



Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner

August 23, 2023

Matthew Henschel
SNAP Regional Division Director
USDA/FNS Northeast Regional Office
10 Causeway Street, Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

Dear Mr. Henschel:

Please accept this letter as our official request for a one-year waiver to exempt Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) throughout the Territory from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limits at 7CFR 273.24. The necessary, unemployment data and stats are attached as part of this request.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Kimberley Causey-Gomez
Commissioner
Attachment

cc: Denelle G. Baptiste
Ms. Natalie Bailey
Mrs. Emmanueline Archer
Mrs. Lorna Sutton

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 2150046
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:** Virgin Islands
6. **Region:** Northeast Region
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 U.S. Virgin Islands is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) on the entire U.S. territory from the SNAP time limit 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 U.S. Virgin Islands is eligible for a waiver based on the island's average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of May 2021 through April 2023. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 4.0 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.8 percent. The territory's unemployment rate for this period was 6.7 percent. These unemployment rates are calculated from data obtained from

the Virgin Islands Department of Labor, since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not collect data for this territory.¹

Virgin Islands Department of Labor Statistics Unemployment Data May 2021 through April 2023			
	Unemployed	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Virgin Islands	68,652	1,027,899	6.7%
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.8%		

10. **Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** This waiver will provide consistency for state operations.
11. **Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):** This waiver affects the entire territory.
12. **Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:**
The U.S. Virgin Islands is requesting a one-year waiver from January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.
13. **Proposed quality control review procedures:** There are no quality control procedures involved.
14. **State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person:**
Natalie L. Bailey, Administrator, Natalie.bailey@dhs.vi.gov
15. **Signature and title of requesting official:**


Kimberley Causey-Gomez
Commissioner
Email: Kimberley.causeygomez@dhs.vi.gov
16. **Date of request:** August 23, 2023
17. **State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):**
Emmanueline Archer – SNAP Director
Emmanueline.archer@dhs.vi.gov 340-774-0930 ext. 4309
18. **Regional office contact person (to be completed by FNS regional office):**

¹ The data used to support this request were downloaded from the Virgin Islands Department of Labor website: <https://www.vidol.gov/labor-statistics/>

**VIRGIN ISLANDS IS ELIGIBLE FOR A TIME LIMIT WAIVER ON THE BASIS OF
MAY 2021 - APRIL 2023
UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**

Step 1	Please see worksheet entitled "Step 1-4" for monthly labor force numbers
Step 2	Please see worksheet entitled "Step 1-4" for 24-month labor force totals
Step 3	Please see worksheet entitled "Step 1-4" for monthly unemployed numbers
Step 4	Please see worksheet entitled "Step 1-4" for 24-month unemployed totals

	from Step 2	from Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
	MAY 2021 - APRIL 2023	MAY 2021 - APRIL 2023	MAY 2021 - APRIL 2023	MAY 2021 - APRIL 2023	MAY 2021 - APRIL 2023
	Total labor force	Total number of unemployed	Average Unemployment Rate (unrounded)	Average Unemployment Rate (4 decimal places)	Average Unemployment Rate (multiply by 100) (one decimal place)
U.S. Virgin Islands	1,027,899	68,652	0.066789	0.0667	6.7
National Unemployment	3,930,127	159,001	0.040457	0.0404	4
Threshold - 20% Above the National Average				0.0484	4.8

Source: US Virgin Islands Department of Labor
<https://www.vidol.gov/labor-statistics/>

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)							
Downloaded: Tue Jun 20 2023 15:48:50 GMT-0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)							
Area	Time Period	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Preliminary	Seasonally Adjusted
Virgin Islands	April 2023	41,181	39,897	1,284	3.1%	No	No
Virgin Islands	March 2023	41,538	40,134	1,404	3.4%	No	No
Virgin Islands	February 2023	41,342	39,909	1,433	3.5%	No	No
Virgin Islands	January 2023	40,877	39,397	1,480	3.6%	No	No
Virgin Islands	December 2022	42,485	40,709	1,776	4.2%	No	No
Virgin Islands	November 2022	42,346	40,372	1,974	4.7%	No	No
Virgin Islands	October 2022	42,697	40,609	2,088	4.9%	No	No
Virgin Islands	September 2022	42,370	40,072	2,298	5.4%	No	No
Virgin Islands	August 2022	42,465	40,047	2,418	5.7%	No	No
Virgin Islands	July 2022	43,587	40,909	2,678	6.1%	No	No
Virgin Islands	June 2022	43,153	40,284	2,869	6.6%	No	No
Virgin Islands	May 2022	42,955	40,134	2,821	6.6%	No	No
Virgin Islands	April 2022	43,028	40,122	2,906	6.8%	No	No
Virgin Islands	March 2022	43,312	40,122	3,190	7.4%	No	No
Virgin Islands	February 2022	43,149	39,784	3,365	7.8%	No	No
Virgin Islands	January 2022	42,842	39,259	3,583	8.4%	No	No
Virgin Islands	December 2021	43,326	39,922	3,404	7.9%	No	No
Virgin Islands	November 2021	43,651	39,909	3,741	8.6%	No	No
Virgin Islands	October 2021	43,680	39,809	3,871	8.9%	No	No
Virgin Islands	September 2021	43,491	39,497	3,995	9.2%	No	No
Virgin Islands	August 2021	43,951	39,709	4,242	9.7%	No	No
Virgin Islands	July 2021	44,031	39,797	4,234	9.6%	No	No
Virgin Islands	June 2021	43,496	39,484	4,012	9.2%	No	No
Virgin Islands	May 2021	42,946	39,359	3,586	8.4%	No	No
Virgin Islands	April 2021	42,878	39,459	3,419	8.0%	No	No
Virgin Islands	March 2021	42,864	39,234	3,630	8.5%	No	No
Virgin Islands	February 2021	42,807	39,122	3,685	8.6%	No	No
Virgin Islands	January 2021	42,409	38,584	3,824	9.0%	No	No

Source: US Virgin Islands Department of Labor



Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject

Change Output Options:

From: 2021 To: 2023

☐ include graphs ☐ include annual averages

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Data extracted on: June 16, 2023 (5:35:46 PM)

Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey

Series Id: LNU01000000
Not Seasonally Adjusted
Series title: (Unadj) Civilian Labor Force Level
Labor force status: Civilian labor force
Type of data: Number in thousands
Age: 16 years and over

Download: [xlsx](#)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2021	159234(1)	160008	160397	160379	160607	162167	162817	161788	161392	161863	162099	161696
2022	162825(1)	163725	164274	163449	164157	165012	165321	164971	164463	164753	164272	164224
2023	165070(1)	166178	166783	166221	166702							

1 : Data affected by changes in population controls.

Series Id: LNU03000000
Not Seasonally Adjusted
Series title: (Unadj) Unemployment Level
Labor force status: Unemployed
Type of data: Number in thousands
Age: 16 years and over

Download: [xlsx](#)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2021	10851	10486	9905	9220	8829	9883	9221	8556	7366	6896	6302	5964
2022	7207	6782	6168	5458	5548	6334	6255	6256	5460	5609	5523	5352
2023	6378	6465	6043	5146	5700							

Series Id: LNU04000000
Not Seasonally Adjusted
Series title: (Unadj) Unemployment Rate
Labor force status: Unemployment rate
Type of data: Percent or rate
Age: 16 years and over

Download: [xlsx](#)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2021	6.8	6.6	6.2	5.7	5.5	6.1	5.7	5.3	4.6	4.3	3.9	3.7
2022	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3
2023	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.1	3.4							