



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

Dear Director Hawkins:

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) appreciates Rhode Island's cooperation as we continue to monitor issues in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Concerns have emerged at the Claims Collection and Recovery Unit (CCRU) as a result of the implementation of RIBridges and staffing shortages. FNS understands that the Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to addressing these concerns.

FNS is proposing a targeted workgroup to ensure that the concerns with the State's management of SNAP recipient claims is adequately addressed. FNS would like to participate through ongoing site visits and conference calls in order to provide technical assistance and monitor progress. Previously, FNS has expressed concerns through email communications that included the following:

- Staffing of the Claims Collection and Recovery Unit (CCRU)
- RIBridges claims functionality
- Treasury Offset Program (TOP) requirements and State expertise
- CCRU SNAP policy and RIBridges systems training
- Claims backlog
- The State's Claims Management Plan
- FNS-209, Status of Claims Against Households Report and the lack thereof
- Inability to post claims payments
- Coordinating Intentional Program Violation (IPV) overpayment activities and efforts between DHS and the Department of Administration (DOA) Office of Internal Audit

Additionally, FNS has separately issued letters to DHS placing the State on notice that FNS will be investigating potential instances of over-issuances related to the new eligibility system. FNS has also asked DHS to suspend the establishment of any new claims since the roll-out of RIBridges, due to the potential inaccuracy of SNAP claims. Therefore, this effort requires a great need of attention in order to bring DHS into compliance with regulations at 7 CFR 273.18.

We appreciate your commitment to ensuring program access and integrity for all SNAP applicants and recipients. We will continue to work closely with you and your team to further discuss the logistics of a claims corrective action workgroup and

provide technical assistance and validate efforts taken as you progress with claims management oversight.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact Denise Daly at 617-565-6404 or via email at Denise.Daly@fns.usda.gov and/or Mishka Nembhard at 617-565-4121 or via email at Mishka.Nembhard@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie A. Brathwaite".

Bonnie Brathwaite, Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Northeast Region

cc: Iwona Ramian
Kimberly Nikolaidis