

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):**
2. **Type of request:** New
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1), 7 CFR 273.2(f)(5)(i)
4. **State:** Mississippi
5. **Region:** Southeast
6. **Regulatory requirements:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) provide that households must file SNAP applications by submitting the forms to the SNAP office either in person, through an authorized representative, by mail, by completing an on-line electronic application, or, if available, by fax, telephone or other electronic transmission. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(f)(5)(i) state households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, by facsimile or other electronic device, or through an authorized representative. The State agency must not require the household to present verification in person at the SNAP office. The State agency must accept any reasonable documentary evidence provided by the household and must be primarily concerned with how adequately the verification proves the statements on the application.
7. **Proposed alternative procedures:** Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is requesting a waiver of the regulatory requirement to provide households with the ability to submit applications to the SNAP office in person. The MDHS would continue to accept SNAP applications by mail, completing an on-line electronic application, or, if available, by fax, telephone or other electronic transmission. Additionally, we are requesting a waiver of the requirement to permit verifications to be provided in person at the SNAP office. Mississippi would continue to accept verifications by mail, on-line submission through access.ms.gov, email, and fax (if available).

Mississippi SNAP policy states that households may submit applications to MDHS offices by various means, including in-person, online, via an Authorized Representative, mail, or fax. Documentary evidence may be submitted in the same manner as applications. Therefore, SNAP applicants and recipients have a variety of means of submitting documents other than in-person.

8. **Justification for request:** On January 31, 2020, United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared a public health emergency for the United States due to COVID-19. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization identified COVID-19 as a pandemic. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a nationwide state of emergency due to COVID-19. Mississippi remains under Governor Tate Reeves' "Safe Return" Executive Order resulting from the pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 continues to significantly impact the life and health of the State's population. Governor Reeves has extended social distancing measures and issued additional county-specific executive orders throughout the State in an effort to combat the rising numbers of COVID-19 statewide. Approval of this waiver will help protect the well-being of the citizens of Mississippi, including MDHS employees and SNAP applicants and recipients, by promoting social distancing in combating the spread of the virus.

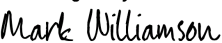
9. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations: This waiver will suspend the requirement to provide households with the ability to submit applications and verifications to the SNAP office in person. This will help prevent exposure of COVID-19 to SNAP applicants and recipients, as well as to MDHS employees.

10. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable): This waiver will apply to all SNAP applicant and recipient households. The number of SNAP recipients as of August 1, 2020 was 439,388.

11. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:
Immediately on approval and until September 30, 2020.

12. Proposed quality control review procedures: Cases will be reviewed in accordance with this waiver approval.

13. Signature, title, and email of requesting official:

DocuSigned by:


Mark Williamson
Director, Division of Economic Assistance Eligibility
Mississippi Department of Human Services
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14. Date of request: August 10, 2020

15. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):
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16. Regional office contact person: