



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Rhode Island Department of Human Services

Louis Pasteur Building,

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Phone: 401.462.2121 Fax: 401.462.6594

July 19, 2017

Bonnie Brathwaite, Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
USAD/FNS Northeast Region
10 Causeway Street, Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

RE: USDA/FNS LETTER DATED JUNE 20, 2017

Dear Director Brathwaite:

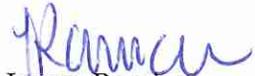
This letter is in response to the above referenced letter, regarding granting read-only, off-site access to the State of Rhode Island's RIBridges system for Federal reviewers. As you are aware, the RIBridges system is the State of Rhode Island's integrated eligibility system used to determine, among other public programs, SNAP eligibility decisions. It is important to note that Rhode Island has always permitted Federal reviewers access to its eligibility system during visits to Rhode Island, regardless of the reason for the visit. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 275.21, Rhode Island has "[supplied] the FNS Regional Office with individual household case records" upon request and is therefore in compliance with section 16(c)(4) and (5) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended and 7 CFR 275.21.

The RI Bridges system does not currently have functionality to provide the access you have requested. The State will work to create a new user role in order to meet these additional requirements. It is anticipated that creating a new user role and completing User Acceptance Testing of this new user role will take the State from three (3) to six (6) months to grant the required access. The State has begun to identify current user roles that may meet some of the USDA requirements for access in order to attempt to expedite the development process. It is important to note that this request will require the State to attempt to isolate the SNAP QC information required by USDA from other public assistance programs in this integrated system. As you are aware, each program and interface has its own confidentiality requirements. As a result, if the State cannot successfully isolate SNAP QC information from other public assistance information, the State would need to seek permission from other federal agencies to permit access to their information which could extend the abovementioned timeline. Moreover, R.I. General Laws § 40-6-12 states the required confidentiality of Rhode Island public program and penalties for violating the confidentiality of the data associated with these programs. Consequently, if access

cannot be isolated to SNAP QC information, then confidentiality agreements will need to be executed with each employee that is granted system access.

As always, the State of Rhode Island is committed to improving the integrity of SNAP as well as continuing its cooperation with USDA/FNS and its compliance with SNAP regulations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



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cc: Kim Nikolaidis
William O'Donnell