



May 2, 2019

Ms. Deborah Hammack, Acting Regional Director USDA, FNS,
Mountain Plains Region 1244 Speer Boulevard,
Suite 903 Denver, CO 80204

Dear Ms. Hammack:

Enclosed please find our request for an extension of waiver #970125 for North Dakota.

The waiver extension request is to waive the work requirements for ABAWDS for Benson, Bottineau, Eddy, Emmons, Kidder, McHenry, Nelson, Pierce, Rolette, Sheridan, Sioux, and Wells Counties. These twelve counties in North Dakota are eligible for a waiver, based on having an aggregate average unemployment rate for the area that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of March 2017 through February 2019.

North Dakota will also use 15% exemptions for FFY 2020 for the following counties: Foster, McLean, Mercer, and Oliver.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele A. Gee". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michele Gee, Economic Assistance Director
North Dakota Department of Human Services

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE DIVISION

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 970125
2. **Type of request:** Amendment and extension
3. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended
4. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** North Dakota
6. **Region:** MPRO
7. **Regulatory requirements:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, provides 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. Section 6(o) also provides 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. **Description of alternative procedures:** The State of North Dakota is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 12 counties from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24.
9. **Justification for request:**
Under SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f)(2), areas may qualify for an ABAWD time limit waiver if they have insufficient jobs. To support this claim, states may submit evidence that an area has an average unemployment rate for a 24-month time period that is at least 20 percent above the national average for the same 24-month period. 7 CFR 273.24(f)(6) provides that States may define areas to be waived.

The State of North Dakota seeks a waiver for a region of 12 contiguous counties based on its average unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of March 2017 through February 2019. The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 4.1 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.9 percent. The region's unemployment rate was 4.9 percent for the same time period.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data March 2017 through February 2019		
County	Total Unemployed	Total Labor Force
Benson County	2,119	56,027
Bottineau County	2,427	72,916
Eddy County	1,426	30,169
Emmons County	1,574	36,210
Kidder County	1,303	32,104
McHenry County	3,069	77,130
Nelson County	1,101	34,840
Pierce County	1,365	43,954
Rolette County	11,102	113,725
Sheridan County	771	16,964
Sioux County	1,191	30,438
Wells County	1,530	49,637
Total	28,978	594,114
Combined Unemployment Rate	4.9%	
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.9%	

10. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:

This waiver will provide consistency for households and State agency operations in areas where unemployment remains higher than the national average.

11. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):

The caseload for these areas, as of March 1, 2019, represent 19% of the caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

The 15% exemption criteria will be used in Foster, McLean, Mercer, and Oliver Counties.

12. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

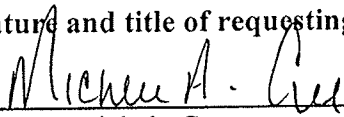
13. Proposed quality control review procedures:

There are no special quality control procedures needed in conjunction with this waiver.

- 14. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person:**
North Dakota Department of Human Services, SNAP Policy Division

Name: Melissa Karabensh
Title: Program Administrator
Email: mkarabensh@nd.gov

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


Name: Michele Gee
Title: Economic Assistance Director
Email for transmission of response: mgee@nd.gov

- 16. Date of request:**
May 2, 2019

- 17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):**

Name: Melissa Karabensh
Title: Program Administrator
Email: mkarabensh@nd.gov

- 18. Regional office contact person (to be completed by FNS regional office):**

