



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2017 Wisconsin Act 264
[January 2018 Special Session
Assembly Bill 2]

**FSET Participation for Able-
Bodied Adults**

BACKGROUND

Federal law requires each state to operate an employment and training program for food stamp recipients. Participation in Wisconsin's FoodShare Employment and Training Program (FSET) is currently voluntary.

Currently, the number of hours of FSET participation can vary for FoodShare recipients who choose to participate in the program. Able-bodied adults without dependents are generally required to complete 80 hours of work per month in order to remain eligible for more than three countable months of FoodShare benefits during any three-year period. These individuals can choose to participate in FSET to satisfy all or a portion of their 80 hours. Other FoodShare recipients may also choose to participate in FSET and, if they choose to participate, must complete at least 12 hours of FSET activities per month.¹

The term "able-bodied adult" is defined to mean an individual between the ages of 18 and 50 years old who is physically and mentally fit for employment, and is not pregnant or exempt from federal laws that set forth general work requirements for the food stamp program. An able-bodied adult who is not a parent of, or residing in a household with, a household member under 18 years old is considered an "able-bodied adult without dependents." [s. 49.79 (1) (am) and (ap), Stats.]

¹ FSET Handbook, DHS, Release 17-02, ss. 6.3.1 through 6.3.2.3 (Oct. 30, 2017).

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov>.

2017 WISCONSIN ACT 264

2017 Wisconsin Act 264 makes a number of changes related to FSET participation for able-bodied adults.

First, the Act requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to require, to the extent allowed by the federal government, that all able-bodied adults who receive FoodShare benefits participate in FSET beginning on October 1, 2019, except as follows. DHS may not require FSET participation for FoodShare recipients who are: (1) the caretaker of a child under the age of six; (2) enrolled at least half time in a school, training program, or institution of higher education; or (3) the caretaker of a dependent who is disabled. In addition, FoodShare recipients who are otherwise employed, as determined by DHS, may be exempt from FSET participation.

Second, the Act requests that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee direct the Legislative Audit Bureau to perform a financial and performance evaluation audit of FSET in 2019.

Third, DHS is required under the Act to request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture share at least some of any savings that may result from the reforms to FoodShare and FSET, for the purpose of facilitating administration of assisting able-bodied adults in finding employment.

Finally, prior to the Act, participation in any component of FSET was considered an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares eligibility. The Act specifies that only the job search and work experience components of FSET are considered approved activities for Wisconsin Shares eligibility. This change reinstates the statutory language that existed prior to the 2017-19 Biennial Budget Act (2017 Wisconsin Act 59).

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