

WAIVER REQUEST

Student Eligibility

1. **Type of Request:** Initial
2. **Primary Citation:** Section 6(e) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended
3. **Secondary Regulation Citation:** 7 CFR §273.5 (b)(5)
4. **State:** Hawaii
5. **FNS Region:** WRO
6. **Act and Regulatory Requirements:** Section 6(e) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and federal regulation defines household members at least half-half time in an institution of higher education are not eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) unless they meet certain student exemptions.

7 CFR §273.5(b)(5) Be employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week and be paid for such employment or, if self-employed, be employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week and receiving weekly earnings at least equal to the Federal minimum wage multiplied by 20 hours.

7. **Proposed Alternative Procedures:** Hawaii is requesting a waiver to allow students of higher education who are impacted due to COVID-19 to qualify for SNAP regardless of employment status. Hawaii will re-evaluate for student eligibility at the next periodic report or eligibility review, after the pandemic has ceased.
8. **Justification for Request:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an emergency proclamation mandates closure of restaurants, bars, and entertainment and recreational facilities across the state of Hawaii. Additionally, CDC recommendations to limit gatherings to ten people. Due to the evolving situation, Hawaii recognizes the need to do more to provide assistance to those impacted by COVID-19 related closures.

Students who are eligible for SNAP are impacted by the closing of businesses and are unable to work the required 20 hours a week of employment mandated in the regulation. Hawaii is requesting to waive the requirement that students work an average of 20 hours a week to maintain SNAP eligibility.
9. **Anticipated Impact on Households:** Maintaining SNAP benefits for eligible students during this crisis is crucial. Hawaii will ensure students remain eligible during this time when they report a change in employment due to widespread business closures. Hawaii does not anticipate an increase in the number of eligible households, but rather maintaining eligibility for current recipients.
10. **Affected Caseload:** The caseload of existing eligible students working an average of 20 hours a week, who are temporarily out of work because of COVID-19, will remain the same.

The number of eligible students could increase, because of waiving the work requirement, however these students are not currently eligible, and therefore this amount is unknown.

11. Anticipated Implementation Date: Hawaii anticipates implementation of the waiver immediately upon approval to avoid lapse in eligibility for students that have been out of work as of March 23, 2020 as a result of the Governor David Ige's 3rd Emergency Proclamation for COVID19 for closure of various restaurants, bars, and facilities.

Hawaii will continue to work to provide correct training to staff in addition to working with the University of Hawaii System and the State's Workforce Development Council to provide correct information to those impacted.

12. Proposed Quality Control Procedures: The proposal does not affect quality control sampling or procedures.

13. Signature and Title of Requesting Official:



Scott Nakasone
Assistant Division Administrator

14. Date of Request: March 25, 2020