

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 970125
2. **Type of request:** Amendment and extension
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:** North Dakota
6. **Region:** MPRO
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 State of North Dakota is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 9 counties 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 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.

The State of North Dakota seeks a waiver for a region of 9 contiguous counties based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2015 through January 2017. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 5.0 percent; 20 percent above this was 6.0 percent. The region's unemployment rate was 6.0 percent for the same time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2015 through January 2017		
County	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Benson	2,527	59,175
Bottineau	3,575	77,928
Eddy	1,428	30,547
Emmons	1,777	37,514
Kidder	1,245	32,755
Pierce	1,863	44,950
Rolette	12,668	119,081
Sheridan	941	17,398
Wells	2,079	52,298
Total	28,103	471,646
Combined Unemployment Rate	6.0%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	6.0%	

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 April 1, 2017, represents 16% of the caseload for the state. The ABAWD provisions did not apply to Benson, Eddy, Emmons, Kidder, Pierce, Rolette, and Sheridan counties in FFY 2017. There are no quality control procedures involved.

The 15% exemption criteria will be used in Foster, McLean, Mercer, and Oliver counties.

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 October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018.

13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

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

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

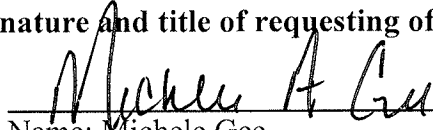
North Dakota Department of Human Services, SNAP Policy Division

Name: Melissa Karabensh

Title: Program Administrator

Email: mkarabensh@nd.gov

15. Signature and title of requesting official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele A. Gee", is written over a horizontal line.

Name: Michele Gee

Title: Public Assistance Director

Email for transmission of response: mgee@nd.gov

16. Date of request:

May 1, 2017

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

Name: Melissa Karabensh

Title: Program Administrator

Email: mkarabensh@nd.gov

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