

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

FOOD STAMP POLICY/CLAIMS UNIT
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March 3, 2000

Dennis Stewart, Regional Director
Food Stamp Program
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service
550 Kearny Street, Room 400
San Francisco, CA 94108-2518

Dear Mr. Stewart:

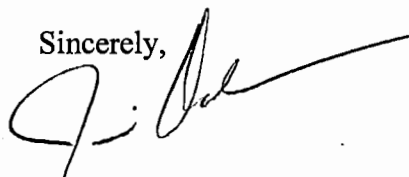
The State of Alaska will again exempt certain census areas from the ABAWD work requirement. The state elects to self-certify a waiver of Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act based on unemployment rates over 10 percent. The data used is from our official 1999 unemployment rates provided by the Alaska Department of Labor.

Our waiver exempts qualifying areas on a seasonal basis only. This approach preserves our message of the importance of recipients finding and keeping employment. It also provides continued food assistance in areas where there are not always jobs available for everyone who wants to work. The seasonal exemptions align with the periods of high unemployment and greatest need for food stamps. The enclosures provide details of our waiver plans.

For 13 census areas we request USDA approval of waivers due to insufficient number of jobs. The justification for seasonal ABAWD work requirement waivers for these areas, all of which have a current U.S. Department of Labor, Labor Surplus Area designation, are enclosed as a separate request.

Since our current waivers expire on March 31, 2000, your prompt forwarding of the request on to your National Office for approval is appreciated. Thank you for your assistance. Please contact me if you have any questions relating to our ABAWD waivers.

Sincerely,



Jim Dalman
Program Officer

Enclosures

RECEIVED
MAY 13 1999
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
JAN 10 1999

**ALASKA FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
STATE-CERTIFIED WAIVER
OF
PRWORA SECTION 824**

Rule Waived: Section 824 - Personal Responsibility and
Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

State: State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services,
Division of Public Assistance

Region: Food and Nutrition Service, Western Regional

Requirement:

The State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services proposes renewal of a partial waiver of the work requirement set out in section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This section creates time-limited food stamp eligibility for able-bodied adults without children unless they work. It also provides that a state may ask the Secretary for a waiver to exempt individuals residing in certain areas from this work requirement if the unemployment rate is over 10 percent or there are insufficient jobs available.

To continue getting food stamps, able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) age 18 through 49, must comply with the Food Stamp Program work requirements. Unless otherwise exempt, these individuals must work at least 20 hours per week, averaged monthly, or participate in an approved work program to get food stamps. If the requirements are not met, they can get food stamps for only 3 months in 36 months. Additional months of eligibility can be regained under certain conditions.

Category Under Which The Waiver Is Being Submitted:

Self-Certification based on unemployment rate over 10 percent.

Duration Of The Waiver:

One Year. April 1, 2000 through March 31, 2001.

Proposed Alternative Procedures:

Based on high unemployment rates, Alaska proposes to waive the PRWORA Section 824 work requirements in certain Alaska census areas. The Alaska Department of Labor has provided Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) for calendar year 1998 that are used as the basis for this request. The waiver would exempt ABAWDs residing in specified census areas from the

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)
WORK REQUIREMENT WAIVER SUMMARY

CENSUS AREA	POPULATION	WORK REQUIREMENT EXEMPT PERIOD	UNEMPLOY. RATE DURING EXEMPT PERIOD	LABOR SURPLUS AREA?	1999 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Aleutian East	2,253	None		NO	3.4%
Aleutian West	3,879	None		NO	5.6%
Anchorage	254,982	None		NO	4.3%
Bethel**	15,967	Oct-June	8.6%	YES	8.6%
Bristol Bay**	1,356	Nov-April	10.3%	YES	7.3%
Denali**	1,970	Oct-March	10.7%	YES	7.6%
Dillingham**	4,534	Nov-June	8.2%	YES	7.4%
Fairbanks NSB**	84,217	Jan-February	7.9%	YES	5.7%
SE Fairbanks*	5,713	Oct-May	12.8%	YES	10.0%
Haines*	2,225	Nov-May	14.5%	YES	10.9%
Juneau	30,191	None		NO	4.8%
Kenai*	48,008	Oct-May	12.0%	YES	10.6%
Ketchikan**	13,443	Jan-March	10.9%	YES	7.0%
Kodiak Island**	14,520	Nov-Dec	11.5%	YES	6.6%
Lake Peninsula**	1,699	Dec-June	8.9%	YES	7.1%
Matanuska/ Susitna**	56,258	Jan-April	9.4%	YES	7.6%
Nome*	9,016	Oct-June	10.9%	YES	10.8%
North Slope	7,152	None		NO	7.3%
NW Arctic*	6,758	Oct-June	12.8%	YES	12.9%
Prince of Wales*	7,037	Nov-June	14.6%	YES	12.1%
Sitka	8,338	None		NO	4.9%
Skagway/**					
Hoonah/Angoon	3,834	Dec-Mar	10.3%	YES	6.6%
Valdez/Cordova**	10,279	Oct-April	10.3%	YES	8.4%
Wade Hampton*	6,812	Oct-June	15.0%	YES	14.6%
Wrangell/ Petersburg**	6,818	Dec-April	12.1%	YES	8.4%
Yakutat**	799	Dec-June	9.3%	YES	7.7%
Yukon/Koyukuk*	5,952	Oct-June	14.4%	YES	13.5%
STATE TOTAL	614,010				6.00%
* State-certified waiver areas ** Request for USDA waiver					
00cysum.xls					

1999 UNEMPLOYMENT BY ALASKA CENSUS DISTRICT													1999
AREA	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	AVERAGE
ALASKA	7.4	8.1	7.2	6.0	6.4	6.0	5.1	4.6	4.5	5.4	5.8	5.9	6.0
ANCH	4.8	5.3	4.8	4.2	4.5	4.4	3.9	3.6	3.5	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.3
BETHEL	8.0	8.3	7.7	8.0	10.1	11.1	8.1	8.8	8.0	8.2	7.8	8.5	8.6
BRISTOL	10.8	11.6	11.0	8.5	5.5	4.5	2.1	2.8	3.4	7.4	9.8	10.0	7.3
DENALI	11.3	11.3	11.0	7.7	6.3	2.9	3.2	2.5	4.4	9.3	10.7	10.6	7.6
DILLHAM	7.7	7.1	7.2	8.1	9.3	9.3	4.7	6.4	5.5	7	7.8	8.8	7.4
E.ALEUT	6.4	1.8	1.7	2.3	4.9	2.4	2.8	1.3	1.5	4.3	4.5	7.2	3.4
FBX NSB	7.6	8.2	6.9	5.6	5.8	5.6	4.6	4.2	4.0	5.1	5.2	5.5	5.7
HAINES	16.3	18.6	17.6	14.5	10.8	7.9	4.9	4.2	3.0	8.8	11.4	12.3	10.9
JUNEAU	6.2	6.6	6.0	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.8
KENAI	13.2	15.4	13.4	11.2	10.1	9.1	7.6	7.1	7.8	10.1	11.1	11.4	10.6
KETCH	10.8	11.6	10.2	7.5	6.4	5.9	4.9	4.0	4.4	5.8	6.4	6.7	7.0
KODIAK	6.2	5.6	5.1	5.5	13.3	4.8	3.9	3.3	3.5	4.6	12.0	10.9	6.6
LAKE&PN	8.3	10.0	9.3	8.1	8.1	8.7	5.7	6.7	3.1	3.8	4.0	9.5	7.1
MAT SU	9.4	10.8	9.5	7.9	8.0	7.8	6.8	6.0	5.6	6.3	6.6	6.8	7.6
N.SLOPE	6.2	6.4	6.7	6.3	7.9	9.0	7.8	7.6	7.7	7.7	7.6	6.2	7.3
NOME	11.6	12.1	11.0	10.9	12.9	13.8	12.6	10.0	8.0	8.6	8.9	8.7	10.8
NW ARCT	12.6	13.8	12.1	11.7	14.7	15.0	14.3	12.8	12.5	12.2	12.2	11.2	12.9
P WALES	19.0	21.6	19.2	12.8	13.2	12.5	7.9	7.1	5.8	7.3	8.4	10.4	12.1
S/H/A	10.9	10.9	9.0	6.3	5.0	5.5	4.6	3.7	2.6	4.3	5.6	10.4	6.6
SE FBX	14.6	15.5	14.1	10.4	8.7	5.8	6.8	6.5	6.7	9.4	10.7	11.0	10.0
SITKA	6.4	7.7	6.0	4.4	5.1	5.4	4.0	3.6	3.2	4.5	3.9	4.3	4.9
VAL/COR	12.4	11.4	9.9	8.6	7.7	7.4	4.5	4.1	5	9.4	10.1	10.4	8.4
W.ALEUT	9.7	3.6	3.4	4.4	5.9	6.8	7.6	4.0	3.4	4.4	6.1	7.9	5.6
WADE'HP	14.6	14.8	15.4	15.3	18.4	17.2	14.0	14.4	11.7	12	13.2	13.7	14.6
WRG/PBG	14.3	15.6	12.5	8.5	7.8	6.7	4.5	3.7	4.3	6.0	6.9	9.6	8.4
YAKUTAT	11.8	10.1	7.1	5.9	11.6	10.6	6.1	5.0	6.2	4.2	5.8	8.2	7.7
YUK/KOY	16.3	18.4	16.4	14.7	16.2	14.6	11.3	10.7	10.0	10.0	11.9	11.0	13.5
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requirement during certain months when unemployment is highest. The time periods for the exemption coincide with the Alaska's harsh winter months and seasonal employment trends.

Under the waiver, all ABAWDs in Alaska will be subject to the requirement at least part of the year. About 55 percent of ABAWDs live in areas that will be seasonally exempt. The remaining 45 percent will not be exempt from the rule. A majority of Alaska communities will have seasonal ABAWD work requirement exemptions under the plan.

The work requirement will not apply to the specified census areas during the months designated as exempt by this waiver. The work requirement will be in effect in any non-exempt month.

Any ABAWDs residing in a seasonally exempt area who exhaust their three-month food stamp eligibility could get food stamps during the exempt months, if otherwise eligible. At the end of the exempt period they would be considered ineligible for food stamps. The exempt months will count toward the 36-month period eligibility period.

Several census areas containing larger cities and robust local economies will be subject to the ABAWD work rule year-round.

Justification:

The state elects to waive the ABAWD requirements because of the hardship caused for low-income Alaskans by limiting food assistance in areas and periods of highest unemployment.

A seasonal waiver emphasizes the importance of work message, and provides food assistance during periods of highest need.

Many Alaska census areas have persistently or seasonally high unemployment rates. There are not always jobs available for everyone wanting to work.

All census areas proposed for state-certified waiver of the ABAWD work requirement have unemployment rate averages in excess of 10 percent during their specified exemption period. Each also has a current U.S. Department of Labor, Labor Surplus Area designation.

Alaska is a vast state with a small population. Local economies in many areas, particularly remote rural regions, cannot easily provide year-round paid employment for everyone wanting to work. This fact coupled with the severity and length of winter contributes to high seasonal unemployment in Alaska.

Areas Covered By The Request:

The following Alaska census areas are exempt by state-certified waiver: SE Fairbanks; Haines; Kenai; Nome; Northwest Arctic; Prince of Wales; Wade Hampton; and Yukon/Koyukuk.

For the following Alaska census areas we will separately request the Secretary's approval for a work requirement waiver based on current Labor Surplus Area designation: Bethel; Bristol Bay;

For the following Alaska census areas we will separately request the Secretary's approval for a work requirement waiver based on current Labor Surplus Area designation: Bethel; Bristol Bay; Denali; Dillingham; Fairbanks North Star Borough; Ketchikan; Kodiak Island; Lake and Peninsula; Matanuska/Susitna; Skagway/Hoonah/Angoon; Wrangell/Petersburg; and Yakutat.

The attached chart titled *Work Requirements Waiver Summary* displays which census areas are seasonally exempt from the ABAWD work requirement, and the length of the exemption period. It also provides area details including: average annual unemployment rates; the unemployment rate for the state-certified exempt period; population; and whether the area is designated a U.S. DOL Labor Surplus Area. A census area map of Alaska is also provided for reference.

Attachment

Work Requirement Waiver Summary

1999 Alaska Unemployment Chart

Map of Alaska Boroughs and Census Areas

ALASKA FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

WAIVER REQUEST OF PRWORA SECTION 824

Rule Waived: Section 824 - Personal Responsibility and Work
Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

State: State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Assistance

Region: Food and Nutrition Service, Western Region

Requirement:

The State of Alaska requests a partial waiver of Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This section creates time-limited food stamp eligibility for able-bodied adults age 18 through 49 without children, unless they work.

To continue getting food stamps, able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) age 18 through 49, must comply with Food Stamp Program work requirements. Unless otherwise exempt, to get food stamps these individuals must work at least 20 hours per week, averaged monthly, or participate in an approved work program. Otherwise, they can get food stamps for only 3 months in 36 months.

The law allows states to request a waiver from the rule for individuals residing in areas that have an unemployment rate over 10 percent, or do not have a sufficient number of jobs.

Category Under Which the Waiver is Being Submitted:

The census areas do not have a sufficient number of jobs. USDA Secretary approval required.

Duration Of The Waiver:

One year: April 1, 2000 through March 31, 2001.

Proposed Alternative Procedures:

Thirteen census areas not self-certified for exemption by the state have persistently high unemployment rates, and have an insufficient number of jobs. Other circumstances help justify a seasonal waiver of the ABAWD work requirement in these regions. *Each of these census areas has a current Labor Surplus Area designation from the U.S. Department of Labor.*

The ABAWD work requirement will not apply during the months of the seasonal exemption. The new work rule will be in effect during all non-exempt months. ABAWDs residing in these

areas that exhaust their three-month in 36 month food stamp eligibility could get food stamps during exempt months, if otherwise eligible. The exempt months will count toward the individual's 36-month food stamp eligibility calendar.

Justification:

BETHEL CENSUS AREA

The state proposes an October through June seasonal work requirement exemption period for this region. This aligns the exempt period with that of the adjacent Wade Hampton census area that is also served by our Bethel office. This remote Southwest Alaska region has many small villages. There are few available jobs and very high seasonal unemployment during the severe winter months. A 1990 census summary indicates that in the villages of this region 45 to 75 percent of persons over 16 were not employed.

More recent surveys support these findings and show that the official unemployment rate greatly understates village unemployment. Rural areas in Alaska have perpetually high unemployment. Because many rural residents are marginally attached to the labor force, they are not captured in the official unemployment rates. Hence, the Alaska Department of Labor states the official calculation undoubtedly understates rural unemployment rate. The 1999 unemployment rate for the proposed exemption period for the region is 8.6 percent.

Another significant circumstance currently affecting the region is poor fishing harvest. The fishing season was again very poor last year. Traditional subsistence needs for fish for food were also hard to fulfill. The many households that fish commercially in the area each summer made little or nothing for their effort if they fished at all. Fishing is a common work activity for many ABAWDs and other food stamp recipients. Many have incurred debt and ongoing financial hardship as a result.

Area Covered by this Request:

The Bethel Census area population is about 16,000. The 35 surrounding villages in this large census area have an average population less than 300 persons. These small village communities contain about 80 percent of the food stamp recipients in the census area.

BRISTOL BAY CENSUS AREA

The state proposes a six-month, November through April, seasonal ABAWD work requirement waiver for this area. This rural area in Alaska has perpetually high unemployment. Census data shows villages in the area have 35 to 55 percent unemployment of individuals 16 years and older. Because many of these residents are marginally attached to the labor force, they are not captured in the official unemployment rates. Hence, the Alaska Department of Labor states the official rate undoubtedly understates unemployment in rural Alaska. The 1999 unemployment rate for the proposed exemption period is 10.3 percent. *The U.S. Department of Labor has designated this a Labor Surplus Area.*

Fishing, on which the area depends on almost entirely for economic stability has been poor in recent years. Traditional subsistence needs for fish for food were also hard to fulfill. Many have incurred debt and greater financial hardship as a result of the poor fishing.

This request allows Bristol Bay to have a work requirement exemption, and better aligns our policy with the neighboring Dillingham and Lake and Peninsula census areas, which are served by the same state public assistance office. This waiver helps assure uniform ABAWD policy for the area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The Bristol Bay census area population is about 1,350, living in three small communities. There are less than 20 households participating in the Food Stamp Program in this census area.

DENALI CENSUS AREA

The state proposes a six-month, October through March, seasonal ABAWD work requirement waiver for this area. The Denali area has high seasonal unemployment during the winter months. The 1999 unemployment rate for the proposed exemption period is 10.7 percent. *The U.S. Department of Labor has designated this a Labor Surplus Area.*

This census area is large with just a few small communities. The local job market is seasonal, declining sharply during the winter months. It is far from larger towns and without public transportation, limiting work opportunities for persons without reliable transportation.

Area Covered by this Request:

The Denali census area contains seven communities. The population of the area is about 2,000. There are about 25 households participating in the Food Stamp Program in this area.

DILLINGHAM CENSUS AREA

The state proposes a five-month, November through June, seasonal ABAWD work requirement waiver for this area. These rural areas in Alaska have perpetually high unemployment. Census data shows many villages have 40 to 75 percent unemployment of individuals 16 years and older. Because many of these residents are marginally attached to the labor force, they are not captured in the official unemployment rates. Hence, the Alaska Department of Labor states the official calculation undoubtedly understates the rate of unemployment rural Alaska. The 1999 unemployment rate for the proposed exemption period is 8.2 percent. *The U.S. Department of Labor has designated this a Labor Surplus Area.*

Fishing, on which the area depends for economic stability has been poor. The area had an economic disaster declaration in the two prior years and has not fully recovered. Traditional

subsistence fishing for food needs was hard to fulfill. Commercial fishing is a common work activity in the area, and many have incurred financial hardship as a result of the poor fishing.

This request allows the Dillingham census area to have an exemption and better aligns our policy with the adjacent Bristol Bay area, which is served by the same state public assistance office. This waiver helps assure uniform policy and helps assure more equitable treatment of ABAWDs in nearby communities.

Area Covered by this Request:

The Dillingham census area population is about 4,550. There are now about 250 households participating in the Food Stamp Program. Fifty percent of the census area residents live in Dillingham. The 10 surrounding villages have an average population of 220. These 10 villages contain about 80 percent of the food stamp participants in the census area.

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a two-month, January and February, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Fairbanks North Star Borough census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the borough for the January through February 1999 base period was 7.9 percent. *The Fairbanks North Star Borough has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

Fairbanks has definite seasonal employment trends. In this community winter temperatures often drop to -40, with less than four daylight hours. Job markets such as construction work or tourism, shut down during the long winter. January and February are the most difficult months to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 84,000 persons. More than half the area population lives in the immediate vicinity of Fairbanks and the in smaller communities outside the city. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now 1,400 cases.

KETCHIKAN CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a three-month, January and March, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Ketchikan census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the borough for the January through March 1999 proposed work requirement exemption period was 10.9 percent. *The Ketchikan Gateway Borough has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

Ketchikan has definite seasonal employment trends. The timber industry is in decline, and local employment in tourism and construction, shut down during the winter. January and March are the most difficult months to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 13,500 persons. The majority of borough residents live in Ketchikan and the remainder in smaller communities outside the city. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now about 600 cases.

KODIAK ISLAND CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a two-month, November and December, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Kodiak Island census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the borough for the January through March 1999 proposed work requirement exemption period was 11.5 percent. *The Kodiak Island Borough has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

Kodiak has seasonal employment trends. The fishing industry is very active here, but has varied periods of available employment depending on the opening and closing of certain fisheries and the related on shore processing. Construction and tourism work shuts down during the winter. November and December are the most difficult months to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 14,500 persons. The majority of borough residents live in Kodiak, and the remainder in eight smaller communities on the island. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now about 225 cases.

LAKE AND PENINSULA CENSUS AREA

The state proposes a seven-month, January through April, seasonal ABAWD work requirement waiver for this area. These rural areas in Alaska have perpetually high unemployment. Census data shows villages in the area have 35 to 75 percent unemployment of individuals 16 years and older. Because many of these residents are marginally attached to the labor force, they are not captured in the official unemployment rates. Hence, the Alaska Department of Labor states the official rate undoubtedly understates unemployment in rural Alaska. The 1999 unemployment rate for the proposed exemption period is 8.9 percent. *The U.S. Department of Labor has designated the Lake and Peninsula census area a Labor Surplus Area.*

Fishing, on which the area depends for economic stability has been poor. The area had an economic disaster declaration in the two prior years and has not fully recovered. Traditional subsistence fishing for food needs was hard to fulfill. Commercial fishing is a common work activity in the area, and many have incurred financial hardship as a result of the poor fishing.

This request allows the Lake and Peninsula census area to have a work requirement exemption, and better aligns our ABAWD policy with the neighboring Dillingham and Bristol Bay census areas, which are served by the same state public assistance office. This waiver helps assure more uniform policy and helps avoid inequitable treatment of ABAWDs in nearby communities.

Area Covered by this Request:

The Lake and Peninsula census area population is about 1,700 living in 17 small communities with 35 to 180 inhabitants. There are about 90 households in this area participating in the Food Stamp Program.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA CENSUS AREA

The state proposes a four-month, January through April, seasonal ABAWD work requirement waiver for this area. The Matanuska valley area has high seasonal unemployment during the winter months. The 1998 unemployment rate for the proposed exemption period is 9.4 percent. *The U.S. Department of Labor has designated this a Labor Surplus Area.*

This census area is large and about half the residents live outside of the established communities. The local job market is seasonal, declining sharply during the winter months. Though the area is spread along the road system, there is not a public transportation system. This limits work opportunities for persons without reliable transportation.

Area Covered by this Request:

The Matanuska-Susitna census area contains about a dozen small communities. The population of the area is about 56,500. There is about 1,400 households participating in the Food Stamp Program in this area.

SKAGWAY/HOONAH/ANGOON CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a four-month, December through March, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Skagway/Hoonah/Angoon census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This widespread Southeast area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the area for the December through March 1999 proposed work requirement exemption period was 10.3 percent. *The Skagway/Hoonah/Angoon census area has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

The area has definite seasonal employment trends. The timber industry is in decline, and local employment in tourism, fishing and construction shut down during the winter. December through March is the most difficult time to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 3,900 persons. The population is spread around 14 small communities in the areas three census sub-areas. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now about 65 cases.

VALDEX/CORDOVA CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a seven-month, October and April, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Valdez/Cordova census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the borough for the October through April 1999 proposed work requirement exemption period was 10.3 percent. *The Valdez/Cordova census area has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

The region has definite seasonal employment trends. Local employment opportunity improves from late spring to the fall. Much work ends during the winter. October through April is the most difficult time to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 13,500 persons. The most residents live in the towns of Cordova and Valdez. None of the other 17 communities in the census area have more than a few hundred residents. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now about 170 cases.

WRANGELL/PETERSBURG CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a five-month, December through April, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Wrangell/Petersburg census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This Southeast area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the area for the December through April 1999 proposed ABAWD work requirement exemption period was 12.1 percent. *The Wrangell/Petersburg census area has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

The area has seasonal employment trends. The timber industry has collapsed, and local employment in tourism, fishing and construction shut down during the winter. December through April is the most difficult time to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 6,800 persons. The population is mostly located in the towns of Petersburg and Wrangell, and in the village of Kake. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now about 135 cases.

YAKUTAT CENSUS AREA

Alaska proposes a seven-month, December through June, exemption from the food stamp ABAWD work requirement for the Yakutat census area.

Several factors support this work requirement waiver request. This gulf coast area has high seasonal unemployment rates. The unemployment rate for the area for the December through June 1999 proposed ABAWD work requirement exemption period was 9.3 percent. *The Yakutat census area has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the U.S. Department of Labor.*

The area is isolated and has seasonal employment trends. Local employment opportunity is best in the summer months when fishing and construction work is available. December through June are the most difficult time to find work in this area.

Area Covered by this Request:

The population of this census area is around 800 persons. The only community in the borough is Yakutat. The Food Stamp Program caseload in the area is now less than 10 cases.

Attachments

Work Requirement Waiver Summary (Lists Alaska census areas and seasonal ABAWD waiver periods. USDA waiver approval census areas denoted by **)

1999 Alaska Unemployment Chart (Monthly unemployment rates by census area)

Labor Surplus Area Designation for FFY 99

Alaska Census Area Maps (Geographic and community detail for: Bethel, Bristol Bay, Denali, Dillingham, Fairbanks NSB, Ketchikan, Kodiak Island, Lake and Peninsula Borough, and Matanuska-Susitna, Skagway/Hoonah/Angoon, Valdez/Cordova, Wrangell/Petersburg and Yakutat).