

From: [Gagliardi_David - FNS](#)
To: [Natasha Johnson](#)
Cc: [SM.FN.SNAP-PDD-COVID](#); [Ratchford_Eric - FNS](#); [Jenkins_Bill - FNS](#); [Boger_Kelly - FNS](#); [Hayes_Alyssa - FNS](#); [Jacober-Brown_Sally - FNS](#); [Larry Braasch](#)
Subject: FW: COVID-19 NJ Adjustment Extensions Approval - August
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 1:56:35 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[Criteria to Extend COVID.docx](#)
[EO-162.pdf](#)
[NJ - MARO Weekly SNAP Apps COVID-19\(7-6-20\).xlsx](#)
Importance: High

Dear Natasha,

Thank you for your emails on July 7, 2020 and July 21, 2020. Your request to extend the following adjustments has been approved through August 31, 2020:

Initial Certification and Recertification Interviews – COV-010
Certification Periods and Adjust Reporting Requirements – COV-012

All terms and conditions outlined within the previously approved adjustments apply. Please note, the evaluation report deadline remains 45 days after the end of the adjustments. Data only needs to be provided once per adjustment, regardless of the duration of the waiver.

As noted in our previous email, FNS will approve extensions beyond August on an extremely limited basis. In order to receive an extension beyond August, a State must have an emergency order that extends into the month in which the State is requesting the adjustment and provide data that demonstrates that the adjustment continues to be warranted given the current circumstances in the State. FNS expects requests include data on substantial increases in new applications in recent months (e.g. July and August for September adjustment), sizable increases in a backlog of case actions or applications, or a significant decrease in staffing capacity due to COVID-19, among other supporting information. States are expected to reasonably adjust to changing circumstances, including caseload growth, and FNS will not approve requests where the data is merely comparable with the State agency's data from non-COVID-19 circumstances in which FNS was working with the State under a corrective action plan. These requests should also include plans to return to a new normal in a short time frame. States must submit these requests by the 10th day the month before the adjustment would take effect with a response due back from FNS to the State by the 15th. Because approvals for adjustments beyond August will be extremely limited, States should make arrangements to ensure they are able to return to their new normal by September 1, 2020.

We stand ready to provide technical assistance and answer any of your questions.

Thank you,



Dave Gagliardi, Branch Chief/Regional Disaster Coordinator
SNAP, Program Operations
FNS, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
[Redacted]

From: Larry Braasch [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 6:13 PM
To: Jenkins, Bill - FNS [Redacted]; Gagliardi, David - FNS [Redacted]; Boger, Kelly - FNS [Redacted]
Cc: Natasha Johnson [Redacted]
Subject: FW: COVID-19 Extension Requests for August 2020 and Beyond

Good afternoon,

New Jersey would like to request an extension of the following waivers for August:

- Telephone signatures;
- Claims/delinquency;
- QC face to face interviews;
- Interviews; and
- Cert and period reporting extensions.

On Thursday July 2nd Governor Murphy issued Executive Order 162 which extends the public health state of emergency for due to COVID-19 for an additional 30 days. Both the county and state have experienced substantial impediments to normal business processing since the onset of this public health emergency. School and child care center closures have impaired the ability of staff to be available for work since the outset of the emergency, and many agencies were required to limit access to the building for both staff and customers. Over the first months of the pandemic response, our applications experienced a meteoric rise. While the weekly application numbers have declined since the initial weeks of the crisis, the most recent week available is still roughly 60% higher than pre-COVID application rates. Many of the counties have only recently been, or will soon be, returning to a full complement of staff, and an extension of these waivers will afford an opportunity to process the overdue applications that have not been able to be processed due to the increase in volume and decrease in staff that have accumulated during this crisis.

As you can see from the weekly application reports ,and the chart below, our total applications actually increased by 10% last week. This increase is noteworthy in that it falls on a holiday week where we would typically see a decline in applications. It is expected that there will be another surge of applications in July and August as the Pandemic Unemployment Benefits are exhausted. Household's that were over the income limits are expected to seek assistance from SNAP as the job market has not recovered. Last week the Governor had to slow down the reopening plan, and some of the businesses that were hoping to reopen have not been permitted to do so. Continuation of these waivers, specifically the telephone signatures, interviews and certification/reporting periods are necessary to alleviate the pressure of pending applications and to be prepared for the new wave expected as unemployment benefits are exhausted.

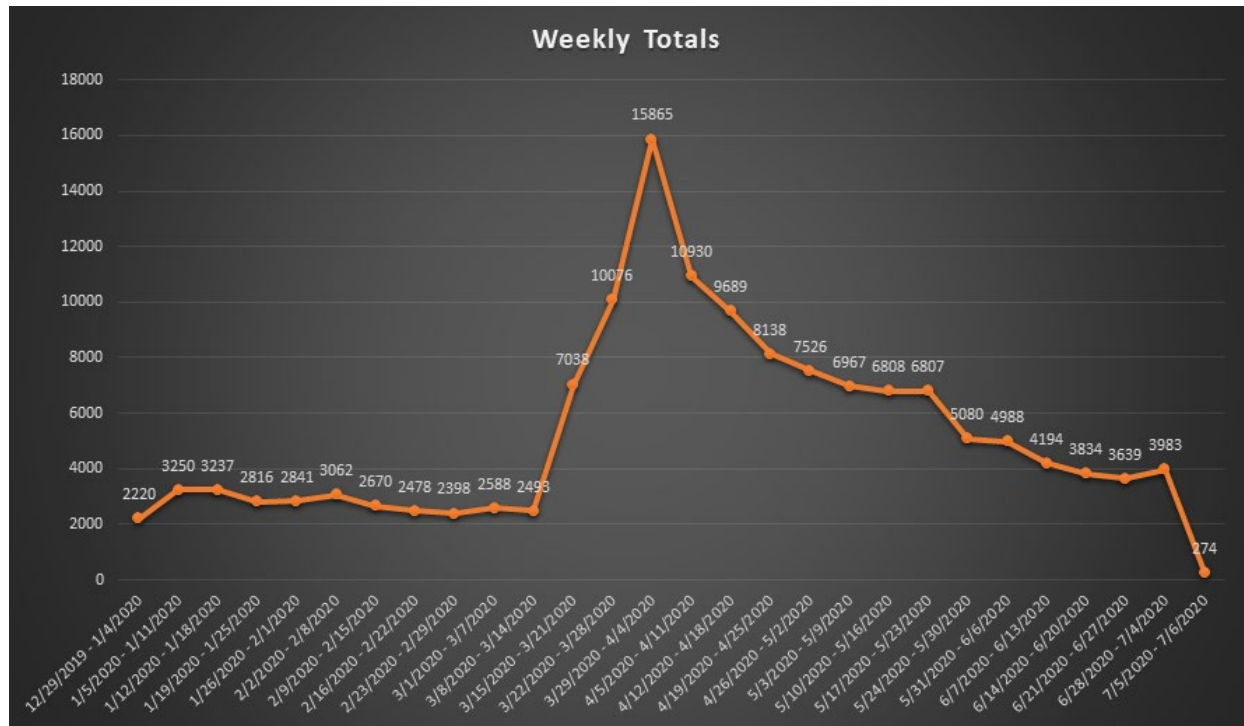
State offices have remained functional in our oversight of the counties throughout the emergency; however, we have limited access to our building to only two days per week and only to those staff who cannot work remotely. Due to our successful centralization of the periodic reporting process, we had been process approximately 75% of the periodic reports that were due. Unfortunately, New Jersey state workers are now undergoing furloughs for the month of July to help offset budget issues due to the economic collapse created by the pandemic. Virtually all of the staff here at DFD are required to take 10 furlough days for the month of July. Given our limited access to the building, and now the limited availability of staff, the DFD periodic report processing will experience delays in our ability to process periodic reports. These waiver extensions are required to ensure that no case closes due to the temporary inability to process all periodic reports timely.

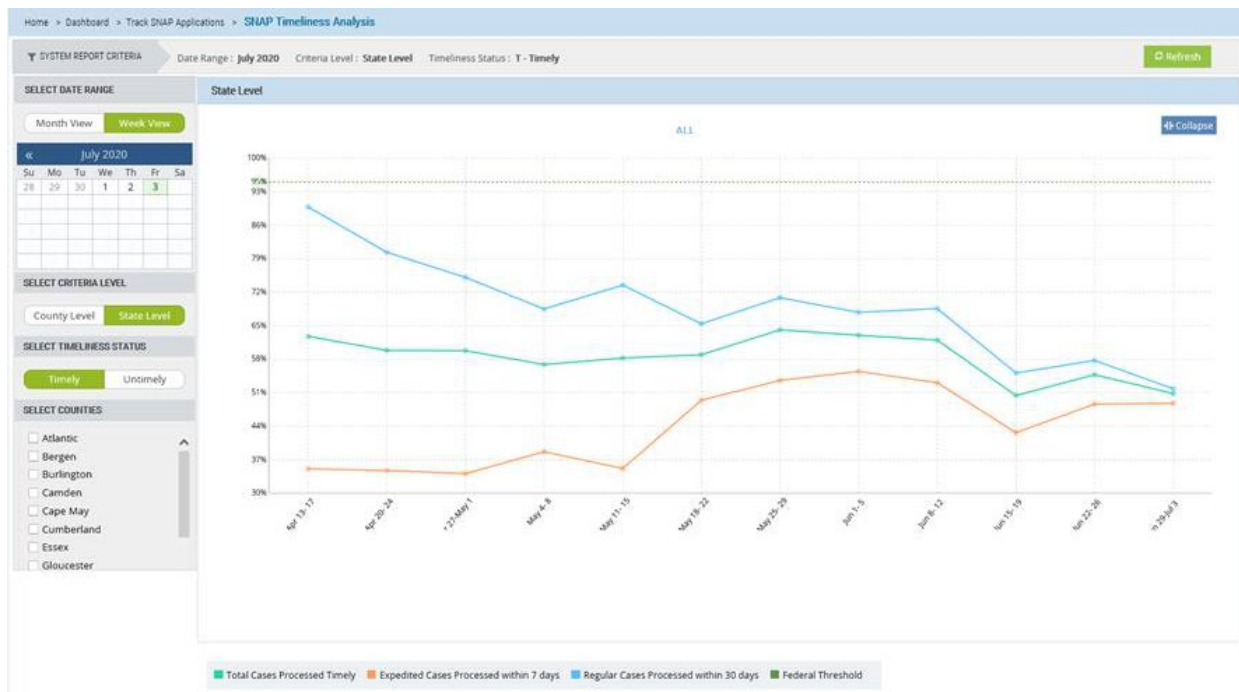
Below you will find weekly timeliness report trends. While it may seem disheartening to see the timeliness numbers dip in the weeks of June this should be seen as progress. As the local offices are bringing staff back online, they are able to work the overdue cases. Therefore, the more overdue applications that they are able to process, the worse the timeliness numbers will appear. Given sufficient time to continue the use of the waiver extensions the offices will deplete the backlog of applications and timeliness numbers will improve.

Pandemic EBT has been release and we are anticipating an high volume of calls regarding benefits and possible card replacements. This activity is something that must be managed in addition to the regular SNAP work that is being conducted.

For the reasons stated here New Jersey is requesting to continue the aforementioned waivers. Allowing these waivers to expire now will have a negative impact on access to the program and would serve to exacerbate food insecurity issues among our needy residents.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any additional questions you may have regarding this matter.





Larry Braasch
Assistant Division Director
NJ Division of Family Development
PO Box 716
Trenton, NJ 08625

Advisory, Consultative and/or Deliberative material.

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From: Jenkins, Bill - FNS [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 11:29 AM
To: Natasha Johnson [REDACTED]; Larry Braasch [REDACTED]; 'Buhrig, Catherine' [REDACTED]; Fitzgerald, Ray (DHSS) [REDACTED]; Hall, Thomas (DHSS) [REDACTED]; Seymour, Anthea (DHS) [REDACTED]; Bloch, Stephanie (DHS) [REDACTED]; Ribar, Michael (DHS) [REDACTED]; Netsanet Kibret -DHS- SSC [REDACTED]; LaSherra Ayala -DHS- SSC [REDACTED]; Augustin Ntabaganyimana -DHR- SSC [REDACTED]; Hamilton, Monica A [REDACTED]; Washington, Toni (VDSS) [REDACTED]; Jackson, Claudia (VDSS) [REDACTED]
Cc: FNS - MARO SNAP ALL Staff [REDACTED]
Subject: COVID-19 Extension Requests for August 2020 and Beyond

Good morning SNAP State Directors,

FNS has worked to develop a process to extend COVID-19 related adjustments and waivers moving forward. This email addresses extension requests for August and beyond.

[Extension requests for August 2020 and beyond:](#)

FNS is setting forth criteria that States must meet in order to receive approval for adjustment extensions beyond July 31, 2020.

In the attached document titled "Criteria to Extend COVID-Related Adjustments and Waivers," each waiver type is listed under a certain tier.

Each tier has a specific set of documentation that must be provided to your Regional Office (RO) in order for an extension beyond July 31 to be considered. Please review this document and let us know any questions that you may have.

Requests for August and beyond will be due no later than the 8th of the prior month to the RO. The RO will make every effort to review and reply to all submissions by the 15th of the month.

Process for extension requests for adjustments expiring July 2020 and beyond:

1. Send the RO an email with the necessary criteria and data for each adjustment.
2. Once received and reviewed by the RO representative, the State will receive an email approval or denial of the extension.
3. All extension emails should be sent to Bill Jenkins, Dave Gagliardi and Kelly Boger.

Please note:

- In order to request an extension, the State agency must have an emergency order that extends into the month in which they are requesting the adjustment or waiver. For example, in order to receive an extension for the month of August, the emergency order must extend into some part of August.
- Requests can only be submitted on a monthly basis (e.g. a State cannot request to waive the interview for August and September at the same time, they must submit the August request, and then submit a second, later request to demonstrate continued need for the adjustment in September).
- States that wish to extend the adjustments that extend certification periods and waive periodic reports, eliminate the interview at certification and recertification, and postpone expedited service interview must demonstrate that the adjustments continue to be warranted given the current circumstances in the State. FNS will approve these adjustments on an extremely limited basis and expect that any requests include sufficient data to support the requests, such as data on increases in applications, extent of application backlog, and any reduced staffing being experienced.

If you have any questions please contact our office.

Thanks
Bill

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