



Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Center

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JUL 02 2018

Iwona Ramian
SNAP Administrator
Rhode Island Department of Human Services
57 Howard Avenue, Louis Pasteur Building
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

RE: SNAP – Rhode Island Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults
without Dependents Time Limit – Approval

Dear Ms. Ramian:

This is in response to the Rhode Island State agency's request to waive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 26 areas from September 1, 2018, through August 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 Rhode Island to waive the time limit in the 26 areas for the requested 12-month period. The approval amends and extends waiver number 2150035. The attached waiver response includes the approved areas, the supporting evidence used, and the conditions of approval. If you have any questions please contact Maria Volpe at Maria.Volpe@fns.usda.gov.

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,

Sasha Gersten-Paal
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Enclosure

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2150035
2. **Type of request:** Amendment and extension
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:** Rhode Island
6. **Region:** Northeast
7. **Requirement:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, provides that no able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) 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) also provides 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 Rhode Island State agency is requesting to waive the ABAWD time limit in 26 areas from September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019. The State agency has combined certain jurisdictions for consideration as combined areas based on the towns and cities sharing the same labor market areas, while considering other jurisdictions individually. The State agency has supported its request based upon the areas having average unemployment rates 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 individual or combined area was at least 6.0 percent during the selected time period.

The State agency has grouped 23 towns and cities in the same New England City and Town Area (NECTA), as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for consideration as a combined area and has supported its request based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
February 2015 – January 2017*		
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA NECTA, RI part	Unemployment	Labor Force
1. Bristol town	14,746	290,398
2. Burrillville town	11,793	213,923
3. Central Falls city	14,420	205,096
4. Charlestown town	5,873	97,808
5. Coventry town	23,795	449,582
6. Cranston city	54,399	988,643
7. East Greenwich town	8,036	163,901
8. East Providence city	34,519	581,466
9. Foster town	3,514	69,280
10. Johnston town	21,986	375,041
11. Middletown town	9,381	190,261
12. North Providence town	24,204	430,753
13. Pawtucket city	55,197	869,308
14. Portsmouth town	10,689	211,197
15. Providence city	139,637	2,070,714
16. Scituate town	7,751	147,447
17. Smithfield town	13,576	271,242
18. South Kingstown town	20,047	396,591
19. Tiverton town	11,050	209,055
20. Warren town	7,583	136,651
21. West Greenwich town	3,883	76,367
22. West Warwick town	22,605	385,992
23. Woonsocket city	34,060	457,954
Total	552,744	9,288,670
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.0%	

*Data extracted from Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment survey (<http://www.bls.gov>) on April 19, 2018.

The State agency has grouped 2 contiguous towns in the same NECTA, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for consideration as a combined area and has supported its request based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. As detailed in the following table, the unemployment rate for the 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*		
Norwich-New London-Westerly, CT-RI NECTA	Unemployment	Labor Force
1. Hopkinton town	6,078	112,922
2. Westerly town	18,370	272,064
Total	24,448	384,986
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.4%	

*Data extracted from Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment survey (<http://www.bls.gov>) on April 19, 2018.

The State agency has supported its request for one individual town based upon the individual area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. As detailed in the following table, the unemployment rate for the individual area was at least 6.0 percent during the selected time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data February 2015 – January 2017*		
Individual Town	Unemployment	Labor Force
1. New Shoreham town	2,283	19,488
Unemployment Rate	11.7%	

*Data extracted from Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment survey (<http://www.bls.gov>) on April 19, 2018.

9. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving the Rhode Island State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit in the 26 areas because the jurisdictions meet the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.
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 September 1, 2018, through August 31, 2019.

13. Limitation if any on regional office approval of like requests: The waiver is limited to the Rhode Island State agency.

14. Date of National Office action: JUL 02 2018

15. Date of State agency's request: March 20, 2018

16. Date of regional office transmittal of request: March 20, 2018

17. State agency contact:

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18. FNS Regional Contact:

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