



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

November 19, 2024

Averil E. George
Commissioner
Department of Human Services
1303 Hospital Ground, Suite 1
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802-6722

RE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – U.S. Virgin Islands Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Time Limit – Initial – Approval

Dear Commissioner George:

This is in response to the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services' September 11, 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 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. Please contact your Regional Office representative with any questions.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

Catrina Kamau

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Catrina L. Kamau
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Enclosure

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**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:** Virgin Islands
- 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 time limit throughout the Territory from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

The State agency supported its request based upon the State having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of January 2022 through December 2023. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 3.6 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 4.4 percent. The unemployment rate for the requested area 4.8 percent during the 24-month period (Table 1).

Table 1: Territory (Virgin Islands Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, January 2022 – December 2023)

| Territory | Unemployment Rate |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Virgin Islands | 4.8% |

Data extracted from <https://www.vidol.gov/labor-statistics/> on October 23, 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: January 1, 2025

11. Expiration Date: December 31, 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:

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14. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:

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