



Food and
Nutrition
Service

DEC 02 2015

Park Office
Center

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Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

Ms. Pamela Higa
SNAP Administrator
Department of Human Services
Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division
820 Mililani Street, Suite 606
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: SNAP – Hawaii Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents Time Limit on the Island of Molokai – Extension – Approval

Dear Ms. Higa:

This is in response to the Hawaii Department of Human Services' request to extend waiver number 2150080, which would allow Hawaii to continue to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) on the Island of Molokai from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program time limit at 7 CFR 273.24. The Hawaii State agency has requested a 24-month waiver extension based upon Molokai having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 36-month period. Following longstanding Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) policy, areas may qualify for a 24-month waiver based upon having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 36-month period.

The Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations data provided by the State demonstrates that Molokai Island had an unemployment rate of 20 percent above the national average for the 36-month time period of October 2012 through September 2015. Therefore, FNS is approving the Hawaii State agency's request to extend its ABAWD time limit waiver on Molokai for 24 months, effective December 1, 2015 through November 30, 2017. The detailed waiver response is attached. Please contact Shahdy Monemzadeh at Shahdy.Monemzadeh@fns.usda.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Sasha Gersten-Paai
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Enclosure

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2150080
2. **Type of request:** Extension
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **State:** Hawaii
5. **Region:** Western
6. **Regulatory requirement:** Federal regulations at 7 CFR 273.24 provide 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 36-month period in which the individual was subject to, but did not comply with the ABAWD work requirement. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(a) provide that fulfilling the work requirement means: working 20 hours or more per week, averaged monthly; participating in and complying with the requirements of a work program at least 20 hours per week; any combination of working and participating in a work program for a total of 20 hours per week; or participating and complying with a workfare program.

Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f) also provide 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.

7. **Description of proposed alternative procedures:** The Hawaii State agency has requested to waive the ABAWD time limit at 7 CFR 273.24 on the Island of Molokai for the 24-month period of December 1, 2015 through November 30, 2017. Hawaii has supported its request based upon the Island of Molokai having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 36-month period of October 2012 through September 2015. During this 36-month period the national average unemployment rate was 6.5 percent; 20 percent above this is 7.8 percent. As detailed in the following table, Molokai's average unemployment rate for the selected 36-month period was 10.5 percent.

Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations / Bureau of Labor Statistics Data October 2012 through September 2014*		
	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Total
Island of Molokai, Hawaii	93,250	9,750
Average Unemployment Rate	10.5%	
20% Above National Average Unemployment Rate Threshold	7.8%	

*Data extracted from <https://www.hiwi.org/gsipub/index.asp?docid=417> and <http://www.bls.gov> on December 1, 2015.

8. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving the Hawaii State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit on the Island of Molokai because the area meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance. The Island of Molokai qualifies for a 24-month waiver based upon having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 36-month period of October 2012 through September 2015.
9. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** The waiver is approved pursuant to 7 CFR 273.24(f).
10. **Conditions and reasons:** None.
11. **Information required for extension:** To receive an extension the State agency must provide FNS with a formal waiver request supported by data or other information as described in 7 CFR 273.24(f). If the State requests an extension based upon unemployment rates, it must provide FNS with all supporting documentation, including data spreadsheets.
12. **Expiration date:** The waiver extension is effective December 1, 2015 through November 30, 2017.
13. **Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** The waiver is limited to the Hawaii State agency.
14. **Date of national office action:** DEC 02 2015
15. **Date of State agency's request:** November 19, 2015
16. **Date of regional office transmittal of request:** November 19, 2015
17. **Implementation date:** December 1, 2015
18. **State agency contact:**
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phiga@dhs.hawaii.gov

18. State agency contact:

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(808) 586-5722

19. FNS regional contact:

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