

THIS LETTER APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES ONLY:

Buncombe	Franklin	Lenoir	Pasquotank
Cabarrus	Gates	Madison	Perquimans
Camden	Granville	McDowell	Pitt
Chowan	Guilford	Mecklenburg	Polk
Craven	Haywood	Moore	Randolph
Cumberland	Henderson	Nash	Stokes
Currituck	Hertford	New Hanover	Transylvania
Davidson	Jackson	Onslow	Union
Durham	Johnston	Orange	Wake
Forsyth	Jones	Pamlico	Wilkes

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC SERVICES 3-2004, Extended Benefits

Waiver for ABAWDs (June 24, 2004)

(Food Stamps)

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food Stamp Supervisors

DATE: June 24, 2004

RE: Extended Benefits Waiver for ABAWDs

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2004

I. BACKGROUND

The Food Stamp Program requires able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) from the ages of 18 through 49 to participate in work activities as a condition of eligibility. These physically and mentally fit individuals are restricted to receiving food stamp benefits for a period of three months within a 3 year period, unless the individual is exempt or meets minimum work requirements as described below:

- A. Works an average of 20 hours per week (80 hours per month);
- B. Actively works in a Workfare Program;

C. Participates or complies with a work program at least 20 hours per week; **or**

D. Works and participates in a work program for a combined total of at least 20 hours per week.

North Carolina was among several states that qualified for the Extended Benefits (EB) Waiver under the Unemployment Insurance Program due to the state's unemployment rate. The Division of Social Services submitted a waiver request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow ABAWDs to receive food stamp benefits longer than three months within a three year period without meeting the 80-hours work rule. Under North Carolina's waiver request, ABAWDs living in the counties identified above can receive benefits beyond the three-month period provided all other eligibility requirements are met. The waiver criteria stipulate that ABAWDs must reside in a county that elects to participate in the EB waiver.

II. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

North Carolina's waiver has been approved. In the affected counties, households containing an ABAWD can now be certified longer than three months. Work registration requirements are still applicable for ABAWDs, and employment and training (E&T) requirements and sanctions for non-compliance continue to apply.

The exemption applies to each of the identified counties above from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. There is no guarantee that the EB waiver will be extended beyond one year. Please know this waiver is tied to the North Carolina's unemployment rates and will be reassessed by the United States Department of Labor.

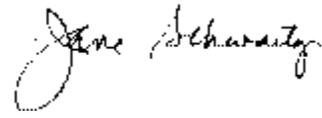
III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

Effective July 1, 2004, at each application, recertification, and change in situation, evaluate each potential ABAWD. Determine eligibility as appropriate. Use the two-digit numerical ABAWD work registration codes found in Food Stamp Manual Section 245 to track ABAWDs affected by this waiver.

At each application, recertification, and change in situation, if there is an ABAWD whose dependent relationship code is J, and the person had previously complied with work requirements, add the ABAWD back to the food stamp case after verifying all eligibility factors. Change the dependent relationship code (field 80K) to "Z," and use the appropriate work registration code (field 80E) on the DSS-8590 and ABAWD tracking form. Re-register the ABAWD with the Employment Security Commission using the NCSSES-2624 or refer the ABAWD to Career Start, if appropriate.

If you have any questions concerning the policy contained in this letter, please contact your Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Schwartz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jane Schwartz, Chief

Economic Services Section

JS/DP