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Director

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF ECONOMIC & HOUSING STABILITY
BUREAU OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

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March 19, 2020

Bonnie Brathwaite, Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Northeast Region
10 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02222

Dear Ms. Brathwaite:

Attached please find New Hampshire's waiver request to accept self-attestation for all verification required during the period March 19, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

Protocols are changing daily, sometimes several times in a day. At this point in time, the State has closed all eligibility offices to the public (while staff continue to work in these facilities) and is providing all service over the telephone. We know that households are increasingly anxious about a number of things, and many are losing income due to being released, at least temporarily, from their jobs. New Hampshire is experiencing an increase in applications as are other states.

If you have any questions please contact Maureen Burke, Administrator III, at 603-271-9660. She can also be reached at Maureen.Burke@dhhs.nh.gov

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Sorli, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Family Assistance

Cc:
Maureen Burke

Waiver Request

- 1. Waiver serial number:**
- 2. Type of request:** Initial
- 3. Primary regulation citations:** 7 CFR 273.2(f)(4)
- 4. Secondary regulation citation, if any:** N/A
- 5. State:** New Hampshire
- 6. Region:** Northeast (NERO)
- 7. Regulatory requirements:** §273.2(f)(4) Sources of Verification

(4) *Sources of verification—(i) Documentary evidence.* State agencies shall use documentary evidence as the primary source of verification for all items except residency and household size. These items may be verified either through readily available documentary evidence or through a collateral contact, without a requirement being imposed that documentary evidence must be the primary source of verification. Documentary evidence consists of a written confirmation of a household's circumstances. Examples of documentary evidence include wage stubs, rent receipts, and utility bills. Although documentary evidence shall be the primary source of verification, acceptable verification shall not be limited to any single type of document and may be obtained through the household or other source. Whenever documentary evidence cannot be obtained or is insufficient to make a firm determination of eligibility or benefit level, the eligibility worker may require collateral contacts or home visits. For example, documentary evidence may be considered insufficient when the household presents pay stubs which do not represent an accurate picture of the household's income (such as out-dated pay stubs) or identification papers that appear to be falsified.

8. Proposed alternative procedures: The State proposes to accept self-attestation for all documentation during the time period of March 19 - July 31, 2020. New Hampshire is requesting that this waiver include all new applications and recertifications.

9. Justification for Request: The State believes this waiver request is justified pursuant to §272.3(c)(1)(i) and (ii), which allows FNS to approve waivers it determines appropriate when specific regulatory provision cannot be implemented due to extraordinary temporary situations and when approval of the waiver would result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

As Coronavirus continues to spread across the country, CDC and other national health experts continue to advise that social distancing, self-isolation and in some cases, quarantine, are the best ways to contain the virus. For this reason, the District Offices have been temporarily closed and all interactions between SNAP applicants/recipients and staff will be conducted by telephone. Closure of the District Offices to face-to-face contact is one way to minimize the potential exposure of Coronavirus for both households and eligibility workers as the virus can survive an indeterminate amount of time on surfaces as well as being transferred by person-to-person contact.

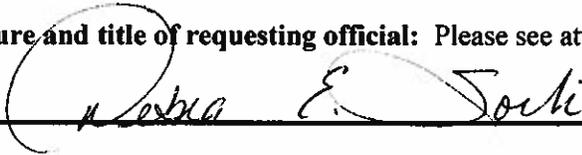
Case processing will necessarily be delayed by this process, as households will have to obtain, copy and mail-in paper verification. Allowing self-attestation is one way to assure rapid and seamless service to households, who are dealing with Coronavirus issues in many arenas.

10. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations: New Hampshire anticipates that the impact of this waiver will be to ease application and recertification requirements for those individuals impacted by the current pandemic. In addition, it will allow eligible households to receive benefits more rapidly than they would following the usual practice of requiring documentary evidence. It will also allow safeguards around person-to-person and surface transmission in the district offices.

11. Proposed Implementation: The State proposes to implement this waiver on March 18, 2020. New Hampshire proposes to apply this waiver to individuals who are due for recertification between March 19, 2020 and July 31, 2020.

12. Proposed quality control review procedures: New Hampshire is aware that implementation of this waiver has the potential to increase payment errors. However, we believe that it is strongly in the best interest of households and the agency to proceed. Cases will be reviewed using standard review procedures contained in the FNS 310 Handbook. For the period of March 19, 2020 through July 31, 2020 the State agency is requesting to be held harmless for any errors that result in a difference between a client's self-attestation and any documentary verification obtained during the QC review process.

13. Signature and title of requesting official: Please see attached letter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra E. Sorli", is written over a horizontal line.

Name: Debra Sorli

Title: Bureau Chief, Bureau of Family Assistance

15. Date of request: March 19, 2020

16. State Agency Staff Contacts:

Name: Maureen Burke and/or Laurie Green

Phone: 603-271-9660 and/or 603-271-9287

E-mail: Maureen.burke@dhhs.nh.gov and/or laurie.green@dhhs.nh.gov

Regional Office Contact: *(to be completed by FNS Regional Office)*