

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 83 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 individual town based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of January 2017 through

December 2018. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 4.1 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.9 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2017 through December 2018			
Individual Towns	Unemployed	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Southbridge Town city, MA	9,840	196,598	5.0%
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.9%		

The State also seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 41 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2017 through December 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 4.9 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics and Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Local Area Unemployment Data¹ January 2017 through December 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Adams town, MA	5,213	102,836
Agawam Town city, MA	14,659	393,479
Becket town, MA	1,039	22,703
Blandford town, MA	629	18,639
Brimfield town, MA	1,740	54,617
Claremont town, MA	606	15,965
Cheshire town, MA	2,219	47,258
Chester town, MA	753	18,331
Chicopee city, MA	31,791	673,169
Clarksburg town, MA	894	21,179
East Longmeadow town, MA	6,836	216,276
Florida town, MA	406	9,988
Granville town, MA	860	22,163
Hampden town, MA	2,445	73,642
Hancock town, MA	275	9,806

¹ The areas requested include 13 towns in Massachusetts with populations less than 1,000 people, for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics stopped publishing data. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development published unemployment data for these towns using BLS methodology. These towns are Aquinnah town, Chilmark town, Florida town, Gosnold town, Hancock town, Monroe town, Montgomery town, New Ashford town, Rowe town, Savoy town, Tolland town, Washington town and Windsor town. The state data are available at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/lmi_lur.asp

Hinsdale town, MA	1,136	25,554
Holland town, MA	1,434	39,191
Holyoke city, MA	22,600	397,851
Longmeadow town, MA	5,783	200,484
Ludlow town, MA	13,051	268,994
Monroe town, MA	79	1,880
Monson town, MA	4,627	120,438
Montgomery town, MA	435	12,634
New Ashford town, MA	186	3,423
North Adams city, MA	7,941	145,815
Otis town, MA	878	19,252
Palmer Town city, MA	7,487	153,528
Rowe town, MA	151	3,958
Russell town, MA	902	24,893
Savoy town, MA	515	9,640
Southwick town, MA	5,308	136,912
Springfield city, MA	101,644	1,556,723
Tolland town, MA	182	7,071
Wales town, MA	1,078	24,367
Ware town, MA	6,032	129,187
Warren town, MA	2,722	59,826
Washington town, MA	316	7,811
West Springfield Town city, MA	14,541	360,066
Westfield city, MA	21,411	520,898
Wilbraham town, MA	6,255	188,636
Windsor town, MA	355	12,360
Combined Area Total	297,414	6,131,443
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.9%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.9%	

The State 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 January 2017 through December 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 4.9 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2017 through December 2018

Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Lawrence city, MA	57,707	876,229
Methuen town city, MA	26,977	663,929
Middleton town, MA	3,633	110,979
North Andover town, MA	12,850	401,675
Combined Area Total	101,167	2,052,812
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.9%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.9%	

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 19 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2017 through December 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 4.9 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2017 through December 2018		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Acushnet town, MA	6,923	150,882
Berkley town, MA	3,233	89,811
Dartmouth town, MA	18,791	453,130
Dighton town, MA	3,722	100,819
Fairhaven town, MA	10,288	231,021
Fall River city, MA	59,854	974,386
Freetown town, MA	5,034	131,378
Halifax town, MA	3,662	106,238
Lakeville town, MA	5,823	159,248
Mattapoisett town, MA	2,856	78,384
Middleborough town, MA	12,150	323,709
New Bedford city, MA	72,406	1,143,617
Plympton town, MA	1,577	40,329
Raynham town, MA	6,610	183,164
Rochester town, MA	2,632	79,873
Somerset town, MA	8,636	224,054
Swansea town, MA	9,207	234,641
Taunton city, MA	31,278	733,545
Westport town, MA	9,576	205,088

Combined Area Total	274,258	5,643,317
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.9%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.9%	

The State also seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 18 non-contiguous towns based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of January 2017 through December 2018. The average unemployment rate for this region was 4.9 percent, 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate for the same period. The towns are located in the economic region of Cape and Islands Workforce Development Area (WDA).²

Bureau of Labor Statistics and Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Local Area Unemployment Data January 2017 through December 2018		
Non-contiguous towns in Cape and Islands Workforce Development Area	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Aquinnah town, MA	128	5,090
Brewster town, MA	4,814	126,959
Chatham town, MA	3,049	72,966
Chilmark town, MA	391	11,683
Dennis town, MA	8,331	162,617
Eastham town, MA	3,108	63,588
Edgartown town, MA	3,295	58,509
Falmouth town, MA	16,371	375,769
Gosnold town, MA	10	1,145
Harwich town, MA	6,988	150,121
Mashpee town, MA	8,432	193,484
Oak Bluffs town, MA	3,098	62,781
Provincetown town, MA	6,549	51,897
Tisbury town, MA	2,884	54,722
Truro town, MA	2,463	30,595
Wellfleet town, MA	2,647	40,875
West Tisbury town, MA	1,234	38,187
Yarmouth town, MA	13,613	294,024
Combined Area Total	87,405	1,795,012

² Information on the composition of the Massachusetts Workforce Development Areas is available at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/LAUS_town_index.asp

Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.9%
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.9%

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 total caseload for these areas, as of 10/1/19, represent **32.98%** of the total SNAP caseload for the state. The total potential ABAWD caseload for these areas, as of 10/1/19, represent **2%*** of the total SNAP caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

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

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

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

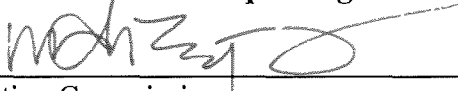
13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

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:



Acting Commissioner
melissa.pullin@state.ma.us

16. Date of request: 11/22/19

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*):