



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.
Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

JUL 11 2017

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

Dear Ms. Hawkins:

The quality control case review process is a key element in the administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The state of Rhode Island continues to face serious challenges with its transition to the new eligibility system which is impacting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) Quality Control System (QCS). For FY 2017 the SNAPQCS has not been able to demonstrate the capability to draw a representative sample from the active as well as the negative universe (as stipulated in CFR §275.21(a) and (b).

The state has not transmitted (currently for the last four (4) months) its cases to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) within the 115 days after completion/determination of case reviews. This has prevented FNS from conducting subsampling for further review.

FNS provides an additional 10 days (for a total of 125 days) for a state to finalize and transmit cases with appropriate supporting documents. The state of Rhode Island is now out of compliance not just for the 115 days, but for 125 days for the sampling month of November 2016, December 2016 and January 2017. Additionally, Rhode Island has not met the due date for submitting the FY 2016 QC cases.

According to CFR §275.21(b) and CFR §275.21(c), the state has 125 days to draw, review and transmit QC cases for further Federal review. Failure to comply may result in an Administrative Procedure to formally assess compliance according to CFR §275.22. Findings from such formal review may lead to serious actions including but not limited to suspensions/disallowance of administrative funds (CFR §276.4).

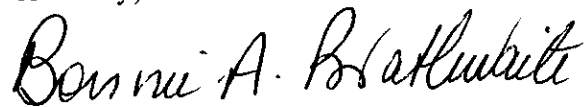
FNS has communicated with the state on multiple occasions including conference calls to discuss the transition to the new system and the state's effort to address problems arising from the system.

The correct representativeness of QC cases, appropriate review, and timely transmission of case files for further Federal review is a federal requirement and is a critical role in the determination of the error rate which also affect the national error rate. This needs immediate attention so that the state can resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Please provide a Corrective Action Plan, to address this deficiency ASAP, and no later than July 26, 2017.

Thank you for your cooperation in this effect, and we look forward to working with you and your team. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Solomon Mezgebu by phone at (617) 565-1607 or by email at Solomon.Mezgebu@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bonnie A. Brathwaite". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Bonnie Brathwaite, Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Northeast Region

cc: Kim Nickolaidis
Iwona Ramian
Dana Denman