

# Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 62, No. 213

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Food and Consumer Service

#### Food Stamp Program: Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Waivers Under Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act

**AGENCY:** Food and Consumer Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collections. Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, establishes a time limit for the receipt of food stamp benefits for certain able-bodied adults who are not working. The provision authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, upon a State agency's request, to waive the provision for any group of individuals if the Secretary determines "that the area in which the individuals reside has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent, or does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals." As required in the statute, in order to receive a waiver the State agency must submit sufficient supporting information so that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can make the required determination as to the area's unemployment rate or sufficiency of available jobs. This collection of information is therefore necessary in order to obtain waivers of the food stamp time limit.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before January 5, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of

information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Margaret Batko, Assistant Branch Chief, Certification Policy Branch, Program Development Division, Food and Consumer Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302. Comments may also be faxed to the attention of Ms. Batko at (703) 305-2486. The internet address is: Margaret\_Batko@FCS.USDA.GOV. All written comments will be open for public inspection at the office of the Food and Consumer Service during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) at 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 720, Alexandria, VA 22302.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information should be directed to Ms. Batko at (703) 305-2516.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Waiver Guidance for Food Stamp Time Limits.

*OMB Number:* 0584-0479.

*Form Number:* Not a form.

*Expiration Date:* 6/30/97.

*Type of Request:* Reinstatement with change of a previously approved information collection for which approval has expired.

*Abstract:* Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-193, 110 Stat. 2323 (7 U.S.C. 2015) (PRWORA) establishes a time limit for the receipt of food stamp benefits for certain able-bodied adults who are not

working. The provision authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, upon a State agency's request, to waive the provision for any group of individuals if the Secretary determines "that the area in which the individuals reside has an unemployment rate of over 10 percent; or (ii) does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals." As required in the statute, in order to receive a waiver the State agency must submit sufficient supporting information so that USDA can make the required determination as to the area's unemployment rate or sufficiency of available jobs. This collection of information is therefore necessary in order to obtain waivers of the food stamp time limit. Since the provision was implemented (the effective date of the legislation was August 22, 1996), the Food and Consumer Service (FCS) has received requests for waivers from 44 State agencies. A total of 102 separate waiver requests have been received by FCS through September 19, 1997. Each request submitted by a State agency to exempt individuals residing in specified areas is considered by FCS to be a separate request, since the requested exemptions may be based on different criteria, are submitted at different times, and require separate analysis. A significant number of State agencies have submitted multiple requests. Since these waivers must be renewed on an annual basis and new ones may be submitted to reflect changing labor market conditions, FCS anticipates receipt of approximately the same number of waiver requests every year.

*Affected Public:* State and Local governments.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 44.

*Estimated Number of Responses:* 100.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 20 hours.

*Estimated Total Burden:* 2000 hours.

Dated: October 23, 1997.

**Yvette Jackson,**

*Acting Administrator, Food and Consumer Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-29129 Filed 11-3-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-U