-444-0060, filed 8/26/10, effective 10/1/10.]

[Ch. 388-444 WAC—p. 4]
WAC 388-444-0070 What is good cause for quitting my job? Unless otherwise specified the following rules apply to all persons receiving Basic Food.

1. You must have a good reason (good cause) for quitting a job or you will be disqualified from receiving Basic Food under WAC 388-444-0075. Good cause includes the following:
   (a) Your employment is unsuitable as under WAC 388-444-0060;
   (b) You were discriminated against by an employer based on age, race, sex, color, religious belief, national origin, political belief, marital status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or other reasons in RCW 49.60.180;
   (c) Work demands or conditions make continued employment unreasonable, such as working without being paid on schedule;
   (d) You accepted other employment or are enrolled at least half time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education;
   (e) You must leave a job because another assistance unit member accepted a job or is enrolled at least half time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education in another county or similar political subdivision and your assistance unit must move;
   (f) You are under age sixty and retire as recognized by your employer;
   (g) You accept a bona fide offer of employment of twenty hours or more a week or where the weekly earnings are equivalent to the federal minimum wage multiplied by twenty hours. However, because of circumstances beyond your control, the job either does not materialize or results in employment of twenty hours or less a week or weekly earnings of less than the federal minimum wage multiplied by twenty hours;
   (h) You leave a job in connection with patterns of employment where workers frequently move from one employer to another, such as migrant farm labor or construction work; and
      (i) Circumstances included under WAC 388-444-0050;
   (2) You are eligible for Basic Food after quitting a job if the circumstances of the job involve:
      (a) Changes in job status resulting from reduced hours of employment while working for the same employer;
      (b) Termination of a self-employment enterprise; or
      (c) Resignation from a job at the demand of an employer.
   (3) You must provide proof that you had good cause for quitting a job. However, we do not deny your application for Basic Food if you are unable to get this proof even with our help.

WAC 388-444-0075 What are the penalties if I quit a job without good cause? (1) If you have applied for Basic Food and have quit a job without good cause within sixty days before applying for Basic Food, we deny your application and you must have a penalty period as described under subsection (3) from the date of your application.

(2) If you already receive Basic Food and you quit your job without good cause, we send you a letter notifying you that you will be disqualified from Basic Food. The disqualification in subsection (3) of this section begins the first of the month following the notice of adverse action.

(3) You are disqualified for the following minimum periods of time and until the conditions in subsection (4) of this section are met:
   (a) For the first quit, one month;
   (b) For the second quit, three months; and
   (c) For the third or subsequent quit, six months.
   (4) You may reestablish eligibility after serving the disqualification period, if otherwise eligible by:
      (a) Getting a new job; or
      (b) Participating in Workfare as provided in WAC 388-444-0040.

(5) If you become exempt from work registration under WAC 388-444-0010, we end your disqualification for a job quit unless you are exempt for applying for or receiving unemployment compensation (UC), or participating in an employment and training program under TANF.

(6) If you are disqualified and move from the assistance unit and join another assistance unit, we continue to treat you as an ineligible member of the new assistance unit for the remainder of the disqualification period.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.515, 74.08.090, 74.08A.120, 74.08A.903, and 7 C.F.R. §§ 273.7 and 273.24, 10-23-112, § 388-444-0070, filed 11/17/10, effective 12/18/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057 and 74.08.090. 98-16-044, § 388-444-0065, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]

(8/31/11)