

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):

2150057

2. Type of request:

Modification

3. Statutory citation:

Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended

4. Regulatory citation:

7 CFR 273.24

5. State:

Massachusetts

6. Region:

NERO

7. 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 the individual received program benefits for more than 3 months during any 3 year period in which the individual was subject to, but did not comply with, the SNAP work requirements. Regulations at 273.24(a) provide that fulfilling the work requirement means: working 20 hours or more per week, averaged monthly; participating in and complying with the requirements of a work program or a workfare program for at least 20 hours per week; or any combination of working and participating in a work program for a total of 20 hours per week.

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 time limit described above for any group of individuals in the State if FNS makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.

8. Description of alternative procedures:

The State of Massachusetts is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 4 counties, 2 New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) 55 towns and cities and 1 reservation from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24. This request would modify the state's waiver approved for 2017 by extending it to 12 months, ending in December of 2017.

9. Justification for request:

Under SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f)(2), areas may qualify for an ABAWD time limit waiver if they have insufficient jobs. To support this claim, states may submit evidence that an area has an average unemployment rate for a 24-month time period that is at least 20 percent above the national average for the same 24-month period. 7 CFR 273.24(f)(6) provides that States may define areas to be waived. They may also submit evidence that an area has an average unemployment rate for 3-month period that exceeds 10 percent.

The State of Massachusetts seeks a waiver for one individual county based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 5.5 percent; 20 percent above this was 6.5 percent. The county's average unemployment rate was 6.9 percent for the same time period.

May 2014 – April 2016			
Individual County	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
Dukes County, MA	15,523	224,269	6.9%
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%		

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of two contiguous counties based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.6 percent.

May 2014 – April 2016		
County	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Berkshire County, MA	90,253	1,577,865
Hampden County, MA	367,044	5,312,774
Total for Region	457,297	6,890,639
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.6%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State seeks a waiver for Nantucket County/town, based on its average unemployment rate for the 3-month period of January 2016 to March 2016. The average unemployment rate in Nantucket during this period was 10.8 percent, exceeding the unemployment rate threshold of 10 percent for a 3-month period.

January 2016 - March 2016			
Individual County	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Nantucket County/town, MA	1,769	16,427	10.8%
Unemployment Rate Threshold	10.0%		

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of the two contiguous New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs), based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of May 2014 to April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.5 percent, 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate for the same period. The region is comprised of the NECTAs of New Bedford and Taunton-Middleborough-Norton.

The New Bedford Metropolitan NECTA is comprised of the towns of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Mattapoisett and the city of New Bedford. The Taunton-Middleborough-Norton NECTA is comprised of the towns of Berkeley, Dighton, Freetown, Lakeville, Middleborough, Norton, Raynham, Rochester and the city of Taunton.¹

May 2014 – April 2016		
New England City and Town Areas	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
New Bedford, MA Metropolitan NECTA	151,407	2,015,612
Taunton-Middleborough-Norton, MA NECTA Division	109,490	1,971,212
Total for Region	260,897	3,986,824
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State seeks a waiver for two individual towns based on their average unemployment rates that are 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016.

May 2014 – April 2016			
Individual County	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
Monroe town, MA	156	1,868	8.4%
Rowe town, MA	263	3,814	6.9%
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%		

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 18 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.5 percent for this time period.

May 2014 – April 2016		
Towns and Cities	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Athol town, MA	9,378	135,956
Brookfield town, MA	2,479	44,404
Dudley town, MA	8,516	153,787
Fitchburg city, MA	32,915	463,325

¹ Information on the composition of the Massachusetts NECTAs is available at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/map_box.asp.

Gardner city, MA	15,628	229,066
Orange town, MA	5,691	84,842
Petersham town, MA	773	15,989
Phillipston town, MA	1,277	22,666
Royalston town, MA	968	17,113
Southbridge Town city, MA	15,301	193,442
Sturbridge town, MA	5,958	120,259
Templeton town, MA	5,615	103,039
Ware town, MA	8,066	125,456
Warren town, MA	3,753	58,096
Webster town, MA	13,922	206,582
Wendell town, MA	666	11,010
Westminster town, MA	4,770	104,042
Winchendon town, MA	7,635	131,564
Total for Region	143,311	2,220,638
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State seeks a waiver for another eligible region of 7 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.5 percent for this time period.

May 2014 – April 2016		
Towns and Cities	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Dracut town, MA	20,279	413,678
Lawrence city, MA	82,784	851,655
Lowell city, MA	85,745	1,297,300
Methuen town city, MA	35,202	634,442
North Andover town, MA	16,288	371,742
Tewksbury town, MA	18,247	392,533
Tyngsborough town, MA	7,616	160,733
Total for Region	266,161	4,122,083
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State seeks a waiver for a region of four contiguous towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.5 percent.

May 2014 – April 2016		
Towns	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Abington town, MA	11,807	212,578
Brockton city, MA	80,535	1,130,709
Holbrook town, MA	8,804	145,557
Stoughton town, MA	19,437	378,531
Total for Region	120,583	1,867,375

Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.5%
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%

The State also seeks a waiver for a region of one contiguous city and one contiguous town based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.5 percent.

May 2014 – April 2016		
Towns and Cities	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Gloucester city, MA	24,909	370,982
Rockport town, MA	4,861	84,593
Total for Region	29,770	455,575
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State also seeks a waiver for a region of seven contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.7 percent.

May 2014 – April 2016		
Towns and Cities	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Attleboro city, MA	29,534	574,678
Fall River city, MA	85,157	951,438
Rehoboth town, MA	7,320	162,828
Seekonk town, MA	9,006	192,006
Somerset town, MA	12,254	219,001
Swansea town, MA	11,875	222,121
Westport town, MA	12,689	197,368
Total for Region	167,835	2,519,440
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.7%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 15 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. The average unemployment rate for this region was 6.5 percent for this time period.

May 2014 – April 2016		
Towns and Cities	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Barnstable town city, MA	31,635	565,902
Bourne town, MA	14,766	250,031
Brewster town, MA	6,406	122,799
Chatham town, MA	3,977	69,547

Dennis town, MA	11,550	158,966
Eastham town, MA	4,436	62,270
Falmouth town, MA	22,372	368,691
Harwich town, MA	9,183	145,505
Mashpee town, MA	10,737	184,673
Orleans town, MA	3,347	67,929
Provincetown town, MA	10,734	53,894
Truro town, MA	3,975	30,508
Wareham town, MA	18,579	298,078
Wellfleet town, MA	4,340	40,358
Yarmouth town, MA	19,592	287,495
Total for Region	175,629	2,706,646
Combined Region Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The State requests to waive the following reservation based on having an average unemployment rate exceeding the national average for a recent 24-month period. The reservation unemployment rate was calculated by applying 2014 American Community Survey² share ratios to county-level BLS data from May 2014 – April 2016. The following table summarizes the calculations:

May 2014 through April 2016			
Reservations	Unemployed	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Dukes County (part); Massachusetts (part); Wampanoag-Aquinnah Trust Land, MA	132	1,514	8.7%
Total Wampanoag-Aquinnah Trust Land Reservation	132	1,514	8.7%

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, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):

The caseload for these areas, as of 9/17/16, represents 21.24% of the caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

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

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017.

13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

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

² These calculations are based on data from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

14. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person:

Lauren Arms-Ledwith, SNAP Director, Department of Transitional Assistance

15. Signature and title of requesting official:

Lauren Ledwith, SNAP Director

Title:

Email for transmission of response:

16. Date of request: 11/28/16

17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone): Miriam Kaufmann

Miriam.Kaufmann@state.ma.us (617) 348-5561

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