



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

NOV 10 2015

**Food and
Nutrition
Service**

**3101 Park
Center Drive**

**Alexandria, VA
22302-1500**

Mr. Jeff McCue
Commissioner
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

RE: SNAP – Massachusetts – Request to Waive Able-bodied Adults without Dependents
Time Limit – Extension and Modification – Approval

Dear Commissioner McCue:

This is in response to the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance's request to extend and modify waiver number 2150057, which would allow Massachusetts to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) in 40 areas from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit at 7 CFR 273.24 for calendar year 2016.

In developing its waiver request, the Massachusetts State agency has combined certain jurisdictions based upon their respective locations in the State while considering others individually. The request includes five individual cities and towns, four regional groupings of multiple towns and cities, one individual county, one regional grouping of two counties, two individual New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs), one regional grouping of two NECTAs, and one Reservation area. The State agency has supported its request to waive the time limit based upon the areas having aggregate average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. In addition, the State has supported waiving one town based upon its having an average unemployment rate greater than 10 percent over a recent three month period.

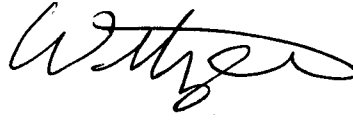
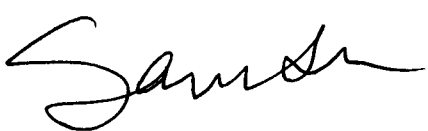
The Bureau of Labor Statistics and American Community Survey data provided by the Massachusetts State agency supports waiver approval for the requested areas. Therefore, the Food and Nutrition service is approving Massachusetts' request to waive the ABAWD time limit in all requested areas for 12 months, effective January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016. The attached waiver response cites the 40 approved areas, explains

Mr. Jeff McCue

Page 2

the supporting evidence used, and details the terms and conditions of the approval. If you have any questions, please contact Kevin Pasquaretta at Kevin.Pasquaretta@fns.usda.gov or at (617)565-5402.

Sincerely,



for

Sasha Gersten-Paal
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Attachment

RE

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2150057
2. **Type of request:** Extension and modification
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **State:** Massachusetts
5. **Region:** North East
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 3-year 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 Massachusetts State agency has requested to waive the ABAWD time limit at 7 CFR 273.24 in a total of 40 areas from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. The Massachusetts State agency has combined certain jurisdictions based upon their respective locations in the State while considering others individually. The request includes five individual cities and towns, four regional groupings of multiple towns and cities, one individual county, one regional grouping of two counties, two individual New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs), one regional grouping of two NECTAs, and one Reservation area.

The State has supported waiving the time limit in eight contiguous towns and cities based on the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014. The average national unemployment rate for this period was 6.8 percent; 20 percent above this is 8.1 percent. As detailed in the following table, the combined area's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period reached 8.1 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
January 2013 - December 2014*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
1. Ashburnham town	83,950	5,229
2. Fitchburg city	462,738	42,454
3. Gardner city	227,583	19,054
4. Phillipston town	22,650	1,713
5. Royalston town	16,961	1,127
6. Templeton town	102,990	7,318
7. Westminster town	103,055	6,261
8. Winchendon town	130,207	9,754
Combined Area Total	1,150,134	92,910
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	8.1%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	8.1%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit in four contiguous towns and cities based on the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2013 through January 2015. The national average unemployment rate for this period was 6.7 percent; 20 percent above this is 8.0 percent. As detailed in the following table, the combined area's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period reached 8.0 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
February 2013 - January 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
9. Dudley town	149,826	10,212
10. Southbridge Town city	194,282	19,059
11. Sturbridge town	119,237	7,065
12. Webster town	206,147	16,903
Combined Area Total	669,492	53,239
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	8.0%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	8.0%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit in 11 contiguous towns and cities based on the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of March 2013 through February 2015. The national average unemployment rate for this period was 6.6 percent; 20 percent above this

is 7.9 percent. As detailed in the table that follows, the combined area's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period reached 7.9 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
March 2013 - February 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
13. Barnstable Town city	564,741	36,021
14. Brewster town	120,694	7,456
15. Chatham town	69,571	4,564
16. Dennis town	158,925	13,134
17. Eastham town	62,484	5,311
18. Harwich town	145,150	10,688
19. Orleans town	68,002	3,995
20. Provincetown town	55,489	13,008
21. Truro town	30,806	4,415
22. Wellfleet town	40,394	4,674
23. Yarmouth town	288,333	22,739
Combined Area Total	1,604,589	126,005
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	7.9%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	7.9%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit in four contiguous towns and cities based on the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of April 2013 through March 2015. The national average unemployment rate for this period was 6.5 percent; 20 percent above this is 7.8 percent. As detailed in the following table, the combined area's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period reached 7.8 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
April 2013 - March 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
24. Abington town	211,442	13,603
25. Brockton city	1,132,024	93,901
26. Holbrook town	144,883	9,958
27. West Bridgewater town	89,658	5,042
Combined Area Total	1,578,007	122,504
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	7.8%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	7.8%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit two contiguous counties based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2013 through April 2015. The State has also supported waiving the city of Lowell based upon the area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the same 24-month period. The national average unemployment rate for this period was 6.4 percent; 20 percent above this is 7.7 percent. As detailed in the following tables, the combined area and the city of Lowell's average unemployment rates reached 7.7 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
May 2013 - April 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
28. Berkshire County	1,585,908	104,124
29. Hampden County	5,335,174	426,331
Group Total	6,921,082	530,455
Group Unemployment Rate	7.7%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	7.7%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
May 2013 - April 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
30. Lowell city	1,294,693	99,486
Unemployment Rate	7.7%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	7.7%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit for an individual county and three individual towns based on the areas having average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2013 through May 2015. The national average unemployment rate for this period was 6.3 percent; 20 percent above this is 7.6 percent. As detailed in the following table, each individual area's average unemployment rate reached at least 7.6 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data			
June 2013 - May 2015*			
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
31. Dukes County	224,433	17,589	7.8%
32. Gloucester city	371,024	28,345	7.6%
33. Monroe town	1,838	149	8.1%
34. Rowe town	3,853	293	7.6%
20% Above National Average Threshold			7.6%

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit in the individual New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) of Athol, MA Micropolitan and the portion of the Lawrence-Methuen Town-Salem, MA-NH NECTA division that is located in Massachusetts, based upon the areas having average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2013 through May 2015. The Athol MA Micropolitan NECTA is comprised of the towns of Athol, Orange, and Petersham. The part of the Lawrence-Methuen Town-Salem, MA-NH NECTA Division that is located in Massachusetts is comprised of Lawrence city, Methuen town city and North Andover town. As detailed in the following table, the individual average unemployment rates for each of the two NECTAs exceeded 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate for the selected time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data			
June 2013 - May 2015*			
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
35. Athol, MA Micropolitan NECTA	236,721	18,523	7.8%
36. Lawrence-Methuen Town-Salem, MA-NH NECTA Division, MA Part	1,840,035	154,885	8.4%
20% Above National Average Threshold			7.6%

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit in two contiguous NECTAs based on the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2013 to May 2015. The New Bedford MA Metropolitan NECTA is comprised of Acushnet town, Dartmouth town, Fairhaven town, Mattapoisett town and New Bedford city. The part of the Providence-Warwick, RI-MA Metropolitan NECTA that is located in Massachusetts is comprised of several towns and cities: Attleboro city, Bellingham town, Blackstone town, Fall River city, Millville

town, North Attleboro town, Plainville town, Rehoboth town, Seekonk town, Somerset town, Swansea town and Westport town. As detailed in the following table, the aggregate average unemployment rate for this combined area exceeded 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate for the selected time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data June 2013 - May 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
37. New Bedford, MA Metropolitan NECTA	2,017,689	176,651
38. Providence-Warwick, RI-MA NECTA, MA Part	3,448,320	249,412
Combined Area Total	5,466,009	426,063
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	7.8%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	7.6%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

The State has supported waiving the time limit in Wampanoag-Aquinnah Trust Land based upon the Reservation area having an average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of June 2013 to May 2015. The reservation unemployment rate was calculated by applying the 2013 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) share ratios to county-level BLS data for June 2013 to May 2015. As detailed in the following table, the average unemployment rate for the Wampanoag-Aquinnah Trust land exceeded 20 percent above the national average unemployment rate for the selected time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data / Census Bureau Data*	
Area	Unemployment Rate: June 2013 – May 2015
39. Dukes County; Wampanoag- Aquinnah Trust Land	9.8%
20% Above National Average Threshold	7.6%

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> and <http://factfinder.census.gov> on October 8, 2015 and October 21, 2015.

The State has supported waiving the time limit in Nantucket County/town based upon the area having an average unemployment rate for the 3-month period that exceeded 10 percent for the 3-month period of January 2015 through March 2015. The average unemployment rate in Nantucket during this period was 11.6 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2015 - March 2015*		
Area	Labor Force	Unemployed
40. Nantucket County/town	16,609	1,928
Unemployment Rate	11.6%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 8, 2015

8. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving the Massachusetts State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit in all 40 requested jurisdictions because the areas meet the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.
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 is effective January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016.
13. **Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** The waiver is limited to the Massachusetts State agency.
14. **Date of national office action:** NOV 10 2015
15. **Date of State agency's request:** September 10, 2015
16. **Date of regional office transmittal of request:** September 24, 2015
17. **Implementation date:** January 1, 2016
18. **State agency contact:**
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 (617)348-5395

2150057

Page 8

19. FNS regional contacts:

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