6.8.1 What are exemptions?

Exemptions typically waive mandatory participation requirements for individdauls who aren't able to actively engage in work, looking for work or preparing for work.. Grant participants an exemption if they:

1. Are the parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of two (see WHFB section [5.1)](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/chapter-5-pathways-employment/51-pregnancy-employment%22%20%5Cl%20%225_1_11),
2. Are a needy caregiver relative and aged 55 or older,
3. Have a severe and chronic medically verified condition (including individuals likely to be approved for SSI or other federal benefits),
4. Must be in the home to care for a child with special needs, or
5. Must be in the home to care for an adult relative with a severe and chronic medical condition.

An exemption from participation may not always be appropriate. Defer participants who have health or family issues that *temporarily* interfere with their ability to work (instead of exempt) from job search and other WorkFirst activities. See [WFHB 6.3, Deferrals](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/chapter-6-resolving-issues/63-participation-while-resolving-issues), for more information.

Documentation to support an exemption may come from a variety of sources based on the participant's situation. Medical documentation **must** be adequate to identify the severity and duration of the disability. Exemptions can't be approved without the appropriate documentation.

6.8.9 Can exempt participants have mandatory participation requirements?

If the participant is exempt due to a severe and chronic disability, they be required to participate in deferral activities per [WAC 388-310-0350 (4). This is limited to activities that support:](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=388-310-0350)

* Pursuit of SSI or another type of federal disability benefit, which may include gathering objective medical evidence as described in [WAC 388-449-0015](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-449-0015)in preparation of the SSI application process; and/or
* Participation in available treatment that is recommended by the participant's medical or mental health provider or chemical dependency professional.

Individuals who are pregnant or have a child under the age of two, who choose to take the Infant, Toddler, or Post-partum exemption may be required to participate in mental health or chemical dependency treatment depending on results of their comprehensive evaluation and subsequent Pregnancy to Employment Assessment. Please refer to [WFHB section 5.1](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/chapter-5-pathways-employment/51-pregnancy-employment%22%20%5Cl%20%225_1_11) for additional guidance.

6.8.10 Can exempt participants voluntarily participate?

Exempt individuals may voluntarily participate. WorkFirst will provide services or refer voluntarily participating individuals to service providers to assistance and support.

For those who choose to voluntarily participate, do not remove the eJAS exemption codes so you can ensure that sanction will not be imposed for failure to participate.

6.8.11 eJAS codes

Use the following codes on the eJAS component code screen when an individual is approved for an exemption or long-term deferral:

* **ZA**(approved exemption for an older caretaker relative)
* **ZB**(approved exemption for an individual needed in the home to care for a disabled adult relative)
* **ZC**(approved exemption for an individual needed in the home to care for a child with special needs)
* **ZD**(adult with severe and chronic disabilities)

The codes below may be coupled alongside the ZD exemption component to indicate mandatory participation per WFHB section 6.8.9, or may be used to support voluntary activity engagement per WFHB 6.8.10.

* **XB**(pursuing SSI/L&I/VA or other benefits) Used to indicate cases being assessed for a facilitated SSI application or accepted for SSI Facilitation.
* **XE (**substance abuse treatment**)**
* **XG**(mental health condition and required to access available, helpful treatment)
* **XM**(physical condition and required to access available, helpful treatment)