



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

DEC 20 2013

Ms. Patricia Duda
Director, Food and Nutrition Programs
Agency of Human Services, Economic Services Division
Vermont Department for Children and Families
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, Vermont 05674

RE: SNAP – Vermont Request to Waive Able-bodied Adults without Dependents
Time Limits in Selected Areas for Fiscal Year 2013

Dear Ms. Duda:

This is in response to the Vermont Department for Children and Families' (VT) request to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 27 selected towns from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limits at 7 CFR 273.24 for Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2013.

Vermont submitted its waiver request to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) on September 6, 2013. The waiver request proposes that the waiver be made effective from October 1, 2012, approximately 11 months prior to the submission date. If approved, this waiver would retroactively exempt all ABAWDs in the 27 selected towns from time limits for Fiscal Year 2013.

FNS appreciates the State agency's desire to extend the eligibility of a greater number of at-risk ABAWDs. However, a retroactive waiver would manipulate longstanding FNS policy by allowing a State to recover or regain 15 percent ABAWD exemptions that the State has already used. For that reason, FNS is denying the State's request.

State agencies may apply their allotted number of 15 percent exemptions as they deem appropriate. However, along with this flexibility, State agencies have the responsibility to develop an exemption tracking system and usage policy that accounts for the number of exemptions they are allotted. FNS has advised VT to discontinue the issuance of exemptions and begin appropriately applying the ABAWD time limit. We will continue working closely with the State to ensure proper implementation of ABAWD tracking and consistent application of ABAWD policy moving forward.

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FNS will continue to assist Vermont in addressing its exemption overuse and other ABAWD related issues, and encourages the State agency to continue the corrective measures it has already begun to implement. FNS will consider any future ABAWD waiver requests from the State on a case by case basis.

If you have any questions, please contact Alison Mickiewicz at alison.mickiewicz@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lizbeth Silberman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lizbeth" and last name "Silberman" clearly distinguishable.

Lizbeth Silberman
Director
Program Development Division

CSM