



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.
Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

April 19, 2021

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

Dear Director Hawkins:

On August 23, 2017, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) notified the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) that the State would be liable for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) overpayments resulting from the implementation of RIBridges. As you are aware, FNS has been working closely with DHS over the past year to obtain access to data from RIBridges and evaluate that data to identify overpayments in an effort to determine an overall liability amount.

Currently, FNS is finalizing calculations and will provide additional information in the near future for overpayments in the following categories:

- Unprocessed recertifications and interim reports;
- Untimely implementation of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA); and
- Duplicate accounts/payments.

After analyzing the data from RIBridges, FNS identified categories of overpayments for which we were unable to determine a final liability amount due to limitations with the data from RIBridges. These include overpayments associated with:

- Incorrect application of the Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowance (HCSUA) for households that should have received a qualifying LIHEAP payment but did not;
- Delayed implementation of interfaces (including the prisoner and death matches);
- Failure to correctly count RIWorks payments as unearned income in SNAP budgets; and
- RIBridges-generated overpayment referrals that are not duplicative of the overpayments identified above.

For these overpayment types, FNS is requiring DHS to 1) develop and document a methodology for calculating the overpayments and 2) to provide the calculations and final amounts to FNS for review. Please provide the methodology to FNS for review and approval within 60 days of the date of this letter. Upon approval of the methodology, the State will have an additional 60 days to submit final calculations to FNS.

FNS will coordinate a call in the coming weeks to discuss expectations related to the State's calculation of these overpayment types, and to answer any questions. FNS will also schedule a virtual review of select cases to investigate discrepancies identified during the review of data from RIBridges. In the interim, please reach out to Matt Henschel at 617-565-1610 or Matthew.Henschel@usda.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

M. Christine Ruggieri
Acting Regional Administrator
Northeast Region

Enclosure