

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 2150057
2. **Type of request:** 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:** 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 49 towns 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 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 Massachusetts seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 3 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the

national average for the 24-month period of June 2016 through May 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 5.4 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2016 through May 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Edgartown town, MA	3,212	56,942
Oak Bluffs town, MA	3,224	61,489
Tisbury town, MA	2,882	53,521
Combined Area Total	9,318	171,952
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.4%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.3%	

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 14 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2016 through May 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 5.3 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2016 through May 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Acushnet town, MA	7,115	148,556
Berkley town, MA	3,313	87,983
Dartmouth town, MA	19,038	452,198
Fairhaven town, MA	10,329	229,116
Fall River city, MA	61,097	954,159
Freetown town, MA	5,185	128,057
Lakeville town, MA	5,957	155,737
Mattapoisett town, MA	2,937	77,147
Middleborough town, MA	12,475	316,670
New Bedford city, MA	73,675	1,129,286
Rochester town, MA	2,635	77,833
Somerset town, MA	8,882	220,972
Swansea town, MA	9,264	230,000
Westport town, MA	9,731	201,041
Combined Area Total	231,633	4,408,755

Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.3%
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.3%

The State also seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 4 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2016 through May 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 5.3 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2016 through May 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Adams town, MA	5,303	101,605
Cheshire town, MA	2,291	47,019
Clarksburg town, MA	949	20,881
North Adams city, MA	8,171	144,295
Combined Area Total	16,714	313,800
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.3%	

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 2 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2016 through May 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 5.7 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2016 through May 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Lawrence city, MA	58,716	864,388
Methuen town city, MA	27,712	650,029
Combined Area Total	86,428	1,514,417
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.7%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.3%	

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 12 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2016 through May 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 5.3 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2016 through May 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Agawam Town city, MA	15,070	384,793
Chicopee city, MA	32,294	666,550
Granville town, MA	886	21,673
Holyoke city, MA	22,401	389,782
Ludlow town, MA	13,285	263,318
Palmer Town city, MA	7,376	148,566
Russell town, MA	887	24,164
Southwick town, MA	5,409	133,901
Springfield city, MA	101,052	1,521,433
West Springfield Town city, MA	14,919	351,625
Westfield city, MA	21,872	509,857
Wilbraham town, MA	6,240	184,691
Combined Area Total	241,691	4,600,353
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.3%	

The State also seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 9 non-contiguous towns based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of June 2016 through May 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 5.3 percent, 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate for the same period. The towns are located in the Barnstable Town, MA Metropolitan New England City and Town Area (NECTA) labor market area.¹

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2016 through May 2018		
Non-contiguous towns in Barnstable Town, MA	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total

¹ Information on the composition of the Massachusetts NECTAs is available at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/2010%20NECTA%20and%20Labor%20Areas_townlist.asp.

Metropolitan NECTA		
Chatham town, MA	3,117	71,237
Dennis town, MA	8,465	160,163
Eastham town, MA	3,157	62,543
Falmouth town, MA	16,855	372,265
Harwich town, MA	7,176	147,149
Provincetown town, MA	6,532	51,232
Truro town, MA	2,521	30,164
Wellfleet town, MA	2,679	40,267
Yarmouth town, MA	13,820	288,719
Combined Area Total	64,322	1,223,739
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.3%	

The State seeks a waiver for Nantucket County based on its average unemployment rate for the 3-month period of January 2018 through March 2018. The county unemployment rate is greater than 10 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2018 through March 2018			
County	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
Nantucket County, MA	1,851	17,505	10.6%
National Unemployment Threshold	10%		

The State also seeks a waiver for two towns with populations below 1,000 based on their average unemployment rates for the 24-month period of January 2016 through December 2017. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 4.6 percent; 20 percent above this was 5.5 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2016 through December 2017			
Individual Towns	Unemployed	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Gosnold town, MA	75	1,248	6.0%
New Ashford town, MA	249	3,411	7.3%

20% Above National Average Threshold	5.5%
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The State also seeks a waiver for two contiguous towns with populations below 1,000 based on the region's aggregate average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of January 2016 through December 2017. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 4.6 percent; 20 percent above this was 5.5 percent. The region's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period was 5.6 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2016 through December 2017		
Contiguous Towns	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Monroe town, MA	136	1,905
Rowe town, MA	182	3,754
Combined Area Total	318	5,659
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.6%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.5%	

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 8/20/18, represent 6.35%* of the caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

*This number includes only SNAP recipients aged 18-49, not known to be disabled and not subject to TANF work requirements.

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

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

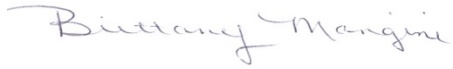
13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

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

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

Department of Transitional Assistance
Cynthia Zabin, Assistant Director for SNAP Compliance

15. Signature and title of requesting official:



Title: Director of Food Security and Nutrition

Email for transmission of response: brittany.managini@state.ma.us

16. Date of request: 8/29/18

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

Cynthia Zabin, Assistant Director for SNAP Compliance

cynthia.zabin@state.ma.us

(617) 348-8464

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