

STATE WAIVER REQUEST

1. **Waiver Serial Number (if applicable):**
2. **Type of request:** New
3. **Regulatory citation:** 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1), 7 CFR 273.2(f)(5)(i)
4. **Secondary regulation citation, if any:**
5. **State:** Ohio
6. **Region:** Midwest Region
7. **Regulatory requirements:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) provide that households must file SNAP applications by submitting the forms to the SNAP office either in person, through an authorized representative, by mail, by completing an on-line electronic application, or, if available, by fax, telephone or other electronic transmission. Regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(f)(5)(i) states households may supply documentary evidence in person, through the mail, by facsimile or other electronic device, or through an authorized representative. The State agency must not require the household to present verification in person at the SNAP office. The State agency must accept any reasonable documentary evidence provided by the household and must be primarily concerned with how adequately the verification proves the statements on the application.
8. **Proposed alternative procedures:** As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is requesting a waiver of the regulatory requirement to provide households with the ability to submit applications to the SNAP office in person. Ohio would continue to accept SNAP applications by mail, completing an on-line electronic application, or, if available, by fax, telephone or other electronic transmission. Additionally, we are requesting a waiver of the requirement to permit verifications to be provided in person at the SNAP office. Ohio would continue to accept verifications by mail, on-line submission through the Ohio Benefits self-service portal, email, and fax (if available).

Ohio policy currently states that households may submit an application to the county agency by any of the following means: in person; through an authorized representative; by fax; by electronic transmission; by mail; or by telephone. Therefore, an application can be submitted through other means other than in person.

9. **Justification for request:** On January 31, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern as well as Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, declared a public health emergency for the United States. The Governor of Ohio, Mike DeWine, declared a state of emergency of the entire state of Ohio on March 9, 2020, (Executive Order 2020-01D) to protect the well-being of the citizens of Ohio from the dangerous effects of COVID-19. In addition to the state-declared state of emergency, on March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national state of emergency over the COVID-

19 pandemic. Approval of this waiver will assist in protecting the lives, safety and health of the citizens of Ohio due to limiting personal contact (social distancing) to help prevent the rapid spread of this virus.

- 10. Anticipated impact on households and State agency operations:** This waiver will suspend the requirement to provide households with the ability to submit applications and verifications to the SNAP office in person. This will help prevent exposure of our customers, as well as state and county employees, to COVID-19.
- 11. Caseload information, including percent, characteristics, and quality control error rate for affection portion (if applicable):** This waiver will apply to all SNAP applicant and recipient households. Ohio's federal fiscal year (FFY) 2018 quality control error rate was 7.46%. The number of SNAP recipients as of December 2019 was 1,316,695.
- 12. Anticipated implementation date and time period for which waiver is needed:**
Immediately upon approval until the month following the month the state of emergency ends.
- 13. Proposed quality control review procedures:** Cases will be reviewed in accordance with this waiver approval.
- 14. State agency submitting waiver request and State contact person:** Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Betsy Suver.
- 15. Signature and title of requesting official:**

_____ **Betsy Suver** _____
Betsy Suver
Bureau Chief, Bureau of Cash/Food Policy & Technical Support
Betsy.Suver@jfs.ohio.gov
- 16. Date of request:** March, 20, 2020
- 17. State agency staff contact (name/email/telephone):** Ashley Howard, Ashley.Probst@jfs.ohio.gov, (614) 644-1680
- 18. Regional office contact person:** Jenie Farinas, Jenie.Farinas@usda.gov