

March 12, 2007

2070032

SUBJECT: Connecticut Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD)
Waiver of 7 CFR 273.24

TO: Mary Ann Ferris, Director
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region

This is in response to your memorandum of February 15, 2007 transmitting the Connecticut State agency's request to exempt certain individuals from the work requirements of 7 CFR 273.24 based on insufficient jobs. The State based its determination of insufficient jobs on U.S. Department of Labor data.

Our response approving the State's request is attached. If you have any questions, please contact Vicky Robinson at vicky.robinson@fns.usda.gov or at (703) 305-2476.

/s/

Patrick Waldron
Chief
Certification Policy Branch

Attachment

cc: All Regions (except NERO)
Bob Dalrymple OAE
John Knaus
Civil Rights

FINAL:FNS:FSP:PDD:CPB:VROBINSON:03/09/07:mcl
DIR:I:CPB:WAIVERS:FY2007:2070032 CT ABAWD: 2070032 CT ABAWD initial

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WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2070032
2. **Type of request:** Initial
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24(f)
4. **Secondary regulation citation:**
5. **State:** Connecticut
6. **Region:** Northeast
7. **Regulatory requirements:** 7 CFR 273.24 provides that no individual shall 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 per week, averaged monthly; did not participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours or more per week; did not participate in and comply with requirements of a program under Section 20 or a comparable program established by the State; or was exempt from these requirements.

7 CFR 273.24(f) 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 a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.

8. **Proposed alternative procedures:** The Connecticut State Agency has requested to waive, for a period of two years, the work requirements of 7 CFR 273.24 for the Waterbury Metropolitan and the Willimantic Micropolitan areas based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average of 5.1 percent, or 6.1 percent, for the 36-month period of December 2003 to November 2006. The State agency bases its findings of insufficient jobs on data obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics as follows:

National Unemployment Rate (UER):

Labor Force	Unemployed	UER
5,371,719,000	274,339,000	5.1

Area	Labor Force	Unemployed	UER
Waterbury	3,603,127	220,407	6.1
Willimantic	411,576	26,613	6.5

The State agency also requested a two-year approval for the cities of East Hartford and New Haven based on their designation as Labor Surplus Areas for FY06 and FY07.

9. **Justification for request:** To ensure the equitable distribution of food stamp benefits in areas experiencing high unemployment.
10. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** We are approving the State agency's request in full. Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) who reside in the aforementioned areas will be exempt from work requirements due to high unemployment.
11. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** The waiver is approved pursuant to 7 CFR 273.24(f), 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 has insufficient jobs.
12. **Conditions and reasons:** None.
13. **Information required for extension:** To receive an extension the State agency must provide data for the affected areas indicating that there continue to be insufficient jobs for individuals subject to 7 CFR 273.24.
14. **Expiration date:** As requested, this waiver is approved for two years, effective May 1, 2007 through April 30, 2009.
15. **Limitation on regional office approval of like requests:** Approval of this waiver is limited to the Connecticut State agency.
16. **Quality control procedures:** N/A
17. **Date of national office action:** March 9, 2007
18. **Date of State agency's request:** February 15, 2007
19. **Date of regional office's transmittal of request to national office:** February 15, 2007
20. **Date of regional office transmittal of response to State agency:**
21. **Actual implementation date:**