

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION

DOCKET: 26-1091

V.

Department of Human Services

I. INTRODUCTION

On January 8, 2026, the Department of Human Services (“DHS”) issued [REDACTED] (“Appellant”) a BENEFITS DECISION NOTICE (“BDN”) that informed the Appellant of a change to their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) benefit amount. On February 4, 2026, the Appellant filed APPEAL REQUEST [REDACTED] in RI Bridges case [REDACTED] to dispute DHS’s decision.

An administrative hearing was held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (“APA”) as set forth by the R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35 on May 26, 2026, via Microsoft Teams, the Appellant declined the video option. For reasons discussed in this decision, the Appellant’s appeal request is denied.

II. JURISDICTION

Per R.I. Gen. Laws §42-7.2 EOHHS is to serve as the principal agency for managing the departments of children, youth and families; health; human services; behavioral healthcare; developmental disabilities and hospitals. As such, EOHHS is responsible for legal services including applying and interpreting the law, hearings and appeals, administrative adjudication duties and related functions of said state agencies.



III. ISSUES

The issue is whether or not the Appellant's SNAP benefits were processed in accordance with applicable regulations.

IV. STANDARD OF PROOF

It is well settled that in formal or informal adjudications modeled on the Federal APA, unless otherwise specified, a preponderance of the evidence is generally required to prevail. (2 Richard J. Pierce, Administrative Law Treaties § 10.7 (2002) & see Lyons v. Rhode Island Pub. Employees Council 94, 559 A.2d 130, 134 (R.I. 1989) (preponderance standard is the "normal" standard in civil cases)). This means that for each element to be proven, the factfinder must believe that the facts asserted by the proponent are more probably true than false. When there is no direct evidence on a particular issue, a fair preponderance of the evidence may be supported by circumstantial evidence. (Narragansett Electric Co. vs. Carbone, 898 A.2d 87 (R.I. 2006))

V. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

DHS was represented by Eligibility Technician III Stephen Gossman, who submitted the following evidence into the record exhibit 1 SNAP Application for Elderly and/or Disable households, exhibit 2 Net income benefit calculation printout from RI Bridge, exhibit 3 Appellant's request for hearing, and exhibit 4 BDN issued on January 8, 2026.

The Appellant appeared, but did not testify, [REDACTED], the Appellant's authorized representative appeared and testified on the Appellant's behalf, the following evidence was submitted into the record exhibit 5 Copy of the Appellant's April 24, 2026, Workers Compensation Check, exhibit 6 April 16, 2026, mortgage statement, exhibit 7 April 3, 2026, Verizon bill, exhibit 8 April 27, 2026, water bill, exhibit 9 April 2026 RI Energy bill, exhibit 10 The Appellant's Medicare part B premium bill, exhibit 11 Medicare premium payment

verification, exhibit 12 Medical and prescription payment receipts and exhibit 13 SNAP guidelines October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

The Administrative record contains DHS's agency response and letters issued to the Appellant from the Executive Hearing Office.

VI. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

R.I. General Laws 40-6 designates DHS as the principal agency of the State responsible to administer SNAP. Federal Regulations issued pursuant to the act are contained in 7 Code of Federal Regulations ("C.F.R.") Parts 271 through 282. SNAP benefits are processed by DHS based on the household's information and according to the rules and regulations that govern the program and authorized by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (as amended through Pub. Law 116-94). SNAP regulations in Rhode Island are conducted in accordance with Rhode Island Code of Regulations ("RICR") 218-RICR-20-00-1.

The amount of SNAP benefits a household is eligible for is based on the US Department of Agriculture's ("USDA") Thrifty Food Plan, which is an estimate of how much it costs to buy food to prepare nutritious, low-cost meals for one's household. The USDA issues an annual memorandum that provides the SNAP fiscal year cost-of-living adjustments, SNAP maximum allotments, income eligibility standards, and deductions. The income eligibility standards are based on the Federal Poverty Level ("FPL") and are updated annually on October 1.

Per SNAP regulations, if an elderly/disabled household's gross income is at or below 200% of the FPL are categorically eligible for SNAP benefits and is not subject to a resource test. Categorically eligible households of one and two people that do not meet the net income standard are still eligible for the minimum monthly benefits of \$23.00 per month. (218-RICR-20-00-1.15(A)).

A household's monthly SNAP income is determined is determined according to the steps outlined in 210-RICR-20-00-1.15(D). First, determine gross income by adding the total gross monthly earned and unearned income of all household members, then minus any income exclusions. Then to calculate net adjusted income, calculate the earned income deduction and subtract that amount from the total gross income earned, add that to the total monthly unearned income, minus income exclusions. Next determine and subtract the standard deduction, excess medical deduction and dependent care deduction. Lastly, determine and apply excess shelter expenses.

VII. FINDINGS OF FACTS

1. The Appellant applied for SNAP benefits on July 2, 2025, for herself and her spouse, both are elderly and disabled.
2. The household income is the Appellant's Workers' Compensation benefits of \$2,397.00 per month and the spouse's Social Security Benefits of \$1,012.00 per month.
3. The household's expenses are a mortgage expense of \$1,100.00 and all household utility bills. The standard excess medical deduction of \$183.00 was applied starting as of January 1, 2026.
4. The legal basis on the BDN is 218-RICR-20-00-1.13.1 regarding reporting changes.
5. According to the current SNAP monthly income limits, 200% of the FPL is \$3,526.00 and 100% of FPL is \$1,763.00

VIII. DISCUSSION

DHS maintained the decision made on the Appellant's application is correct. They testified that the household passed the gross and net income tests but due to the income and

expense calculations, their monthly allotment of \$23.00 is correct. DHS did not present any rules or regulations; they testified that there are none that apply to this matter because regulations are only for denials and exemptions. They presented their benefit calculation worksheet, the Appellant's application and the BDN issued to the Appellant on January 8, 2026, as their evidence to uphold this decision.

The Appellant's position is that DHS calculated SNAP benefits incorrectly, they were unable to figure out the calculations when they reviewed them, and they believe SNAP benefits should be around \$100.00 per month. The figures that DHS used to calculate the benefits were reviewed and the only discrepancy was that DHS did not apply the medical deduction until January 2026.

To determine SNAP eligibility for this elderly/disable household, the gross monthly income of \$3,409.00 is first compared to 200% of the FPL, since the household is under the limit of \$3,526.00, the net must now be calculated then compared to 100% of the FPL to further determine SNAP eligibility.

All the household's income is unearned; therefore, the earned income deduction does not apply. All households are eligible for a standard deduction of 8.31% of the FPL, currently \$209.00 for this household of two, this deduction was applied which then yielded an adjusted gross income ("AGI") of \$3,200.00. The Appellant's \$183.00 standard medical deduction was subtracted for an AGI of \$3,017.00. The Appellant has a housing expense of \$1,100.00 and a Standard Utility Allowance credit of \$844.00, for a total shelter expense of \$1,944.00. Half of this elderly household's AGI, \$1,508.00 is then subtracted from the total shelter expense for an excess shelter cost of \$435.50. The excess shelter cost of \$435.50 deducted from the AGI yields us the net income amount of \$2,851.50.

All decisions made by State agencies must be made according to approved policies, laws and regulations, therefore DHS's testimony that there not policy that applies to this matter is incorrect. Although the decision made on the Appellant's benefits is. They testified the Appellant met both the gross and net income limits to be eligible for SNAP; but they only met the gross. They failed 100% of the FPL or \$1,763.00. As the Appellant's household income after allowable deductions was \$2,851.50, under normal program rules, this household is ineligible for SNAP. However, due to the categorically eligible factor of an elderly/disable household, DHS is correctly issuing the minimum SNAP allotment of \$23.00 to this household.

IX. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After reviewing the administrative record, I conclude the evidence does support that DHS processed this household's benefits in accordance with 218-RICR-20-00-1.15(A) of categorically eligible households.

X. DECISION

Based on the foregoing Findings of Facts, Conclusion of Law, and testimony it is found that a final order be entered that DHS's decision in this matter is upheld, the Appellant's appeal is denied.

APPEAL DENIED

/s/Holly Young | Appeals Officer | Executive Office of Health and Human Services

NOTICE OF APPELLATE RIGHTS

This decision is a final order under R.I.G.L. § 42-35-12. Under R.I.G.L. § 42-35-15, this Order may be appealed to court within thirty (30) days of the mailing of this decision. Such appeal, if taken, must be completed by filing a complaint in 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.

Appeals are generally filed in the Providence County Superior Court. However, appeals affecting or concerning children under the age of eighteen (18) and/or appeals of a DCYF action may need to be filed in Providence Family Court. If you have any questions about which court a complaint for appeal should be made, you should seek the advice of an attorney, Rhode Island Legal Services, or the clerk of the court where you wish to file your appeal. The courts' contact information can be found on the judiciary's website (<https://www.courts.ri.gov>). Copies of the appeal must be served upon all parties in your case within ten (10) days of the filing of your appeal.

If you exercise any of these appellate rights, please inform the EOHHS appeals office of this so we can prepare a copy of the record for the court. You can contact the Appeals Office at OHHS.AppealsOffice@ohhs.ri.gov, 401.462.2132 (Phone), 401.462.0458 (Fax), or at 3 West Road, Virks Building, Cranston, RI 02908.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I mailed, via regular mail, postage prepaid, a true copy of the foregoing to

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and electronically to [REDACTED]. Copies were

sent electronically to DHS representatives of the DHS Appeals Unit, the DHS Policy Unit,

Stephen Gossman and Kirsten Cornford, on this 12th day of June,
2026.

Rehm K.A.