



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF INCOME MAINTENANCE

P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-8018

Lisa M. Watson  
Deputy Secretary for  
Office of Income Maintenance

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MAR 13 2020

Eric Ratchford, Director  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service  
300 Corporate Boulevard  
Robbinsville, New Jersey 08691-1598

Dear Eric Ratchford:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is requesting a waiver to permit the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to waive implementation of the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) final rule. Due to the recent Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, DHS believes this is an exceptional circumstance found under 7 CFR 273.24(f)(3) effective April 1, 2020, that would allow DHS to postpone implementing the ABAWD final rule. The COVID-19 outbreak has quickly become a health crisis, continues to grow daily, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is requesting those at high risk take precautions, some of which include staying out of public areas.

The approval of this waiver would allow DHS to delay implementation of the ABAWD final rule and ensure households continue to receive their SNAP benefits during this health crisis. The waiver will also allow individuals that may have the virus to stay quarantined at home instead of having to risk spreading the virus to others just to ensure they are meeting the ABAWD requirements.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Brian Whorl, Director, Division of Federal Programs and Program Management, at (717) 772-7804.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lisa M. Watson".

Lisa M. Watson, J.D.

cc: Cathy Buhrig

## WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number:**
2. **Type of Request:** Initial
3. **Primary Regulation Citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **Secondary Regulation Citation:**
5. **State:** Pennsylvania
6. **Region:** Mid-Atlantic Region Office (MARO)
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, and regulations at 273.24 provide 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 three months during any 3-year period in which the individual was subject to but did not comply with the ABAWD work requirement.

Under 7 CFR 273.24(f)(3), effective April 1, 2020, upon request of the State agency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) may waive the applicability of the time limit in exceptional circumstances.

8. **Proposed Alternative Procedures:** Under the waiver, the ABAWD final rule would not be implemented April 1, 2020. The Department of Human services (DHS) is requesting to postpone implementation of the ABAWD final rule. Due to the recent Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, DHS believes this is an exceptional circumstance that would allow DHS to postpone implementing the ABAWD final rule. The COVID-19 outbreak has quickly become a health crisis, continuing to grow daily, and the Center for Disease and Prevention is requesting those at high risk take precautions, which include staying out of public areas. These public areas could include employment and training centers, community service areas, classrooms, and employment locations.
9. **Justification for Request:** The approval of this waiver would allow DHS to delay implementation of the ABAWD final rule and ensure households continue to receive their SNAP benefits during this health crisis. The waiver will also allow individuals that may have the virus to stay quarantined at home instead of having to risk spreading the virus to others just to ensure they are meeting the ABAWD requirements.

10. **Anticipated Impact on Households and State Agency Operations:** This waiver has a positive impact on the client by allowing their SNAP benefits to continue during this health crisis.
11. **Caseload Information, Including Percent, Characteristics, and Quality Control Error Rates for Affected Portion:** This waiver is only applicable to ABAWDs in the state that do not currently meet an exemption.
12. **Anticipated Implementation Date and Time Period for which Waiver is Needed:** April 1, 2020 until this health crisis has ended.
13. **Proposed Quality Control Review Procedures:** No special quality control procedures. Cases will be reviewed using the standard review procedures outlined in FNS handbook 310.
14. **Signature and Title of Requesting Official:**

Lisa M. Watson, J.D.  
Deputy Secretary for Income Maintenance

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15. **Date of Request:**

3/14/2020