



Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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NOV 24 2015

Natalie Bailey  
Assistant Administrator  
Division of Family Assistance  
Department of Human Services  
1303 Hospital Ground, Suite 1  
Saint Thomas, Virgin Islands 00820

RE: SNAP – Virgin Islands Request to Waive Able-bodied Adults without  
Dependents Time Limit – Extension – Approval

Dear Ms. Bailey:

This is in response to the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services' (DHS) request to extend waiver 2150046, which would exempt able-bodied adults without dependents throughout the Territory from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limits at 7 CFR 273.24.

DHS has supported its request to waive the time limit based on the Territory having a 24-month average unemployment rate of 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of June 2013 through May 2015.

Based on the data provided, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving the Territory's request to waive the time limit for a one-year period, effective January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016. Our detailed waiver response is attached. If you have any questions, please contact Alyssa Hayes at [alyssa.hayes@fns.usda.gov](mailto:alyssa.hayes@fns.usda.gov) or Alexis Lometz at [alexis.lometz@fns.usda.gov](mailto:alexis.lometz@fns.usda.gov).

Sincerely,

Sasha Gersten-Paal  
Chief  
Certification Policy Branch  
Program Development Division

Enclosure

## WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2150046
2. **Type of request:** Extension
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24(f)
4. **State:** Virgin Islands
5. **Region:** Mid-Atlantic
6. **Regulatory requirements:** 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 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 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 alternative procedures:** The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (DHS) has requested an extension of its waiver of SNAP participation time limits for ABAWDs throughout the Territory from January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016.

DHS has requested the waiver based upon the Virgin Islands having an unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average from June 2013 through May 2015. DHS provided data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and from Virgin Islands Department of Labor in support of its request. During this time period, the national average unemployment rate plus 20 percent was 7.6 percent. During this time period, the unemployment rate for the Virgin Islands was 12.9 percent.

8. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** FNS is approving DHS' request to waive the ABAWD time limit because the U.S. Virgin Islands meets the requirements for approval pursuant to 7 CFR 273.24(f)(3) and relevant FNS guidance.
9. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** The 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 information as described in 273.24(f). If the State requests an extension based upon unemployment rates, it must provide FNS with all supporting documentation, including data spreadsheets.
12. **Expiration date:** The waiver is effective beginning on January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.
13. **Limitation on regional office approval of like requests:** The waiver is limited to the U.S. Virgin Islands.
14. **Date of national office action:** NOV 24 2015
15. **Date of State agency's request:** September 25, 2015
16. **Date of regional office transmittal of request to national office:** September 30, 2015
17. **Anticipated implementation date (*notify FNS if actual date differs*):** January 1, 2016
18. **State agency contact:**  
Emmanueline Archer  
340-774-2399  
emmanueline.archer@dhs.vi.gov
19. **FNS regional contacts:**  
Alyssa Hayes  
609-259-5055  
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Alexis Lometz  
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