



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

March 12, 2026

Michael Wisehart

Director

Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services

Department of Economic Security

1789 W Jefferson Street

Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Arizona Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Time Limit – Initial – Approval

Dear Director Wisehart:

This is in response to the Arizona Department of Economic Security's (AZDES) September 26, 2025, request to waive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). The attached waiver response includes the approved areas, the supporting evidence used, and the conditions of approval.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) reminds the State agency that it must measure the 3-year period and track ABAWDs on a continuous basis, even in areas under a waiver. The State agency must continue tracking so that the State agency will be ready to transition off the waiver when it expires and reintroduce the time limit.

FNS also reminds AZDES of the clear expectation that SNAP participants who can work, do work. ABAWDs may fulfill the ABAWD work requirement in several ways including by engaging for at least 80 hours a month in a work program. The SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program is one of many ways that ABAWDs can meet this requirement and helps SNAP participants gain skills and find work that moves them toward self-sufficiency. Connecting participants to AZDES' SNAP Employment & Training program supports our shared goal to lift millions of Americans out of dependency and into hopeful futures.

Please contact your Regional Office representative with any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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for

Ronald Ward

Acting Associate Administrator

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Food and Nutrition Service

Enclosure

Enclosure

**ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)
WAIVER RESPONSE**

- 1. **Request Type:** Initial
- 2. **Statutory Citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
- 3. **Regulatory Citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
- 4. **State:** Arizona
- 5. **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Southwest
- 6. **Requirement:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and regulations at 7 CFR 273.24 provide that no individual shall be eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a member of any household if the individual received program benefits for more than 3 months during any 3-year period in which the individual was subject to but did not comply with the ABAWD work requirement. Section 6(o) and 7 CFR 273.24 also provide that, upon the request of the State agency, the Secretary may waive the applicability of the 3-month ABAWD time limit 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 for non-contiguous States, has an unemployment rate 1.5 times the national average.
- 7. **Requested Area(s) and Support:** The State agency requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in one county and six reservation areas from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

The State agency supported its request based upon three counties having a 12-month average unemployment rate over 10 percent for the 12-month period of June 2024 through May 2025. The unemployment rate for the requested county was 13.0 percent during the 12-month period (Table 1).

Table 1: Counties (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, June 2024 – May 2025)

County	Unemployment Rate
Yuma County	13.0%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on October 28, 2025.

For the four reservation areas, the State agency supported its request based upon those areas having a 12-month average unemployment rate over 10 percent for the 12-month period of June 2024 through May 2025. The average unemployment rate for the requested areas was 11.4 percent or greater during the 12-month period (Table 2).

Table 2: Reservation Areas (2023 American Community Survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, June 2024 – May 2025)

Reservation Area	Unemployment Rate
Cocopah Reservation	22.0%
Hualapai Indian Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land	14.8%
Maricopa (Ak Chin) Indian Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land	11.4%
Salt River Reservation	15.8%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> and <https://data.census.gov> on October 28, 2025.

For the remaining two reservation areas (San Carlos Reservation and Pascua Pueblo Yaqui Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land), the State agency attached a letter from the respective Tribal governments requesting that the State agency submit a waiver request on their behalf. Both Tribal governments provided data and information in their letters showing their reservation areas have an unemployment rate above 10 percent based on the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate data. Each reservation also provided alternate data sources, including historical data and State reports.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe supported its request based upon the San Carlos Reservation area having an unemployment rate of 19.4 percent. They also provided historical and State unemployment rates. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe supported its request based upon the Pascua Pueblo Yaqui Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land having an unemployment rate of 10.1 percent.

While this methodology does not align with the standard methodology FNS uses to calculate unemployment rates for reservation areas (using Bureau of Labor Statistics and more recent American Community Survey data), FNS is granting a one-time approval using a special methodology to waive these two areas (Table 3).

Table 3: Reservation Areas (2022 American Community Survey)

Reservation Area	Unemployment Rate
San Carlos Reservation	19.4%
Pascua Pueblo Yaqui Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land	10.1%

Data extracted from <https://data.census.gov> on March 12, 2026.

8. FNS Action and Justification: FNS is approving the State agency's request to waive the ABAWD time limit. The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.

9. Authority: The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).

10. Implementation Date: March 1, 2026

11. Expiration Date: February 28, 2027

12. Information Required to Submit a Modification, Extension, or New Waiver: To receive a modification, extension, or submit a new waiver to replace the current waiver, the State agency must provide FNS with a formal request supported by data or other information as described in 7 CFR 273.24(f). Any request based upon unemployment rates must include data spreadsheets and supporting documentation.

13. State Agency Contact Information:

Name: Nancy Meeden

Phone Number: (480) 271-5794

Email: nmeeden@azdes.gov

14. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:

Name: Archie Williams

Phone: 214-290-9897

Email: archie.williams@usda.gov