



United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

Northeast Region

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3/2/02

Date: 10/15/02

Subject: Rhode Island (RI) ABAWD Waiver Renewal

To: Art Foley, Director
Program Development Division

Attached is the February 12, 2002 waiver request from Rhode Island Department of Human Services to exempt individuals from Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Action, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

Rhode Island currently has one waiver that exempt individuals in municipalities that have been designated as Labor Surplus Areas by the U.S. Dept. of Labor and/or are experiencing unemployment rates that are in excess of 20 percent above the national average.

The State agency requests an extension of its current waiver #970051, which expired on December 31, 2001.

Rhode Island is asking that this current waiver request be made effective April 1, 2002 through December 31, 2002. The waiver extension request applies only to individuals residing in the towns of Central Falls City, New Shoreham, Pawtucket City and Providence City. We recommend approval of this waiver.

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

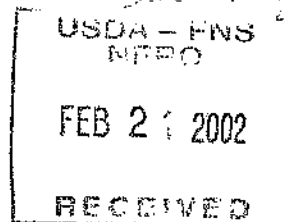
Susan Mahan acting for
Mary A. Ferris, Chief
State Program Improvement Section
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region

Attachments

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Office of the Director



February 12, 2002

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 four 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 April 2002.

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 that reads "Jane A. Hayward".
Jane A. Hayward
Director

JAH:ejh

Enclosures

WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number:** 970051
2. **Type of Request:** Extend and Modify
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 1999 and

2000 as well as areas which had an unemployment rate more than 20 percent above the national average for federal fiscal years 2000 and 2001. Under the proposed modification and extension, individuals residing in New Shoreham would be exempt due to its LSA designation. Residents of Central Falls 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 1999 and 2000 as well as for federal fiscal years 2000 and 2001. Residents of Pawtucket would also be exempt because this municipality experienced an unemployment rate which is more than 20 percent above the national average for federal fiscal years 2000 and 2001.

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 2,284 individuals that are considered Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents receiving food stamp benefits in Rhode Island. This waiver request, effecting four of Rhode Island's cities and towns, would exempt 1,819 individuals or 80%.

12. **Anticipated Implementation Date:** Rhode Island is requesting to implement this extension April 1, 2002 and is requesting this extension through December 31, 2002.
13. **Quality Control Procedures:** Not applicable
14. **Signature and Title of Requesting Official:**

Robert J. McDonough
Administrator

15. **Date of Request:** February 12, 2002