



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health and Social Services

DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
Policy & Program Development
P.O. Box 110640
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0640
Main: 907-465-3382
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April 21, 2020

Charles Tobin
Regional Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
550 Kearny Street, Room 400
San Francisco, CA 94108

Dear Mr. Tobin:

The State of Alaska is requesting to waive regulations at 7 CFR 273.9(b)(2)(ii) and 7 CFR 273.10(c). Under this waiver, Alaska is requesting approval to exclude the \$600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefit as countable income when determining SNAP eligibility.

The State is requesting this temporary waiver to ease the hardship for households being affected by the COVID-19 virus outbreak and reduce SNAP application traffic caused by households being forced to re-apply for SNAP.

If you have any questions, please contact Matthew Stangley at (907)465-5835 or via email at Matthew.Stangley@alaska.gov, or Reuben Lumbab at (907)465-3201 or via email at Reuben.Lumbab@alaska.gov.

Thank you,

Matthew Stangley

Matthew Stangley
Chief of Policy and Program Development
Division of Public Assistance

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):**
2. **Type of request:** Initial
3. **Regulation citations:** 7 CFR 273.9(b)(2)(ii) and 7 CFR 273.10(c)
4. **State:** Alaska
5. **Region:** Western
6. **Regulatory requirements:** Under 7 CFR 273.9(b)(2)(ii), unearned income shall include annuities; pensions; retirement, veteran's, or disability benefits; worker's or unemployment compensation including any amounts deducted to repay claims for intentional program violations as provided in §272.12; old-age, survivors, or social security benefits; strike benefits; foster care payments for children or adults who are considered members of the household; gross income minus the cost of doing business derived from rental property in which a household member is not actively engaged in the management of the property at least 20 hours a week.

Under 7 CFR 273.10(c), State agencies must take into account the income already received by the household during the certification period and any anticipated income the household and the State agency are reasonably certain will be received during the remainder of the certification period. If the amount of income that will be received, or when it will be received, is uncertain, that portion of the household's income that is uncertain shall not be counted by the State agency. For example, a household anticipating income from a new source, such as a new job or recently applied for public assistance benefits, may be uncertain as to the timing and amount of the initial payment. These moneys shall not be anticipated by the State agency unless there is reasonable certainty concerning the month in which the payment will be received and in what amount. If the exact amount of the income is not known, that portion of it which can be anticipated with reasonable certainty shall be considered as income. In cases where the receipt of income is reasonably certain but the monthly amount may fluctuate, the household may elect to income average. Households shall be advised to report all changes in gross monthly income as required by §273.12.

7. **Description of alternative procedures:** Due to COVID-19 financial impacts to households, President Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act into law on March 27, 2020. One of the provisions created Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) which provides an extra \$600 per week to individuals eligible under the Alaska unemployment program.

The State of Alaska is requesting approval to exclude the extra \$600 benefit as countable income when determining SNAP eligibility. Alaska will still continue to

count the portion received under the standard Alaska unemployment program at application and during the certification period, following our normal rules regarding acting on changes.

- 8. Justification for request:** The State of Alaska believes that this waiver will help the population affected by the COVID-19 health emergency. Many businesses are reducing employment hours or ceasing to operate, making it more and more difficult to obtain gainful employment to meet daily needs such as food.

Counting these extra unemployment payments as income would place majority of the SNAP population over the income limit. This in turn causes undue hardship to an already vulnerable population. Without this waiver, many applicants and recipients will be denied or terminated from SNAP participation and will be forced to re-apply when they again meet income eligibility limits.

- 9. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** The waiver will ease the hardship for households being affected by the COVID-19 health emergency and reduce SNAP application traffic caused by households being forced to re-apply for SNAP.
- 10. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):** This waiver affects the entire state.
- 11. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:** The State is requesting that this waiver be approved effective immediately until the extra unemployment payments are no longer being received.
- 12. Proposed quality control review procedures:** No special Quality Control review processes will be required.
- 13. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person:**

Matthew Stangley
Chief of Policy & Program Development
Division of Public Assistance

- 14. Signature and title of requesting official:**



Matthew Stangley
Chief of Policy & Program Development

- 15. Date of request:** April 20, 2020

16. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):

Matthew Stanglely
Chief of Policy & Program Development
State of Alaska – Dept. of Health and Social Services – Division of Public Assistance
907-465-5835
matthew.stanglely@alaska.gov

or

Reuben Lumbab
Public Assistance Analyst II
State of Alaska – Dept. of Health and Social Services – Division of Public Assistance
907-465-3201
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18. Regional office contact person (to be completed by FNS regional office):