



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

MAR 30 2018

Park Office
Center

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

Natasha Johnson
Director
Division of Family Development
Department of Human Services
PO Box 716
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

RE: SNAP – New Jersey Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults without
Dependents Time Limit – Amendment to Waive 13 Areas – Partial Approval

Dear Ms. Johnson:

This is in response to the New Jersey State agency's March 6, 2018, request to amend its current waiver of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). New Jersey already requested and received the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) approval to waive the time limit in three areas from January 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018. Now the State is requesting to waive 10 more areas. FNS understands that the State is making this request after reevaluating labor market data for the areas. The State has requested that the amended waiver be effective January 1, 2018.

The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance. Therefore, FNS approves New Jersey to waive the time limit in the 10 additional areas. However, FNS is does not approve the requested start date of January 1, 2018, for the 10 additional areas. Instead, FNS approves the waiver effective from March 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018. The approval amends FNS's December 12, 2017. The enclosed waiver response describes the supporting evidence used and the conditions of approval. If you have any questions please contact Marilene Nepali at Marilene.Nepali@fns.usda.gov.

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FNS is reviewing its policies regarding ABAWD time limit waivers. Moving forward, FNS will be taking actions to support the Administration's priority to provide able-bodied Americans a path to self-sufficiency. This goal requires that we establish a clear and mutual commitment to moving SNAP participants to meaningful employment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lizbeth Silberman", followed by a stylized flourish or initials.

Lizbeth Silberman
Director
Program Development Division

Enclosure

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 970028
2. **Type of request:** Amendment of the Food and Nutrition Service's December 12, 2017 approval of waiver 970028
3. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended
4. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** New Jersey
6. **Region:** Mid-Atlantic
7. **Requirement:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, and 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 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.
8. **Proposed alternative procedures:** The New Jersey State agency is requesting to waive the ABAWD time limit in a total of 13 counties. The State agency has grouped contiguous counties for consideration as two respective combined areas, and has supported its request based upon each combined area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2015 through January 2017. During this time period the national average unemployment rate was 5.0 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 6.0 percent. As detailed in the following tables, the unemployment rate for each combined area was at least 6.0 percent during the selected time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
February 2015 – January 2017*		
Group 1 Counties	Unemployment	Labor Force
Essex	569,534	8,938,227
Passaic	387,258	5,955,618
Sussex	91,280	1,828,227
Union	368,590	6,679,914
Warren	66,785	1,366,603

Total	1,483,447	24,768,589
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.0%	

Group 2 Counties	Unemployment	Labor Force
Atlantic	250,818	3,015,549
Burlington	267,822	5,585,025
Camden	359,480	6,128,318
Cape May	118,021	1,146,077
Cumberland	129,942	1,619,970
Gloucester	196,333	3,597,580
Mercer	219,348	4,777,810
Salem	49,819	738,897
Total	1,591,583	26,609,226
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.0%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on March 7, 2018

9. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approves the New Jersey State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit in the 13 counties because the requested areas meet the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance, as described in this waiver approval.
10. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended and 7 CFR 273.24(f).
11. **Information required for an extension:** To receive an amendment or extension 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.
12. **Implementation date and expiration date:** The waiver is effective March 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018.
13. **Limitation, if any, on Regional Office approval of like requests:** The waiver is limited to the New Jersey State agency.
14. **Date of National Office action:** **MAR 30 2018**
15. **Date of State agency's request:** March 6, 2018

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16. Date of Regional Office transmittal of request: March 6, 2018

17. State agency contact:

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18. FNS regional contacts:

Marilene Nepali

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