



Food and  
Nutrition  
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JUN 28 2018

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

Dear Ms. Hawkins:

Today the U.S. Department of Agriculture released the official Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) overpayment, underpayment, and payment error rates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 under the quality control (QC) provisions of Section 16(c) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended (the Act). The national performance measure (national average payment error rate) for FY 2017 is 6.30 percent.

Rhode Island was notified on June 14, 2018, that the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), would assign the State a payment error rate for FY 2017 because Rhode Island was unable to complete a significant portion of its QC case reviews for FY 2017. Rhode Island has experienced systemic issues with the implementation of its new eligibility system, RIBridges, which has greatly impacted the State's ability to complete QC cases during the FY 2017 review period. 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.

Rhode Island's assigned QC error rates for FY 2017 are:

Overpayment Rate	10.07 percent
Underpayment Rate	1.17 percent
Payment Error Rate	11.24 percent

Your assigned payment error rate consists of the sum of the overpayment rate and the underpayment rate. Please note, this sum may not add up to the exact payment error rate due to rounding.

Statutory authorities regarding liability determinations due to excessive payment error rates have been delegated by the Secretary of Agriculture to the Under Secretary for the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS). Under the Act, a 2-year liability system is in place. Under this system, a liability amount shall be established when, for the second or subsequent consecutive FY, FNCS determines that there is a 95 percent statistical probability that a State's payment error rate exceeds 105 percent of the national performance measure for payment error rates.

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FNCS has determined that there is a 95 percent statistical probability that Rhode Island's assigned payment error rate of 11.24 percent exceeds 105 percent of the national performance measure for FY 2017. Therefore, FY 2017 is the first year that Rhode Island's excessive payment error rate places the State in a position of potential future liability. No liability amount is being established for this FY. However, if next year there is also a 95 percent statistical probability that Rhode Island's payment error rate exceeds 105 percent of the national performance measure for FY 2018 and exceeds 6 percent, a liability amount may be established for your State for FY 2018. In such an event, Rhode Island will be able to appeal that FY 2018 determination and its associated liability amount. FNS' assignment of a FY 2017 error rate can be administratively appealed. Such an appeal is limited to the issue of whether a rational basis exists for the methodology used by the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the State's FY 2017 assigned error rate.

Proper administration of the SNAP QC system is our shared responsibility and is essential to guaranteeing the program is run efficiently, effectively, and with the utmost integrity. FNS will continue working with you as we strive to better serve our participants and practice good stewardship of taxpayer funds. Thank you for your partnership in administering this important program. If you have any questions or need more information, please call your Regional Administrator, Kurt Messner, at (617) 565-6370.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon Lipps", written in a cursive style.

Brandon Lipps  
Administrator  
Food and Nutrition Service