



JUL 03 2019

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

Ms. Courtney Hawkins
Director
Department of Human Services
Louis Pasteur Building
57 Howard Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

Dear Ms. Hawkins:

In July 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will release the official Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) overpayment, underpayment, and payment error rates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 under the quality control (QC) provisions of Section 16(c) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended (the Act). This letter is your official notification that Rhode Island will receive an assigned payment error rate for FY 2018.

Rhode Island was unable to complete a significant portion of its QC case reviews for FY 2018. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is aware that Rhode Island continues to experience a shortage of staff in its QC unit and ongoing performance issues with the functionality of its integrated eligibility system, RIBridges, which have greatly impacted the State's ability to complete QC cases during the FY 2018 review period. As a result, FNS is assigning Rhode Island an error rate for FY 2018. Section 16(c)(4) of the Act provides the Secretary of Agriculture, through FNS, the statutory authority to assign an error rate when the State fails to meet QC reporting requirements established by the Secretary.

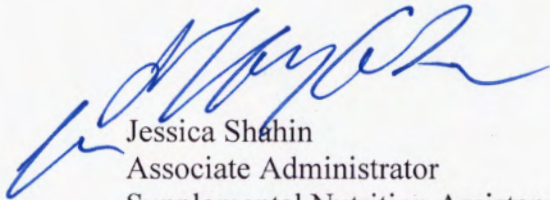
FNS is unable to use Rhode Island's past State reported error rates as part of the methodology to estimate an error rate for FY 2018 due to the unreliability of State reported data for the prior years in which error rates were announced. FNS had to assign Rhode Island's error rate in FY 2017 due to the implementation issues with RIBridges and the State's FY 2015 integrity review cited findings of non-compliance with FNS rules. Considering these circumstances, FNS will utilize the FY 2018 State reported data for cases Rhode Island was able to complete reviews of in order to estimate Rhode Island's error rate for the year.

This letter, the State's response, and any subsequent correspondence shall constitute the consultation about the FY 2018 assigned error rate as required by 7 CFR 275.23(a)(2)(ii). Any response must be sent to our Northeast Regional Office, SNAP Director Bonnie Braithwaite at Bonnie.Braithwaite@usda.gov within 10 days of the date of this letter.

Ms. Courtney Hawkins
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Thank you for Rhode Island's partnership with FNS to continue working to resolve outstanding technical issues. FNS continues to be available to provide technical assistance and training to assist Rhode Island as it implements corrective actions.

Sincerely,



Jessica Shahin
Associate Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program