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John Bel Edwards, Governor
Suzy Sonnier, Secretary

January 13, 2016

Mr. Dwight Crudup, Regional Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
USDA – Food and Nutrition Service
1100 Commerce St., Room 522
Dallas, TX 75242

RE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Statewide Waiver for Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS) – 7 CFR 273.24(f)(2)

Dear Mr. Crudup,

The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is requesting a statewide ABAWD waiver on the basis of having insufficient jobs. Louisiana has been determined by the Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance Service as qualifying for extended unemployment benefits. Louisiana qualifies for the extension under FNS regulations that allow states to qualify for a statewide ABAWD waiver if its unemployment is high enough to meet the traditional criteria for extended benefits (EB) under the unemployment insurance program. One of the criteria is that the state must have a seasonally adjusted total unemployment rate (TUR) for three months reaching (1) 6.5 percent; and (2) 110 percent of such TUR for the corresponding three-month periods ending in either or both of the two preceding calendar years. Under the February 1, 2015 trigger notice from the Department of Labor, Louisiana qualifies based on meeting these thresholds. Louisiana's TUR was 6.5% and it was 116% above the previous year. Louisiana is not listed as triggering "ON" in the notice because the state does not offer this option, but under federal rules, it can qualify for a waiver based on meeting the unemployment threshold required to be eligible. Louisiana is eligible for a one-year waiver up to a year from the date of the trigger notice. Louisiana qualifies for a waiver beginning December 1, 2015 until November 30, 2016.

As you know, Louisiana's previous ABAWD waiver expired effective October 2015, so many ABAWDs lost SNAP benefits effective January 2016. Governor John Bel Edwards wants to ensure that January 2016 SNAP benefits are available to all eligible ABAWDs who had been certified for the month of January 2016. Due to system constraints and limitations, many of these ABAWD cases were closed in mid-December 2015. In order to operationalize this waiver of the ABAWD time limit and to provide SNAP benefits seamlessly and systematically, we are requesting the waiver back to December 1, 2015.



If additional information is needed, please contact Kim Matherne by email at Kim.Matherne@la.gov or by telephone at (225) 219-2428.

Sincerely,



Sammy Guillory
Deputy Assistant Secretary

SG/pjc

cc: Suzy Sonnier, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services

