

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
APPEALS OFFICE

██████████

v.

Rhode Island Department of Human
Services

DOCKET No. 25-1374

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A Microsoft Teams meeting on the above-entitled matter was held on June 30, 2025.

██████████ (Appellant) initiated this matter to appeal a decision made by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to close her Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to her household being over income for SNAP. For the reasons discussed in detail below, the Appellant's appeal is denied.

II. JURISDICTION

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is authorized and designated by R.I.G.L. §42-7.2-6.1 and 210-RICR-10-05-2 to be the principal entity responsible for appeals and hearings related to DHS programs. The administrative hearing was held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (R.I.G.L. §42-35-1) and EOHHS regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2.

III. ISSUE

The issue is whether the termination of the Appellant's SNAP was done in compliance with Federal and State regulations and policies.

IV. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

Present for DHS was Glenda Ramos, Eligibility Technician III, who testified regarding the case. DHS offered the following evidence, which was entered into the record of hearing:

- DHS Exhibit #1: State Online Query Report (SOLQ) for the Appellant.
- DHS Exhibit #2: Pay stubs for the Appellant's spouse for pay dates November 22, 2024, through December 6, 2024.
- DHS Exhibit #3: SNAP Gross Income calculation sheet.
- DHS Exhibit #4: SNAP Net Income calculation sheet.

The Appellant attended the hearing and testified on her own behalf.

V. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

Certain individuals living with others must be considered as customarily purchasing food and preparing meals together. Separate household status may NOT be granted a spouse of a member of the household living together. 218-RICR-20-00-1.2.2(A)(1)(a) & 7 C. F. R. §273.1(b)(1)(i).

Household income means all income from whatever source, such as all wages and salaries for services performed and assistance payments from federal or federally aided public assistance programs, such as SSI. 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.2(A)(1)(a)(1) & 218-RICR-20-00-1.2.2(B)(a)(1)(AA).

Households that contain an elderly or disabled member must meet the net income standard of \$1,704.00 for a household of two. 218-RICR-20-00-1.15(A)(2).

SNAP allows five deductions from a household's gross income. These deductions are the earned income deduction, the standard deduction, the excess medical expense deduction, the dependent care deduction, and the excess shelter deduction. 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(A)(6).

The maximum excess shelter deduction per month for household's incurring shelter costs is \$712.00. However, the maximum shelter deduction does not apply to households with an elderly or disabled member. Those households receive an excess shelter deduction for the monthly cost that exceeds 50% of the household's monthly income after all other applicable deductions. 218-RICR-20-00-1.5.7(a)(6)(2).

VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Appellant's SNAP household is a household of two.
2. On December 30, 2025, the Appellant submitted her fiancé's (now spouse) paystubs for period November 22, 2024, through December 6, 2024. The Appellant is an SSI recipient.
3. The Appellant's household failed both the gross and net income limit tests.
4. The Appellant received a Benefits Decision Notice dated January 3, 2025, advising her that her SNAP benefits were ending effective February 1, 2025, due to her household exceeding the adjusted income standard for SNAP.
5. The Appellant filed an Appeal Request on March 20, 2025, stating "The expenses my fiancé and I have need to be accounted for in my case."
6. DHS had calculated the income and expenses that were provided by the Appellant at the time of her SNAP Recertification.

7. The Appellant concedes that DHS calculated all of the income and expenses that she had provided to them.
8. Once all of the Appellant's reported deductions were calculated, the household's net income was \$2386.70, which exceeds the net income limit of \$1704.00.

VII. DISCUSSION

DHS stands by its position that the Appellant's household is over the gross and net income limits for SNAP, and therefore the closure of SNAP was correct.

The basis for the Appellants appeal is that she feels that the expenses that she and her then fiancé should be accounted for in her SNAP case.

The Appellant agrees that DHS processed her case correctly with regards to the household's income and expenses that she provided. However, she does not feel that it is fair that she is not able to have her own SNAP case separate from her spouse because she is disabled and would most likely qualify on her own. She is aware of the regulations that state that she must include her spouse in her SNAP household.

There is a limit with regards to the Hearing Officer's ability to make a ruling on "fairness". The decision of a Hearing Officer is based solely on regulations.

VIII. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After careful consideration of the testimony and evidence presented at the Administrative Hearing, this Hearings Officer concludes:

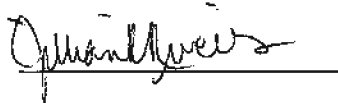
1. DHS was in compliance with the appropriate Federal and State regulations when counting the income from the Appellant's spouse.

2. DHS was in compliance with the appropriate Federal and State regulations when counting the Appellant's spouse as a household member for SNAP purposes.

IX. DECISION

Based on the foregoing findings of fact, conclusions of law, evidence, and testimony it is found that a final order be entered that DHS complied with the requirements of the applicable Federal and State regulations and policies when terminating the Appellant's SNAP benefits.

APPEAL DENIED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jillian R. Rivers", is written over a horizontal line.

Jillian R. Rivers

Appeals Officer

NOTICE OF APPELLANT RIGHTS

This final order constitutes a final order of the Department of Human Services pursuant to RI General Laws §42-35-12. Pursuant to RI General Laws §42-35-15, a final order may be appealed to the Superior Court sitting in and for the County of Providence within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of this decision. Such appeal, if taken, must be completed by filing a petition for review in Superior Court. The filing of the complaint does not itself stay enforcement of this order. The agency may grant, or the reviewing court may order, a stay upon the appropriate terms.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I mailed, via regular mail, postage prepaid, a true copy of the foregoing to [REDACTED]; copies were sent, via email, to the Appellant at [REDACTED]; and to DHS Representatives Glenda Ramos, Kirsten Cornford, Laura Larrivee, the DHS Appeals Unit, and the DHS Policy Office on this

2nd day of July, 2025.

