



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

MAR 18 2016

Phyllis Morris
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Center for Employment and Economic Supports
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12243

RE: SNAP – New York Request to Waive Able-bodied Adults without
Dependents Time Limit in Three Additional Areas within New York City

Dear Ms. Morris:

This is in response to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's January 29, 2016, request to waive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) in an additional three community districts in New York City. The State agency is already approved to waive the time limit in four community districts in New York City for calendar year 2016 under waiver number 2150029, issued by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) on November 10, 2015.

The data and methods the State agency has provided in support of its request are characteristically used for areas in which current Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data is limited or unavailable. FNS reviews such requests for approval or denial on a case-by-case basis because they are not based upon the most current BLS data. After careful review, FNS is not approving this request because the evidence provided by the State does not adequately demonstrate a lack of sufficient jobs in the requested areas.

FNS shares New York's concern that eligible ABAWDs continue to receive the benefits they need, particularly as many areas in the country return to ABAWD time limits. We appreciate that certain groups, including the chronically homeless, may face additional challenges under these circumstances. Existing policy may provide an avenue for relief to those who are most in need and unable to secure employment. For example, people living with physical or mental challenges that prevent them from securing employment can be eligible for an exemption from the ABAWD time limit. Effectively implementing ABAWD time limit policy requires diligent, effective screening for these individuals. In addition, the State's 15 percent exemptions are available for those individuals who do not meet the criteria for exemption, but still face significant employment barriers. The State currently has 145,308 exemptions available for use.

FNS staff continues to be available to provide technical assistance if the Center for Employment and Economic Supports would like to discuss additional strategies to better serve ABAWDs.

Mr. Phyllis Morris
Page 2

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this topic further, please contact Kevin Pasquaretta at kevin.pasquaretta@fns.usda.gov or Martha Cavanaugh at martha.cavanaugh@FNS.USDA.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lizbeth Silberman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lizbeth Silberman
Director
Program Development Division