



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

June 27, 2024

Nola Ward  
SNAP Director  
Department of Transitional Assistance  
600 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

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


Dear Director Ward:

This is in response to the Department of Transitional Assistance's June 12, 2024, 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) also 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 must continue tracking so that the State will be ready to transition off the waiver when it expires and reintroduce the time limit. Please contact your Regional Office representative with any questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

  
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Catrina L. Kamau  
Chief  
Certification Policy Branch  
Program Development Division

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:** Massachusetts
- 5. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Northeast
- 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 does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.
- 7. Requested Area(s) and Support:** The State agency requested to waive the ABAWD time limit from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025 in the following areas: two individual counties; a grouping of three contiguous counties; four individual towns and cities; a grouping of four contiguous towns and cities; a grouping of 12 contiguous towns and cities; a grouping of two contiguous towns and cities, a grouping of 27 contiguous towns and cities; two individual New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs); and a grouping of 44 contiguous towns and cities.

The State agency supported its request based upon the two individual counties having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the requested areas was 5.2 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 1).

**Table 1: Counties (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Counties</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
Dukes, MA	5.5%
Nantucket, MA	6.6%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of three contiguous counties having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 5.2 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 2).

**Table 2: Combined Area #1 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Counties</b>
Berkshire, MA
Hampden, MA
Hampshire, MA
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.2%</b>

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the four individually eligible towns and cities having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the requested areas was 5.2 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 3).

**Table 3: Towns/Cities (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Towns/Cities</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
Bernardston, MA	5.2%
Falmouth, MA	5.2%
Gloucester, MA	5.2%
Lowell, MA	5.3%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of four contiguous towns and cities having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 5.2 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 4).

**Table 4: Combined Area #2 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Towns/Cities</b>
Lynn, MA
Revere, MA
Salem, MA
Saugus, MA
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.2%</b>

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of 12 contiguous towns and cities having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 5.2 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 5).

**Table 5: Combined Area #3 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Towns/Cities</b>
Abington, MA
Avon, MA
Brockton, MA
Halifax, MA
Hanson, MA
Holbrook, MA
Randolph Town, MA
Rockland, MA
Stoughton, MA
West Bridgewater, MA
Weymouth Town, MA
Whitman, MA
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.2%</b>

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of two contiguous towns and cities having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 5.5 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 6).

**Table 6: Combined Area #4 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Towns/Cities</b>
Charlemont, MA
Rowe, MA
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.5%</b>

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of 27 contiguous towns and cities having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of February 2021 through January 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.4 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.2 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 5.2 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 7).

**Table 7: Combined Area #5 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, February 2021 – January 2023)**

<b>Towns/Cities</b>
Ashburnham, MA
Barre, MA
Brookfield, MA
Douglas, MA
Dudley, MA
East Brookfield, MA
Fitchburg city, MA
Gardner city, MA
Hubbardston town, MA
Leicester town, MA
Leominster city, MA
New Braintree town, MA
Oakham town, MA

Paxton town, MA
Phillipston town, MA
Royalston, MA
Rutland, MA
Southbridge, MA
Spencer town, MA
Sturbridge town, MA
Templeton town, MA
Warren town, MA
Webster town, MA
West Brookfield, MA
Westminster, MA
Winchendon, MA
Worcester, MA
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.2%</b>

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the two individually New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs) having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2021 through April 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.0 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 4.8 percent. The average unemployment rate for the requested areas was 4.8 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 8).

**Table 8: NECTAs (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, May 2021 – April 2023)**

NECTAs	Unemployment Rate
Athol, MA Micropolitan NECTA	4.8%
Lawrence-Methuen Town-Salem, MA-NH NECTA Division	5.9%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of 44 contiguous towns and cities having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of May 2021 through April 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.0 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 4.8 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 4.8 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 9).

**Table 9: Combined Area #6 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, May 2021 – April 2023)**

<b>Towns/Cities</b>
Acushnet, MA
Attleboro, MA
Barnstable, MA
Berkley, MA
Bourne, MA
Brewster, MA
Carver, MA
Chatham, MA
Dartmouth, MA
Dennis, MA
Dighton, MA
Eastham, MA
Easton, MA
Fairhaven, MA
Fall River, MA
Freetown, MA
Harwich, MA
Kingston, MA
Lakeville, MA
Mansfield, MA
Marion, MA
Mashpee, MA
Mattapoisett, MA
Middleborough, MA
New Bedford, MA
North Attleborough, MA
Norton, MA
Orleans, MA
Plymouth, MA
Plympton, MA
Provincetown, MA
Raynham, MA
Rehoboth, MA
Rochester, MA
Sandwich, MA
Seekonk, MA
Somerset, MA
Swansea, MA

Taunton, MA
Truro, MA
Wareham, MA
Wellfleet, MA
Westport, MA
Yarmouth, MA
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 4.8%</b>

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on June 25, 2024.

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:** July 1, 2024
11. **Expiration Date:** June 30, 2025
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: Frances Ransom  
Email: [frances.ransom-canning@mass.gov](mailto:frances.ransom-canning@mass.gov)
14. **FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**  
Name: Leidy Mateus  
Email: [leidy.mateus@usda.gov](mailto:leidy.mateus@usda.gov)