



Food and
Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

March 29, 2023

Bethany Caputo
Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 8709
Cranston, RI 02920

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

Dear Administrator Caputo:

This is in response to the Rhode Island Department of Human Services' March 6, 2023, 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:

E3B5695CCC56411...
for Catrina 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:** Rhode Island
- 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 in 23 towns and cities from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) reminds the State agency that the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) continues to temporarily and partially suspend the ABAWD time limit nationwide. While the suspension remains in place, only ABAWDs who are offered a slot in a work or workfare program, including a SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program, are subject to the time limit.

The State agency supported its request for two individual towns based upon the towns having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2020 through December 2021. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 6.7 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 8.0 percent. As detailed in the following table, the average unemployment rate for the towns was at least 8.0 percent during the 24-month period.

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Table 1: Individual Towns (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, January 2020 – December 2021)

Towns	Unemployment Rate
1. New Shoreham town	10.2%
2. Westerly town	8.5%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on March 17, 2023	

The State agency grouped 21 towns and cities in the same New England City and Town Area (NECTA), as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, for consideration as a combined area and has supported its request based upon the combined area having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2020 through December 2021. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 6.7 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 8.0 percent. As detailed in the following table, the average unemployment rate for the combined area was at least 8.0 percent during the 24-month period.

Table 2: Combined Area #1 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, January 2020 – December 2021)

Providence-Warwick, RI-MA NECTA, RI part	
1. Burrillville town	
2. Central Falls city	
3. Charlestown town	
4. Cranston city	
5. Cumberland town	
6. East Greenwich town	
7. East Providence city	
8. Foster town	
9. Glocester town	
10. Johnston town	
11. Lincoln town	
12. North Providence town	
13. North Smithfield town	
14. Pawtucket city	
15. Providence city	
16. Scituate town	
17. Smithfield town	
18. Warren town	
19. West Greenwich town	
20. West Warwick town	
21. Woonsocket city	
Combined Area Unemployment Rate	8.0%
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on March 17, 2023	

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- 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, 2023
- 11. Expiration Date:** June 30, 2024
- 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: Bethany Caputo
Phone: (401) 309-1237
Email: Bethany.caputo@dhs.ri.gov
- 14. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
Name: Leidy Mateus
Email: leidy.mateus@usda.gov