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Date: December 21, 2018

Babs Roberts  
Director, Community Services Division  
Department of Social and Health Services  
State of Washington  
Post Office Box 45440  
Olympia, Washington 98504

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Washington Request to Waive Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents Time Limit – Approval**

Dear Ms. Roberts:

This is in response to the Washington State agency's September 24, 2018, request to waive the SNAP time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents in 38 counties and 1 reservation area from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) guidance. Therefore, FNS is approving the State to waive the time limit in the areas for a 12-month period, as requested. The attached waiver response includes the approved areas, the supporting evidence used, and the conditions of approval. Please contact your FNS Regional Office with any questions.

As you may be aware, FNS has proposed regulations that would strengthen the standards by which areas can qualify for these waivers so that the statutory ABAWD work requirement is applied more broadly. FNS has proposed that the rule, once finalized, would go into effect on October 1, 2019, which is the beginning of federal fiscal year 2020. Therefore, the final rule could change the qualifying areas and approval period for this waiver.

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-of the waiver when it expires and reintroduce the time limit.

Moving forward, FNS will be taking actions to support the Administration's priority to provide able-bodied Americans a path to self-sufficiency. This goal requires that we establish a clear and mutual commitment to moving SNAP participants to meaningful employment.

Sincerely,

Sasha Gersten-Paal  
Chief  
Certification Policy Branch  
Program Development Division



### Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver Response

1. **Serial Number:** 2150021
2. **Request Type:** Extension and amendment
3. **Statutory Citation:** Section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
4. **Regulatory Citation:** 7 CFR 273.24
5. **State:** Washington
6. **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region:** Western
7. **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.
8. **Requested Area(s) and Support:** The Washington State agency has requested to waive the ABAWD time limit in 38 contiguous counties and 1 reservation from January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019. The State agency has grouped the 38 contiguous counties for consideration as a combined area, while considering the reservation area individually. The State has supported its request based upon each combined or individual area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. The State agency selected May 2016 through April 2018 for these areas. During this time period the national average unemployment rate was 4.5 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.4 percent. As shown in the following tables, the average unemployment rates for the requested areas were at least 5.4 percent during the selected time period.

**Table 1: Combined Area 1 (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data May 2016 through April 2018)**

Counties
1. Adams County
2. Asotin County
3. Benton County
4. Chelan County
5. Clallam County
6. Clark County
7. Columbia County



<b>Counties</b>
8. Cowlitz County
9. Douglas County
10. Ferry County
11. Franklin County
12. Garfield County
13. Grant County
14. Grays Harbor County
15. Island County
16. Jefferson County
17. Kitsap County
18. Kittitas County
19. Klickitat County
20. Lewis County
21. Lincoln County
22. Mason County
23. Okanogan County
24. Pacific County
25. Pend Oreille County
26. Pierce County
27. San Juan County
28. Skagit County
29. Skamania County
30. Snohomish County
31. Spokane County
32. Stevens County
33. Thurston County
34. Wahkiakum County
35. Walla Walla County
36. Whatcom County
37. Whitman County
38. Yakima County
<b>Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 5.5%</b>
Data extracted from <a href="http://www.bls.gov">http://www.bls.gov</a> on October 26, 2018

**Table 1: Reservation Areas (American Community Survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics Data May 2016 through April 2018)**

<b>Reservation</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
1. Muckleshoot Reservation	10.2%
Data extracted from <a href="http://www.bls.gov">http://www.bls.gov</a> and <a href="http://factfinder.census.gov">http://factfinder.census.gov</a> on October 26, 2018.	

- 9. FNS Action and Justification:** FNS is approving the State agency to waive the ABAWD time limit as requested. The State agency's request meets the requirements for approval provided at 7 CFR 273.24(f) and relevant FNS guidance.
- 10. Authority:** The waiver is approved pursuant to section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and 7 CFR 273.24(f).
- 11. Implementation Date:** January 1, 2019
- 12. Expiration Date:** December 31, 2019
- 13. Information Required for Amendment or Extension:** To receive an amendment or extension 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.
- 14. State Agency Contact Information:**
- Name: Glenn Haynes  
Phone Number: (360) 725-4556  
Email: Glenn.haynes@dshs.wa.gov
- Name: Troy Burgess  
Phone Number: (360) 725-4651  
Email: Troy.burgess@dshs.wa.gov
- 15. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
- Name: Shahdy Monemzadeh  
Phone Number: (415) 645-1923  
Email: Shahdy.Monemzadeh@fns.usda.gov