



United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria VA,
22314

March 7, 2023

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

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

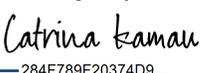
Dear Director Roberts:

This is in response to the Washington Department of Social And Health Services' January 30, 2023, request to waive the 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:


284F789F20374D9...

Catrina L. Kamau
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

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: Washington

5. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region: Western

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 determines 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 37 contiguous counties and two reservation areas from February 1, 2023, to January 31, 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 requested to waive the time limit for one grouping of 37 counties for consideration as one combined area and two reservations. The State agency supported its request based on the region's aggregate average unemployment rate for the 24-month period of December 2020 through November 2022. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 4.6 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 5.5 percent. The aggregate average unemployment rate for the combined areas was 5.5 percent during the month period (Table 1).

The State agency also requested to waive two reservations as both having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for a recent 24-month period. The State agency supported its request based on the reservation unemployment rate calculated by applying 2017-2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) share ratios to county-level Bureau of Labor Statistics data for December 2020 through November 2022. The average national unemployment rate for this period was 4.6 percent;

Enclosure

Page 2

20 percent above this was 5.5 percent. The reservations average unemployment rate for the same period was at 6.8 percent (Table 2).

Table 1: Counties (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, December 2020 – November 2022)

Counties	Unemployment Rate
Benton County, WA	5.2%
Clallam County, WA	6.1%
Cowlitz County, WA	6.0%
Franklin County, WA	6.3%
Grant County, WA	6.3%
Grays Harbor County, WA	7.4%
Jefferson County, WA	5.8%
Lewis County, WA	6.0%
Mason County, WA	6.6%
Pacific County, WA	7.5%
Skamania County, WA	5.8%
Kittitas County, WA	6.0%
Klickitat County, WA	5.8%
Pierce County, WA	5.6%
Thurston County, WA	4.9%
Chelan County, WA	5.0%
Spokane County, WA	5.0%
Adams County, WA	5.1%
Wahkiakum County, WA	6.6%
Yakima County, WA	6.6%
Ferry County, WA	8.8%
Okanogan County, WA	6.4%
Pend Oreille County, WA	7.2%
Skagit County, WA	5.8%
Stevens County, WA	6.5%
Asotin County, WA	3.6%
Clark County, WA	5.0%
Columbia County, WA	5.1%
Douglas County, WA	5.2%
Garfield County, WA	6.0%
Island County, WA	5.2%
Kitsap County, WA	4.7%

Enclosure

Page 3

Lincoln County, WA	4.9%
San Juan County, WA	4.6%
Walla Walla County, WA	4.4%
Whatcom County, WA	5.4%
Whitman County, WA	4.3%
Combined Areas Unemployment Rate: 5.5%	
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov on February 17, 2023 ¹	

Table 2: Reservation Areas (American Community Survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics Data December 2020 – November 2022)

Reservations	Unemployment Rate
Muckleshoot Reservation	7.1%
Tulalip Reservation	6.4%
Combined Areas Unemployment Rate: 6.8%	
Data extracted from http://www.bls.gov and https://data.census.gov on February 17, 2023 ²	

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: February 1, 2023

11. Expiration Date: January 31, 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.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data can be found at <https://data.bls.gov>. Data is from December 2020-November 2022.

² American Community Survey data can be found at <https://data.census.gov>. 2017-2021 5-year American Community Survey data.

Enclosure
Page 4

13. State Agency Contact Information:

Name: Aman Joshi

Phone: (360) 926-5770

Email: aman.joshi@dshs.wa.gov

14. FNS Regional Office Contact Information:

Name: Ana Ingram

Phone: 415-645-1935

Email: Ana.Ingram@usda.gov