

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 2150035
2. **Type of request:** Initial
3. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
4. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** Rhode Island
6. **Region:** NERO
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 Rhode Island is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 5 towns 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 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 State of Rhode Island seeks a waiver for an individual town based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of February 2021 to January 2023. During this time, the national average for unemployment was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above this was 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for this town is above 5.2 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2021 to January 2023
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Individual towns	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
New Shoreham town	1,383	18,855	7.3%
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.2%		

The State of Rhode Island also seeks a waiver for 4 non-contiguous towns in the Providence-Warwick, RI-MA New England City and Town Area (NECTA), based on this region's unemployment rate for the 24-month period of February 2021 to January 2023. This NECTA used in this waiver request is defined by the Census Bureau.¹ The combined average unemployment rate for the towns in this NECTA was 5.2 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2021 to January 2023		
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA NECTA, RI part	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Central Falls city, RI	11,044	211,524
Charlestown town, RI	4,838	101,950
Providence city, RI	108,941	2,134,602
Woonsocket city, RI	25,824	470,183
Region Total	150,647	2,918,259
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	5.2%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	5.2%	

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 3/1/2024, represent 44% of the entire 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 July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

¹ A map of NECTAs is available from the Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/nectas.html>. This NECTA is treated as an economic region, enabling the towns to be grouped non-contiguously, in accordance with Section VI of FNS guide on calculating waiver requests (<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-2021-guide-supporting-abawd-time-limit-waiver-requests.pdf>).

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:



Name/Title: Bethany Caputo, SNAP Administrator

Email for transmission of response: Bethany.caputo@dhs.ri.gov

16. Date of request: 4/4/2024

17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone): Bethany Caputo,
Bethany.caputo@dhs.ri.gov, 401-309-1237

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