



## TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

THOMAS M. SUEHS  
EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER

May 4, 2012

Mr. Dwight Crudup  
Regional Director  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service  
1100 Commerce Street, Rm 522  
Dallas, Texas 75242-1005

**Subject:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - Request for Extension of Waiver (#970057)

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission requests an extension of the existing waiver of section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act as amended by section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (P.L. 104-193), for the following twenty-three Texas counties: Cameron, Cass, Dickens, El Paso, Hidalgo, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Maverick, Morris, Newton, Orange, Presidio, Red River, Reeves, Sabine, San Augustine, Starr, Tyler, Willacy, and Zavala. The current waiver expires September 30, 2012.

These twenty-three counties qualify as high unemployment areas under criteria specified in 7 CFR 273.24(f)(i), which allows the Secretary to approve state requests for exemption from work requirements for individuals residing in areas with unemployment rates exceeding ten percent. The extension request is for a one-year period beginning October 1, 2012, coinciding with the federal fiscal year.

Attached is the most recent data on county unemployment rates from the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics website. The waiver uses the employment data from this time period and source. The method used is in compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture memo FSP-SO-2004-14 dated May 7, 2004. Details are contained in the attached standard-format waiver request.

In order to complete computer programming for these changes, a response is needed by July 1, 2012. Your consideration and prompt response is appreciated and will allow the state time to complete the necessary automation changes.

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Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Cathy Rose, SNAP Lead, serves as lead staff on this matter and can be reached by telephone at (512) 206-4542 or by email at [Cathy.Rose@hpsc.state.tx.us](mailto:Cathy.Rose@hpsc.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Byrnes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Todd Byrnes  
Director for Eligibility Services Support

Attachment

## WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver serial number (if request is extension):** 970057
2. **Type of request:** Extension
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24(f)
4. **Secondary regulation citation:** N/A
5. **State:** Texas
6. **Region:** SWRO
7. **Regulation Requirements:** 7 CFR 273.24 provides that no able-bodied adult shall be eligible to participate in SNAP as a member of any household if, during a three-year period, the individual received SNAP benefits for three or more months (consecutive or otherwise), during which the individual did not work an average of 20 hours or more per week; did not participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours or more per week; or did not participate in and comply with the requirements of a program under section 20 or a comparable program established by the State.

It also provides that, upon 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.

8. **Proposed alternative procedures:** Texas proposes to exempt from this requirement individuals who reside in counties that have an unemployment rate in excess of 10 percent. Employment data obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics website at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#data> (Attachment A) indicates that the 23 counties listed in Attachment A had unemployment rates exceeding 10 percent from February 1, 2011 through January 31, 2012. Each year the State plans to revise the list of waiver counties with an annual effective date of October 1. The State may request approval of a waiver for additional counties if circumstances warrant during the year.
9. **Justification for request:** This waiver is requested under 7 CFR 273.24(f). Approval of this waiver would allow individuals who reside in areas with unemployment rates over 10 percent the opportunity to participate in SNAP without being required to meet program work requirements that may not be attainable.
10. **Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** Approval of this waiver would mitigate the adverse effects experienced by households in areas with high unemployment rates by allowing them to continue to receive basic nutritional assistance

<b>Cameron</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>labor force</b>	<b>unemployment</b>
2011	Feb	162347	19716
2011	Mar	162407	19057
2011	Apr	162565	18470
2011	May	161522	18783
2011	Jun	162557	20356
2011	Jul	166827	20204
2011	Aug	164998	19933
2011	Sep	163077	19309
2011	Oct	163115	18491
2011	Nov	161847	17784
2011	Dec	162306	17744
2012	Jan	162802	18768
<b>Total</b>		<b>1956370</b>	<b>228615</b>

$228615/1956370 = .1168 \times 100 = 11.68$

11.7% unemployment

<b>Cass</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>labor force</b>	<b>unemployment</b>
2011	Feb	13501	1505
2011	Mar	13616	1462
2011	Apr	13556	1401
2011	May	13573	1416
2011	Jun	13628	1534
2011	Jul	13600	1531
2011	Aug	13617	1480
2011	Sep	13672	1456
2011	Oct	13615	1368
2011	Nov	13508	1325
2011	Dec	13528	1289
2012	Jan	13362	1341
<b>Total</b>		<b>162776</b>	<b>17108</b>

$17108/162776 = .1051 \times 100 = 10.51$

10.5% unemployment

<b>Dickens</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>labor force</b>	<b>unemployment</b>

Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	316434	39233
2011	Mar	316975	37920
2011	Apr	315058	35898
2011	May	316666	37343
2011	Jun	318887	41330
2011	Jul	310886	40324
2011	Aug	315383	39519
2011	Sep	317326	37598
2011	Oct	319471	35693
2011	Nov	322540	35283
2011	Dec	323784	35953
2012	Jan	324463	38039
<b>Total</b>		<b>3817873</b>	<b>454133</b>

$454133/3817873 = .1189 \times 100 = 11.89$

**11.9% unemployment**

<b>Houston</b>			
Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	8749	889
2011	Mar	8821	876
2011	Apr	8879	831
2011	May	8847	850
2011	Jun	9019	992
2011	Jul	9047	965
2011	Aug	9276	1070
2011	Sep	9102	1012
2011	Oct	8965	990
2011	Nov	9000	919
2011	Dec	9075	895
2012	Jan	8915	960
<b>Total</b>		<b>107695</b>	<b>11249</b>

$11249/107695 = .1044 \times 100 = 10.44$

**10.4% unemployment**

<b>Jasper</b>			
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Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	32277	3658
2011	Mar	32205	3386
2011	Apr	32071	3161
2011	May	32325	3396
2011	Jun	32720	3779
2011	Jul	32681	3646
2011	Aug	32491	3501
2011	Sep	32485	3326
2011	Oct	32642	3163
2011	Nov	32785	3187
2011	Dec	32874	3248
2012	Jan	32774	3324
<b>Total</b>		<b>390330</b>	<b>40775</b>

$40775/390330 = .1044 \times 100 = 10.44$

**10.4% unemployment**

<b>Matagorda</b>			
Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	18251	2148
2011	Mar	18244	2067
2011	Apr	18414	1936
2011	May	18071	2057
2011	Jun	18037	2241
2011	Jul	17996	2229
2011	Aug	18021	2198
2011	Sep	18068	2045
2011	Oct	17764	1922
2011	Nov	17744	1918
2011	Dec	17679	2001
2012	Jan	17598	2040
<b>Total</b>		<b>215887</b>	<b>24802</b>

$24802/215887 = .1148 \times 100 = 11.48$

**11.5% unemployment**

<b>Maverick</b>
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Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	5848	826
2011	Mar	5897	798
2011	Apr	5885	798
2011	May	5901	821
2011	Jun	5965	872
2011	Jul	5871	854
2011	Aug	5877	844
2011	Sep	5809	808
2011	Oct	5772	771
2011	Nov	5743	762
2011	Dec	5753	766
2012	Jan	5660	734
<b>Total</b>		<b>66981</b>	<b>9654</b>

$9654/66981 = .1379 \times 100 = 13.79$

13.8% unemployment

Orange			
Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	41602	4788
2011	Mar	41658	4548
2011	Apr	41232	4479
2011	May	41533	4686
2011	Jun	41825	4915
2011	Jul	42000	4915
2011	Aug	41394	5007
2011	Sep	41279	4700
2011	Oct	41255	4357
2011	Nov	41107	4209
2011	Dec	40828	4136
2012	Jan	40906	4267
<b>Total</b>		<b>496619</b>	<b>55007</b>

$55007/496619 = .1107 \times 100 = 11.07$

11.1% unemployment

Presidio

Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	4720	513
2011	Mar	4810	517
2011	Apr	4815	502
2011	May	4703	497
2011	Jun	4874	626
2011	Jul	4771	546
2011	Aug	4807	530
2011	Sep	4908	554
2011	Oct	4775	517
2011	Nov	4718	482
2011	Dec	4734	472
2012	Jan	4770	485
<b>Total</b>		<b>57405</b>	<b>6241</b>

$$6241/57405 = .1087 \times 100 = 10.87$$

10.9% unemployment

Sabine			
Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	3411	598
2011	Mar	3444	582
2011	Apr	3438	556
2011	May	3439	559
2011	Jun	3522	605
2011	Jul	3479	578
2011	Aug	3485	564
2011	Sep	3413	528
2011	Oct	3339	498
2011	Nov	3331	501
2011	Dec	3340	515
2012	Jan	3371	562
<b>Total</b>		<b>41012</b>	<b>6646</b>

$$6646/41012 = .1620 \times 100 = 16.20$$

16.2% unemployment

San Augustine

Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	8499	949
2011	Mar	8646	958
2011	Apr	8654	944
2011	May	8579	976
2011	Jun	8592	1069
2011	Jul	8529	1066
2011	Aug	8471	1036
2011	Sep	8539	1005
2011	Oct	8359	928
2011	Nov	8367	899
2011	Dec	8382	896
2012	Jan	8365	932
<b>Total</b>		<b>101982</b>	<b>11658</b>

$11658/101982 = .1143 \times 100 = 11.43$

11.4% unemployment

Willacy			
Year	Period	labor force	unemployment
2011	Feb	9399	1310
2011	Mar	9559	1291
2011	Apr	9544	1251
2011	May	9358	1261
2011	Jun	9320	1368
2011	Jul	9408	1488
2011	Aug	9528	1532
2011	Sep	9472	1448
2011	Oct	9364	1355
2011	Nov	9404	1288
2011	Dec	9465	1308
2012	Jan	9691	1392
<b>Total</b>		<b>113512</b>	<b>16292</b>

$16292/113512 = .1435 \times 100 = 14.35$

14.4% unemployment

Zavala
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January 2012

County	ABAWD Recipients	ABAWD Households
Cameron	1,407	1,309
Cass	266	239
Dickens	14	13
El Paso	2,307	2,214
Hidalgo	2,697	2,507
Houston	8,883	8,570
Jasper	189	182
Jefferson	1,279	1,237
Liberty	261	248
Matagorda	222	208
Maverick	94	85
Morris	35	34
Newton	145	132
Orange	458	423
Presidio	12	12
Red River	19	18
Reeves	28	26
Sabine	69	64
San Augustine	71	67
Starr	263	237
Tyler	57	49
Willacy	171	167
Zavala	57	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,004</b>	<b>18,093</b>

Total Counties 23