Grammar Explanation

Using simple past (acted) or present perfect (have acted)

- Use the simple past when you refer to an action that occurred at a specific time in the past; for example, with phrases such as yesterday, last night, or two days ago.
  - Example: Welfare recipients did not have to work for their benefits before 1996.

- Use the present perfect when you refer to an action that occurred at a non-specific time in the past, especially if there is a connection to the present.
  - Example: The living standard of welfare recipients has increased.

- Use the present perfect with actions that started in the past and continue into the present.
  - Example: Welfare recipients have had to work for their benefits since the welfare reform act was signed into law.

Excerpted from: Verb Tenses: Exercise 2