

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

ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION

Docket: 26-1143

V.

Department of Human Services

I. INTRODUCTION

The Appellant, [REDACTED], filed a HEARING REQUEST on February 4, 2026, to appeal adverse actions taken by the Department of Human Services ("DHS"), to the Appellant's General Public Assistance ("GPA") benefits application in appeal 183187, RI Bridges account 231744.

An administrative hearing was conducted on July 13, 2026, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35.1 and the Rhode Island Code of Regulations ("RICR") 210-RICR-10-05-2. The hearing was held via Microsoft Teams Video. For the reasons detailed below, the appeal 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. 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 decision made by DHS was in compliance with regulations.

IV. STANDARD OF PROOF

It is well settled that in formal or informal adjudications modeled on the Federal Administrative Procedures Act, 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. (Id.). 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 Senior Case Work Supervisor Linda McBride, the Appellant appeared and testified on their own behalf. The following documents were submitted into the record:

- Exhibit 1 Benefits Decision Notice (“BDN”) issued January 22, 2026.
- Exhibit 2 GPA application.
- Exhibit 3 Printout of DHS internal case notes.
- Exhibit 4 GPA policy 218-RICR-220-00-3.2.
- Exhibit 5 Appeal request.

- The Appellant submitted several documents into evidence, none of which were relevant to the matter under appeal.

VI. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

An applicant of the GPA Bridge fund is expected to file a written application for SSI within 30 days of the date of the GPA Intake appointment. If verification of filing is not received by DHS within 30 days, or if the individual applies and subsequently refuses to cooperate in the determination of SSI eligibility, a notice of GPA ineligibility is sent, and the case is closed due to non-compliance. If upon review by the worker, or if the applicant reports to the worker that their SSI application has been denied, the worker should instruct the applicant, they have 60 days from the SSI denial date to file for reconsideration. (218-RICR-20-00-2.1(D)).

VII. FINDINGS OF FACTS

1. The Appellant applied for GPA benefits on January 20, 2026.
2. The Appellant reported on the application that they have a disability and that a Social Security Benefits application was filed on September 11, 2026.
3. DHS conducted an interview with the Appellant on January 22, 2026. After DHS confirmed, through the Social Security benefits electronic interface that the Appellant had not applied for SSI benefits, the GPA application was denied for not meeting program requirements.
4. The Appellant's reason for this appeal is due to financial hardship as they have been waiting for the result of Workers' Compensation benefits for some time, they were evicted and are now living at [REDACTED] and are unable to work due to disability.
5. The Appellant did not apply for SSI benefits.

VIII. DISCUSSION

DHS maintained that the Appellant is ineligible for the GPA Bridge program because they have not applied for SSI, there are no exceptions to this program requirement.

The Appellant testified, upon the advice of their attorney, they chose not to apply for SSI, only for RSDI. Several pieces of evidence were submitted that clearly documents the Appellant's housing crisis, Workers Compensation claim status, disability and more, but this proceeding is not to determine any of those things. The matter to be decided is does the Appellant meet the program requirements for GPA benefits. The Appellant is seeking DHS's decision to be overturned due their "hardship" situation and GPA benefits awarded.

Regulations are clear, as testified to by DHS, this program is limited to individuals who have applied for and are actively pursuing a claim for SSI benefits. 218-RICR-20-00-3.2.1 specifies that a GPA applicant who will be 65 years of age within one month or an applicant who is disabled, is required to file for and cooperate in the eligibility determination for SSI. The Appellant was aware of this requirement as they were informed in the interview, and the Appellant has chosen not to fulfill this requirement.

DHS did not verify an SSI application, and a notice of GPA ineligibility was sent two days after the application was filed, and the case was closed due to non-compliance. Per policy the Appellant has 30 days to demonstrate compliance with the requirement. Although DHS denied the application prior to the 30th day, that is a moot point, by the Appellant's own admittance, they did not apply for SSI. DHS's denial of GPA benefits for not meeting program requirements is correct.

IX. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After reviewing the administrative record, I conclude the following reasons for this decision:

Per 218-RICR-20-00-3.2(A)(4)(d) GPA applicants must file a claim for SSI benefits.

The evidence supports that the Appellant did not file an SSI benefits claim.

X. DECISION

Based on the foregoing finding of facts, conclusions of law, evidence and testimony, there is sufficient evidence to support DHS's denial of the Appellant's GPA benefits application as these actions were processed in accordance with regulations.

DHS's decision is upheld and this appeal is denied.

This decision is a final order of the Executive Hearing Office. If you are dissatisfied or aggrieved by the decision, see the attached time sensitive notice of appellate rights.

/s/Holly Young | Appeals Officer | Executive Hearing Office

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, and/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

_____ and via email to

_____ copies were sent electronically to Agency representatives of the

ESSU Unit, the DHS Policy Office, Linda Demoranville, Linda McBride and Kirsten Cornford,

on this 17TH day of JULY, 2026.

