



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition
Service

Date: January 6, 2021

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria VA,
22314

Ms. Babette Roberts
Director, Community Services Division
State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services
P.O. Box 45440
Olympia, Washington 98504

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Washington Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Time Limit –Approval

Dear Ms. Roberts:

This is in response to the Washington State agency's December 31, 2020, request to waive the SNAP time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). The attached waiver response includes the approved areas, the supporting evidence used, and the conditions of approval.

On December 5, 2019, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the final rule, [*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents*](#) (84 FR 66782), which revises the conditions under which FNS would approve requests from States to waive the ABAWD time limit. The final rule's changes to waiver standards were scheduled to take effect as of April 1, 2020. However, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia vacated this final rule on October 18, 2020.

As a result, the previous waiver criteria published in the January 17, 2001, final rule, [*Food Stamp Program: Personal Responsibility Provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*](#) (66 FR 4438), is being used as the basis for any waiver approvals. Waivers approved under the 2001 standards will be in effect up until the date specified in the attached waiver response, or until the date at which new waiver standards become effective, whichever occurs earlier.

FNS also reminds the State agency that it must measure the 3-year period and track ABAWDs on a continuous basis, even in areas under a waiver. The State must continue tracking so that the State will be ready to transition off-of the waiver when it expires and reintroduce the time limit. Please contact your Regional Office representative with any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
1/6/2021
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Arpan Dasgupta
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Enclosure

Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver Response

1. **Serial Number:** 2150022
2. **Request Type:** Initial
3. **Statutory Citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
4. **Regulatory Citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** Washington
6. **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Western
7. **Requirement:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and regulations at 7 CFR 273.24 provide that no individual 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) and 7 CFR 273.24 also provide 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. **Requested Area(s) and Support:** The State agency requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in 38 counties and 1 reservation area from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021. The State agency grouped 38 counties for consideration as a combined area. The State requested Muckleshoot Reservation individually. The State agency supported its request based upon these areas having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of November 2018, through October 2020. During this time period the national average unemployment rate was 5.6 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 6.7 percent.

Table 1: Combined Area 1 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data November 2018 through October 2020)

Counties
1. Adams County
2. Asotin County
3. Benton County
4. Chelan County
5. Clallam County
6. Clark County
7. Columbia County

8. Cowlitz County
9. Douglas County
10. Ferry County
11. Franklin County
12. Garfield County
13. Grant County
14. Grays Harbor County
15. Island County
16. Jefferson County
17. Kitsap County
18. Kittitas County
19. Klickitat County
20. Lewis County
21. Lincoln County
22. Mason County
23. Okanogan County
24. Pacific County
25. Pend Oreille County
26. Pierce County
27. San Juan County
28. Skagit County
29. Skamania County
30. Snohomish County
31. Spokane County
32. Stevens County
33. Thurston County
34. Wahkiakum County
35. Walla Walla County
36. Whatcom County
37. Whitman County
38. Yakima County
Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 6.7%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on December 31, 2020

Table 2: Muckleshoot Reservation (2019 American Community Survey Data and Bureau of Labor Statistics Data from November 2018 - October 2020)

Reservation	Unemployment Rate
1. Muckleshoot	10.8%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov and https://data.census.gov/cedsci/ on December 31, 2020.	

- 9. FNS Action and Justification:** FNS is approving the State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit the approved areas for one year or until the date at which new waiver standards become effective, whichever occurs earlier. The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.
- 10. Authority:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).
- 11. Implementation Date:** January 1, 2021
- 12. Expiration Date:** December 31, 2021 or the date at which new waiver standards become effective, whichever occurs earlier
- 13. Information Required for Amendment or 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.
- 14. State Agency Contact Information:**
 Name: Spring Benson
 Phone Number: (360) 522-0179
 Email: spring.benson@dshs.wa.gov
- 15. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
 Name: LaKisha Strong
 Phone Number: (415) 645-1902
 Email: lakisha.strong@usda.gov