



MYTHS vs. REALITY: Work Requirements

MYTH

Work requirements will increase administrative costs.

REALITY

There is no credible evidence that work requirements increase administrative costs.

In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, states without work requirements have administrative costs between 30 percent and 50 percent higher per-person than states with statewide requirements. Kansas' 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. Likewise, Maine's administrative costs have declined by more than 2 percent since the state implemented work requirements in 2014, while nationally these costs have grown by nearly 7 percent.

MYTH

Will implementing work requirements increase payment error rates?

REALITY

There is no credible evidence that implementing work requirements will increase payment error rates.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, states with statewide work requirements had slightly lower payment error rates than states with no work requirements. When Kansas implemented work requirements, the state's payment error rate dropped from nearly 4 percent to less than 1 percent – while the national average rose from 3 percent to 4 percent. Kansas' error rate was the third lowest in the nation and the single most improved in 2014, earning the state \$628,000 as a payment bonus.

MYTH

Work requirements will create unsustainable demand at food banks.

REALITY

There is no evidence of widespread increases on food banks in states with work requirements.

In fact, in some states, the food banks have benefited from a surge of volunteers helping them as enrollees meet their work requirement by volunteering. It makes sense – adults who cycle off the program, on average, make more money than they lost in benefits, so they have more money of their own to spend on groceries.



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MYTH

Work requirements will lead to malnutrition.

REALITY

Work requirements protect limited resources for the truly needy and are unlikely to negatively impact nutrition for those no longer eligible.

In states that have implemented work requirements, the average able-bodied adult leaving food stamps has earned more than enough income to offset lost food stamps – leaving more money to buy groceries and other products than while on welfare. Additionally, research sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture concluded that food stamps have “little to no impact” on nutritional intake and that there was “little evidence” that receiving food stamps had a positive impact on “overall dietary quality.” More than two decades’ worth of research, reviewed by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, also confirms there is little to no evidence showing that food stamps “alleviates hunger and malnutrition.”

MYTH

Work requirements disproportionately affect women and minorities.

REALITY

Implementing work requirements will not disproportionately affect women or minorities.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, able-bodied adults subject to the work requirements are significantly more likely than other enrollees to be men and are more likely to be white.

MYTH

Able-bodied adults who leave welfare will be stuck in low-skill, minimum wage jobs.

REALITY

Adults who leave welfare after work requirements find work in hundreds of industries.

In states that have implemented work requirements, able-bodied, childless adults found work in more than 750 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.