

## STATE WAIVER REQUEST

**1. Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):**

**2. Type of request:** Initial

**3. Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.10(f)(1), (3), and (5)

**4. State:** Iowa

**5. Region:** MWRO

**6. Regulatory requirements:**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(3) provide that the State agency must certify each eligible household for a definite period of time. State agencies must assign the longest certification period possible based on the predictability of the household's circumstances. The first month of the certification period will be the first month for which the household is eligible to participate. The certification period cannot exceed 12 months except to accommodate a household's transitional benefit period. Federal rule 7 CFR 273.10(f)(1) provides that a State agency may certify for up to 24 months households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled. Additionally, 7 CFR 273.(f)(5) provides State agencies the ability to lengthen a household's current certification period once it is established, as long as the total months of the certification period do not exceed 24 months for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, or 12 months for other households. If the State agency extends a household's certification period, it must advise the household of the new certification ending date with a notice containing the same information as the notice of eligibility set forth in paragraph (g)(1)(i)(A) of this section.

**7. Description of alternative procedures:**

Iowa is requesting a waiver of the regulatory requirement and proposes to extend certification periods by an additional six months for households whose certification period is expiring in August 2020 and live in the 27 counties currently under a disaster declaration from severe storms and power outages resulting from the derecho that swept through Iowa on August 10, 2020. Additionally, the waiver would not require Iowa to send a notice to households regarding the extended certification period. A notice of expiration will be sent prior to the expiration of the extended certification period.

**8. Justification for request:**

This request is justified pursuant to 7 CFR 272.3(c) (1)(ii) which permits FNS to authorize waivers that result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program. The approval of this waiver will ensure Iowa can respond quickly to the increase in demand for SNAP benefits, as well as replacement of lost benefits, resulting from this natural disaster.

On August 14, 2020, Governor Kim Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation for 27 Iowa counties. On August 16, 2020, a presidential declaration was also requested. As of August 17, 2020, 75,000 Iowans were still without power to their homes.

Approval of this waiver will support needy Iowans who have been adversely impacted by the derecho, including complete displacement. In several affected areas, power may not be restored for another week, meaning thousands of Iowans will be unexpectedly without power in their homes for two weeks. Due to the length of time without power, many families have been forced to leave their homes and stay where they are able. The storm destroyed a significant amount of mailboxes and mail delivery has been inconsistent and/or altered completely. All of this in the age of COVID where Iowa's numbers are increasing. With such basic human needs in chaos, families are faced with the additional burden of administrative requirements related to applying for recertification. The timing couldn't be worse for these families.

We are requesting a six-month extension for all recertifications of households for which the certification period is expiring on August 31, 2020 who live in the 27 declared counties.

**9. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:**

This waiver will ease a burden of the disaster-affected certified households, due for a recertification in August, to continue to receive SNAP for an additional six months without the need to redetermine eligibility. This will allow DHS to serve the immediate needs of these affected families, who are experiencing the loss of their most basic, fundamental needs, by focusing on issuing replacement benefits due to the substantial power outages.

**10. Caseload information:**

As of June 2020, Iowa served 154,233 SNAP households and 308,227 individuals.

For the month of August 2020, Iowa has 9,194 cases in the disaster area whose SNAP certification is expiring. This waiver will allow us to extend those certification periods so those households do not need to go through the recertification process in order to receive continued benefits.

**11. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:**

Iowa requests to implement this immediately to recertify all households in the disaster area with current end certification dates of August 2020. These certification periods will be extended through February 2021.

**12. Proposed quality control review procedures:**

The proposal does not affect quality control sampling or procedures.

**13. Signature and title of requesting official:**

**e-signed:** *Janee Harvey*

Name: Janee Harvey

Title: Division Administrator, Adult, Children and Family Services

Email for transmission of response: [REDACTED]

**14. Date of request:**

08/19/20

**15. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):**

Food Assistance Program Manager: Kari Lind, [REDACTED],  
[REDACTED]

**16. Regional office contact person (to be completed by FNS regional office):**