

Food Stamp

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



MARC RACICOT
GOVERNOR

LAURIE EKANGER
DIRECTOR

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-1788
Division's Main FAX: (406) 444-2547
Administrator's FAX: (406) 444-9650

HUMAN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
PO Box 202952
Helena, MT 59620-2952

January 22, 1999

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Consumer Services
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria VA 22302

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is Montana's request for an extension and modification of waiver #970146. This waiver allows Montana to exempt unemployed able-bodied adults without dependents who reside within the geographic boundaries of Montana's Indian Reservations from the provisions of Section 824 of PRWORA. This waiver will affect six Indian reservations with employment-to-population ratios between 25% and 39%.

We have attached 1997 Indian Service Population and Labor Force Estimates for the six eligible reservations. This documentation was provided by the US Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs, Billings office.

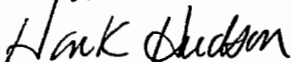
We are not including the Flathead reservation in the request for an extension of waiver #970146 as we have not yet received the 1997 data from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Portland office. When this data is received, we anticipate requesting a modification to add the Flathead reservation.

Because the unemployment data for the Flathead reservation comes from Portland instead of Billings, and represents a different branch of the BIA, we encounter this difference in the timing of receipt of data each year. Would it be possible to separate the waiver request into two components or two waivers, one being based on the BIA data from Billings for the six reservations, and the second being based on BIA data from Portland for the Flathead reservation? Please advise us as to whether this is possible to do. Please advise us also whether it is possible to continue the Flathead reservation exemption until such a time as new data is available.

The waiver will expire March 3, 1999 for the Flathead and Fort Peck Reservations and will expire February 28, 1999 for the remaining five reservations: Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Rocky Boy.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Carol Carpenter of my staff at (406) 444-9291.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hank Hudson".

Hank Hudson, Administrator
Human and Community Services Division

c: Carol W. Carpenter, Food Stamp Program Officer
Allan Nickels, Regional Director, USDA Food Stamp Program, Mountain Plains Region,
1244 Speer BLVD., Denver, CO 80204-3581

State Agency submitting the request for waiver #970146 extension:

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Contact Name: Carol Carpenter, Food Stamp Program Specialist
Address: Department of Public Health and Human Services
Human and Community Services Division
P.O. Box 202952
Helena, MT 59602-2952

Phone number: (406) 444-9291

Areas covered by the request:

Blackfeet Indian Reservation	
Includes portions of:	Glacier County * # Pondera County
Rocky Boy Indian Reservation	
Includes portions of:	Choteau County Hill County
Fort Belknap Indian Reservation	
Includes portions of:	Blaine County * # Phillips County #
Fort Peck Indian Reservation	
Includes portions of:	Daniels County Sheridan County Valley County Roosevelt County * #
Crow Indian Reservation	
Includes portions of:	Yellowstone County Big Horn County #
Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation	
Includes portions of:	Big Horn County # Rosebud County #

* Indicates a county for which the unemployment rate is higher than 10%. A request for an extension of self-certification waiver # 970089 has been filed with FNS.

Indicates a county which meets the definition of a Labor Surplus Area. A request for an extension/modification of waiver # 970090 has been filed with FNS.

While Montana has applied for waivers for counties meeting the 10% unemployment rate criteria as well as the labor surplus criteria, those exemptions will not be inclusive of the entire reservation boundaries. It creates a situation where neighboring participants on the reservation fall under different participation requirements, one being exempt and the other not.

Category under which waiver is being requested:

This request is based on the extremely high jobless rate that exists on Montana's Indian reservations. This jobless rate is not reflected in the BLS statistics for unemployment or for the Labor Surplus Areas. In the counties which include a portion of a reservation, the high jobless rate on the reservation combined with the concentration of population within that geographic area translates into higher food stamp caseloads.

The reservation population is extremely vulnerable to the detrimental effects of poverty. This population, while highly mobile within the geographic confines of the reservation, is less likely than other populations to leave a geographic area for economic reasons. The cultural, religious and familial ties are so strong that leaving the reservation is often too difficult to consider.

This is a population which, generally speaking, has a poorer educational background than the general population. The majority of the area within the confines of Montana's reservations is rural with very limited opportunity for advanced education, skills training, or work experience. Jobs and training are limited to farm or ranch work and lower level skilled jobs.

Duration of waiver:

One year

Basis for the request:

The State of Montana is requesting a waiver of the time limit for receipt of Food Stamp benefits by unemployed able-bodied adults without dependents who live within the geographic boundaries of six of seven of Montana's Indian reservations. This waiver request is based on information gathered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior which reflects the unemployment rate of the six Montana reservations served by the Billings area office ranging from 61% to 75%. The seventh reservation, Flathead is served by the Portland Area BIA office which has not yet completed their data collection and is not included in this waiver request.

Given this information it is difficult to believe that those individuals who live on a reservation and participate in the Food Stamp Program have many opportunities available to them to work or participate in a work activity for the required 80 hours in a 30 day period. This population has compelling need for a continued exemption from these provisions.

Local Estimates of Resident Indian Population and Labor Force Status
Male/Female Indians Living on and Adjacent to Reservations
Summary by Reservation

Area Reports, 1 of 3, on (circle one):			SERVICE POPULATION: ON OR NEAR RESERVATION AND ALASKA													
TOTALS:		State/s	Tribal Enrollment (A)	Total Indian Resident Service Population (B)	Age Distribution			Labor Force				Total Employed			Number Employed, but Below Pov. Guidelines (C7)	
Area, Agency and Tribe Names					Under 16 (C1)	16-64 (C2)	65 & Over (C3)	Not Available for Work (C4)	Available for Work or Total Workforce	Number Employed	Number Not Employed	Unemployed as % of Labor Force	Public (C5)	Private (C6)		Total
BILLINGS AREA OFFICE																
Blackfeet Agency																
Blackfeet Tribe, Montana		MT	14837	9125	3000	5655	470	301	5824	1751	4073	70%	1286	465	1751	388
Fort Belknap Agency				0					0	0	0	#DIV/0!			0	
Fort Belknap Indian Community, MT		MT	5188	3979	1727	1979	273	229	2023	597	1426	70%	520	77	597	250
Crow Agency				0					0	0	0	#DIV/0!			0	
Crow Tribe of Montana		MT	9824	6947	2745	3978	224	108	4094	1611	2483	61%	1485	126	1611	1306
Fort Peck Agency				0					0	0	0	#DIV/0!			0	
Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, MT		MT	10760	6812	2687	3845	280	812	3313	1241	2072	63%	889	352	1241	496
Northern Cheyenne Agency									0	0	0	#DIV/0!			0	
Northern Cheyenne Tribe, MT		MT	7374	4199	1433	2597	169	265	2501	883	1618	65%	723	160	883	192
Rocky Boy's Agency				0					0	0	0	#DIV/0!			0	
Chippewa-Cree Indians of the Rocky Boy's Reservation, Montana		MT	4875	3292	1303	1815	174	532	1457	350	1097	75%	310	50	360	110
Wind River Agency				0					0	0	0	#DIV/0!			0	
Arapahoe Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming		WY	6281	5155	2319	2657	179	14	2822	915	1907	68%	814	101	915	373
Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming		WY	3169	2302	958	1128	216	17	1327	414	913	69%	355	59	414	157
TOTALS:			62308	41811	18172	23654	1985	2278	23361	7772	15589	67%	6882	1390	7772	3272

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages > 1

To <u>Carol Carpenter</u>	From <u>Jo Ann Birdshead</u>
Dept./Agency <u>State of Montana</u>	BIA, Social Services
Fax # <u>406-444-2547</u>	Phone # <u>406-247-7988</u>
	Fax # <u>406-247-7566</u>

NSN 7540-01-317-7368

5099-101

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION