



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

June 15, 2023

Shenetta Drone
Deputy Executive Director
Economic Programs
Department of Human Services
200 S. Lamar Street
Post Office Box 352
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

RE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Mississippi Request
to Waive Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Time Limit – Initial –
Partial Approval

Dear Deputy Executive Director Drone:

This is in response to the Mississippi Department of Human Services' May 11, 2023, request to waive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). The attached waiver response includes the approved areas, the supporting evidence used, and the conditions of approval.

FNS approves DHS' request to waive the SNAP ABAWD time limits in the 14 contiguous counties for the Delta Workforce Development Area. On June 13, 2023, FNS requested additional justification from DHS for Monroe and Montgomery counties to demonstrate that the areas have an unemployment rate of over 10 percent or do not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals. FNS is available to provide technical assistance to DHS if needed and will provide a response to the State's request to waive Monroe and Montgomery counties in a separate letter.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) also reminds the State agency that it must measure the 3-year period and track ABAWDs on a continuous basis, even in areas under a waiver. The State must continue tracking so that the State will be ready to transition off the waiver when it expires and reintroduce the time limit. Please contact your Regional Office representative with any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Catrina Kamau

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Catrina L. Kamau
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Enclosure

Enclosure

**ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)
WAIVER RESPONSE**

- 1. Request Type:** Initial
- 2. Statutory Citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
- 3. Regulatory Citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
- 4. State:** Mississippi
- 5. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Southeast
- 6. Requirement:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and regulations at 7 CFR 273.24 provide that no individual 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) and 7 CFR 273.24 also provide 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. Requested Area(s) and Support:** The State agency requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in 16 counties from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

The State agency supported its request for a combined area of 14 contiguous counties based upon the area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2021 through December 2022. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.5 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.4 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 6.6 percent during the 24-month period (Table 1).

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Table 1: Counties (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, January 2021 – December 2022)

Counties
1. Bolivar County
2. Carroll County
3. Coahoma County
4. Holmes County
5. Humphrey's County
6. Issaquena County
7. Leflore County
8. Panola County
9. Quitman County
10. Sharkey County
11. Sunflower County
12. Tallahatchie County
13. Tunica County
14. Washington County
Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 6.6%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on May 18, 2023.

The State agency is also requesting to waive two additional counties affected by a major disaster as declared on March 26, 2023, under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121. FNS has requested additional justification for Montgomery and Monroe counties to demonstrate the areas 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. The evidence the State agency submitted does not represent that the State agency has a threshold of 20% above the National average for the 24-month time period frame of January 2021 to December 2022.

- 8. FNS Action and Justification:** FNS is partially approving the State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit. The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.
- 9. Authority:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).

10. Implementation Date: July 1, 2023

11. Expiration Date: June 30, 2024

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12. Information Required to Submit a Modification, Extension, or New Waiver: To receive a modification, extension, or submit a new waiver to replace the current waiver, the State agency must provide FNS with a formal request supported by data or other information as described in 7 CFR 273.24(f). Any request based upon unemployment rates must include data spreadsheets and supporting documentation.

13. State Agency Contact Information:

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14. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:

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