



FEB 03 2020

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.  
Room 501  
Boston, MA 02222

Courtney Hawkins, Director  
RI Department of Human Services  
Louis Pasteur Building  
57 Howard Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920

Dear Director Hawkins:

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) acknowledges the Rhode Island (RI) Department of Human Services' (DHS) November 1, 2019 response to FNS' request for information pertaining to the Formal Warning that was issued on April 16, 2018. Based on the State's response, documentation provided, and information that FNS has obtained through management evaluations (MEs) and other oversight activities, FNS is able to close several of the issues identified in the Formal Warning.

The following issues are considered closed for the purposes of the Formal Warning. FNS will continue to monitor these areas through future MEs and bi-weekly corrective action calls.

- **Application Processing Timeliness** – The State has provided timeliness data from January to June 2019. The data indicate that RI has met the 95% timeliness threshold required by the Formal Warning. State-reported Quality Control data available through the Quality Control System further support that the State has met this benchmark.
- **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)** – FNS will no longer track ABAWD compliance issues as part of the Formal Warning. However, please note that open findings from Federal MEs remain open and will continue to be addressed through the ME and semi-annual corrective action processes.
- **Quality Control (QC) Case Completion** – To date, the State has submitted its Federal Fiscal Year 2019 QC cases timely. As a result, this issue is closed for the purposes of the Formal Warning. We will continue to monitor QC case completion and will follow up on any concerns through our bi-weekly calls.

The items below remain open and will continue to be tracked under the Formal Warning:

- **Backlog of Unprocessed Documents** – FNS acknowledges the State's weekly report that was sent November 22, 2019 indicating that the backlog of overdue recertifications had been reduced to 24 and the backlog of overdue interim reports had been reduced to 190. Both of these figures are within the 5%

tolerance threshold identified in FNS' June 3, 2019 letter. Subsequent data reports indicate that the State has been able to maintain this progress. FNS will seek to validate and close this item in the near future. In the interim, we will continue to monitor the volume of overdue unprocessed documents through the weekly data reports.

- **Delayed Implementation of Interfaces** – This item will remain open pending completion of the remaining Unclear Information system releases.
- **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Reconciliation** – FNS and DHS have initiated a series of monthly technical assistance visits specific to EBT reconciliation. DHS will develop a plan of action to address deficiencies in this area.
- **Reporting** – FNS will continue to monitor the accuracy and timeliness of State reporting through the Food Program Reporting System (FPRS).
- **Claims Collection and Recovery Unit (CCRU)** – This item will remain open throughout the CCRU pilot period.

FNS will seek updates on the open Formal Warning issues during our bi-weekly calls and ongoing CCRU and EBT technical assistance meetings. We may require a written update on these open items in the future. FNS appreciates DHS' ongoing efforts to address the issues identified in the April 16, 2018 Formal Warning letter. Our agency remains committed to providing technical assistance as needed. If you have any questions, please contact Maria Volpe at 617-565-6390.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Brathwaite, Director  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
Northeast Region

cc: Deborah Barclay