



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

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Alexandria
VA 22302

APR 28 2016

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 Limits – Approval

Dear Mr. Steinhauser:

This is in response to the Virginia Department of Social Services' request to extend and amend waiver number 2140016, which would allow Virginia to waive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) in 53 jurisdictions from May 1, 2016 through April 30, 2017. The Virginia State agency has supported its request to waive the time limit based upon the jurisdictions, when grouped as northern and southern regions, having aggregate average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics data provided by the State agency demonstrates that the aggregate average unemployment rates for each of the two requested regions reached 20 percent above the national average for the selected 24-month period. Therefore, the Food and Nutrition Service is approving the State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit in all 53 jurisdictions for a 12-month period, effective May 1, 2016, through April 30, 2017.

The attached waiver response cites the 53 jurisdictions, explains the supporting evidence used, and details the conditions of approval. If you have any questions, please contact Geraldine Alphe-Igiehon at Geraldine.Alphe-Igiehon@fns.usda.gov or Alyssa Hayes at Alyssa.Hayes@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

Sasha Gersten-Paal
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2140016
2. **Type of request:** Extension and amendment
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **State:** Virginia
5. **Region:** Mid-Atlantic
6. **Regulatory requirement:** Federal regulations at 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 at least 20 hours per week; any combination of working and participating in a work program for a total of 20 hours per week; or participating and complying with a workfare program.

Regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f) also provide that, upon the request of the 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.

Description of proposed alternative procedures: The Virginia Department of Social Services has requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in 53 jurisdictions from May 1, 2016 through April 30, 2017. The Virginia State agency has supported its request to waive the time limit based upon the jurisdictions, when grouped as northern and southern regional areas, having aggregate average unemployment rates 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. During this 24-month period the national average unemployment rate was 5.8 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 6.9 percent. As detailed in the following tables, all 53 jurisdictions qualify based upon each of the two combined areas having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the selected 24-month time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data December 2013 through November 2015*		
Southern Region	Unemployed	Labor Force
Accomack County	23,262	383,323
Alleghany County	9,938	172,904
Bland County	4,140	69,170
Brunswick County	12,055	154,524
Buchanan County	19,555	185,589
Buckingham County	9,846	156,479
Carroll County	19,794	315,864
Charles City County	5,119	91,445
Charlotte County	8,103	126,871
Craig County	3,534	58,884
Cumberland County	6,302	108,532
Dickenson County	12,277	123,694
Grayson County	11,896	169,442
Greensville County	6,378	102,066
Halifax County	27,221	372,430
Henry County	39,800	541,885
Lancaster County	9,207	127,909
Lee County	16,469	210,426
Lunenburg County	7,352	128,302
Mecklenburg County	21,720	300,927
Northampton County	10,154	146,316
Northumberland County	8,964	134,271
Patrick County	11,326	184,674
Pittsylvania County	43,290	725,562
Prince Edward County	17,266	235,154
Prince George County	21,131	356,490
Pulaski County	22,679	405,189
Richmond County	4,985	95,674
Russell County	20,300	272,234
Scott County	13,210	239,503
Smyth County	23,620	323,915
Southampton County	10,276	219,375
Surry County	5,088	87,710
Sussex County	7,177	99,840
Tazewell County	32,169	411,190
Washington County	35,733	669,835
Wise County	30,683	339,502

Wythe County	20,223	332,474
Bristol city	11,144	187,958
Covington city	4,349	59,368
Danville city	38,264	467,105
Emporia city	4,335	55,527
Franklin city	6,573	86,486
Galax city	4,669	71,342
Hampton city	101,602	1,574,346
Hopewell city	19,225	232,490
Martinsville city	12,666	131,154
Norton city	3,251	42,783
Petersburg city	33,607	331,287
Portsmouth city	73,690	1,083,805
Williamsburg city	11,126	164,571
Totals	936,743	13,667,796
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.9%	
20% Above National Average Unemployment Threshold	6.9%	

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data December 2013 through November 2015*		
Northern Region	Unemployed	Labor Force
Page County	21,760	283,888
Rappahannock County	4,151	93,956
Totals	25,911	377,844
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	6.9%	
20% Above National Average Unemployment Threshold	6.9%	

*Data extracted from www.bls.gov on April 5, 2016.

7. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving the State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit in all 53 jurisdictions because the areas meet the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance. The two requested combined areas had an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of December 2013 through November 2015.
8. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** The waiver is approved pursuant to 7 CFR 273.24(f).

- 9. Information required for an extension:** To receive an extension the State agency must provide FNS with a formal waiver request supported by data or other information as described in 7 CFR 273.24(f). If the State requests an extension based upon unemployment rates, it must provide FNS with all supporting documentation, including data spreadsheets.
- 10. Implementation date and expiration date:** The waiver is effective May 1, 2016, through April 30, 2017.
- 11. Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** The waiver is limited to the Virginia State agency.
- 12. Date of national office action:** **APR 28 2016**
- 13. Date of State agency's request:** March 25, 2016
- 14. Date of regional office transmittal of request:** March 30, 2016
- 15. State agency contact:**
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- 16. FNS regional contacts:**
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