



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

Northeast Region

Date:

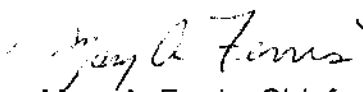
Subject: ABAWD Waiver Extension Request, RI

To: Art Foley, Director
Program Development Division

Attached is a November 10, 2000, request from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services to modify and extend waiver number 970051, which exempts certain individuals from Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

The State requests an extension of their current waiver, due to expire on December 31, 2000, to allow individuals residing in Central Falls and New Shoreham to be exempt based on their designation as Labor Surplus Areas (LSA's). In addition, they are requesting that residents of Charlestown, Johnston, Pawtucket, West Warwick and Woonsocket, be exempted because these areas had an unemployment rate which was more than 20 percent above the national average for the last two years.

If you have any questions on this waiver request, please contact Susan Mahan at (617) 565-6382.


Mary A. Ferris, Chief
State Program Improvement
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region

Attachment

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Office of the Director

November 10, 2000

Frances E. Zorn
Regional Administrator
United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
Northeast Region
10 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02222

Dear Ms. Zorn:

Rhode Island is requesting to modify and extend waiver number 970051, which exempts certain individuals from the requirements of Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) regulations.

This modify and extend request applies to eight Rhode Island municipalities that have been recently designated as Labor Surplus Areas (LSA) by the United States Department of Labor and/or are experiencing unemployment rates that are in excess of 20 percent above the national average. We wish to implement this modification and extension of the waiver on January 1, 2001.

Enclosed for your review are documents relating to the current LSA designation, unemployment rates and a listing of the current number of individuals subject to ABAWD regulations in Rhode Island by city and town.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, or need of additional information, please call Mr. Robert McDonough at (401) 462-2423.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christine C. Ferguson".

Christine C. Ferguson
Director

CCF:ejh

Enclosures

WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number:** 970051
2. **Type of Request:** Extension
3. **Primary Regulation Citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.
4. **Secondary Regulation Citation:** Not Applicable
5. **State:** Rhode Island
6. **Region:** NERO
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), P. L. 104-193, provides that no individual shall be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program as a member of any household if, during the preceding 36-month period, the individual received food stamp benefits for not less than three (3) months (consecutive or otherwise), during which the individual did not work 20 hours or more per week, averaged monthly; did not participate in and comply with the requirements of a program under Section 20 or a comparable program established by the State.

Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the PRWORA, also provides that, upon the request of a State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the above provision for any group of individuals in the State if the Secretary makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside has an unemployment rate over 10 percent, or does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.
8. **Proposed Alternative Procedures:** Rhode Island is requesting to exempt from the work requirement of Section 6(o) of the Act, individuals residing in areas which have an insufficient number of jobs based on their designation as Labor Surplus Areas (LSA) by the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor. Rhode Island is also requesting to exempt individuals from the work requirement who reside in areas that are experiencing an unemployment rate which is more than 20 percent above the national average for calendar years 1998 and

1999 as well as areas which had an unemployment rate more than 20 percent above the national average for the period September, 1998 through August, 2000. Under the proposed modification and extension, individuals residing in Central Falls and New Shoreham would be exempt due to their LSA designation. Residents of Central Falls, New Shoreham and Providence would also be exempt because these municipalities experienced an unemployment rate which is more than 20 percent above the national average for calendar years 1998 and 1999 as well as the period September, 1998 through August, 2000. Residents of Charlestown, Johnston, Pawtucket, West Warwick and Woonsocket, would also be exempt because these municipalities experience an unemployment rate which is more than 20 percent above the national average for the period September, 1998 through August, 2000.

Approval of this waiver would allow individuals who reside in areas where there are insufficient jobs the opportunity to participate in the Food Stamp Program without being required to meet unrealistic program work requirements. It would also ease the burden for individuals trying to comply with work requirements, which are unreasonable, given the local economic environment. Finally, it would provide for more efficient operation of the Food Stamp Program by allowing the State agency to focus its efforts and resources regarding work requirements on those households most likely to benefit.

9. **Justification for Request:** To justify this extension request, Rhode Island is submitting documentation from the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, the United States Department of Labor and information collected by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
10. **Anticipated Impact on Households and State Agency Operations:** The granting of this extension request would allow eligible individuals in affected areas to continue to receive benefits as the state implements employment and training activities to service this population.
11. **Caseload Information:** There are currently 1,621 individuals that are considered Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents receiving food stamp benefits in Rhode Island. This waiver request, effecting eight of Rhode Island's cities and towns, would exempt 1,458 individuals or 89.9%.

12. **Anticipated Implementation Date:** Rhode Island is requesting to implement this extension January 1, 2001 and is requesting this extension through December 31, 2001.
13. **Quality Control Procedures:** Not applicable
14. **Signature and Title of Requesting Official:**

Robert J. McDonough
Administrator

15. **Date of Request:** November 10, 2000



Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

Center General Complex
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920-4407

Dr. Lee H. Arnold
Director

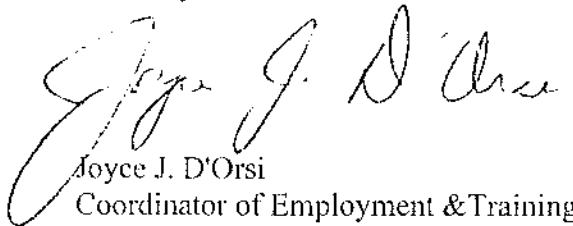
November 10, 2000

Mr. Robert McDonough
RI Department of Human Services
600 New London Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

Dear Mr. McDonough,

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Unit of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training has verified the statistical data you sent to us. The information is compiled in our LMI Unit and is approved by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you need further assistance, please call me at 462-8762.

Sincerely,



Joyce J. D'Orsi
Coordinator of Employment & Training Programs



Lincoln Almond
Governor

Telephone: (401) 462-8000

<http://www.dlt.state.ri.us>

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR AREAS IN YOUR STATE

Attached are two tables of unemployment data for counties, cities, and labor market areas in your state. The tables list the average unemployment rate for two separate periods:

- calendar years 1998 and 1999 (January 1998 through December 1999); and
- the most recent two-year period available (September 1998 through August 2000).

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) list of Labor Surplus Areas (LSAs) for federal fiscal year 2001 is based on unemployment rates for the twenty-four months comprising calendar years 1998 and 1999. (The current LSA list for your state is attached.) USDA, however, grants waivers based on unemployment data *either* for the period DOL uses *or* for more recent periods. The twenty-four month period comprising September 1998 through August 2000 is the most recent such period for which unemployment data is available at the time of this mailing.

States therefore may request waivers for jurisdictions that meet USDA's criteria for either or both periods. In a state where some jurisdictions meet the criteria for the first of these periods but not the second and some meet for the second period but not the first, a state could request waivers for all jurisdictions meeting the criteria based on data for calendar years 1998 and 1999 and request additional waivers for jurisdictions that qualify based on data from the more recent period. Several states have taken this approach.

Accordingly, these tables show average unemployment rates for each of these twenty-four-month periods. For convenience, the fourth column indicates under what basis, if any, an area qualifies for a waiver:

- A "C" indicates that the area had an unemployment rate more than 20 percent above the national average for calendar years 1998 and 1999.
- An "R" indicates that the area had an unemployment rate more than 20 percent above the national average for the period from September 1998 through August 2000.
- A "CR" indicates that the area would qualify for a waiver under data from either of these two twenty-four-month periods.

The first table lists only areas with unemployment more than 20 percent above the national average for at least one of the two periods in question; the second table lists all areas in the state.

Methodological note: Rounding numbers at different stages of the process can yield slightly different thresholds for the unemployment rate an area must have to be more than 20 percent above the national average. Based on the methodology used in previous years, we calculated that waiver decisions will be made on the basis of a 5.2 percent threshold for the period comprising calendar years 1998 and 1999 and a 5.0 percent threshold for the period from September 1998 through August 2000. USDA staff have confirmed that they intend to continue using this methodology for the coming year. These tables therefore note the probable eligibility of areas whose unemployment rates round to those levels (or higher) for the appropriate period. All data comes from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) released by DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This is the same data DOL uses to compile the LSA list and USDA uses to analyze waiver requests.