



ARKANSAS

# Work Requirements

**M** MYTH: Arkansas Medicaid recipients may not even be aware of the work requirements.

**R** **REALITY: Everyone subject to the work requirement has been notified multiple times.**

Childless adults between 30 and 49 years old enrolled in Arkansas' Medicaid expansion are required to report that they are working, volunteering, going to school, or looking for a job at least 20 hours per week on average, or meet an exemption from the work requirement.<sup>1</sup> Enrollees were sent hard copy letters prior to the implementation of the work requirement and a letter for each month that they are not compliant. The Arkansas Department of Human Services has also been emailing beneficiaries directly and uses social media daily to remind enrollees how and when to report. The state also has a vendor calling enrollees telling them about the work requirements. The new policy has received widespread media coverage across the state. Medicaid expansion enrollees who want to keep their taxpayer-funded benefits have been given plenty of notice of the work requirement.

**M** MYTH: Enrollees don't know how to report their work activities.

**R** **REALITY: Enrollees can, at the touch of a button, report their work hours online.**

The Hutchinson administration has provided an abundance of tools to inform enrollees how to report their work, volunteer, or training hours using a simple website. The website includes an instructional video and sample forms as well as step-by-step instructions for filling them out.<sup>2</sup> Enrollees can access this website using a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Arkansas has also developed county-by-county information that includes the location of hundreds of publicly-accessible computers across the state that enrollees can use to report their work activities.<sup>3</sup> There is at least one public computer in all 75 Arkansas counties, including every county human services office, which all provide free internet access.<sup>4</sup> Enrollees received a letter that included this information. Additionally, enrollees can contact the DHS call center, open 14 hours a day, to ask questions and get help with reporting.<sup>5</sup>

**M** MYTH: Arkansas' work requirement isn't reasonable to meet.

**R** **REALITY: There are over a dozen ways to meet the requirement.**

There are multiple ways that enrollees can meet the Arkansas work requirement. Enrollees can work, get job training, search for work, get trained on how to search for work, participate in community service, or engage in other qualifying activities for an average of just four hours per day. This is just half of the regular forty-hour full-time work week and applies to adults in their prime working years. Additionally, the state has provided an online dashboard that includes information about job, volunteer, and training opportunities as well as transportation options.<sup>6</sup>

**M** MYTH: Arkansas' work requirement is taking benefits from the truly needy.

**R** **REALITY: The work requirement does not apply to the truly needy.**

The Arkansas Medicaid work requirement currently only applies to non-disabled, working-age enrollees ages 30-49 in Arkansas's Medicaid expansion. Beginning next year, able-bodied adults between the ages of 18 and 29 will also be subject to the requirement. These are individuals in their prime working years who have no physical or mental disabilities keeping them from meaningful employment. Work requirements actually improve the outlook for truly needy Arkansans by freeing up limited funding.<sup>7</sup>

**M** MYTH: Arkansas' work requirement isn't legal.

**R** **REALITY: Medicaid was designed to promote independence. Work requirements fulfil that goal.**

The federal government can approve state Medicaid waiver requests that advance the objectives of the program.<sup>8</sup> One statutory goal of Medicaid is to help "families and individuals attain or retain capability for independence," which is exactly what work requirements do.<sup>9</sup> There has also been a lesser known work requirement available in Medicaid for more than twenty years; although few states use this option, states can remove individuals from Medicaid who fail to meet the existing work requirement in the cash welfare program.

**M** MYTH: Arkansas' work requirement has increased administrative costs.

**R** **REALITY: Arkansas has implemented their work requirement without hiring any additional staff.**

Arkansas has implemented the work requirement without any additional staff. Furthermore, state systems are already designed to administer this type of work requirement, given that the Medicaid requirement largely mirrors the existing requirements in food stamps and cash welfare.

**M** MYTH: There are no jobs available in Arkansas.

**R** **REALITY: There are thousands of open job in Arkansas.**

Arkansas currently has a record-low unemployment rate of 3.7 percent.<sup>10</sup> There are 27,300 job openings posted online.<sup>11</sup> Even if an individual couldn't find work that suits them, they can fulfill the work requirement by volunteering, training for work, taking financial literacy classes, going to school, or through a number of other approved activities that count towards the work requirement.

1. Arkansas Department of Human Services, "Arkansas Works Section 1115 Demonstration," Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2017), <https://medicaid.mmis.arkansas.gov/Download/general/comment/ARWorksWvr-Amended.pdf>.
2. Arkansas Works, "Reporting Work Activities and Exemptions for Arkansas Works," Arkansas Department of Human Services (2018), <https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/reporting/index.html>.
3. Arkansas Works, "Resource Dashboard," Arkansas Department of Human Services (2018), [https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/resource\\_dashboard/index.html](https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/resource_dashboard/index.html).
4. Arkansas Works, "Public Access Computers," Arkansas Department of Human Services (2018), [https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/Resources/Public\\_Access\\_Computers.pdf](https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/Resources/Public_Access_Computers.pdf).
5. "Hotlines," Arkansas Department of Human Services (2018), <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/hotlines>.
6. Arkansas Works, "Resource Dashboard," Arkansas Department of Human Services (2018), [https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/resource\\_dashboard/index.html](https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/ARWorks/resource_dashboard/index.html).
7. Jonathan Ingram & Nicholas Horton, "The Future of Medicaid Reform: Empowering Individuals to Work (2017), <https://thefga.org/research/future-medicare-reform-empowering-individuals-work/>.
8. 42 U.S.C. § 1315 (2017), <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2017-title42/pdf/USCODE-2017-title42-chap7-subchapXI-partA-sec1315.pdf>.
9. Whitney Munro, "FGA Congratulates Arkansas on the Approval of Their New Medicaid Waiver," Foundation for Government Accountability, <https://thefga.org/news/fga-congratulates-arkansas-approval-new-medicare-waiver/>.
10. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Arkansas: Economy at a Glance," U.S. Department of Labor (2018), <https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ar.htm>.
11. Author's calculations based upon data provided by Haver Analytics on March 2018 job postings gathered from more than 16,000 internet job boards, corporate boards, and other job sites.