

HB 255: SNAP ABAWD Work Waivers

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Goals of HB 255

- Ensure that Alaska is seeking the broadest waiver possible under federal law
- Ensure that Alaska is approving the broadest waiver possible under law
- Ensuring that vulnerable Alaskans have the food they need to be healthy

What is the SNAP ABAWD work requirement?

Under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) are required to meet specific work requirement of 80 hours per month to qualify for benefits.

There is a 3-month time limit per 3 years on benefits if the work requirement isn't met.



**Supplemental
Nutrition
Assistance
Program**

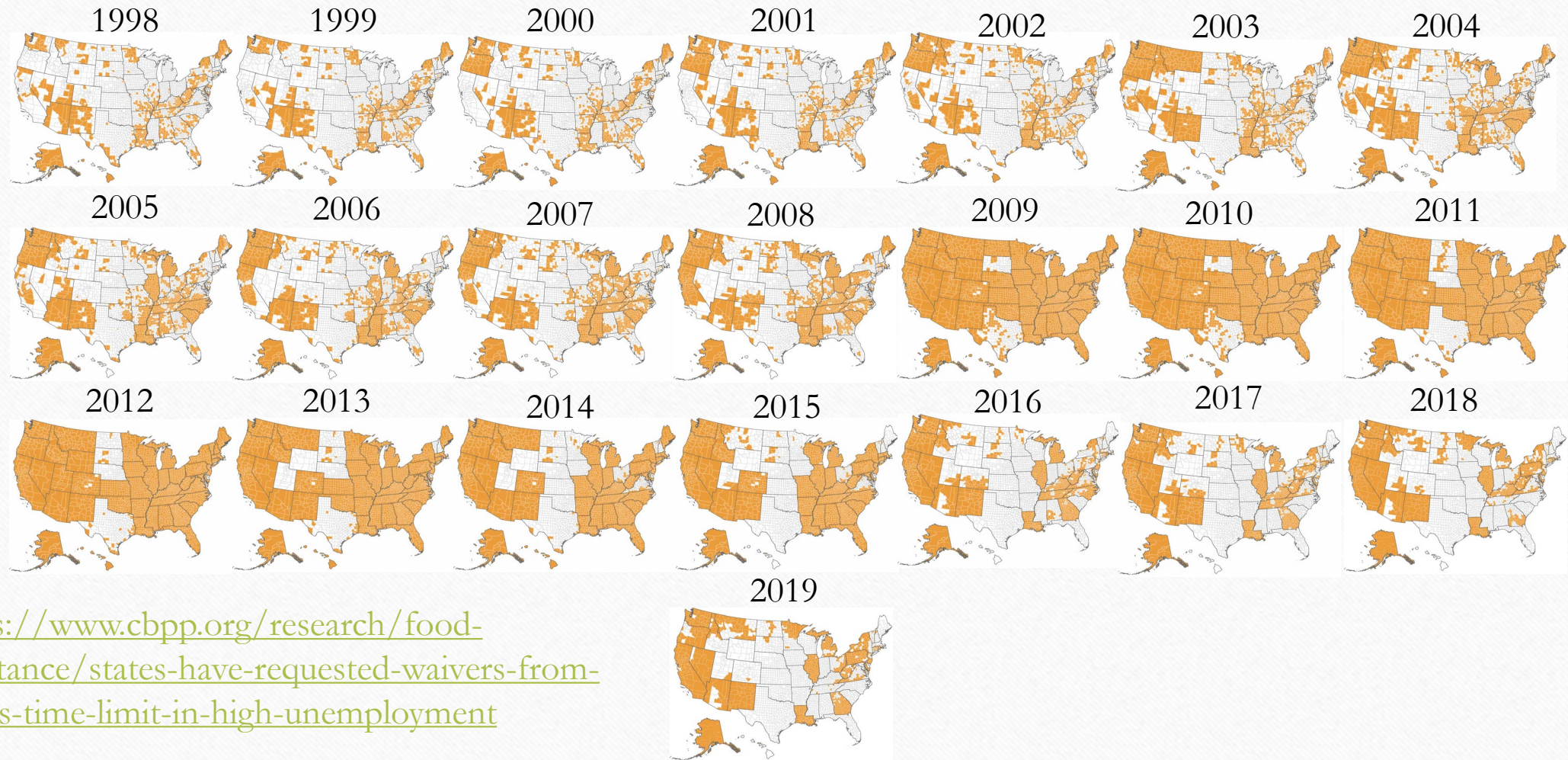
Waivers SNAP ABAWD Time Limits to Work Requirements

Since the time limits enactment in 1996 states have been able to apply for waivers in areas of low work availability

Additionally states can exempt up to 12% of caseload who are ineligible for benefits (extending time limit 1 additional month)

Alaska and Guam lost statewide waivers between 4th quarter of 2019 and 1st quarter of 2020

CBPP- History of ABAWD Waivers from 1998 to 2019



<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/states-have-requested-waivers-from-snaps-time-limit-in-high-unemployment>

Why has Alaska always qualified?

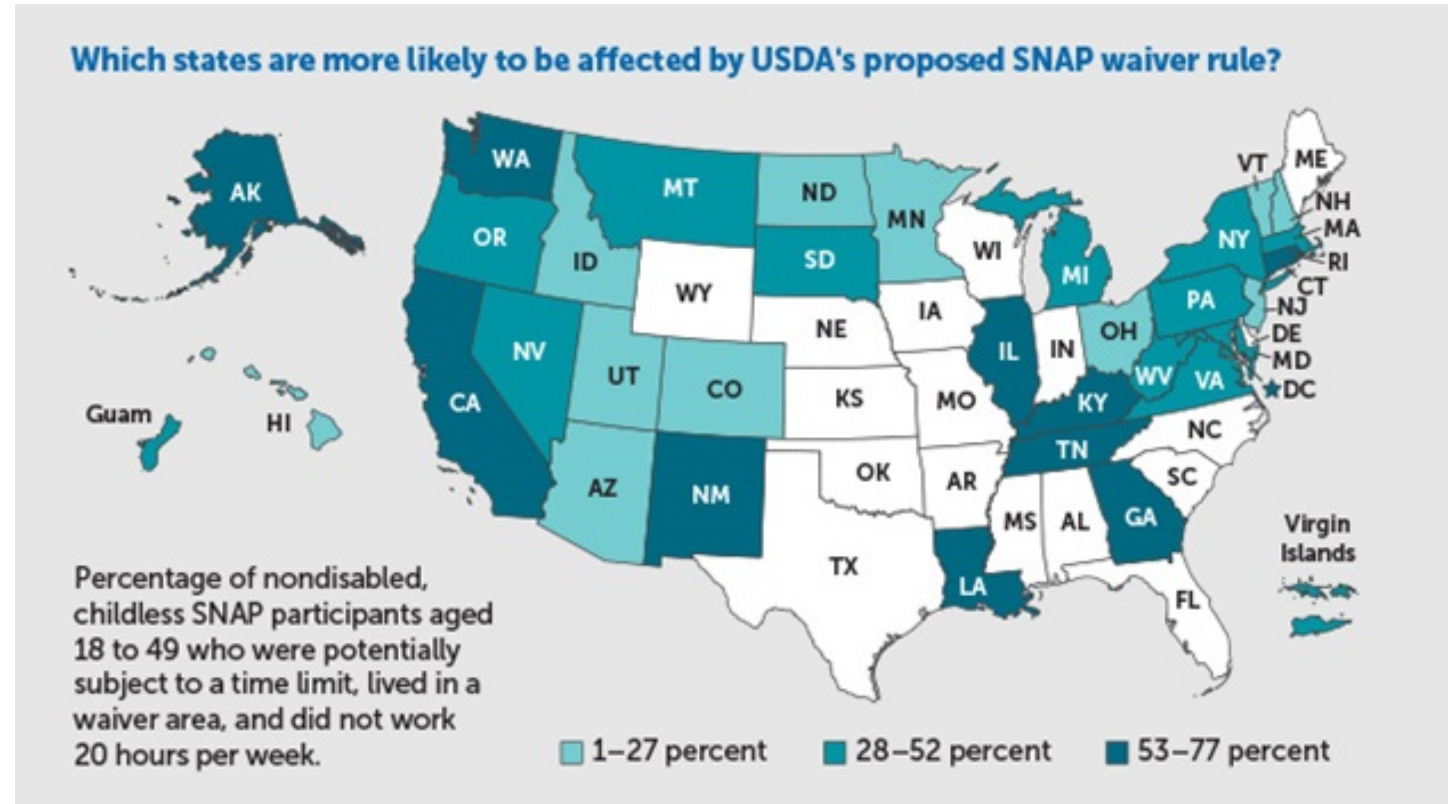
Consistently High Unemployment

- Alaska has consistently met unemployment requirements under the previous federal rule
- Most areas of Alaska can still meet federal requirements under the new rule

Lack of Traditional Job Opportunities

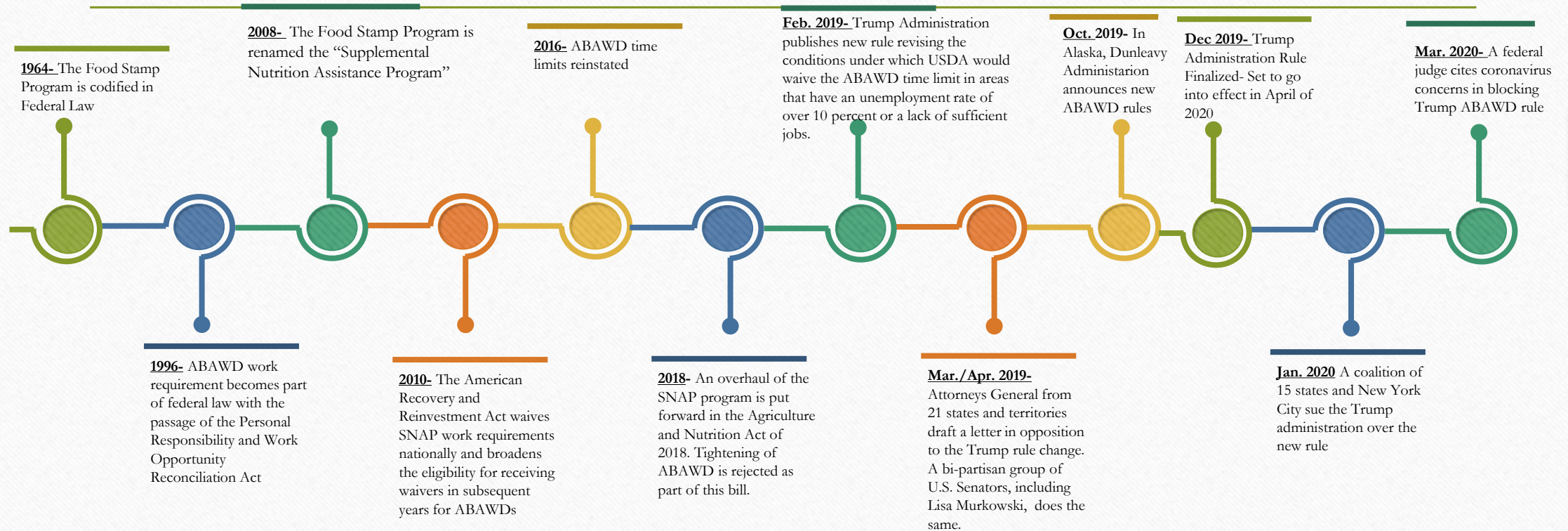
- Rural communities with less cash economy
- Highly seasonal workforce in many sectors of the economy

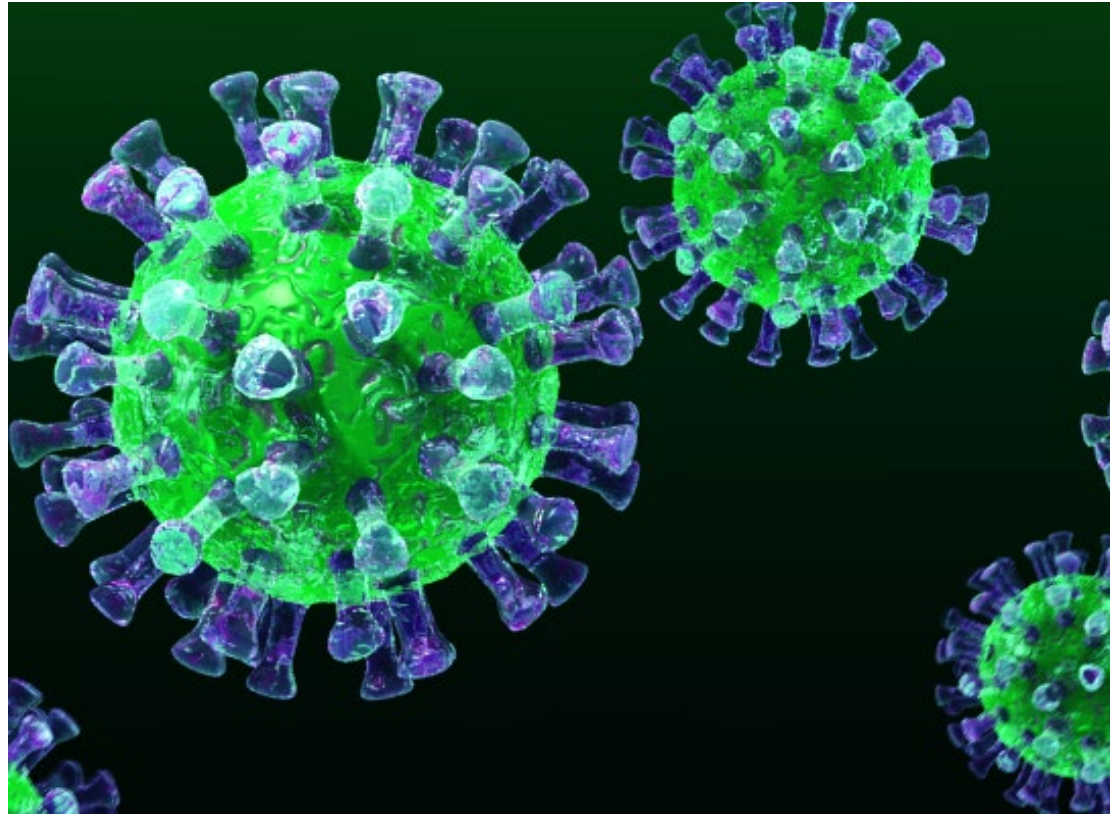
Which States might be Impacted Most?



<https://www.mathematica.org/news/more-than-1-million-snap-participants-could-be-affected-by-usdas-proposed-waiver-rule>

ABAWD Waiver Timeline for Alaska





COVID-19 and SNAP

- Economic uncertainty is increasing dramatically
- Many low wage jobs will be hit hardest (for example- roughly 1/3 of SNAP recipients in Alaska work in the service industry)
- Forcing needy families to go to crowded food pantries or soup kitchens would increase spread of the virus

Sectional Analysis

Section 1: Amends AS 47.25.975 to add a new subsection outlining requirements that DHSS:

Must request, accept, and attempt to renew or extend federal waivers relating to work requirements and time limits for ABAWDs to the maximum extent allowed under federal law in all geographical areas of the state.

Must implement ABAWD waivers approved by the federal government to the maximum allowable extent outlined in each waiver.

May not create more stringent work requirements or time limits for ABAWDs than those outlined in an accepted waiver.

Section 2: Adds a new section to the uncodified law of the State of Alaska requiring that DHSS promptly apply to the federal government for a waiver if the department determines that the waiver is necessary to implement the policy changes outlined in Section 1 of this Act.

Section 3 and Section 4: Relate to the conditional effective date of this Act.



Questions?
