



# Eliminating Waivers From Work Requirements in Food Stamps

## MYTH:

Michigan already has a work requirement in food stamps.



## FACT:

Even before the pandemic, Michigan had abused waivers from the federal work requirement to eliminate the requirement in 69 of 83 counties, including 64 counties with unemployment rates lower than the statutory threshold. This meant that **about 175,000 able-bodied adults without dependents were not subject to the work requirement** and only 29,000 were subject to it.

Most midwestern states have eliminated these loopholes including Indiana, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri.

## MYTH:

Work requirements will cut off food stamps for children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.



## FACT:

**Only able-bodied adults over the age of 18, with no dependent children, are subject to the work requirement.** The requirement does not apply to parents of dependent children, individuals physically or mentally unfit for work, or adults over the age of 50.

## MYTH:

We cannot expect people to go to work while the COVID-19 pandemic continues.



## FACT:

**Work requirements are largely suspended during the national health emergency.** This bill simply ensures that once the federal suspension ends, Michigan's work requirement will apply across the state, rather than in a minority of counties.

Nevertheless, work requirements are flexible enough to meet this moment. There are a record number of job openings right now. Even in areas with fewer jobs, paid work is not the only way to meet a work requirement. Individuals can volunteer, work on their education, or receive job training as well. And if an enrollee or their family faces health vulnerabilities, they can apply for a good cause exemption from the work requirement.

**MYTH:**

Racial minorities face discrimination and barriers to work that other people do not. Considering their share of enrollment, expanding work requirements will affect them unfairly.

**FACT:**

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, **able-bodied adults subject to the work requirements are more likely than other enrollees to be men and are more likely to be white.** Getting welfare enrollees into jobs that increase incomes and connect them into their communities is one of the most effective tools for spreading social mobility to traditionally disadvantaged groups.

**MYTH:**

Many enrollees cannot get to work or volunteer activities because they cannot afford a car and there is no available public transportation.

**FACT:**

**Michigan spends more than \$50 million per year on work supports like public transportation to limit this problem.** In the more remote areas, Michigan's TANF cash welfare program subsidizes transportation for vulnerable and isolated low-income individuals that may bridge the gap and get enrollees where they need to go.

**MYTH:**

Stronger work requirements will require the state to increase spending on training programs and administration.

**FACT:**

**Some states have actually reduced state spending on education and training programs after implementing work requirements.** In states that have restored work requirements, more than 75 percent of enrollees choose to cycle off the program.

In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, states without work requirements have per-person administrative costs between 30 percent and 50 percent higher than states with statewide requirements. Kansas's administrative costs have declined by nearly 12 percent since the state implemented work requirements in 2013, while these costs grew by nearly 13 percent nationally during that time period.

**MYTH:**

Work requirements will just push welfare enrollees into low-skill, minimum wage jobs.

**FACT:**

Every job has dignity and value in promoting self-sufficiency and building communities, but adults who leave welfare after work requirements actually find work in hundreds of different industries. **Research shows that many individuals who found immediate work at temp agencies or in lower-wage industries were able to successfully transition into higher-paying, longer-term employment within just a few months.**