

## Appendix A1.a - 7 CFR 273.24

### Waivers of the Work Requirements for Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

#### § 273.24 Time limit for able-bodied adults.

(f) *Waivers* —(1) *General*. On the request of a State agency, FNS may waive the time limit for a group of individuals in the State if we determine that the area in which the individuals reside:

(i) Has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent; or

(ii) Does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals.

(2) *Required data*. The State agency may submit whatever data it deems appropriate to support its request. However, to support waiver requests based on unemployment rates or labor force data, States must submit data that relies on standard Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data or methods. A non-exhaustive list of the kinds of data a State agency may submit follows:

(i) To support a claim of unemployment over 10 percent, a State agency may submit evidence that an area has a recent 12 month average unemployment rate over 10 percent; a recent three month average unemployment rate over 10 percent; or an historical seasonal unemployment rate over 10 percent; or

(ii) To support a claim of lack of sufficient jobs, a State may submit evidence that an area: is designated as a Labor Surplus Area (LSA) by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA); is determined by the Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance Service as qualifying for extended unemployment benefits; has a low and declining employment-to-population ratio; has a lack of jobs in declining occupations or industries; is described in an academic study or other publications as an area where there are lack of jobs; has a 24-month average unemployment rate 20 percent above the national average for the same 24-month period. This 24-month period may not be any earlier than the same 24-month period the ETA uses to designate LSAs for the current fiscal year.

(3) *Waivers that are readily approvable*. FNS will approve State agency waivers where FNS confirms:

(i) Data from the BLS or the BLS cooperating agency that shows an area has a most recent 12 month average unemployment rate over 10 percent;

(ii) Evidence that the area has been designated a Labor Surplus Area by the ETA for the current fiscal year; or

(iii) Data from the BLS or the BLS cooperating agency that an area has a 24 month average unemployment rate that exceeds the national average by 20 percent for any 24-month period no earlier than the same period the ETA uses to designate LSAs for the current fiscal year.

(4) *Effective date of certain waivers*. In areas for which the State certifies that data from the BLS or the BLS cooperating agency show a most recent 12 month average unemployment rate over 10 percent; or the area has been designated as a Labor Surplus Area by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration for the current fiscal year, the State may begin to operate the waiver at the time the waiver request is submitted. FNS will contact the State if the waiver must be modified.

(5) *Duration of waiver*. In general, waivers will be approved for one year. The duration of a waiver should bear some relationship to the documentation provided in support of the waiver

request. FNS will consider approving waivers for up to one year based on documentation covering a shorter period, but the State agency must show that the basis for the waiver is not a seasonal or short term aberration. We reserve the right to approve waivers for a shorter period at the State agency's request or if the data is insufficient. We reserve the right to approve a waiver for a longer period if the reasons are compelling.

(6) *Areas covered by waivers.* States may define areas to be covered by waivers. We encourage State agencies to submit data and analyses that correspond to the defined area. If corresponding data does not exist, State agencies should submit data that corresponds as closely to the area as possible.