

February 24, 2006

980017

SUBJECT: FSP - Illinois - Request to Waive 7 CFR 273.24

TO: Tim English, Director
Food Stamp Program
Midwest Region

This is in response to the Illinois State Agency's request to exempt individuals residing in specific geographic areas of the state from the work requirements of 7 CFR 273.24 because of unemployment rates more than 20% above the national average. The State bases its analysis on U.S. Department of Labor data that shows specific geographic areas of the State qualify for a waiver based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during a recent 24-month time period.

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

/s/

Harriet Kornegay
Assistant Branch Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Attachment

cc: All Regions (except MWRO)
Kate Fink and Bob Dalrymple, OAE
John Knaus
Civil Rights

FINAL:USDA:FNS:FSP:PDD:CPB:CPerkins:02/17/06:so
DIR:I:CPB/Waivers/2006: 980017 IL ABAWD ext. & mod

| Symbol | Surname | Date | Symbol | Surname | Date |
|--------|---------|------|--------|---------|------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 980017
2. **Type of request:** Extension and Modification
3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
4. **Secondary regulation citation:**
5. **State:** Illinois
6. **Region:** Midwest Region
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** Under 7 CFR 273.24(b), an individual is not 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; participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours or more per week; or participate in and comply with requirements of a program under Section 20 or a comparable program established by the State.

Under 7 CFR 273.24(f), upon the request of a State agency, FNS may waive the applicability of the above provision for any group of individuals in the State if FNS 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. **Description of proposed alternative procedures:** The Illinois State Agency is requesting that waiver 980017 be modified and extended to exempt individuals residing in 10 regions within the State. Each of these areas is a contiguous Sub-region of one of the ten Economic Development Regions (EDRs) in the State from the work requirements of 7 CFR 273.24 due to these areas having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during a recent 24-month period.

Illinois is requesting to exempt residents in cities of Addison village, Alton, Aurora, Granite, North Chicago, Pekin, Peoria, Round Lake Beach village, Waukegan, and West Chicago based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during calendar years 2003 and 2004. To qualify for a waiver, an area must have an average unemployment rate of at least 6.9 during calendar years 2003 and 2004.

| Area | Unemployment Rate, CY 2003-2004 | Area | Unemployment Rate, CY 2003-2004 |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Addison village | 7.0 | Pekin city | 7.2 |
| Alton city | 8.5 | Peoria city | 6.9 |
| Aurora city | 6.9 | Round Lake Beach village | 7.1 |
| Granite city | 8.5 | Waukegan city | 7.6 |
| North Chicago city | 10.1 | West Chicago city | 7.5 |

The State is requesting to exempt residents in the seven regions listed below, based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. To qualify for a waiver, a region must have an average unemployment rate of at least 6.7 during June 2003-May 2005.

Sub-region of Northwest Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bureau County | 6.7 | Lee County | 5.9 |
| Carroll County | 7.8 | Mercer County | 6.7 |
| Henry County | 5.7 | Putnam County | 6.8 |
| La Salle County | 7.4 | Whiteside County | 6.7 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 6.7 |

Bureau, Carroll, La Salle, Mercer, Putnam, and Whiteside Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. Henry and Lee Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

Northern Stateline Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Boone County | 7.5 | Stephenson County | 6.9 |
| Ogle County | 6.4 | Winnebago County | 7.7 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 7.4 |

Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. Ogle County qualifies based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

Sub-region of North Central Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Fulton County | 7.2 | Mason County | 8.1 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 7.4 |

Fulton and Mason Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

Sub-region of East Central Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Douglas County | 5.4 | Iroquois County | 5.6 |
| Ford County | 5.3 | Vermilion County | 8.0 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 6.8 |

Vermilion County qualifies based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. Douglas, Ford, and Iroquois Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

Sub-region of Central Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cass County | 5.6 | Menard County | 5.2 |
| Christian County | 6.4 | Montgomery County | 8.2 |
| Greene County | 6.2 | Morgan County | 6.1 |
| Logan County | 6.4 | Scott County | 7.0 |
| Macon County | 7.3 | Shelby County | 6.3 |
| Macoupin County | 6.5 | Total for Sub-region | 6.7 |

Macon, Montgomery, and Scott Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. Cass, Christian, Green, Logan, Macoupin, Menard, Morgan, and Shelby Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

Sub-region of Southeast Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Clark County | 6.6 | Effingham County | 6.4 |
| Clay County | 6.7 | Fayette County | 7.8 |
| Coles County | 5.6 | Jasper County | 6.6 |
| Crawford County | 6.8 | Lawrence County | 6.0 |
| Cumberland County | 6.8 | Marion County | 8.6 |
| Edgar County | 5.8 | Richland County | 6.6 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 6.7 |

Clay, Crawford, Cumberland, Fayette, and Marion Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. Clark, Coles, Edgar, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, and Richland Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

Sub-region of Southern Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY 05 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Alexander County | 10.0 | Perry County | 7.6 |
| Franklin County | 8.2 | Pope County | 8.1 |
| Gallatin County | 7.9 | Pulaski County | 9.2 |
| Hamilton County | 6.2 | Saline County | 7.2 |
| Hardin County | 8.3 | Union County | 7.5 |
| Jackson County | 5.4 | Wabash County | 6.6 |
| Jefferson County | 6.0 | Wayne County | 6.0 |
| Johnson County | 7.2 | White County | 5.3 |
| Massac County | 6.0 | Williamson County | 6.5 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 6.7 |

Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hardin, Johnson, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, and Union Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005. Hamilton, Jackson, Jefferson, Massac, Wabash, Wayne, White, and Williamson Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

In addition, the State is requesting to exempt residents in the Stark County based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during June 2003-May 2005.

| Area | Unemployment Rate, JUN 03-MAY05 |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Stark County | 7.1 |

The State is seeking waivers for contiguous Sub-regions of this EDR based on aggregate average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during August 2003-July 2005. The request includes area of the State with an average unemployment rate of at least 6.6 during August 2003-July 2005.

Sub-region of Southwest Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, AUG 03-JUL 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, AUG 03-JUL 05 |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bond County | 6.4 | Randolph County | 6.0 |
| Clinton County | 5.5 | St. Clair County | 6.9 |
| | | Total for Sub-region | 6.6 |

St. Clair County qualifies based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during August 2003-July 2005. Bond, Clinton, Randolph Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during August 2003-July 2005.

In addition, the State is requesting to exempt residents in the Calhoun County based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during August 2003-July 2005.

| Area | Unemployment Rate, AUG 03-JUL 05 |
|------|----------------------------------|
|------|----------------------------------|

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| Calhoun County | 7.1 |
|----------------|-----|

The State is seeking waivers for contiguous sub-regions of these EDRs based on aggregate average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during September 2003-August 2005. The request includes area of the State with an average unemployment rate of at least 6.5 during September 2003-August 2005.

Sub-region of Northeast Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, SEPT 03-AUG 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, SEPT 03-AUG 05 |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cook County | 6.6 | Kankakee County | 7.2 |
| Dekalb County | 5.4 | McHenry County | 5.4 |
| Grundy County | 7.7 | Will County | 5.9 |
| Kane County | 6.0 | Total for Sub-region | 6.5 |

Cook, Grundy, and Kankakee Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during September 2003-August 2005. Dekalb, Kane, McHenry, and Will Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during September 2003-August 2005.

Sub-region of West Central Economic Development Region

| Area | Unemployment Rate, SEPT 03-AUG 05 | Area | Unemployment Rate, SEPT 03-AUG 05 |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Brown County | 4.1 | McDonough County | 4.9 |
| Hancock County | 6.2 | Schuyler County | 5.4 |
| Henderson County | 6.5 | Warren County | 6.2 |
| Knox County | 8.2 | Total for Sub-region | 6.5 |

Henderson and Knox Counties qualify based on having average unemployment rates of at least 20 percent above the national average during September 2003-August 2005. Brown, Hancock, McDonough, Schuyler, and Warren Counties qualify based on the area's aggregate average unemployment rate, which is at least 20 percent above the national average during September 2003-August 2005.

The State is also requesting to exempt residents in the Collinsville city based on having an average unemployment rate of at least 20 percent above the national average during September 2003-August 2005.

| Area | Unemployment Rate, SEPT 03-AUG 05 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Collinsville city | 6.5 |

In addition the State is also requesting to exempt residents in municipalities with population less than 25,000 listed in the attached chart from the Illinois Department of Employment Securities. For the period October 2003 – September 2005 these had a 24 monthly average unemployment rate of at least 6.6 %, 120% of the average U.S. unemployment rate of 5.5% for the same period.

- Action and reason for approval or denial:** We are approving the State agency's

request to modify and extend its current waiver to waive 79 counties, 11 cities, and 97 municipalities in Illinois from the time limit for 18 to 49 year olds. These areas can be waived because they had average unemployment rates more than 20% above the national average during recent 24-month periods.

The statistical data used to make our decision was based on information available from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for recent 24-month periods.

10. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** This waiver is approved under the authority of 7 CFR 273.24(f), which allows FNS to waive the applicability of the work requirement provision for any group of individuals in the State if FNS makes a determination that the area in which the individuals reside has insufficient jobs.
11. **Conditions and reasons:** N/A
12. **Information required for extension:** To receive an extension the State agency must provide data indicating that there are insufficient jobs in the State.
13. **Expiration date:** This waiver extension is approved effective March 1, 2006 and will expire on February 28, 2007
14. **Limitation on regional office approval of like requests:** This waiver is limited to the Illinois State Agency.
15. **Quality Control Procedures:**
16. **Date of national office action:**
17. **Date of State Agency's request:** January 30, 2005
18. **Date of regional office fax transmittal of request:**
19. **Date of regional office transmittal of response to State agency:**
20. **Actual implementation date:**