

ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Type of request:** Initial
2. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **State:** Washington
5. **Region:** Western
6. **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.
7. **Description of alternative procedures:** Washington is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 38 counties from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24.
8. **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 time 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 seeks a waiver for a regional group of 38 contiguous counties based on the region's aggregate average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of August 2021 through July 2023. The average national unemployment rate for this period was 3.8 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.5 percent. The region's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period was 4.7 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data August 2021 through July 2023		
Contiguous Counties	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Adams County	11,824	238,134
Asotin County	9,399	255,437

Benton County	124,965	2,554,483
Chelan County	49,870	1,073,408
Clallam County	40,174	698,992
Clark County	273,912	5,990,064
Columbia County	2,136	42,624
Cowlitz County	64,260	1,177,250
Douglas County	26,673	522,880
Ferry County	5,017	54,904
Franklin County	63,583	1,057,442
Garfield County	1,210	19,290
Grant County	67,993	1,163,288
Grays Harbor County	46,362	703,029
Island County	41,816	883,643
Jefferson County	16,280	305,136
Kitsap County	134,887	3,108,534
Kittitas County	30,415	538,331
Klickitat County	13,143	236,914
Lewis County	48,367	837,920
Lincoln County	5,708	112,114
Mason County	36,860	611,271
Okanogan County	28,610	470,128
Pacific County	13,632	208,984
Pend Oreille County	8,252	124,284
Pierce County	545,278	10,910,656
San Juan County	8,080	211,930
Skagit County	75,438	1,486,885
Skamania County	6,943	133,822
Snohomish County	359,007	10,803,210
Spokane County	291,835	6,340,293
Stevens County	29,946	462,859
Thurston County	159,560	3,584,372
Wahkiakum County	2,110	33,045
Walla Walla County	32,347	738,981
Whatcom County	131,038	2,763,731
Whitman County	24,427	561,099
Yakima County	196,028	3,158,726
Combined Area Total	3,027,385	64,178,093
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.7%	

20% Above National Average Threshold	4.5%
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9. 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.

10. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):

The caseload for the proposed waived areas was 70,579 as of October 2023, accounting for 14 percent of the caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

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

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from February 1, 2024 through January 31, 2025.

12. Proposed quality control review procedures:

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

13. Name, title, email, and signature of requesting official:

Name: Babs Roberts

Title: Director, Community Services Division

Email: babette.roberts@dshs.wa.gov

Signature: 

14. Date of request: 1/5/2024

15. State agency staff contact:

Name: Angela Aikins

Title: Administrator, Food Programs and Policy

Email: angela.aikins@dshs.wa.gov

16. Regional Office contact person (to be completed by FNS regional office):