



Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Date: December 21, 2018

Natasha Johnson

Director

Division of Family Development

New Jersey Department of Human Services

PO Box 716

Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – New Jersey Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Time Limit – Approval

Dear Ms. Johnson:

This is in response to the New Jersey State agency's November 14, 2018, request to waive the SNAP time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents in 13 counties from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) guidance. Therefore, FNS is approving the State to waive the time limit in the areas for a 12-month period as requested. The attached waiver response includes the approved areas, the supporting evidence used, and the conditions of approval. Please contact your FNS Regional Office with any questions.

As you may be aware, FNS has proposed regulations that would strengthen the standards by which areas can qualify for these waivers so that the statutory ABAWD work requirement is applied more broadly. FNS has proposed that the rule, once finalized, would go into effect on October 1, 2019, which is the beginning of federal fiscal year 2020. Therefore, the final rule could change the qualifying areas and approval period for this waiver.

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-of the waiver when it expires and reintroduce the time limit.

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,

Cathy McConnell
FOR

Sash Gersten-Paal

Chief

Certification Policy Branch

Program Development Division

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver Response

1. **Serial Number:** 970028
2. **Request Type:** Extension and amendment
3. **Statutory Citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
4. **Regulatory Citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** New Jersey
6. **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Mid-Atlantic
7. **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.
8. **Requested Area(s) and Support:** The New Jersey State agency has requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in 13 counties from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019. The State agency has grouped contiguous counties for consideration as two respective combined areas, and has supported its request based upon each respective combined area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. The State agency selected September 2016 through August 2018 for the areas. During this time period the national average unemployment rate was 4.3 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.1 percent. As shown in the following tables, the average unemployment rates for the requested areas were 5.2 percent during the selected time period.

Table 1: Combined Area 1 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data September 2016 through August 2018)

Counties
1. Essex County
2. Passaic County
3. Sussex County
4. Union County
5. Warren County
Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.2%

Table 2: Combined Area 2 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data September 2016 through August 2018)

Counties
1. Atlantic County
2. Burlington County
3. Camden County
4. Cape May County
5. Cumberland County
6. Gloucester County
7. Ocean County
8. Salem County
Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.2%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on November 28, 2018

9. **FNS Action and Justification:** FNS is approving the State agency to waive the ABAWD time limit as requested. The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.
10. **Authority:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).
11. **Implementation Date:** January 1, 2019
12. **Expiration Date:** December 31, 2019
13. **Information Required for Amendment or 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.
14. **State Agency Contact Information:**
Name: Larry Braasch
Phone Number: (609) 588-2405
Email: Larry.Braasch@dhs.state.nj.us
15. **FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
Name: Marilene Nepali
Phone Number: (609) 259-5126
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