



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

February 9, 2017

Mr. Eric Ratchford, Regional Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
USDA Mid-Atlantic Region
Mercer Corporate Park
300 Corporate Boulevard
Robbinsville, NJ 08691-1598

Dear Mr. Ratchford:

I am writing to request an extension of Waiver 970283. This waiver allows an exemption from the time-limited benefits required with the work requirement for the able-bodied population for residents in certain Virginia localities. The current waiver expires April 30, 2017.

The waiver request is enclosed and supporting data will be submitted electronically. Please contact Nikole Cox, SNAP Manager, at (804) 726-7270, or by e-mail at Nikole.Cox@dss.virginia.gov for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Steinhauser".

Thomas J. Steinhauser
Director, Division of Benefit Programs

c: Nikole Cox

Enclosure

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 2140016
2. **Type of request:** Extension and Amendment
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:** Virginia
6. **Region:** MARO
7. **Regulatory requirements:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, provides that no able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) shall be 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 ABAWD work requirement. Section 6(o) also provides that, upon the request of the State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the 3-month ABAWD time limit for any group of individuals in the State if the Secretary 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 alternative procedures:** The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents in 53 counties and cities from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24.
9. **Justification for request:** Under SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f)(2), areas may support a claim of insufficient jobs by submitting evidence that an area has an average unemployment rate for a 24-month time period that exceeds the national average for the same 24-month period by 20 percent. 7 CFR 273.24(f)(6) provides that States may define areas to be waived.

The VDSS seeks a waiver for a group of 51 counties and cities in the Southern Region based on the region's aggregate average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016. While most of the localities in the southern part of the state have contiguous borders, others do not but these areas contribute to the overall economic health of the entire region. The national average unemployment rate for this period was 5.5 percent; 20 percent above this was 6.5 percent. The region's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period was 6.5 percent.

**Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data
May 2014 through April 2016**

Southern Region	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Accomack County	21,664	381,980
Alleghany County	9,110	170,415
Bland County	3,915	67,549
Bristol city	10,187	183,029
Brunswick County	10,766	152,182
Buchanan County	19,198	179,372
Buckingham County	9,135	152,549
Carroll County	17,633	314,689
Charles City County	4,838	90,168
Charlotte County	7,451	125,326
Covington city	3,849	58,671
Craig County	3,324	58,508
Cumberland County	5,958	108,911
Danville city	34,732	458,933
Dickenson County	12,112	120,463
Emporia city	3,999	54,483
Franklin city	6,017	87,073
Galax city	4,163	71,278
Grayson County	10,530	167,564
Greensville County	5,694	100,929
Halifax County	24,462	367,526
Hampton city	96,186	1,566,073
Henry County	35,842	537,879
Hopewell city	17,998	232,985
Lancaster County	8,455	123,686
Lee County	15,496	208,023
Lunenburg County	6,808	127,417
Martinsville city	11,448	129,600
Mecklenburg County	19,594	300,934
Northampton County	9,311	145,018
Northumberland County	8,341	131,513
Norton city	2,992	42,257
Patrick County	10,570	183,098
Petersburg city	30,717	331,746
Pittsylvania County	40,153	722,205
Portsmouth city	69,650	1,074,441

Prince Edward County	15,805	234,372
Prince George County	19,723	357,774
Pulaski County	21,463	394,813
Richmond County	4,428	93,807
Russell County	19,123	276,076
Scott County	12,368	232,926
Smyth County	21,742	324,989
Surry County	4,925	88,529
Sussex County	6,896	99,028
Tazewell County	30,985	401,662
Washington County	32,754	656,043
Westmoreland County	11,915	213,818
Williamsburg city	10,238	157,973
Wise County	29,321	337,043
Wythe County	18,845	328,516
Combined Area Total	872,829	13,525,842
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

The VDSS also seeks a waiver for two counties, Bath and Page Counties, in the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.¹ This region has a combined unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2014 through April 2016.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data May 2014 through April 2016		
Shenandoah Valley Partnership	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Bath County	2,526	61,452
Page County	19,663	280,668
Combined Area Total	22,189	342,120
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.5%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.5%	

¹ Information on Virginia's economic regions as defined by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership is available at <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/regions/ecregions.html>.

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.

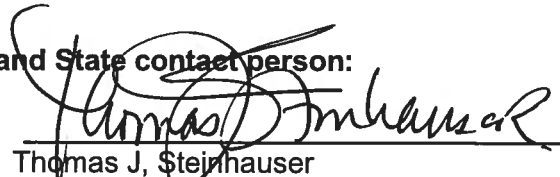
11. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affected portion: The caseload for the localities identified represents 44.1 percent of the caseload for Virginia as of August 2016 and 40.2 percent of the benefits issued for this period. These localities also represent 23.9 percent of the payment error rate for the period October 2015 to May 2016 and 18.9 percent of the negative error.

12. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:
The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018.

13. Proposed quality control review procedures:
There are no special quality control procedures needed in conjunction with this waiver.

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

15. Signature and title of requesting official:


Thomas J. Steinhauser
Director, Division of Benefit Programs
tom.steinhauser@dss.virginia.gov

16. Date of request: January 18, 2017

17. State agency staff contact:

Nikole Cox
Nikole.Cox@dss.virginia.gov
804.726.7270

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