



Bill Draft 2019-LUa-179B: Allow Temp ABAWD Time Limit Waivers/COVID-19.

2019-2020 General Assembly

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| Committee: | House Select Committee on COVID-19 Economic Support Workgroup | Date: | May 26, 2020 |
| Introduced by: | | Prepared by: | Cindy Avrette Staff Attorney |
| Analysis of: | 2019-LUa-179B | | |

OVERVIEW: *The bill draft would allow the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to seek a temporary waiver from the time limits for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) participating in the Food and Nutrition Services program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

CURRENT LAW: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal food assistance program that provides low-income families food needed for a nutritionally adequate diet. North Carolina's SNAP program is called Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). The FNS benefits are 100% federally funded. Costs to administer FNS benefits at the State level are 50% federal/50% state funded and costs to administer benefits at the county level are 50% federal/50% county funded.

The federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 limits the time an ABAWD can receive benefits to three months in any 36-month period, unless the individual meets the ABAWD work requirements or is otherwise exempt. Generally, the work requirements can be met by working at least 80 hours a month, participating in a work program at least 80 hours a month, or participating in a combination of work and work program hours for a total of 80 hours a month. An ABAWD is a person in the program age 18-49 who has no dependents and is not disabled.

The ABAWD work requirements have been temporarily waived due to COVID-19 as a result of a blanket waiver provided to all states by USDA. The waiver is applicable from April 1, 2020 through the end of the federal public health emergency declaration. Under current law, DHHS is prohibited from seeking federal time limit waivers for FNS for ABAWD who have not met federal work requirements.¹ Time limit waivers are temporary, and they are generally approved for a 12-month time period.

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill draft would allow DHHS to seek a temporary time limit waiver for the period following the end of the federal public health emergency declaration.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would become effective July 1, 2020 and expire on July 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND: DHHS notes that the time limits affect 130,000 current or recent FNS recipients:

- About 55,000 current FNS recipients will be in danger of losing their food assistance once they hit the time limit.
- About 75,000 recent FNS recipients subject to the ABAWD time limit are no longer in the program.

¹ DHHS may seek a waiver for the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in an area that has received a Presidential disaster declaration of individual assistance from FEMA.

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