

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):

2140013

2. Type of request:

Modification

3. Regulatory 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. State:

Montana

5. Region:

MPRO

6. Regulatory requirements:

Under 7 CFR 273.24(b) individuals are not eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a member of any household if, during the preceding 36-month period, the individual received SNAP 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 does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.

7 CFR 273.24 (f)(3)(iii) permits states to use “data from the BLS or the BLS cooperating agency that an area has a 24-month average unemployment rate that exceeds the national average by 20 percent for any 24-month period no earlier than the same periods the ETA used to designate LSAs for the current fiscal year.” Under 7 CFR 273.24 (f)(6), states may “define the areas to be covered by waivers,” and submit “data and analyses corresponding to the defined area.”

7. Description of alternative procedures:

The State agency requests to exempt from these requirements individuals residing in one individual county (Granite County) with an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average during the 24-month period of August 2012-July

2014. During this time period, the national average unemployment rate was 7.2 percent; 20 percent above this was 8.6 percent.

AREA	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, AUGUST 2012 – JULY 2014
Granite County, MT	9.1
National Average Plus 20 Percent	8.6

The State seeks a waiver for contiguous and non-contiguous counties in three labor market regions.¹ These counties have aggregate average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of August 2012-July 2014.

NORTHWEST REGION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, AUGUST 2012 – JULY 2014
Flathead County, MT	7.7
Lake County, MT	7.8
Lincoln County, MT	13.8
Mineral County, MT	9.4
Sanders County, MT	12.3
Total for Combined Area	8.7
National Average Plus 20 Percent	8.6

This combined area, composed of Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral and Sanders Counties, had an average unemployment rate of 8.7 percent. These are contiguous counties in the Northwest Labor Market Region.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, AUGUST 2012 – JULY 2014
Glacier County, MT	10.7
Liberty County, MT	4.6
Blaine County, MT	5.6
Total for Combined Area	8.7
National Average Plus 20 Percent	8.6

This combined area, composed of Glacier, Liberty and Blaine Counties, had an average unemployment rate of 8.7 percent. These are non-contiguous areas in the North Central Labor Market Region.

¹ The Montana Department of Labor and Industry divides the state into five Labor Market Regions: the Northwest, North Central, Southwest, South Central and Eastern Regions. These Labor Market Regions are defined in the State of Montana Labor Day Report 2014, available at http://ourfactsyourfuture.org/admin/uploadedPublications/5686_LDR14.pdf

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, AUGUST 2012 – JULY 2014
Big Horn County, MT	13.6
Golden Valley County, MT	4.0
Judith Basin County, MT	4.1
Musselshell County, MT	4.9
Petroleum County, MT	5.8
Wheatland County, MT	4.3
Total for Combined Area	9.0
National Average Plus 20 Percent	8.6

This combined area, composed of Big Horn, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Musselshell, Petroleum and Wheatland Counties, had an average unemployment rate of nine percent. These are non-contiguous areas in the South Central Labor Market Region.

In addition, the State also requests to waive the following reservation areas based on their average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. The reservation unemployment rates were calculated by applying 2012 American Community Survey² share ratios to county-level BLS data from August 2012-July 2014. The following tables summarize the calculations:

Indian Reservation Areas	Average Unemployment Rate, August 2012-July 2014
Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Glacier County part	14.1
Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Pondera County part	16.8
Total Blackfeet Indian Reservation	14.2

Indian Reservation Areas	Average Unemployment Rate, August 2012-July 2014
Crow Reservation, Big Horn County part	21.6
Crow Reservation, Treasure County part	0
Crow Reservation, Yellowstone County part	6.4
Total Crow Reservation	20.4

Indian Reservation Areas	Average Unemployment Rate, August 2012-July 2014
Fort Belknap Reservation, Blaine County part	8.9
Fort Belknap Reservation, Phillips County part	29.1
Total Fort Belknap Reservation	9.9

² Formerly, the data for reservation parts of counties were located in the U.S. Decennial Census Summary File 3. The U.S. Census Bureau is no longer producing the long-form Summary File 3, and instead is collecting this information in the multi-year American Community Survey. These calculations are based on data for the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Indian Reservation Areas	Average Unemployment Rate, August 2012-July 2014
Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Big Horn County part	9.5
Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Rosebud County part	19.1
Total Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation	15.7

Indian Reservation Areas	Average Unemployment Rate, August 2012-July 2014
Fort Rocky Boy's Reservation, Choteau County part	16.8
Fort Rocky Boy's Reservation, Hill County part	17.1
Total Rocky Boy's Reservation	17.0

8. Justification for request:

As stated in number 8 above, the areas requested have average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during a recent 24-month period. All of the raw data supporting our numbers that we have used are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) website, and are included with the request.

9. 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.

10. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):

The caseload for these areas, as of 8/31/14, represent 37% of the caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved

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

The State is requesting a waiver to cover the period of January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

12. Proposed quality control review procedures:

There are no special quality control procedures needed in conjunction with this waiver.

13. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person: State of Montana Katherine Buckley Patton

14. Signature and title of requesting official:

Katherine Buckley Patton

Title: Deputy Administrator Human and Community Services Division

Email for transmission of response: kbuckleypatton@mt.gov

15. Date of request: 10/6/14

16. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone): Katherine Buckley-Patton/kbuckleypatton@mt.gov/ 406 444 5288

17. Regional office contact person (*to be completed by FNS regional office*):