

ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Type of request:** Initial
2. **Statutory citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **State:** Washington
5. **Region:** Western
6. **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.
7. **Description of alternative procedures:** Washington is requesting to exempt able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in 38 counties and one reservation from SNAP time limits at 7 CFR 273.24.
8. **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. 7 CFR 273.24(f)(6) provides that States may define areas to be waived.

The state seeks a waiver for a regional group of 38 contiguous counties based on the region's aggregate average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of July 2022 through June 2024. The average national unemployment rate for this period was 3.7 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.4 percent. The region's aggregate average unemployment rate for this period was 4.7 percent.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data July 2022 through June 2024		
Contiguous Counties	Unemployed Total	Labor Force Total
Adams County	11,088	232,122

Asotin County	9,270	255,519
Benton County	120,558	2,555,593
Chelan County	47,782	1,074,428
Clallam County	38,773	703,372
Clark County	269,557	5,935,503
Columbia County	1,985	41,540
Cowlitz County	61,902	1,163,903
Douglas County	25,776	524,617
Ferry County	4,870	55,153
Franklin County	61,297	1,047,455
Garfield County	1,074	18,798
Grant County	64,345	1,172,038
Grays Harbor County	45,343	694,393
Island County	40,955	889,343
Jefferson County	15,824	300,692
Kitsap County	133,626	3,096,320
Kittitas County	29,596	554,412
Klickitat County	12,385	232,972
Lewis County	47,220	834,577
Lincoln County	5,732	111,980
Mason County	35,526	611,124
Okanogan County	26,766	470,386
Pacific County	13,052	204,422
Pend Oreille County	7,884	123,787
Pierce County	537,166	10,918,168
San Juan County	7,638	208,374
Skagit County	72,085	1,478,889
Skamania County	6,662	132,462
Snohomish County	404,646	10,934,643
Spokane County	284,701	6,339,898
Stevens County	28,681	460,969
Thurston County	157,135	3,595,955
Wahkiakum County	2,220	32,746
Walla Walla County	31,477	722,331
Whatcom County	126,126	2,758,393
Whitman County	24,018	558,423
Yakima County	189,059	3,115,882
Combined Area Total	3,003,800	64,161,582

Combined Area Unemployment Rate	4.7%
20% Above National Average Threshold	4.4%

Washington seeks a waiver for one reservation based on having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. The reservation unemployment rate was calculated by applying 2018-2022 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) share ratios to county-level Bureau of Labor Statistics data for July 2022 to June 2024. The average national unemployment rate for this period was 3.7 percent; 20 percent above this was 4.4 percent. The reservation's average unemployment rate for the same period was 5.5 percent.

American Community Survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics Data July 2022 to June 2024			
Reservations	Unemployed	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
King County (part); Washington (part); Muckleshoot Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WA	2,487	45,045	5.5%
Pierce County (part); Washington (part); Muckleshoot Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WA	0	93	-
Muckleshoot Reservation	2,487	45,138	5.5%

9. 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.

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

The caseload for the proposed waived areas was 81,549 as of October 2024, accounting for 8.6% percent of the caseload for the state. There are no quality control procedures involved.

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

The State is requesting a one-year waiver, from February 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026.

12. Proposed quality control review procedures:

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

13. Name, title, email, and signature of requesting official:

Name: Brice Montgomery

Title: Interim Director, Community Services Division

Email: brice.montgomery@dshs.wa.gov

Signature: 

14. Date of request: 11/20/2024

15. State agency staff contact:

Name: Sharon Hill-LaGuerre

Title: Administrator, Food Programs and Policy

Email: sharon.hill-laguerre@dshs.wa.gov

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