



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

APR 30 2015

Mr. Thomas J. Steinhauser
Division of Benefit Programs Director
Virginia Department of Social Services
801 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219-2901

RE: SNAP – Virginia Request to Waive Able-bodied Adults without
Dependents Time Limit – Extension and Modification – Approval

Dear Mr. Steinhauser:

This is in response to the Virginia Department of Social Services' request to extend and modify waiver number 2140016, which would allow Virginia to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) in 37 jurisdictions from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit at 7 CFR 273.24.

The Virginia State agency has requested to exempt ABAWDs in 34 of the 37 jurisdictions based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014. Based upon the Bureau of Labor Statistics data provided by the State, the 34 jurisdictions qualify for an ABAWD waiver because the combined area's aggregate average unemployment rate reaches 20 percent above the national average for the selected 24-month period. The qualifying combined area is composed of the following 34 counties and cities in Southern Virginia:

Bristol City, Brunswick County, Buchanan County, Carroll County, Charlotte County, Danville City, Dickenson County, Emporia City, Franklin City, Galax City, Grayson County, Greensville County, Halifax County, Henry County, Hopewell City, Lee County, Lunenburg County, Martinsville City, Mecklenburg County, Norton City, Patrick County, Petersburg City, Pittsylvania County, Prince Edward County, Prince George County, Russell County, Scott County, Smyth County, Southampton County, Surry County, Sussex County, Washington County, Wise County, and Wythe County.

The State agency has also requested to exempt ABAWDs in Page County, Richmond County, and Williamsburg City. The Bureau of Labor Statistics data provided by the State supports this request based upon each of the three jurisdictions having an unemployment rate exceeding 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014.

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Virginia also included Covington City and Lexington City in its waiver request, but noted that the two jurisdictions were "unlikely to adopt the waiver". Subsequently, the State provided clarification removing Covington City and Lexington City from the waiver request. The State can request to modify the waiver to include the two jurisdictions at any time, provided it includes supporting documentation.

Therefore, based upon a review of the data provided, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving the waiver for all 37 of the requested jurisdictions for a 12-month period, effective May 1, 2015 through April 30, 2016. The detailed waiver response is attached. If you have any questions, please contact Geraldine Alphe-Igiehon at Geraldine.Alphe-Igiehon@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sasha Gersten-Paul", written over a horizontal line.

Sasha Gersten-Paul
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Attachment

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver Serial Number:** 2140016
2. **Type of Request:** Extension and Modification
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **State:** Virginia
5. **Region:** Mid-Atlantic
6. **Regulatory Requirement:** Federal 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 (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. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(a) provide that fulfilling the work requirement means: working 20 hours or more per week, averaged monthly; participating in and complying with the requirements of a work program 20 hours per week; any combination of working and participating in a work program for a total of 20 hours per week; or participating in and complying with a workfare program.

Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f) also provide that, upon the request of a State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the above provision 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.

7. **Description of proposed alternative procedures:**

The Virginia State Agency has proposed to exempt individuals in 37 jurisdictions from ABAWD participation time limits. As detailed in the table on the following page, 34 cities and counties in Southern Virginia qualify based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014. During this time period the national average for unemployment was 6.8 percent (6.77 unrounded); 20 percent above this is 8.1 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data		
January 2013 through December 2014*		
34 Jurisdictions	Labor Force Total	Unemployment Total
Bristol City	192,745	14,436
Brunswick County	157,083	15,082
Buchanan County	216,409	21,055
Carroll County	321,993	24,226
Charlotte County	121,636	9,323
Danville City	448,165	41,463
Dickenson County	135,721	13,535
Emporia City	55,681	5,261
Franklin City	87,436	7,103
Galax City	71,839	5,737
Grayson County	154,880	14,161
Greensville County	95,159	8,155
Halifax County	372,803	32,865
Henry County	552,508	47,993
Hopewell City	246,308	20,350
Lee County	215,900	19,424
Lunenburg County	120,298	9,115
Martinsville City	125,674	14,703
Mecklenburg County	289,611	27,170
Norton City	41,340	3,629
Patrick County	199,111	13,789
Petersburg City	333,386	33,015
Pittsylvania County	754,012	51,040
Prince Edward County	223,648	19,815
Prince George County	366,699	21,950
Russell County	266,689	23,163
Scott County	235,960	16,268
Smyth County	338,075	27,295
Southampton County	186,403	12,567
Surry County	87,138	5,771
Sussex County	105,047	7,760
Washington County	672,433	44,389
Wise County	413,661	35,516
Wythe County	361,021	23,805
Combined Area Total	8,566,472	690,929
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	8.1%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	8.1%	

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on March 20, 2015

The State agency has also requested to exempt ABAWDs in Page County, Richmond County, and Williamsburg City. As detailed in the table below, these three areas qualify based upon each individual jurisdiction having an average unemployment rate exceeding 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data January 2013 through December 2014*	
Jurisdiction	Unemployment Rate
Page County	9.1%
Richmond County	8.1%
Williamsburg City	8.2%
20% Above National Average Threshold	8.1%

*Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on March 20, 2015

8. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving this waiver for all 37 requested jurisdictions. The 34 jurisdictions of Bristol City, Brunswick County, Buchanan County, Carroll County, Charlotte County, Danville City, Dickenson County, Emporia City, Franklin City, Galax City, Grayson County, Greenville County, Halifax County, Henry County, Hopewell City, Lee County, Lunenburg County, Martinsville City, Mecklenburg County, Norton City, Patrick County, Petersburg City, Pittsylvania County, Prince Edward County, Prince George County, Russell County, Scott County, Smyth County, Southampton County, Surry County, Sussex County, Washington County, Wise County, and Wythe County qualify based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014.

Furthermore, Page County, Richmond County, and Williamsburg City qualify based upon each individual jurisdiction having an average unemployment rates exceeding 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2013 through December 2014. The data submitted by the State agency meets the requirements of approval pursuant to 7 CFR 273.24(f)(3) and relevant FNS guidance.

9. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** This waiver is approved pursuant to 7 CFR 273.24(f).
10. **Conditions and reasons:** None.
11. **Information required for extension:** To receive an extension the State agency must provide FNS with a formal waiver request supported by data or other

12. information as described in 7 CFR 273.24(f). If the State requests extension based upon unemployment rates, it must provide FNS with all supporting documentation, including data spreadsheets.
13. **Expiration date:** This waiver is effective from May 1, 2015 through April 30, 2016.
14. **Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** This waiver is limited to the Virginia Department of Social Services.
15. **Date of national office action:** APR 30 2015
16. **Date of State agency's request:** March 27, 2015
17. **Date of regional office transmittal of request:** April 14, 2015
18. **Implementation date (notify FNS if actual date differs):** May 1, 2015
19. **State agency contact:**
Nikole Cox
Nikole.Cox@dss.virginia.gov
(804) 726-7270
20. **FNS regional contact:**
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