

DEC 31 1998

970304

SUBJECT: FSP - Connecticut - Request to Waive Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as Amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

TO: Robert L. Canavan, Regional Director
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region

This is in response to the Connecticut State Agency's request of November 16, 1998, to extend and modify its current waiver of Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Under the current proposed waiver and extension, which expires on December 31, 1998, 16 cities and towns designated as LSAs for fiscal year 1999 would continue to be exempt from the requirements of Section 6(o) of the Act. The town of East Haven is being added to the waiver based on its designation as an LSA for fiscal year 1999.

The City of Hartford, originally covered by waiver #970303, and the cities and towns of Derby, New Haven, and Norwich, originally covered by waiver #970305, are being added to this waiver and are retroactive to September 1, 1998, based on their designations as LSAs for fiscal years 1998 and 1999. There is no record in our files to indicate that the waivers covering these areas were ever extended to December 31, 1998.

The waiver response approving the State agency's request to is attached. If you have any questions, please contact James A. Walsh at 703-305-2531.

Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division

Attachment

cc: John Knaus
Maurice Tracy
All Regions (except NERO)
Civil Rights
CPB (circulate)
Mike DePiro, OAE

FNS:FSP:PDD:CPB:JWalsh FINAL:12/30/98:va

File: ABAWD—Connecticut

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Waiver Response

1. **Waiver serial number:** 970304
2. **Type of request:** Extension and Modification
3. **Primary regulation citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.
4. **Secondary regulation citation:**
5. **State:** Connecticut
6. **Region:** NERO
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), P.L. 104-193, provides that no individual shall be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program as a member of any household if, during the preceding 36 month period, the individual received food stamp benefits for not less than 3 months (consecutive or otherwise), during which the individual did not work 20 hours or more per week, averaged monthly; did not participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours or more per week; did not participate in and comply with requirements of a program under Section 20 or a comparable program established by the State; or received benefits because they were exempt from these requirements.

Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the PRWORA, also provides that, upon the request of a State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the above provision 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 proposed alternative procedures:** Under current waiver #970304, the Connecticut State Agency is proposing to extend the exemption from this requirement to individuals residing in the following cities and towns which have been designated as Labor Surplus Areas (LSAs) by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the Department of Labor: Ansonia, Bridgeport, East Hartford, Killingly, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New London, Plainfield, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Voluntown, Waterbury, Winchester, and Windham.

The Connecticut State Agency is requesting a modification of waiver #970304 to expand the exemption to the cities and towns of Derby, East Haven, Hartford, New Haven, and Norwich which have also been designated as LSAs by the ETA. The City of Hartford was originally approved under waiver #970303 for unemployment over 10 percent; the waiver expired August 31, 1998. The cities and towns of Derby, New Haven and Norwich were originally approved under waiver #970305 for average unemployment for two years which was 20 percent above the national average; the waiver expired August 31, 1998. The State agency added the town of East Haven which has been classified by the Department of Labor as an LSA beginning October 1, 1998.

The State agency also requested that the town of Plymouth be added to the waiver. According to the State agency the town of Plymouth was designated as an LSA in October 1997 and October 1994. The town of Plymouth was originally approved under waiver #970305 for average unemployment for two years which was 20 percent above the national average; the waiver expired August 31, 1998. The town of Plymouth does not currently qualify for a waiver as an LSA or under any other criteria.

Approval of this waiver would allow individuals who reside in those areas to participate in the Food Stamp Program without being required to meet unrealistic program work requirements. It would also ease the burden for individuals trying to comply with work requirements which are unreasonable given the local economic environment. Finally, it would provide for more efficient operation of the Food Stamp Program by allowing the State agency to focus its efforts and resources in regard to work requirements on those households most likely to benefit.

9. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** We are approving the State agency's request to exempt individuals residing in the cities and towns of Derby, Hartford, New Haven and Norwich retroactive to September 1, 1998 and expiring on December 31, 1999, based on their designations as LSAs. We are adding the town of East Haven to the waiver and are also extending the waiver for the cities and towns of Ansonia, Bridgeport, East Hartford, Killingly, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New London, Plainfield, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Voluntown, Waterbury, Winchester, and Windham until December 31, 1999. All of these areas appear on ETA's FY 1999 list of designated LSA areas.

We are not including residents of the town of Plymouth in the waiver. The town of Plymouth does not currently qualify as an LSA. We understand that current unemployment in Plymouth is about three and one-half percent and, therefore, residents of the town would not qualify for a waiver under any of the approvable criteria for such a waiver. If unemployment in the town changes, the State agency should submit sufficient data to us for our determination.

10. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** The waiver is approved pursuant to Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act, as amended by Section 824 of the PRWORA, which allows the Secretary to waive the applicability of the work requirement provision in Section 6(o) 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 over 10 percent or has insufficient jobs.
11. **Conditions and reasons:** N/A
12. **Information required for extension:** To receive an extension the State agency must provide data indicating that there are insufficient jobs.
13. **Expiration date:** This waiver is retroactive to September 1, 1998 for the cities and towns of Derby, Hartford, New Haven, and Norwich. The waiver is effective January 1, 1999 for the rest of the cities and towns covered by the waiver. The waiver expires for all areas on December 31, 1999.
14. **Limitation on regional office approval of like requests:** This waiver is limited to the Connecticut State Agency.
15. **Quality Control Procedures:** N/A
16. **Date of national office action:**
17. **Date of State agency's request:** November 16, 1998
18. **Date of regional office transmittal of response to State agency:**
19. **Actual implementation date:**