



Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Date: December 21, 2018

Lisa Watson
Deputy Secretary
Office of Income Maintenance
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

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

Dear Ms. Watson:

This is in response to the Pennsylvania State agency's November 7, 2018, request to waive the SNAP time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents in 63 counties and 2 minor civil divisions 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,

Cary McConnell
FOR

Sasha Gersten-Paal
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver Response

1. **Serial Number:** 2150045
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:** Pennsylvania
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 Pennsylvania State agency has requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in 63 contiguous counties and 2 minor civil division areas from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019. The State agency has grouped the 63 contiguous counties together and has supported its request based upon the grouped area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. The State agency selected March 2016 through February 2018 for all requested areas. During this time period the national average unemployment rate was 4.5 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.4 percent. As shown in the following tables, the aggregate unemployment rates for the requested areas were 5.4 percent or higher during the selected time period.

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

Counties
1. Adams County
2. Allegheny County
3. Armstrong County
4. Beaver County
5. Bedford County
6. Berks County
7. Blair County
8. Bradford County

Counties
9. Bucks County
10. Butler County
11. Cambria County
12. Cameron County
13. Carbon County
14. Clarion County
15. Clearfield County
16. Clinton County
17. Columbia County
18. Crawford County
19. Cumberland County
20. Dauphin County
21. Delaware County
22. Elk County
23. Erie County
24. Fayette County
25. Forest County
26. Franklin County
27. Fulton County
28. Greene County
29. Huntingdon County
30. Indiana County
31. Jefferson County
32. Juniata County
33. Lackawanna County
34. Lawrence County
35. Lebanon County
36. Lehigh County
37. Luzerne County
38. Lycoming County
39. McKean County
40. Mercer County
41. Mifflin County
42. Monroe County
43. Montour County
44. Northampton County
45. Northumberland County
46. Perry County
47. Philadelphia County
48. Pike County
49. Potter County
50. Schuylkill County
51. Snyder County

Counties
52. Somerset County
53. Sullivan County
54. Susquehanna County
55. Tioga County
56. Union County
57. Venango County
58. Warren County
59. Washington County
60. Wayne County
61. Westmoreland County
62. Wyoming County
63. York County
Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.4%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on November 7, 2017.

Table 2: Individual Areas (Center for Workforce Information and Analysis March 2016 through February 2018)

Individual Minor Civil Divisions	
Lancaster City	5.9%
Pottstown Boro	5.6%
Received from Pennsylvania Department of Labor; Center for Workforce Information and Analysis on November 30, 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:

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15. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:

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