

SEP 15 2006

2030035

SUBJECT: FSP - Alaska – ABAWD Waiver 2006 Extension - 7 CFR 273.24

TO: Dennis Stewart, Regional Director
Food Stamp Program
Western Region

This is in response to your email forwarding the Alaska State Agency's request to extend waiver 2030035. Alaska wishes to waive 7 CFR 273.24, which limits the receipt of food stamp benefits to 3 months within a 3-year period for able-bodied adults who are not working (or participating in a work program) 20 hours or more each week or participating in workfare.

Alaska is requesting an exemption for the entire State for two years. They provided data showing it has a 36-month unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the national average for the 36-month period, July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2006.

Our response is attached. If you have any questions, please contact Celeste Perkins at 703-305-2507.



for Harriet Kornegay
Assistant Branch Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Attachment

cc: All Regions (except WRO) w/Attachment
Dan Wilucz, QC, PAD w/Attachment
Bob Dalrymple, OANE w/Attachment
FNS National Arbitrator w/Attachment

FINAL:USDA:FNS:FSP:PDD:CPB:CPERKINS: 09-15-06
File:I:CPB:Waivers:FY2006 2030035 AK ABAWD 2-year Extension

Symbol	Surname	Date	Symbol	Surname	Date

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2030035
2. **Type of request:** Extension
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **Secondary regulation citation:**
5. **State:** Alaska
6. **Region:** WRO
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** 7 CFR 273.24 provides that no individual will be eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program as a member of any household if, during the preceding 36-month period, the individual received food stamp benefits for not less than 3 months (consecutive or otherwise), during which the individual did not work 20 hours or more a week, averaged monthly; did not participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours or more a week; or did not participate in and comply with requirements of a program under Section 20 or a comparable program established by the State.

7 CFR 273.24 also provides that, upon the request of a State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the above provision 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 enough jobs to provide employment for the individuals.
8. **Description of proposed alternative procedures:** Alaska is seeking to renew its current year-round statewide waiver of 7 CFR 273.24, exempting all able bodied adults residing in Alaska from the ABAWD work requirements. Alaska's unemployment rate of 7.1% has exceeded the national unemployment rate of 5.3% by over 20 percent for a 36-month period (July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2006). Alaska requests that this waiver be renewed for two years, through September 30, 2008. Alaska supplied data from its Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) website as documentation.
9. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** We are approving the waiver for a 2-year extension. Alaska's unemployment rate of 7.1 % exceeds the national unemployment rate of 5.3% by over 20 percent for a 36-month period (July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2006). A spreadsheet detailing this information was provided. Therefore, Alaska will qualify for a 2-year extension based on verification that the area has experienced and will probably continue chronic high unemployment.

10. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** 7 CFR 273.24, which allows the Secretary to waive the applicability of the work requirement provision for any group of individuals in the State if the Secretary makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside as an unemployment rate of over 10 percent or an insufficient number of jobs.
11. **Conditions or Reasons:** N/A
12. **Information required for extension:** Please submit supporting unemployment data that relies on standard BLS data and/or methods that indicates unemployment rates over 10 percent or a lack of sufficient jobs. Please submit data for a 36-month period when submitting data that indicates an unemployment rate of 20 percent above the national average.
13. **Expiration date:** The waiver is approved from October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2008. Please remind the State to submit future requests no later than 60 days prior to the expiration date.
14. **Limitation on regional office approval of like requests:** The waiver is limited to the Alaska State Agency.
15. **Quality Control Procedures:** N/A
16. **Date of national office action:**
17. **Date of State agency's request:** August 28, 2006
18. **Date of regional office transmittal of response to National office:**
19. **Date of regional office transmittal of response to State agency:**
20. **Actual implementation date:**