



United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

Western Region

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Reply to
Attn of: FS-10-6-WA Waiver #970032, 970063, 970164, and 970153

Subject: FSP – Washington – Statewide ABAWD Waiver

To: Art Foley, Director
Program Development Division
Food Stamp Program

FEB 26 2003

Attached is a request from Washington State for approval of a statewide ABAWD waiver. They make the case that the state's unemployment rate has exceeded the national average by at least 20 percent for a 24-month period (Calendar Years 2001 and 2002) and, in November of 2002, the state ranked 47th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in seasonally adjusted unemployment. This waiver would replace existing waivers 970032, 970063, 970164, and 970153 and would be effective for a one-year period from April 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004. We recommend approval of this waiver.

If you have any questions, please contact Zita Viernes at (415) 705-1320, Ext. 320.

DENNIS STEWART
Regional Director
Food Stamp Program
Western Region

Attachment

Cc: POS WA Desk



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

February 13, 2003

Dennis Stewart, Program Director
Food Stamp Program
Western Region, Food and Nutrition Service
United States Department of Agriculture
550 Kearny Street, Room 400
San Francisco, California 94108-2518

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Washington State is requesting approval of a statewide waiver of food stamp program restrictions on Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) under 7CFR 273.24. This statewide waiver would replace waivers 970032, 980063, and 970164 which exempt specific labor surplus areas and expire on March 31, 2003. This would also replace waiver #97053 which exempts tribal areas and expires on April 30, 2003.

Under 7 CFR 273.24(f), states may request a waiver of ABAWD requirements if data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicates an average unemployment rate greater than 10% for a recent 12-month period. This same section also indicates that a waiver is readily approvable if the unemployment rate for a recent 24-month period exceeds the national average by 20%.

As the State of Washington's unemployment rate has exceeded the national average by at least 20% for a twenty-four month period and has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, we request that ABAWD requirements be waived on a statewide basis.

In discussing this waiver request, FNS Western Region Office staff asked about the impact of Washington state law on a statewide waiver of ABAWD requirements. Under Revised Code of Washington 74.08A.060, the department may exempt areas from ABAWD requirements unless counties specifically indicate they do not wish to be exempted. While we do not anticipate that counties would exercise this option based on current economic conditions, the department would apply the ABAWD requirements to counties who do not want to keep the default exemption.

Dennis Stewart
February 13, 2003
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Federal Labor Surplus Area (LSA) information for 2003 is included in this waiver request.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Tom Haines, Chief of the Office of WorkFirst, Refugee and Immigrant Assistance at (360) 413-3196 or hainest@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roxie Schalliol" followed by a stylized flourish.

Roxie Schalliol, Director
Division of Employment and Assistance Programs

Enclosures

cc: John Atherton
Michael W. Masten
Victor Vasquez
Barbara Bucsko
Tom Haines
Alicia Koné
Sarah Colleen Sotomish
Luisa McEachern

Bcc: Karen Hagen
Linda Clintsman
Theresa Hays
Diana Harder
Patti Clark

WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver serial number:**
2. **Type of request:** Initial. This request would replace existing waivers # 970032, 970063, 970164, & 970153.
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **Secondary regulation citation:** None
5. **State:** Washington
6. **Region:** Western Region
7. **Regulatory requirements:**

Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24 place eligibility restrictions on Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS). These requirements restrict food stamp eligibility for individuals between ages 18 and 50 to three months out of every three years unless the individual works 20 hours a week, participates in a work program for 20 hours or more a week, participates in a workfare program each month, or is exempt.

8. **Description of proposed alternate procedures:**

We propose to exempt all ABAWDS statewide from the eligibility restrictions under 7 CFR 273.24.

Residents of the State of Washington would be subject to these eligibility restrictions only if their county of residence has requested that the department not exempt their county under section 74.08A.060 of the Revised Code of Washington.

9. **Justification for Request:**

Under 7 CFR 273.24(f), states may request a waiver of ABAWD requirements if data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicates an average unemployment rate greater than 10% for a recent 12-month period. This same section also indicates that a waiver is readily approvable if the unemployment rate for a recent 24-month period exceeds the national average by 20%.

As the State of Washington's unemployment rate has exceeded the national average by at least 20% for a twenty-four month period and has one of the

highest unemployment rates in the nation, we request that ABAWD requirements be waived on a statewide basis.

In discussing this waiver request, FNS Western Region Office staff asked about the impact of Washington state law on a statewide waiver of ABAWD requirements. Under Revised Code of Washington 74.08A.060, the department may exempt areas from ABAWD requirements unless counties specifically indicate they do not wish to be exempted.

While we do not anticipate that counties would exercise this option based on current economic conditions, the department would apply the ABAWD requirements to counties who do not want to keep the default exemption.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics publication, Unemployment Rates for States Monthly Rankings, Washington State ranked forty-seven out of fifty states and the District of Columbia for seasonably adjusted unemployment in November 2002.

American Indian Reservations With Insufficient Jobs:

We are including in our statewide waiver all American Indian Reservations from the Food Stamp work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents. For the purpose of this waiver request, the state of Washington is using the state unemployment rate that exceeds the national average by 20% for the last 24-month period.

Waivers are requested for the following Tribal Reservations in Washington State:

Chehalis	Nisqually	Snoqualmie
Colville	Nooksack	Spokane
Cowlitz	Port Gamble S'Klallam	Squaxin Island
Hoh	Puyallup	Stillaquamish
Jamestown S'Klallam	Quileute	Suquamish
Kalispel	Quinault	Swinomish
Lower Elwha	Samish	Tulalip
Lummi	Sauk-Suiattle	Upper Skagit
Makah	Shoalwater Bay	Yakima
Mukleshoot	Skokomish	

A. Counties and Cities Listed on the Federal Labor Surplus Areas list, February 2003.

The cities and counties listed below were granted a waiver of ABAWD requirements on the basis of insufficient jobs as demonstrated by their listing as federal Labor Surplus Areas. The current waiver expires March 31, 2003 Federal Labor Surplus areas are defined as areas where unemployment exceeds the

national unemployment rate by 20% or more over the previous two calendar years. (See Appendix B.)

**LABOR SURPLUS AREAS
OCTOBER 1, 2002 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30 2003**

ELIGIBLE LABOR SURPLUS

ADAMS COUNTY
BELLINGHAM CITY

BALANCE OF BENTON COUNTY

BREMERTON CITY

BALANCE OF CHELAN COUNTY

CLALLAM COUNTY
COLUMBIA COUNTY
BALANCE OF COWLITZ COUNTY

DOUGLAS COUNTY
EVERETT CITY

FERRY COUNTY
GRANT COUNTY
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY
KENNEWICK CITY

KITITITAS COUNTY
KLICKITAT COUNTY
LAKEWOOD CITY

LEWIS COUNTY
LONGVIEW CITY

MASON COUNTY
MOUNT VERNON CITY

OKANOGAN COUNTY
PACIFIC COUNTY
PASCO CITY

PEND OREILLE COUNTY
SKAGIT COUNTY
SKAMANIA COUNTY
SPOKANE CITY

CIVIL JURISDICTIONS INCLUDED

ADAMS COUNTY
BELLINGHAM CITY IN
WHATCOM COUNTY
BENTON COUNTY LESS
KENNIWICK CITY
RICHLAND CITY
BREMERTON CITY IN
KITSAP COUNTY
CHELAN COUNTY LESS
WENATCHEE CITY
CLALLAM COUNTY
COLUMBIA COUNTY
COWLITZ COUNTY LESS
LONGVIEW CITY
DOUGLAS COUNTY
EVERETT CITY IN
SNOHOMISH COUNTY
FERRY COUNTY
GRANT COUNTY
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY
KENNEWICK CITY IN
BENTON COUNTY
KITITITAS COUNTY
KLICKITAT COUNTY
LAKEWOOD CITY IN
PIERCE COUNTY
LEWIS COUNTY
LONGVIEW CITY IN
COWLITZ COUNTY
MASON COUNTY
MOUNT VERNON CITY IN
SKAGIT COUNTY
THURSTON COUNTY
OKANOGAN COUNTY
PACIFIC COUNTY
PASCO CITY IN
FRANKLIN COUNTY
PEND OREILLE COUNTY
SKAGIT COUNTY
SKAMANIA COUNTY
SPOKANE CITY IN

STEVENS COUNTY
TACOMA CITY

VANCOUVER CITY

WALLA WALLA CITY

WENATCHEE CITY

BALANCE OF WHATCOM COUNTY

YAKIMA CITY

BALANCE OF YAKIMA COUNTY

SPOKANE COUNTY
STEVENS COUNTY
TACOMA CITY IN
PIERCE COUNTY
VANCOUVER CITY IN
CLARK COUNTY
WALLA WALLA CITY IN
WALLA WALLA COUNTY
WENATCHEE CITY IN
CHELAN COUNTY
WHATCOM COUNTY LESS
BELLINGHAM CITY
YAKIMA CITY IN
YAKIMA COUNTY
YAKIMA COUNTY LESS
YAKIMA CITY

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, February 12, 2003.

We request that able-bodied adults without dependents be exempt from Food Stamp work requirements in Asotin, Benton, Clark, Chelan, Cowlitz, Franklin, Garfield, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Lincoln, Pierce, San Juan, Snohomish, Spokane, Whitman, Yakima, and Walla Walla counties on the basis of insufficient jobs. These counties were not considered exempt from Food Stamp work requirements in the past.

2000-2001 Annual Averages	US	Washington State
Labor Force	141,774,083	2,995,692
Employment	135,035,917	2,806,575
Unemployment	6,738,250	191,617
Unemployment Rate	4.7	6.4
Percentage Over US Rate		36.17

2001-2002 Annual Averages	US	Washington State
Labor Force	142,509,000	3,046,500
Employment	134,244,000	2,832,300
Unemployment	8,265,000	214,200
Unemployment Rate	5.8	7.0
Percentage Over US Rate		20.69

US and Washington State data is from WILMA.org, Labor Market Access website, seasonally adjusted.

10. Anticipated impact on households and state agency operations:

Households:

We anticipate that this statewide exemption will allow additional people to retain eligibility for food stamps in a time where jobs are the hardest to find. This access to the food stamp program will help ensure that people in the state have adequate nutrition.

State Agency:

By eliminating this eligibility requirement, the department will be better able to focus efforts on determining eligibility and issuing benefits to eligible clients in a timely manner. This would also reduce a portion of the department's administrative burden of managing the workfare program that has not been shown to be very effective in a slow economy.

11. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affected population:

See Appendices B and C for caseload and quality control information. The caseload data is for state fiscal year 2002 and the quality control data is for federal fiscal year 2002.

12. Anticipated implementation date and time for which waiver is needed:

We request this statewide waiver to be effective for the period of April 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004. Based on statewide trends in the unemployment rate, we may request an extension of this waiver.

13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

Quality control reviews would only consider time limited participation requirements under FNS Handbook 310 – Section 850.7 if the participant's county of residence has specifically requested exclusion from this waiver under Revised Code of Washington 74.08A.060

For all other cases, the requirements of 7 CFR 273.24 would not be considered in a quality control review.

14. Signature and title of requesting official:

Roxie Schalliol ^{by} ck

Roxie Schalliol, Director
State of Washington
Department of Social and Health Services
Economic Services Administration
Division of Employment and Assistance Program

2/14/03
Date