



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 903
Denver, Colorado 80204-3585

LPB
Part W

Reply to
Attn. of: MPFS-300:FS 10-1-1

AUG 06 2002

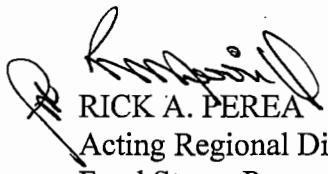
Subject: FSP – Request to Modify Waiver Nos. 970090 and 970146 – Montana

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

Attached is a request to modify the subject waivers. Under the current waivers of Section 273.24(f)(1)(i) of the Regulations, Montana exempts individuals in certain areas from the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) provisions. The State is requesting to exempt individuals from the ABAWD provisions statewide.

Based on the State's justification, we are recommending approval of this request for a period of 1 year, effective upon approval. We verified the data submitted by the State. The data is located at www.bls.gov, under State and Local Unemployment Rates for Montana. The data, which was not seasonally adjusted, is for the period of January 1999 through December 2001.

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


RICK A. PEREA
Acting Regional Director
Food Stamp Program

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



JUDY MARTZ
GOVERNOR

GAIL GRAY, Ed.D.
DIRECTOR

STATE OF MONTANA

PHONE: (406) 444-1788
FAX: (406) 444-2547

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

July 25, 2002

Rick A. Perea
Acting Regional Director
Food Stamp Program
USDA, FNS
1244 Speer Blvd., Suite 903
Denver, CO 80204-3585

Dear Mr. Perea,

Montana is requesting a modification to the Waiver No. 970090 and 970146 granted which allows Montana to exempt Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) from the three-month time limit for Food Stamp benefits. Based on Oregon's approval for a statewide waiver, Montana is requesting a statewide waiver with substantiating data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Montana is eligible for a statewide waiver on the basis of unemployment rates at least 20% above the national average for a recent 24-month period.

Recent budget cuts to the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET) will adversely effect Montana's ABAWD population. The state greatly appreciates your timely consideration of this request so we will know how to proceed with the State Plan for the FSET Program which is due August 15th.

Enclosed you will find the formal waiver request and substantiating documentation. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Yvette Barnier at (406)444-7483.

Sincerely,

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

HANK HUDSON
Administrator

enc.

cc: Karlene Grossberg, Bureau Chief
Jill Nelson, Food Stamp Unit Supervisor
Steve Anderson, Program Director, FNS
Linda Currie, Program Operations and Oversight Supervisor
Yvette Barnier, FSET Specialist
Kathie Herrman, Program Specialist, FNS

State Agency submitting the request for a revision of waiver 970090 and 970146:

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

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

Phone: (406)444-7483

Counties currently covered under waiver #970090 as Labor Surplus Areas:

Deer Lodge	Big Horn	Blaine
Flathead	Glacier	Granite
Lake	Lincoln	Mineral
Musselshell	Phillips	Richland
Roosevelt	Rosebud	Sanders
Wheatland		

Counties currently covered under waiver #970090 based on an unemployment rate greater than 20% above the national average:

Golden Valley Ravalli

Reservations currently covered under waiver #970146:

Flathead	Blackfeet	Fort Belknap
Crow	Fort Peck	Northern Cheyenne
Rocky Boys		

Counties requested to be added to waiver #970090 as part of a statewide waiver based on an unemployment rate greater than 20% above the national average:

Beaverhead	Broadwater	Carter
Carbon	Cascade	Custer
Choteau	Daniels	Fallon
Fergus	Gallatin	Garfield
Hill	Jefferson	Judith Gap
Lewis and Clark	Liberty	Madison
Meagher	McCone	Missoula
Park	Powell	Peteroleum
Powder River	Prarie	Pondera
Stillwater	Sweetgrass	Sheridan
Teton	Toole	Treasure
Valley	Wibaux	Yellowstone

Counties requested to be added to waiver #970090 in the event that a statewide waiver is not approved based on an unemployment rate for CY 1999 through 2000 are:

Broadwater	Cascade	Hill
Petroleum	Powell	Sheridan

Counties requested to be added to waiver #970090 in the event that a statewide waiver is not approved based on unemployment rates for CY 1999 through 2000 and for FY 2000 through 2001 is:

Silver Bow

Basis for the request:

The state of Montana is eligible for a statewide waiver on the basis of unemployment rates at least 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period: June 1999 through May 2001. According to USDA regulations, a statewide unemployment rate from June 1999 through 2001 of 4.9% would qualify Montana for a statewide waiver.

Montana would also qualify using data from an earlier period. For the purposes of this waiver, however, we are submitting data from the most recent period for which the state qualifies.

The first table shows labor force, unemployment and unemployment rates for a 24-month period beginning June 1999 through May 2001. Under the new regulations, states can get waivers based on unemployment rates for the period used for the LSA (Labor Surplus Areas) list or any more recent data period indicating an unemployment rate that exceeds the national average by 20%. A statewide unemployment rate from June 1999 to 2001 of 4.9% substantiates Montana's qualifications for a statewide waiver. The second table displays the monthly labor, unemployment, and unemployment rate data that supports the first summary table. The raw data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics web site that were used to produce these tables is Montana.htm.

Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:

Due to the recent budget cuts to the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET), some FSET offices in Montana will be closing and others will have a reduction in funding necessitating a decrease in enrollments. This will severely impact the population of Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) living in an already unstable Montana economy. To safeguard ABAWDS in Montana who have a three-month time limit on their Food Stamp benefits, the state is requesting a statewide waiver of the ABAWD provision. Montana will continue to offer employment and training slots to ABAWDS to the extent of our funding capabilities.

Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:

Montana requests that the statewide waiver be considered for one year beginning with the approval of this request.

Date of request:

July 25, 2002

Signature and title of requesting official:

Hank Hudson

HANK HUDSON, Administrator