

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, as amended
- 3. Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
- 4. State:** Massachusetts
- 5. Region:** NERO
- 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:**

The State of Massachusetts is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in three counties, 155 cities and towns 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 qualify for an ABAWD time limit waiver if they have insufficient jobs. To support this claim, states may submit evidence that an area is designated as a Labor Surplus Area (LSA) by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, or 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 3 individually eligible counties based on their average unemployment rates that are at least 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2022 through January 2024. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 3.6 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.3 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2022 through January 2024			
County	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
Barnstable County	124,133	2,733,427	4.5%
Dukes County	11,837	254,442	4.7%
Nantucket County	12,404	206,698	6.0%
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.3%		

The State seeks a waiver for one eligible city based on their average unemployment rates that are 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2022 through January 2024. The average unemployment rate for this city was 4.3 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2022 through January 2024			
Towns	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Rate
Gloucester city	16,317	382,765	4.3%
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.3%		

The State also seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 111 contiguous towns and cities based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2022 through January 2024. The average unemployment rate for this region was 4.3 percent. The eligible region is comprised of all towns in Berkshire, Hampden and Franklin counties, in addition to 30 towns.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2022 through January 2024		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Adams town	4,544	88,272
Agawam Town city	13,299	363,371
Alford town	128	5,400
Amherst town city	15,668	439,558
Ashfield town	484	21,001
Athol town	6,275	136,028
Barre town	3,060	70,416
Becket town	1,032	23,209
Bernardston town	1,073	28,230

Blandford town	572	15,744
Brimfield town	1,806	45,194
Buckland town	593	20,431
Charlemont town	689	14,301
Charlton town	6,416	162,049
Cheshire town	1,929	36,354
Chester town	726	15,815
Chesterfield town	480	16,864
Chicopee city	29,666	657,554
Clarksburg town	752	21,292
Colrain town	740	21,631
Conway town	613	22,893
Cummington town	443	9,844
Dalton town	2,955	67,269
Deerfield town	1,927	73,793
Dudley town	6,142	143,828
East Brookfield town	1,186	28,127
East Longmeadow town	6,462	197,449
Egremont town	395	17,442
Erving town	694	22,613
Florida town	277	7,898
Gill town	680	21,479
Goshen town	275	13,716
Granby town	2,758	87,497
Granville town	770	19,456
Great Barrington town	3,241	97,177
Greenfield city	7,352	193,730
Hampden town	2,379	61,774
Hancock town	261	9,217
Hawley town	158	4,146
Heath town	237	9,805
Hinsdale town	1,253	24,858
Holland town	1,336	33,118
Holyoke city	20,332	396,959
Huntington town	1,122	29,268
Lanesborough town	1,609	40,501
Lee town	2,645	69,948
Lenox town	1,837	53,668
Leverett town	672	22,902
Leyden town	220	9,333

Longmeadow town	5,377	168,728
Ludlow town	11,656	263,883
Middlefield town	167	5,869
Monroe town	24	975
Monson town	4,374	100,104
Montague town	4,016	111,918
Monterey town	378	12,709
Montgomery town	398	10,969
Mount Washington town	40	2,084
New Ashford town	92	3,249
New Braintree town	548	12,896
New Marlborough town	566	18,242
New Salem town	453	14,405
North Adams city	6,618	133,782
Northfield town	1,202	39,315
Oakham town	1,106	22,715
Orange town	3,637	76,993
Otis town	792	21,763
Palmer Town city	7,056	155,938
Pelham town	460	15,292
Peru town	410	10,826
Petersham town	617	14,002
Phillipston town	769	21,260
Pittsfield city	20,413	526,639
Plainfield town	292	8,091
Richmond town	503	16,756
Rowe town	189	4,129
Royalston town	568	14,736
Russell town	843	21,620
Sandisfield town	387	11,436
Savoy town	338	7,098
Sheffield town	1,443	51,590
Shelburne town	795	22,806
Shutesbury town	525	21,182
Southampton town	2,611	84,983
Southbridge Town city	10,014	213,029
Southwick town	4,825	126,435
Spencer town	6,211	143,323
Springfield city	93,629	1,606,764
Stockbridge town	825	21,156

Sturbridge town	4,317	127,443
Sunderland town	1,499	56,783
Tolland town	144	6,391
Tyringham town	141	5,236
Wales town	1,029	23,065
Ware town	5,502	117,535
Warren town	2,401	66,304
Warwick town	345	9,972
Washington town	230	5,879
Webster town	9,657	214,753
Wendell town	348	10,652
West Brookfield town	1,994	41,204
West Springfield Town city	13,592	362,802
West Stockbridge town	633	17,512
Westfield city	19,052	476,078
Westhampton town	656	19,330
Whately town	509	20,203
Wilbraham town	6,040	190,081
Williamsburg town	1,282	37,354
Williamstown town	2,537	87,547
Windsor town	427	10,574
Worthington town	524	15,109
Combined Area Total	428,189	10,053,919
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.3%	

The State seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 4 contiguous cities and towns based on its average unemployment rate that is at least 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2022 through January 2024. The average unemployment rate for this region was 4.3 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2022 through January 2024		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Ashburnham town	2,721	74,586
Ashby town	1,510	46,459
Fitchburg city	24,188	534,764

Gardner city	10,150	233,483
Combined Area Total	38,569	889,292
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.3%	

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Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2022 through January 2024		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Haverhill city	33,801	885,337
Lawrence city	55,789	1,053,832
Methuen town	27,334	698,347
North Andover town	12,600	405,708
Combined Area Total	129,524	3,043,224
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.3%	

The State also seeks a waiver for an eligible region of 35 contiguous towns and cities based on its average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of February 2022 through January 2024. The average unemployment rate for this region was 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate of 4.3 percent for the same period. The eligible region is comprised of all towns in Bristol County, and an additional 15 towns.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2022 through January 2024		
Contiguous towns and cities	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Abington town	8,691	240,579
Acushnet town	6,478	138,502
Attleboro city	23,128	614,524
Berkley town	3,282	93,669

Bridgewater town city	13,849	365,136
Brockton city	57,719	1,269,120
Carver town	5,978	151,372
Dartmouth town	17,632	399,159
Dighton town	3,793	110,711
East Bridgewater town	7,378	206,419
Easton town	11,635	326,257
Fairhaven town	9,411	194,844
Fall River city	57,883	1,075,834
Freetown town	4,860	121,985
Halifax town	3,940	99,704
Lakeville town	5,552	170,466
Mansfield town	10,162	328,471
Marion town	2,238	59,655
Mattapoissett town	2,929	86,503
Middleborough town	12,438	321,155
New Bedford city	66,055	1,140,265
North Attleborough Town city	13,652	426,381
Norton town	9,141	252,697
Plympton town	1,559	34,779
Raynham town	7,170	200,316
Rehoboth town	6,036	185,566
Rochester town	2,689	80,122
Seekonk town	7,298	204,495
Somerset town	9,022	230,893
Swansea town	8,490	223,260
Taunton city	33,062	765,089
Wareham town	12,533	281,330
West Bridgewater town	3,453	105,948
Westport town	9,029	214,033
Whitman town	8,272	220,453
Combined Area Total	466,437	10,939,692
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.3%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.3%	

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 these areas, as of April 2025, represents 4% 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 July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

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: Shelly Yarnie

Title: Associate Commissioner for Food Security and Nutrition Programs

Email: Shelly.Yarnie2@mass.gov



Signature:

14. Date of request: June 9, 2025

15. State agency staff contact:

Name: Frances Ransom

Title: Assistant Director for SNAP Compliance

Email: frances.ransom-canning@mass.gov

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