



YOUTH
POWER!

Easy Read Edition

Real Work For Real Pay:

A Self-Advocate's Guide to Employment Policy

**Part 6: What to Know About
Work Requirements**

6. What to Know About Work Requirements

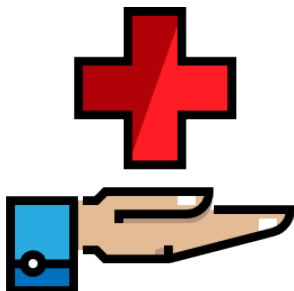
What are work requirements?



Some people who do not make a lot of money get help from the government. A lot of these people are people with disabilities or older people.



The government has programs to help these people get what they need.



Medicaid is one of the government programs. Medicaid helps people get health care.



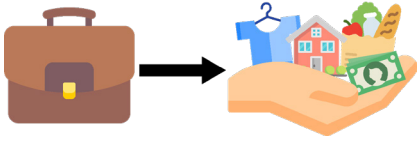
The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** is another program. SNAP is also known as “food stamps.” SNAP helps people have money to buy food they need to live.



People in the government sometimes call programs like these “**benefits**”.



Some people in government want to change how people get benefits. They want to add in “**work requirements**” for people who get benefits.



Work requirements mean that you have to have a job to get benefits. If you do not work, you will not get benefits.



Work requirements would affect people who already get benefits now. If they do not work, they will lose their benefits.

Why do some people want work requirements?



There are a few reasons some people think that work requirements are a good idea.



A lot of people who support work requirements have never used benefits. So, they have wrong ideas about people who use benefits.



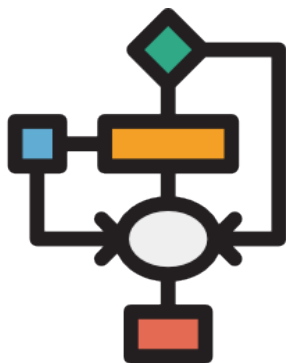
Some people think that benefits make people not want to work. They say that since people can get benefits for food, housing, and health care, people don't have a reason to work.



This is not true. We will talk more about that later.



There is another reason people want work requirements. They think work requirements would save money for the government. The government would not pay for benefits for people who do not work.



Really, it is more complicated than that.



If there was a work requirement for Medicaid, the government would have to look at every person who uses Medicaid, and find out if they have a job or not.



The government would have to spend a lot of money to pay people to find out.



They might lose more money than they save.⁵

⁵ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/states-complex-medic-aid-waivers-will-create-costly-bureaucracy-and-harm-eligible>

Why are work requirements a bad idea?



Work requirements sound like a good idea to some people. But they do not actually help people get jobs.

Do people use benefits programs as an “excuse” not to work?



No.



Most people on benefits are already working.



They still need the benefits because their jobs do not pay enough.



Most people want to have a job and make money if they can.



People need money to pay for things like food, rent, and clothes.



It is very hard to pay for everything you need with just benefits. So most people do not want to stay on benefits if they can help it.

Why doesn't everybody work to get off benefits?

Some people who get benefits are not able to work. This includes:



- People with disabilities



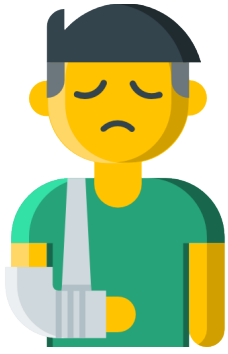
- People who stay home to take care of their families



- People in school



- People who are retired

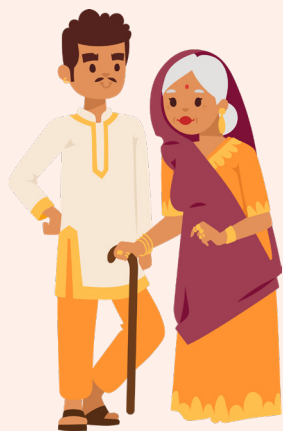


These groups of people have good reasons not to work. Trying to make these groups work would hurt them, not help them.

Here are some examples of people who would be hurt if they lost their benefits by not working:



- Ezra has a mental health disability. Ezra's disability makes it hard for him to work full-time right now. Medicaid helps Ezra pay for his medicine and therapist. Work requirements would make Ezra lose his Medicaid. Ezra would lose his Medicaid because he does not have a job. Without Medicaid, Ezra might not be able to pay for his medicine.



- Ravi takes care of his mom. Ravi's mom has Alzheimer's and needs a lot of help. Ravi had to stop working so he could take care of his mom.



- Monica is going to college. She needs Medicaid to pay for her wheelchair. If Monica had to work, she couldn't finish college.

What is stopping people from getting jobs?



Some people on benefits cannot find jobs, even though they want to.

Here are some reasons it may be hard for someone to get a job:



- They may not have job experience.



- They might have been in prison.



- They may live in a place where there are not many jobs.



- A company might not want to hire someone because of who they are. For example, a company might not want to hire someone because of their disability.

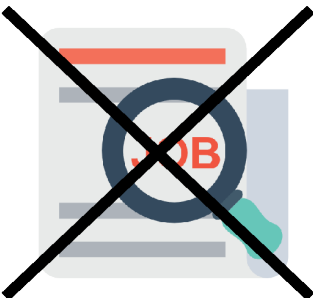
Will work requirements help people get jobs?



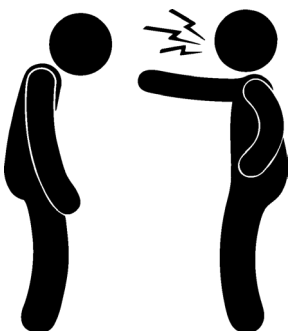
People in government who want work requirements are not making plans to help people get jobs.



They are not setting aside any new government money to help people get jobs.



Setting up work requirements doesn't help people find and keep jobs.

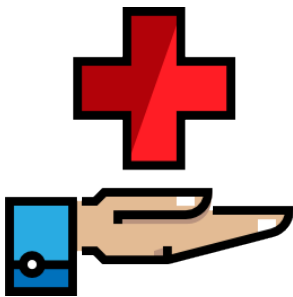


Work requirements just punish people for not having jobs.

Do benefits help people get jobs?



Benefits help many people get ready to look for a job.



For example, Medicaid can help someone get a job.



If someone is sick, they won't be able to keep a job.



Getting health care through Medicaid can help them get well again.



Then they can start to look for jobs.



Taking away someone's health care because they don't have a job does not help. It makes it even harder for them to get a job.

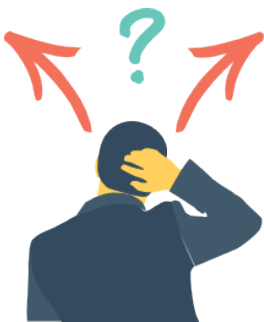
Will work requirements hurt people with disabilities?



People in government who want work requirements say things that sound good. But, the things they say are not always true.



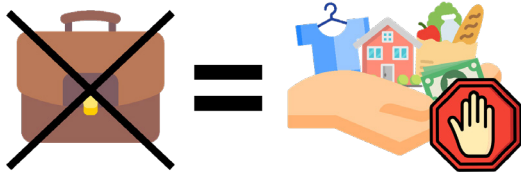
They say that work requirements will not hurt people with disabilities.



But, the government might not know a person has a disability.



There are different reasons disabled people might get benefits. Some disabled people get benefits for reasons besides their disability.



The government doesn't know that these people have a disability. So, they will be forced to work anyway, or they will lose their benefits.



There isn't a good way for the government to know who has a disability.



First, a person has to get a doctor to say they have a disability. Then that person has to let the government know about their disability.



This can take a lot of time and money.



Going to the doctor can be expensive.
You might have to go to the doctor many times.

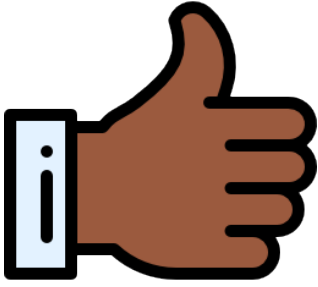


The doctor might say you do not have a disability.



Some disabled people do not have enough time or money to do that. So, the government does not know they are disabled. They could lose their benefits for not working.

Conclusion



Helping people find and keep jobs is a good goal.



Work requirements do not help people find and keep jobs.



There are lots of ways people can get real work for real pay.



But people need to have things like food, health care, and a place to live. People need to have these things before they can start looking for a job.



Government benefits help people get the things they need.



We cannot help people by taking away the things they need. This will not help anyone get a job.



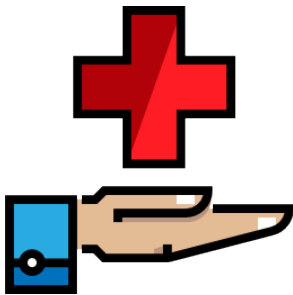
Work requirements do not work.

Glossary



benefits

Some people who do not make a lot of money get help from the government. Disabled people and older people can also get help from the government. The government has programs to help these people get what they need. These programs are “benefits.”



Medicaid

A health care program in the United States. The U.S. government pays for Medicaid.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



SNAP is a federal nutrition program. It is sometimes known as “food stamps.” SNAP helps low-income people be able to buy food.

work requirements



Work requirements are rules saying that you have to have a job to get benefits. If a state decides to use work requirements, many people in that state will not be able to get benefits.