



State of Louisiana
Department of Social Services
OFFICE OF FAMILY SUPPORT
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
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KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

ANN SILVERBERG WILLIAMSON
SECRETARY

September 24, 2007

Ms. Judy Barron, Director
Food Stamp Program
Food & Nutrition Service
Southwest Region
1100 Commerce St., Room 5-C-30
Dallas, Texas 75242

RE: Modification and Extension of Waiver 2020121
7 CFR 273.24

Dear Ms. Barron:

The Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Family Support, requests a modification and extension of waiver 2020121 which waives work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) set forth in 7 CFR 273.24. The waiver will expire on October 31, 2007.

Attached is a request to modify and extend our current waiver from November 1, 2007, through October 31, 2008. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f)(3)(iii) provide that a state may support a waiver with evidence that an area is determined to have a 24-month average unemployment rate that exceeds the national average by 20 percent for any 24-month period. This request is based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics which indicates that 61 of the 64 Louisiana parishes qualify for waivers based on having an aggregate average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during a recent 24-month period.

If you need additional information, please contact Sammy Guillory by telephone at (225) 342-2530 or by e-mail at sguillor@dss.state.la.us.

Sincerely,


for Adren O. Wilson
Assistant Secretary

Attachment
AOW/SG/EG

cc: Ann S. Williamson, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Social Services

WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2020121
2. **Type of request:** Modification and Extension
3. **Primary regulation citation:** Section 6 (o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.
4. **Secondary regulation citation:** CFR 273.24 (f)(3)(iii)
5. **State:** Louisiana
6. **Region:** Southwest (SWRO)
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** Under 7 CFR 273.24(b) individuals are not 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 3 months (consecutive or otherwise), during which the individual did not work 20 hours or more per week, averaged monthly; participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours or more per week; or participate in and comply with requirements of a program under Section 20 or a comparable program established by the State.

Under 7 CFR 273.24(f), upon the request of a State agency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) may waive the applicability of the above provision for any group of individuals in the State if the FNS makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent, or does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.
8. **Description of the proposed alternative procedures:** The State of Louisiana requests to waive individuals residing in sixty-one parishes within the state. The State seeks waivers for contiguous parishes that are eligible based on aggregate average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during February 2004 through January 2006, when the national average unemployment rate plus 20 percent was 6.3 percent.

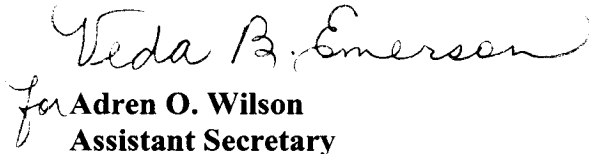
AREA	Unemployment Rate, FEB 2004- JAN 2006
Acadia Parish	5.4
Allen Parish	8.3
Ascension Parish	6.0
Assumption Parish	8.5
Avoyelles Parish	7.5
Beauregard Parish	6.5
Bienville Parish	7.1
Caddo Parish	5.6
Calcasieu Parish	6.1
Caldwell Parish	7.1
Cameron Parish	5.1
Catahoula Parish	7.5
Claiborne Parish	6.0
Concordia Parish	9.6
De Soto Parish	6.5
East Baton Rouge Parish	5.9
East Carroll Parish	12.4
East Feliciana Parish	6.4
Evangeline Parish	6.4
Franklin Parish	8.3
Grant Parish	6.0
Iberia Parish	5.9
Iberville Parish	8.2
Jackson Parish	5.7
Jefferson Davis Parish	5.2
La Salle Parish	5.3
Lafourche Parish	5.1
Lincoln Parish	6.1
Livingston Parish	5.7
Madison Parish	8.7
Morehouse Parish	8.8
Natchitoches Parish	6.1
Pointe Coupee Parish	7.6
Rapides Parish	5.4
Red River Parish	8.6
Richland Parish	7.3
Sabine Parish	5.6
St. Helena Parish	10.1
St. James Parish	9.5
St. Landry Parish	6.3
St. Martin Parish	5.3
St. Mary Parish	8.0
Tangipahoa Parish	7.7
Tensas Parish	10.5
Terrebonne Parish	5.4
Union Parish	5.8
Vermilion Parish	5.5

Vernon Parish	5.2
Washington Parish	8.3
Webster Parish	6.1
West Baton Rouge Parish	6.3
West Carroll Parish	10.8
West Feliciana Parish	7.0
Winn Parish	6.0
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area ¹	6.3
Jefferson Parish	-
Orleans Parish	-
Plaquemines Parish	-
St. Bernard Parish	-
St. Charles Parish	-
St. John the Baptist Parish	-
St. Tammany Parish	-
Total for Sub-Region	6.3

Twenty-nine parishes: Allen Parish, Assumption Parish, Avoyelles Parish, Beauregard Parish, Bienville Parish, Caldwell Parish, Catahoula Parish, Concordia Parish, De Soto Parish, East Carroll Parish, East Feliciana Parish, Evangeline Parish, Franklin Parish, Iberville Parish, Madison Parish, Morehouse Parish, Pointe Coupee Parish, Red River Parish, Richland Parish, St. Helena Parish, St. James Parish, St. Landry Parish, St. Mary Parish, Tangipahoa Parish, Tensas Parish, Washington Parish, West Baton Rouge Parish, West Carroll Parish, and West Feliciana Parish qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average for February 2004 through January 2006. Twenty-five parishes: Acadia Parish, Ascension Parish, Caddo Parish, Calcasieu Parish, Cameron Parish, Claiborne Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish, Grant Parish, Iberia Parish, Jackson Parish, Jefferson Davis Parish, La Salle Parish, Lafourche Parish, Lincoln Parish, Livingston Parish, Natchitoches Parish, Rapides Parish, Sabine Parish, St. Martin Parish, Terrebonne Parish, Union Parish, Vermilion Parish, Vernon Parish, Webster Parish, and Winn Parish qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average for February 2004 through January 2006. In addition, the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area containing seven parishes: Jefferson Parish, Orleans Parish, Plaquemines Parish, St. Bernard Parish, St. Charles Parish, St. John the Baptist Parish, and St. Tammany Parish qualifies based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average for February 2004 through January 2006.

¹ For seven of Louisiana's parishes, individual unemployment rates from the BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program are not available for after August 2005, because of the impact of hurricane Katrina on data collection. These Parishes include Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist and St. Tammany. (BLS explains these issues here: <http://www.bls.gov/katrina/lausquestions.htm>. Although they only specifically mention Jefferson and Orleans Parishes, data is also unavailable for the other five Parishes.)

In lieu of this unavailable data, we used the data provided by the BLS LAUS program for the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area. According to the Metropolitan Statistical Area definitions available from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, these seven Parishes comprise the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area. (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metrodef.html>)

9. **Justification for request:** As stated in number 8 above, the areas listed above have an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during a recent 24-month time period. All of the raw data supporting our numbers that we have used are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) website.
10. **Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** This waiver will provide consistency for households and State agency operations in areas where unemployment remains higher than the national average.
11. **Caseload information, including percent, characteristic, and quality control error rate for affected portion:** As of August 2007, Louisiana's Food Stamp caseload was 259,973 households, representing 634,598 individuals. The caseload for the areas that are covered in this waiver request represents 90 percent of the caseload for the state. The state error rate for FY 2006 was 8.0 percent. Louisiana does not track the error rate for able-bodied adults without dependents.
12. **Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:** The State is requesting a one-year waiver from November 1, 2007 through October 31, 2008.
13. **Proposed quality control review procedures:** There are no special quality control procedures needed in conjunction with this waiver.
14. **Signature:**
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for Adren O. Wilson
Assistant Secretary
15. **Date of request:** September 24, 2007