

# Unemployed Adults Without Children CalFresh Forum

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Center on Budget and Policy Priorities



# Agenda

- The Rule
- Who is Affected
- State Challenges



## Overview: The Rule

- Benefits are limited to 3 full months per 3 year period to an individual.
- Unless the individual:
  - works an average of 20 hours a week, or 80 hours a month
  - is in a qualifying job slot 80 hours a month or doing workfare, or
  - meets one of the limited exemptions, or
  - lives in a waived area.



All 18 to 49 year olds, without children

... who live in un-waived areas

... who do not meet an exemption

... who aren't working in qualified activity

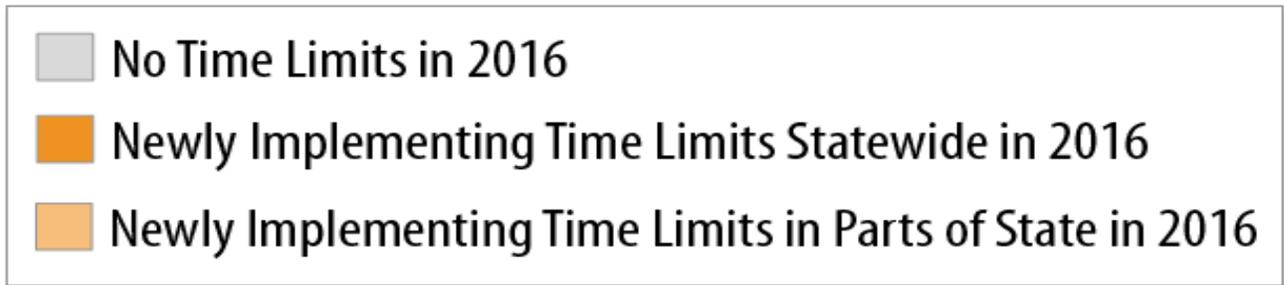
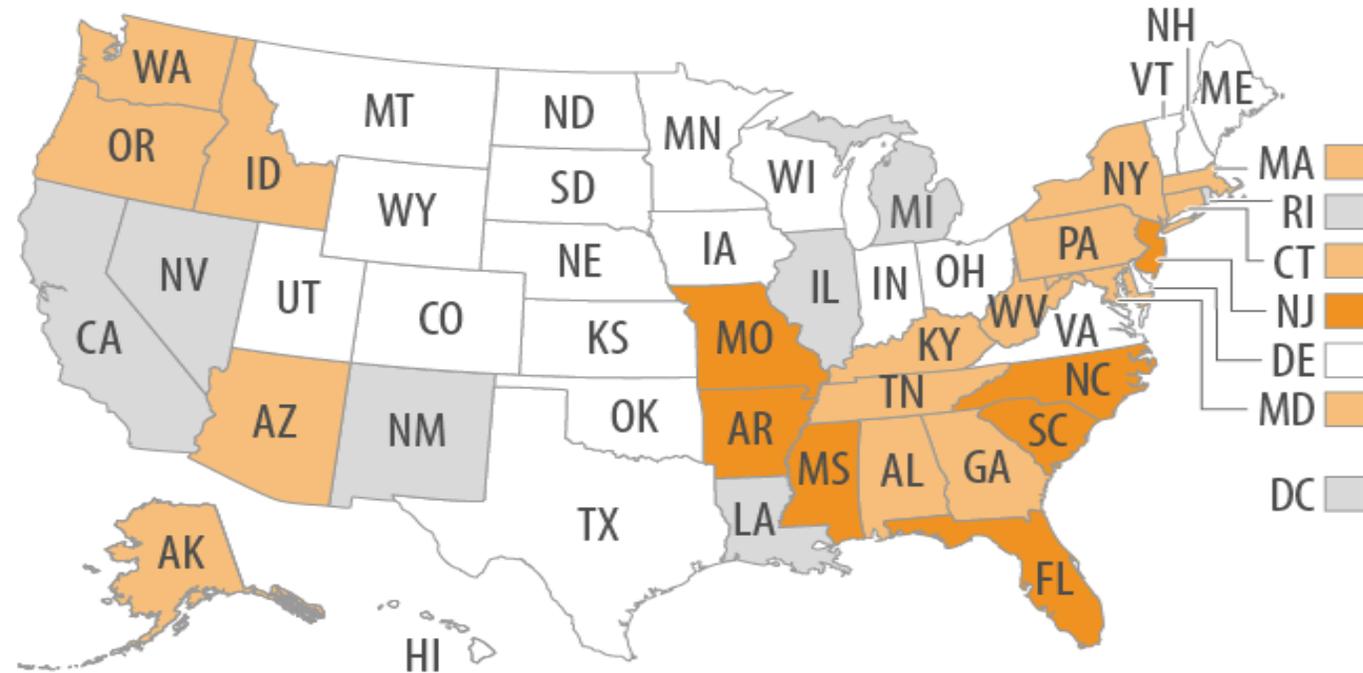
Area waiver

Assess for exemption

Provide qualifying activity



# States Newly Implementing ABAWD Time Limits in 2016



# The Ohio Association of Food Banks assessed close to 5,000 unemployed childless adults on SNAP. What did they learn?



**1 in 3** reported working in the last year.

**1 in 5** are at-risk young adults, under 25, including youth aging out of foster care and exiting juvenile justice systems.



## What did they learn?

**1 in 3** report having a physical or mental disability that limits their ability to perform daily activities.

**1 in 4** is under a doctor's care for conditions like depression, anxiety, PTSD, schizophrenia, diabetes, heart disease, and some report injuries.



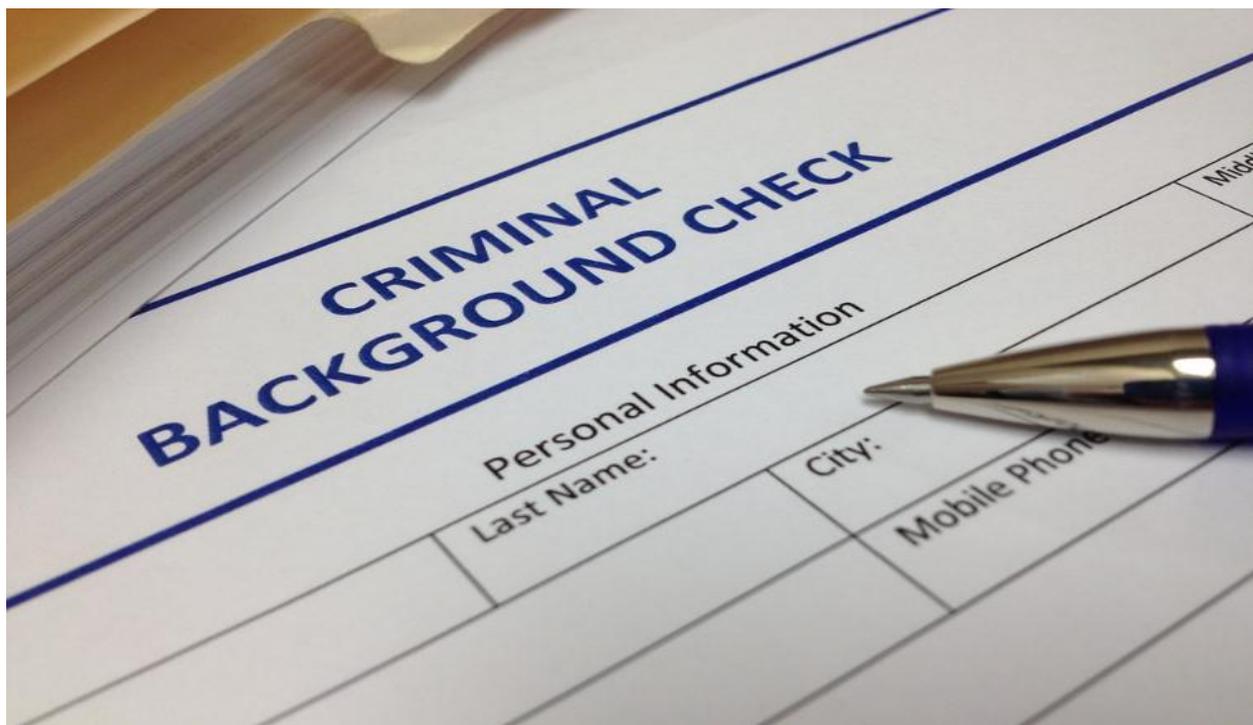
## What did they learn?



30 percent have no high school diploma or GED. Many are marginally and functionally illiterate.



## What did they learn?



More than **1 in 3** reported having a felony conviction. Close to **13%** were on probation or parole.

About **15%** reported having a DUI or OVI violation, limiting their ability to secure employment.



## What else do we know?

- **Childless unemployed adults are very poor.** Average income is 22 percent of poverty.
- **Only 37 percent** have an email address.
- **1 in 4** report having children not in their custody, and **1 in 5** owe child support.
- **Only 4 in 10** have a valid driver's license.
- Despite 1 in 3 working recently, **nearly 80 percent** have never received unemployment compensation.



## Common State Challenges

- Assessing the ABAWD status of individual
- Capturing all work and qualifying training
- Tracking months
- Correct and timely notices
- Providing qualifying activities
- Avoiding churn and regaining eligibility
- Training and support



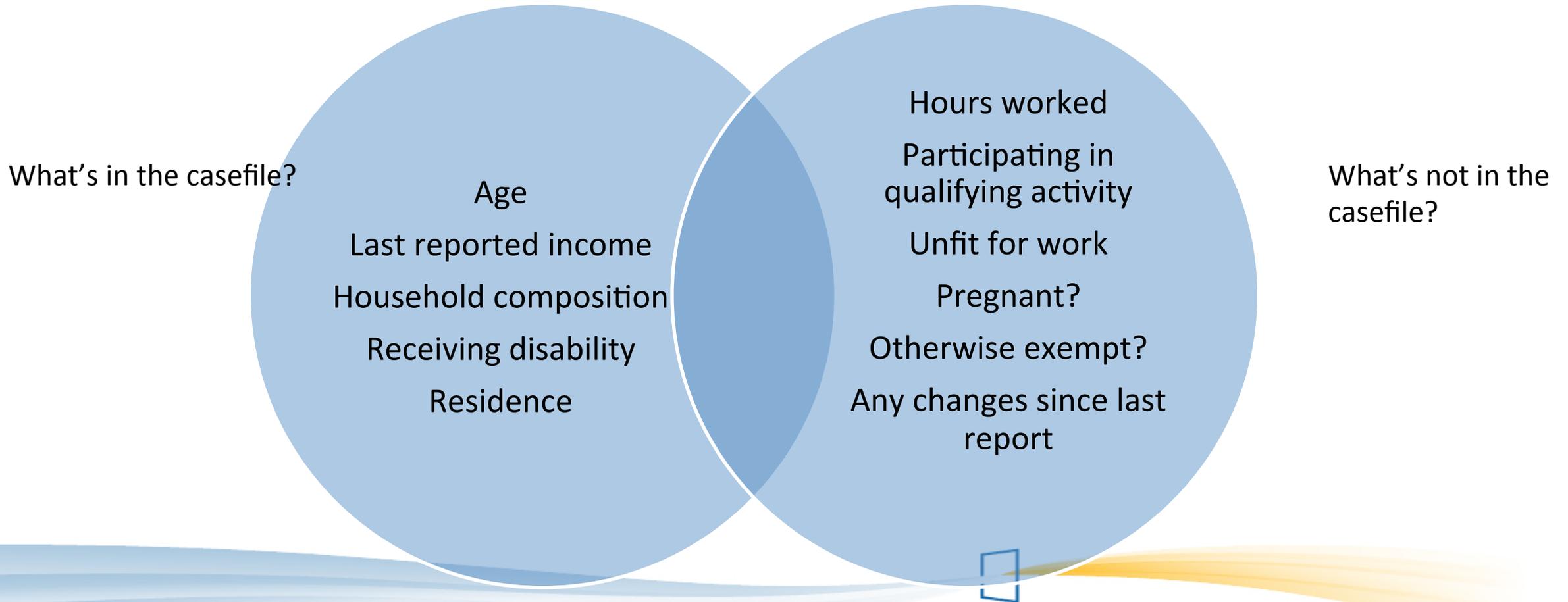
## Assessing Individuals for Exemptions

- Under 18 or 50 years old or older,
- Residing in household with a member under 18,
- Pregnant,
- Physically or mentally “unfit for work”, or
- Already exempt from SNAP work requirements
  - Responsible for the care of a child under 6 or an incapacitated person,
  - Receiving (or applied for) unemployment compensation,
  - Participating in a drug or alcohol rehab program, or
  - Is a student enrolled at least half time.



# Identifying Current ABAWDs

Assume simplified reporting with 12 month cert periods



# Challenges with Assessments

- Adequately screening
  - Child in household turning 18
  - Changes in work hours
  - High school students
- Clear Policy
  - Unfit for work
  - Chronically homeless
  - Drug or alcohol treatment
- Other?



# Physically or Mentally Unfit for Work

- Receives any kind of disability benefits;
- Is obviously unfit as determined by the state agency
  - This includes chronically homeless individuals;
- If not obvious, provides a statement from a:  
Physician or physician's assistant, Psychologist, Nurse or nurse practitioner, Social worker, Representative of a physician's office, or Any other medical personnel the state determines appropriate
- When unfitness for work is obvious to the eligibility worker, no statement or verification from medical personnel is needed. FNS Guidance, Nov. 2015.



# Verifying Medically Unfit for Work

Please answer one or more of the following questions in the box below. Please sign and date this form including your title or position in your agency\*.

1. Is this individual pregnant? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    If yes, due date? ____ / ____ / ____
2. Is this individual a participating in drug/alcohol treatment or counseling program; mental health counseling program; or a vocational rehabilitation program? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    If yes, specify program: _____ Is this program ongoing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    If no, date program will end: ____ / ____ / ____
3. Does this patient have a mental and/or physical illness or disability which reduces his or her ability to financially support him or herself? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    If yes, specify disability: _____ Is this condition ongoing? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No    If no, date it is expected to end: ____ / ____ / ____

I certify that the information provided above is true and accurate.



# Exemption for Chronically Homeless

For example, a chronically homeless individual who is living on the street may be considered unfit for employment as determined by the State. FNS Guidance, November, 2015.

State examples:

- An individual who lacks a permanent residence,
- An individual who self-certifies they do not have a stable night time residence,
- Form for shelter staff,
- Anyone claiming homeless shelter deduction,
- Food and Nutrition Act definition of homeless.



## Capturing all work activities

- All work hours count toward the 80 hours, not just earned income.
  - Voluntary and in-kind work must be counted.
- Verified under standards set by state agency.
- Individuals may have good cause for failure to work.



## Providing Qualifying Activities: E&T

- Job search doesn't count. Except when:
  - Less than half of total SNAP E&T hours,
  - Through WIOA or Trade Act program, or
  - Initial month of a workfare program for new applicants
- Voluntary E&T
- Workfare, including self-initiated workfare
- Good cause



# Community Service



Mail or fax this form to your local County Assistance Office.

## Community Service | Volunteer Verification Form

**INSTRUCTIONS: Please mail or FAX the completed form within 10 days of receipt to the office listed above.**

See reverse for detailed directions.

Questions? Call the Statewide Customer Service Center 1-877-395-8930

### SECTION I. Volunteer | Agency Information

Name of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 SSN \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address of Agency \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION II. Community Service Activity Information

Start Date of Service	MM-DD-YYYY	Expected End Date of Service*	MM-DD-YYYY	Transportation Provided by Agency at No Cost?	YES	NO
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Monthly Schedule of Service								
	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	Estimated Weekly Hours
Week 1								
Week 2								
Week 3								
Week 4								
<b>Total Monthly Estimated Hours</b>								

#### Monthly Schedule Instructions

(Circle one)

1. Mark an 'X' on the expected days of service.
2. Enter the total weekly hours in the Estimated Weekly Hours column.
3. Total the monthly estimated hours.

Description of Tasks Performed:

### SECTION III. Agency Certification

#### COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCY CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that our organization is a nonprofit with 501(C) (3) or 501(C) (4) status and the above named volunteer is registered with our agency to complete community service for the hours and period as indicated above. I understand that this community service verification form is used to verify up to six months of community service participation. I also understand that our agency must report any changes in participation to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services within 10 days from the date the change occurred.



# Clear and Timely Informational Notices

## Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents

### WORK REQUIREMENTS

#### What YOU Need to Know



The federal work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) go into effect on January 1, 2016 in Massachusetts. Able-bodied individuals may only receive SNAP benefits for up to three months within 36 months without meeting the work requirements.

**ABAWDs are able-bodied individuals between the ages of 18 and 50 who have no dependents living with them.**

**An individual is exempt from meeting the work requirement if he or she:**

- Works 30 or more hours per week or is earning more than \$217.50 per week, averaged monthly
- Is medically certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment. (*Note: The ABAWD Work Program Requirement Medical Report must be completed by a competent medical authority.*)
- Is an unemployment applicant or recipient
- Participates in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehab program
- Is a student enrolled at least 1/2 time in a recognized school or training program
- Cares for an incapacitated person
- Is pregnant
- Lives in a waived area. For a list of waived areas visit [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta)
- Lives with any minor in the home & in the SNAP household (does not have to be your own child)





## Clear and Timely Informational Notices

- Simple language to explain the rule,
- Identify if rule applies to recipient,
- List all exemptions,
- Tell individuals what they have to do,
- Explain consequences of failing to comply,
- Provide contact information.



**Now Let's Make It Complicated!**



# Individual Exemptions

- Exemptions equal to 15 percent of the State's ABAWD caseload subject to the time limit.
- California has over 880,000 in the bank.
- One exemption equals one individual for one month.
- Can be used to:
  - Exempt individuals in hard-hit or hard-to-serve areas
  - Reward work effort
  - Address barriers to work
  - Apply to incorrectly tracked prior months.
- Must track and correctly code.



## Regaining Eligibility

- ABAWDs who exhaust their 3 countable months can regain eligibility by becoming exempt or fulfilling the work requirement over any 30 day period.
- ABAWDs who regain eligibility and then no longer comply with the work/training requirement are eligible for an additional 3 consecutive countable months.



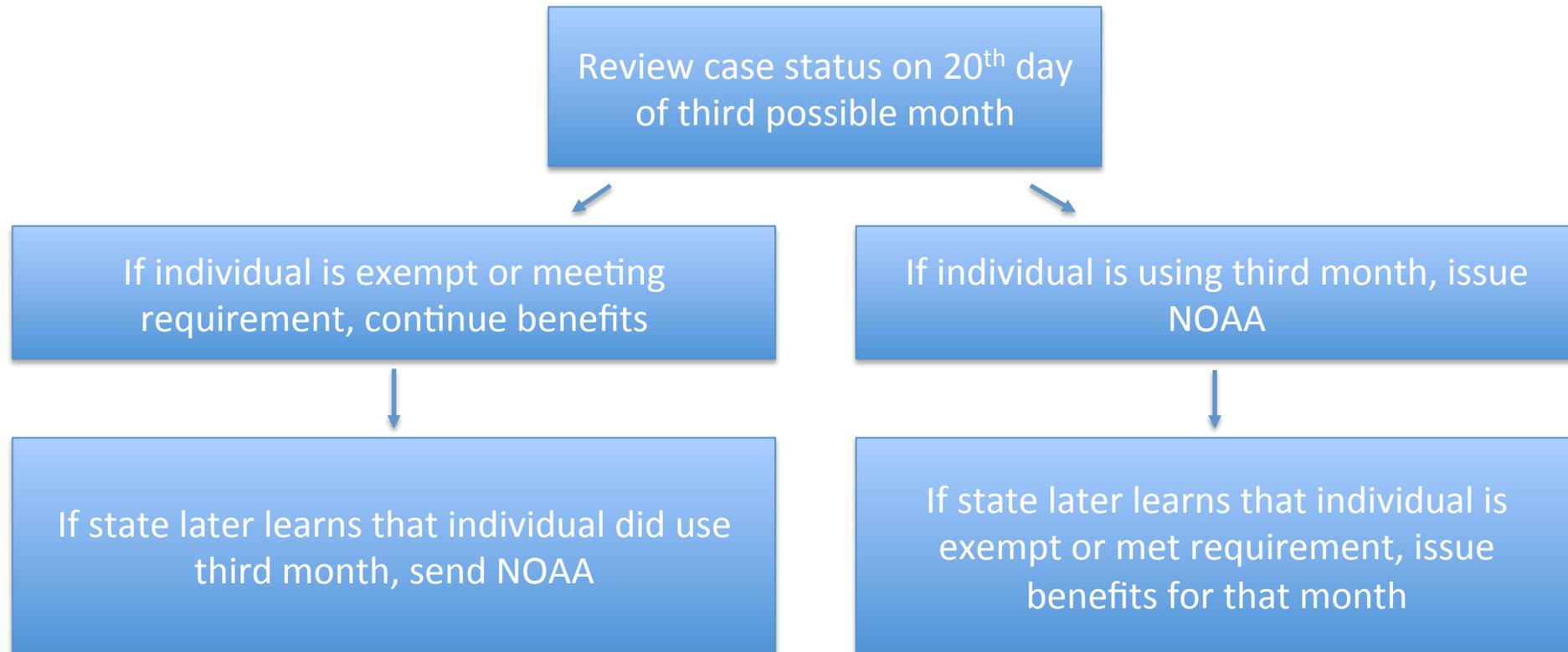
## Churn and Regaining Eligibility

- Many individuals reapply after termination for using 3 countable months.
- Re-eligible by:
  - Work, participate in E&T or combine the two for 80 hours in any 30 day period
  - At state option, individual verifies he or she will meet the 80 hours within 30 days of reapplying
  - Becoming exempt.
- Using banked months for those who demonstrate progress in meeting work requirements.



# Timely Terminations

Reconciling notice requirements with the three month limit is a challenge for states.



## Questions or Comments?

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