



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

October 23, 2025

Niki Kozlowski
Director
Income Support Division
Health Care Authority
Human Services Department
Post Office Box 2348
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

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

Dear Director Kozlowski:

This is in response to the New Mexico Human Services Department, (HSD) September 2, 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.

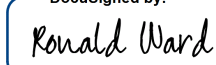
The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) reminds the State agency that it must measure the 3-year period and track ABAWDs on a continuous basis, even in areas under a waiver. The State agency must continue tracking so that the State agency will be ready to transition off the waiver when it expires and reintroduce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

FNS also reminds HSD 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 New Mexico's Health Care Authority, SNAP 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:

A blue ink signature of Ronald Ward, written in a cursive style.

8840E836FF4741A...
Ronald Ward

Acting Associate Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Food and Nutrition Service

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:** New Mexico
- 1. **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Southwest
- 2. **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 an unemployment rate of over 10 percent, or for non-contiguous States, has an unemployment rate 1.5 times the national average.
- 5. **Requested Area(s) and Support:** The State agency requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in one county and four reservation areas from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026.

The State agency supported its request based upon one county 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 county was 12.5 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
Luna County	12.5%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on September 5, 2025.

The State agency also supported its request for the four reservation areas based upon the areas each having an average unemployment rate over 10% for the 12-month period of June 2024 through May 2025. The average unemployment rate for the four reservation areas was 10.1 percent or greater during the 12-month period (Table 2).

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

Reservation Areas	Unemployment Rate
Laguna Pueblo Reservation	10.5%
San Felipe Reservation	10.3%
Taos Pueblo and Off-Reservation	13.2%
Tesuque Pueblo and Off-Reservation	10.1%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> and <https://data.census.gov> on September 5, 2025.

- 6. 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.
- 7. Authority:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).
- 8. Implementation Date:** January 1, 2026
- 9. Expiration Date:** December 31, 2026
- 10. 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.
- 11. State Agency Contact Information:**
Name: Eli Gallegos
Phone: 505-396-0314
Email: Eli.Gallegos@hca.nm.gov
- 12. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
Name: Archie Williams
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Email: archie.williams@usda.gov