



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

October 23, 2025

Alexis Fernández Garcia
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division
Department of Social Services
744 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

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

Dear Deputy Director Garcia:

This is in response to the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) September 12, 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.

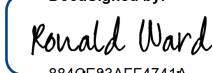
The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) reminds the State agency that it must measure the 3-year period and track ABAWDs on a continuous basis, even in areas under a waiver. The State agency must continue tracking so that the State agency will be ready to transition off the waiver when it expires and reintroduce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

FNS also reminds CDSS 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 CDSS' CalFresh Employment and 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:


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:** California
- 1. **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Western
- 5. **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.
- 6. **Requested Area(s) and Support:** The State agency requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in three individual counties from November 3, 2025, to November 2, 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 July 2024 through June 2025. The average unemployment rate for the requested counties was 10.4 percent or greater during the 12-month period (Table 1).

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

County	Unemployment Rate
Colusa County, CA	13.0%
Imperial County, CA	18.7%
Tulare County, CA	10.4%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on September 17, 2025.

- 7. 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.
- 8. Authority:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).
- 9. Implementation Date:** November 1, 2025
- 10. Expiration Date:** October 31, 2026
- 11. 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.
- 12. State Agency Contact Information:**
Name: Louise Thao
Phone Number: 916-809-5922
Email: Louise.Thao@dss.ca.gov
- 13. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
Name: Jacqueline Bourne
Phone: 415-293-3717
Email: jacqueline.bourne@usda.gov