



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

March 16, 2020

Eric Ratchford, Regional Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
300 Corporate Boulevard
Robbinsville, New Jersey 08691-1598

Dear Mr. Ratchford:

I am writing to request a waiver of regulations that provide household members may not receive benefits beyond a three-month period within a 36-month period unless the members participate in a work activity for a minimum of 20 hours per week. This waiver will ensure Virginia can meet the needs of our participants during this State of Emergency.

The waiver request is enclosed. Please contact Claudia Jackson, SNAP Manager, at (804) 726-7270 or claudia.jackson@dss.virginia.gov, if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Toni Blue Washington".

Toni Blue Washington, Director
Division of Benefit Programs

cc: Claudia Jackson

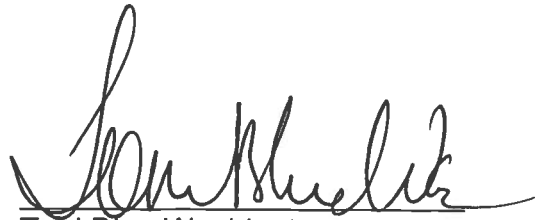
Enclosure

Waiver Request

1. **Waiver serial number:** 970283
2. **Type of request:** Emergency Submission
3. **Primary regulation citation:** §7 CFR 273.24
4. **Secondary regulation citation:** Not applicable
5. **State:** Virginia
6. **Region:** Mid-Atlantic
7. **Regulatory requirements:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at §7 CFR 273.24 provide that household members may not receive benefits beyond a three-month period within a 36-month period unless the members participate in a work activity for a minimum of 20 hours per week. There are exceptions allowed to the time-limited benefits.

Regulations at §7 CFR 273.24(f) also provide that the Food and Nutrition Service may waive the work requirement for any area that has an unemployment rate of 10 percent or higher or an area that does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for individuals.
8. **Proposed alternative procedures:** Virginia requests a waiver for SNAP recipients who reside in Virginia who are subject to the time-limited benefits provisions during the months in which employment, school attendance, and overall lifestyle in the United States are affected by the COVID-19.
9. **Justification for request:** On Friday March 13, 2020 President Trump declared a national state of emergency in response to COVID-19. Virginia is also under a state of emergency as declared by Governor Northam on Tuesday, March 12. We anticipate that SNAP households may likely experience reduced work hours and job layoffs because of COVID-19. We also anticipate that SNAP households may be less likely to have jobs that include paid leave available to cover for instances of illness or absences needed to provide childcare due to extended school breaks.
10. **Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** This waiver will provide consistency for households and agency operations in areas where unemployment remains higher than the national average.
11. **Anticipated Implementation date:** We request for this waiver to effective April 1, 2020.
12. **Quality control procedures:** There are no special procedures for quality control needed in conjunction with this waiver.

13. **Signature and title of requesting official:**



Toni Blue Washington
Director
Division of Benefit Programs

14. **Date of request:** March 16, 2020

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

Claudia Jackson
claudia.jackson@dss.virginia.gov
804.726.7346

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

Kelly Boger
Kelly.boger@usda.gov
609.259.5009