

WAIVER REQUEST - NEW JERSEY

- 1. TYPE OF REQUEST:** Initial
- 2. REGULATION CITATION:** 7 CFR 273.10(f)(5) [7 USC 2012(f)]
- 3. STATE:** New Jersey
- 4. REGION:** Mid-Atlantic Region
- 5. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** Federal regulations permit extending a certification period “as long as the total months of the certification period do not exceed 24 months for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, or 12 months for other households.”
- 6. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** New Jersey is operating under a State of Emergency declared by Governor Murphy on March 9, 2020 relating to the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus. There are currently over 6,400 cases in the United States. 267 of these cases are in NJ with over 1,800 additional cases in adjoining states (Retrieved from <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> on March 18, 2020 at 07:00). Social distancing is the primary non-hygiene related preventative measure identified to prevent the spread of this communicable disease.

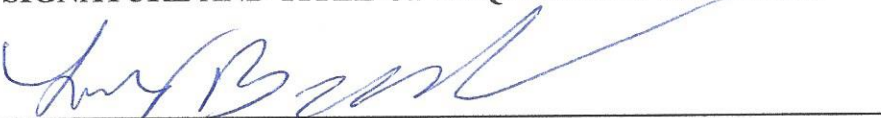
On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared “that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency” retroactive to March 1, 2020. Since the President’s Emergency Proclamation, New Jersey’s has seen a 534% increase in the number of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. Extended school closures have been mandated for all school districts in New Jersey effective March 18, 2020. County Boards of Social Services are experiencing significant staffing deficiencies as the workers struggle to balance caring for their children and working to serve SNAP applicants/recipients. Additionally, local public health officials are mandating closures of county facilities in some areas and/or significant reductions in staffing levels.

To ensure that SNAP recipients do not lose access to critical nutritional benefits provided by SNAP, New Jersey is proposing to the extend certification periods by three months for each certification period set to expire during the State of Emergency and for the two months following the termination of the State of Emergency. Recertifications would be moved according to the following schedule:

Original Cert Expiration Date	New Cert Expiration Date
March 31	June 30
April 30	July 31
May 31	August 31
This pattern would continue for the duration of, and the two months immediately following termination of, the State of Emergency.	

The extension would be applied to any household with a certification period expiring during a month where the State of Emergency is in effect at the start of the month.

Newly approved SNAP cases will be provided a standard certification period as it is expected that the public health emergency would be remedied prior to the expiration of the certification period.

- 7. JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUEST:** This request is justified pursuant to 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(iii) which permits FNS to authorize waivers when “unique geographic or climatic conditions within a State preclude effective implementation of the specific regulatory provision and require an alternate procedure.” The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions in the administration of SNAP offices throughout the state of New Jersey. Additionally, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (HR6201) which permits broad authority for the USDA to approve adjustments in “issuance methods and application and reporting requirement under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008”.
- 8. ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS AND STATE AGENCY OPERATIONS:** New Jersey believes that this waiver will help to maintain access to a critical nutrition assistance program during this public health emergency.
- 9. CASELOAD INFORMATION, INCLUDING PERCENT, CHARACTERISTICS, AND QUALITY CONTROL ERROR RATE FOR AFFECTION PORTION:** In December of 2019, there were 340,602 NJ SNAP households serving 671,271 individuals. In an average month it estimated that there are approximately 24,000 households due for recertification.
- 10. ANTICIPATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND TIME PERIOD FOR WHICH WAIVER IS NEEDED:** Implementation will begin immediately upon waiver approval and will continue for the two month immediately following the termination of the State of Emergency. For example, if the State of Emergency is lifted on April 20, 2020 the cases due for recertification in May and June would also be extended to allow sufficient time for local agency operations to clear any residual case processing matters which occurred during the emergency.
- 11. PROPOSED QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW PROCEDURES:** Extended cases will be coded by QC as timely recertifications. No other special QC provisions apply, and cases will be reviewed using all other standard review procedures in the FNS Handbook 310.
- 12. STATE AGENCY SUBMITTING WAIVER REQUEST AND STATE CONTACT PERSON:**
New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development
Natasha Johnson, Assistant Commissioner
- 13. SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF REQUESTING OFFICIAL:**
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Title: Assistant Division Director
Email for transmission of response: Larry.braasch@dhs.nj.gov
- 14. DATE OF REQUEST:** March 18, 2020
- 15. REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT PERSON (TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE)**

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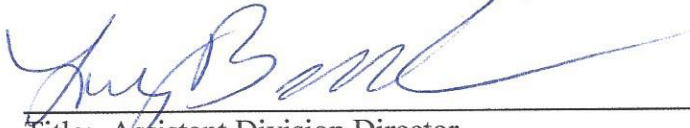
- 1. TYPE OF REQUEST:** Initial
- 2. REGULATION CITATION:** 7 CFR 273.12(a)(5)(iii) [7 USC 2015(c)(D)]
- 3. STATE:** New Jersey
- 4. REGION:** Mid-Atlantic Region
- 5. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** Federal regulations require the submission of a periodic report at least once every 12 months for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, or 6 months for other households.
- 6. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** New Jersey is operating under a State of Emergency declared by Governor Murphy on March 9, 2020 relating to the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus. There are currently over 6,400 cases in the United States. 267 of these cases are in NJ with over 1,800 additional cases in adjoining states (Retrieved from <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> on March 18, 2020 at 07:00). Social distancing is the primary non-hygiene related preventative measure identified to prevent the spread of this communicable disease.

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To ensure that SNAP recipients do not lose access to critical nutritional benefits provided by SNAP, New Jersey is proposing to extend the periodic reporting due date by one month during the State of Emergency and for the two months following the termination of the State of Emergency. Households that have not submitted a period report by the end of the sixth or twelfth month of the certification period would be kept open for an additional month to allow for additional time to process the NJ SNAP Interim Reporting Form:

Original Periodic Reporting Deadline	New Periodic Reporting Deadline
March 31	April 30
April 30	May 31
May 31	June 30
This pattern would continue for the duration of, and the two months immediately following termination of, the State of Emergency.	

The extension would be applied to any household where the sixth or twelfth month of the certification period expiration occurs during a month where the State of Emergency is in effect at the start of the month.

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8. **ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS AND STATE AGENCY OPERATIONS:** New Jersey believes that this waiver will help to maintain access to a critical nutrition assistance program during this public health emergency.
9. **CASELOAD INFORMATION, INCLUDING PERCENT, CHARACTERISTICS, AND QUALITY CONTROL ERROR RATE FOR AFFECTION PORTION:** In Federal Fiscal Year 2020, New Jersey has an average of 22,260 periodic reports due every month.
10. **ANTICIPATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND TIME PERIOD FOR WHICH WAIVER IS NEEDED:** Implementation will begin immediately upon waiver approval and will continue for the two month immediately following the termination of the State of Emergency. For example, if the State of Emergency is lifted on April 20, 2020 the cases due for recertification in May and June would also be extended to allow sufficient time for local agency operations to clear any residual case processing matters which occurred during the emergency.
11. **PROPOSED QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW PROCEDURES:** No special QC provisions apply, and cases will be reviewed using all other standard review procedures in the FNS Handbook 310.
12. **STATE AGENCY SUBMITTING WAIVER REQUEST AND STATE CONTACT PERSON:**
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