

WASHINGTON



WAIVER STATUS: Partial

While Washington technically has a “partial” work requirement waiver, the overwhelming majority of the state is exempted from commonsense work requirements. The current waiver fully exempts 38 out of that state’s 39 counties and part of an additional county, meaning no counties are fully subject to the work requirement. The current waiver runs from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.



TheFGA.org

94,542

able-bodied adults without dependents on food stamps

Subject to work requirement:
13,932

Percent not working:
73%

Waiver Gimmicks

■ FUZZY MATH

Even with the combination of counties, Washington had to use creative math to get their waiver. The national unemployment rate for the relevant time period was 5.0%. 20% above that rate is 6.0%. But Washington’s combined unemployment rate for the waived counties was only 5.98% for the relevant time period, 0.02% lower than the 6.0% needed to qualify for the waiver.

■ OLD DATA

Washington’s waiver relies on data that goes back to July 2015—three years ago. More recent data paints a much different picture of the state’s economy.

For example, Pacific County’s unemployment rate in December 2017 was at 7.4%, yet if you look at that county’s unemployment listed on the waiver the county’s average is 8.87%.

■ GERRYMANDERING

Washington grouped 38 counties with unemployment rates that vary greatly, and many counties would not qualify for waivers had they not been grouped together. For example, San Juan County enjoyed an average unemployment rate of just 4.26% over the 24-month period Washington used for their waiver.

Further, Washington used a one county outlier to pull their average up dramatically. Ferry County has an unemployment rate of 10.61% for the 24-month period Washington used for their waiver – a 4.63% hike from the average rate for that same period.

The Real Story

■ STATEWIDE UNEMPLOYMENT

4.9% in Washington as of December 2017

■ *A near-record low.*

■ OF 38 EXEMPTED COUNTIES IN WA

1 have unemployment rates above the 10% statutory threshold

17 have unemployment rates at or below 4%

■ *Current unemployment rates are as low as 4% in waived counties.*

8 have unemployment rates at or below 5%

In fact, according to Help Wanted Online, there are

143,681

available jobs in Washington.