



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES
Department of Human Services
Division of Family Assistance

Desk of the Administrator

Via Email

January 16, 2020

Bonnie Brathwaite
SNAP Regional Division Director
USDA/FNS Northeast Regional Office
10 Causeway Street, Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

Dear Ms. Brathwaite:

Please accept this letter as our official request for a one-year waiver to exempt Able-bodied Bodies Without Dependents (ABAWDs) throughout the Territory from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limits at 7CFR 273.24. The ABAWD and DOL data stats are attached.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Natalie Bailey
Administrator
Attachments

c: Ms. Pauline Dawes
Mrs. Emmanueline Archer

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):** 2150046
2. **Type of request:** Amendment
3. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
4. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24 as amended by the Food and Nutrition Service's Final Rule "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents," published on December 5, 2019 (84 FR 66782).
5. **State:** U.S. Virgin Islands
6. **Region:** Northeast
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 U.S. Virgin Islands is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) throughout the Territory from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24 as amended by the Food and Nutrition Service's Final Rule (84 FR 66782).
9. **Justification for request:**
Under SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.24(f)(2), areas may support a claim of insufficient jobs by submitting evidence that an area has an average unemployment rate for a 24-month time period that exceeds the national average for the same 24-month period by 20 percent, but in no case may the 24-month average unemployment rate of the requested area be less than 6 percent. 7 CFR 273.24(f)(4) provides that a Labor Market Area (LMA), the intrastate part of an interstate LMA, a reservation area, or a U.S. Territory are considered to be areas for the purposes of waivers.

The U.S. Virgin Islands is seeking a waiver for the Territory based on the Territory having an average unemployment rate at least 6 percent and at least 20 percent above the national

average for the 24-month period of August 2017 through July 2019. These unemployment rates are calculated from data obtained from the Virgin Islands Department of Labor, since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics does not collect data for this territory.¹ The national average unemployment rate for this 24-month period was 3.9 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.7 percent.

US Virgin Islands Department of Labor Unemployment Data August 2017 through July 2019			
Territory	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total	Unemploy ment Rate
U.S. Virgin Islands	99,295	1,080,780	9.2

10. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:

This waiver will provide consistency for households and State agency operations in areas where there are not a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for able-bodied adults without dependents.

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

This waiver affects the entire territory. There are no quality control procedures involved.

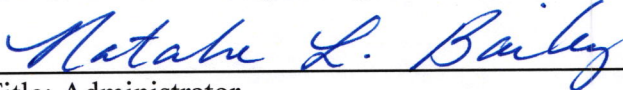
12. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.

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: US Virgin Islands, Department of Human Services, Division of Family Assistance

15. Signature and title of requesting official:



Title: Administrator

Email for transmission of response: Natalie.bailey@dhs.vi.gov

16. Date of request: January 16, 2020

17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone): Emmanueline Archer, emmanueline.archer@dhs.vi.gov (340) 774-4309 ext. 4309

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

¹ The data used to support this request was downloaded from the Virgin Islands Department of Labor website: <https://www.vidolviews.org/gsipub/index.asp?docid=430>.