



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Suite 903
Denver, CO 80204-3585

MTJ

CPB

Reply to

Attn. of:

MPFS-300:FS 10-1-1

JAN 8 2001

due 2/12

Subject:

FSP - Request to Extend Waiver Nos. 970090 and 970146 - Montana

To:

Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division
Food Stamp Program
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
Alexandria, Virginia 22302-1594

Attached, from the State of Montana, are requests to extend the subject waivers. Under these waivers, the State may exempt certain able-bodied adults from Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The State has added two counties to Waiver No. 970090: Richland and Wheatland. Fergus County has been removed from this waiver. Waiver No. 970146 includes the seven Indian reservations in the State.

Based on the justification submitted with the request, we recommend approval of both waivers. Approval should be granted from March 1, 2001 through February 28, 2002.

If there are any questions concerning these requests, or if you need additional information, Kathie Herrman may be contacted at (303) 844-0347 or by e-mail at kathie.herrman@fns.usda.gov.

Donna Anderson

for

ALLAN C. NICKELS
Regional Director
Food Stamp Program

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



MARC RACICOT
GOVERNOR

LAURIE EKANGER
DIRECTOR

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-1788
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HUMAN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
PO Box 202952
Helena, MT 59620-2952

December 12, 2000

Allan C. Nickels
Regional Director
Food Stamp Program
USDA, Food and Consumer Service
1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80202

*Check
MONT Dep of
Census &
Eco info
Center*

Dear Mr. Nickels:

Enclosed is Montana's request for an extension and modification of waiver numbers 970090 and 970146 which allows Montana to exempt certain able bodied adults from provisions of Section 824 of PRWORA. This request is based on the areas having an insufficient number of jobs. The requested counties under waiver 970090 have been identified by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry as labor surplus areas. Also requested under waiver 970146 are the seven Indian Reservations in Montana.

We have attached documentation from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry which supports request for the above waivers.

The original waivers will expire February 28, 2001. Your attention in this matter is appreciated.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Yvette Barnier of my staff at (406)444-7483.

Sincerely,

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

HANK HUDSON
Administrator

Enc.

cc: Karlene Grosssberg, Bureau Chief
Jill Nelson, Food Stamp Unit Supv.
Yvette Barnier, FSET Program Officer

State Agency submitting the request for waiver 970090 and 970146 extension/modification:

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Contact Name: Yvette Barnier
Food Stamp Employment and Training Program Officer
Department of Public Health and Human Services
PO Box 202952
Helena, MT 59620-2952

Phone: (406)444-7483

Counties covered by the wavier request 970090:

- ✓ Anaconda-Deer Lodge County
- ✓ Big Horn County
- ✓ Blaine County
- ✓ Flathead County
- ✓ Glacier County
- ✓ Golden Valley County
- ✓ Granite County
- ✓ Lake County
- ✓ Lincoln County
- ✓ Mineral County
- ✓ Mussellshell County
- ✓ Phillips County
- ✓ Ravalli County
- ✓ Richland County
- ✓ Roosevelt County
- ✓ Rosebud County
- ✓ Sanders County
- ✓ Wheatland County

Indian Reservations covered by the waiver request 970146:

- ✓ Flathead Agency
- ✓ Blackfeet Agency
- ✓ Fort Belknap Agency
- ✓ Crow Agency
- ✓ Fort Peck Agency
- ✓ Northern Cheyenne Agency
- ✓ Rocky Boys Agency

Category under which waivers are being requested:

Waiver request due to lack of sufficient jobs.

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. This waiver request is based on the lack of sufficient jobs in these areas. Each of the eighteen counties has been identified by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry as being a labor surplus area. To qualify as a labor surplus area each county had an average unemployment rate of 6.0% or greater for the previous two calendar years (January 1998 through December 1999).

Two Counties, Richland and Wheatland, have been added to the request waiver. One county, Fergus, no longer qualifies as a labor surplus area and therefore has been excluded from this request.

The State of Montana is also 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 all of Montana's seven Indian reservations. This waiver request is based on information gathered by the Department of Labor which indicates an overall unemployment rate of 11.5% on the reservations.

Six reservations have an unemployment rate of over 10%. One reservation, Flathead, has an unemployment rate of 5.9%. Montana is requesting that the entire Flathead reservation be included in the waiver. The Flathead reservation lies within parts of four counties, Sanders, Flathead, Lake and Missoula. Three of these counties, Sanders, Flathead and Lake are included in the labor surplus areas. Missoula county is not. Only 3% of the reservations population resides in Missoula County. The portion of the Flathead Indian Reservation that is in Missoula County is located a traveling distance of 50 miles round trip from Missoula. Distance and transportation, compounded by the fact that the participants have to travel a mountain pass to get to Missoula, make daily commuting difficult for the residents of this area.

The reservation population is extremely vulnerable to the detrimental effects of poverty. This population, while 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 lower 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

What is the basis for the request?

education, skills training, or work experience. Jobs and training are limited to farm or ranch work and lower level skilled jobs.

Included in this waiver request are the current "Labor Surplus Areas" report and the "Montana Labor Force by Reservation" report gathered by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Research and Analysis Bureau.