



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

December 16, 2024

Brice Montgomery
Interim 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 Montgomery,

This is in response to the Washington Department of Social and Health Services' November 22, 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:

284F789F20374D9...

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

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:** 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 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 38 contiguous counties and one reservation area from February 1, 2025, to January 31, 2026.

The State agency supported its request based upon the combined area of 38 contiguous counties having an aggregate average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of July 2022 through June 2024. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 3.7 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 4.4 percent. The average unemployment rate for the combined area was 4.7 percent during the 24-month period (Table 1).

Table 1: Combined Area (Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Data, July 2022 – June 2024)

Combined Area:
Adams County
Asotin County
Benton County

Chelan County
Clallam County
Clark County
Columbia County
Cowlitz County
Douglas County
Ferry County
Franklin County
Garfield County
Grant County
Grays Harbor County
Island County
Jefferson County
Kitsap County
Kittitas County
Klickitat County
Lewis County
Lincoln County
Mason County
Okanogan County
Pacific County
Pend Oreille County
Pierce County
San Juan County
Skagit County
Skamania County
Snohomish County
Spokane County
Stevens County
Thurston County
Wahkiakum County
Walla Walla County
Whatcom County
Whitman County
Yakima County
Combined Area Unemployment Rate: 4.7%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> on December 6, 2024.

The State agency supported its request for the one reservation area based upon the area having an average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the 24-month period of July 2022 through June 2024. During this period, the national average unemployment rate was 3.7 percent; 20 percent above that rate is 4.4 percent. The average unemployment rate for the requested reservation area was 5.5 percent or greater during the 24-month period (Table 2).

Table 2: Reservation Areas (2022 American Community Survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics Data, July 2022 – June 2024)

Reservation Areas	Unemployment Rate
Muckleshoot Reservation	5.5%

Data extracted from <http://www.bls.gov> and <https://data.census.gov> on December 6, 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:** February 1, 2025
- 11. **Expiration Date:** January 31, 2026
- 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: Sharon Hill-LaGuerre
 Email: sharon.hill-laguerre@dshs.wa.gov
- 14. **FNS Regional Office Contact Information:**
 Name: Ana Ingram
 Email: ana.ingram@usda.gov
 Phone: 415-645-1935