

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

[REDACTED]

v.

Docket No. 26-2043 & 26-2045

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A telephonic hearing on the above-entitled matter was held on June 2, 2026, and the Appellant declined the option of a video hearing. [REDACTED] (Appellant) initiated this matter to appeal a decision made by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to terminate her Rhode Island Works (RIW) benefits as of March 16, 2026, due to failure to provide required information within a specified time frame, and the continued closure due to meeting the RIW time limits. The Appellant disagrees with the closure and is seeking to have her RIW eligibility approved. 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 EOHHS regulations 210-RICR-10-05-2 to be the entity responsible for appeals and hearings related to SNAP. The Administrative Hearing was held in

accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, R.I.G.L. § 42-35-1 et. seq. and EOHHS regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2.

III. ISSUES

The issues are whether the Appellant is ineligible for RIW benefits as of March 16, 2026, due to failure to provide required information within a specified time frame, and whether she continues to be ineligible subsequent to the submission of the required information, due to meeting the RIW maximum lifetime limit.

IV. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

Glenda Ramos, Eligibility Technician III appeared on behalf of DHS and provided testimony regarding the case. DHS submitted the following exhibits into evidence:

- Exhibit #1 – Appeal # [REDACTED] dated March 16, 2026.
- Exhibit #2 – Appeal # [REDACTED] dated March 28, 2026.
- Exhibit #3 - Benefit decision notice (BDN) dated March 4, 2026.
- Exhibit #4 - Important RI time limit notice dated January 26, 2026.
- Exhibit #5 - RIW temporary hardship extension reasons.
- Exhibit #6 - RIW notice reasons for closure.
- Exhibit #7 – Eligibility determination results.

The Appellant appeared and testified on her own behalf. The Appellant submitted the following exhibits into evidence:

- Exhibit #1 - Important RI time limit notice dated January 26, 2026.
- Exhibit #2 - Receipts from Social Security.
- Exhibit #3 - Request for additional documentation (ADR).
- Exhibit #4 - Newborn's verification of birth.

- Exhibit#5 - Newborn's social security card and birth certificate.
- Exhibit #6 - Notice from Office of Child Support Services.

V. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

Per Regulation 218-RICR-20-00-2.21.2 entitled, Reporting requirements, the adult family members are made aware of their responsibility to report any changes in income, resources, family composition, or other factors which can affect eligibility or payment level, within ten (10) days of the change in circumstances.

A new household member joining a household may qualify for assistance from the RI Works program. The date the Department is notified of the addition of the family member constitutes the official application date for that member. 218-RICR-20-00-2.21.1A

The Rhode Island Works law (R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 40-5.2) provides in part that all applicants and/or recipients for cash assistance shall be subject to a maximum lifetime limit of sixty (60) months of cash receipt, since May 1, 1997. 218-RICR-20-00-2.6

Any individual approaching time limit, or who has met or exceeded the time limit, is notified that they may request a reassessment to determine whether or not they may meet the criteria for an extension beyond the time limit. Individuals are required to complete an application for RI Works Program Hardship Extension. 218-RICR-20-00-2.6.2.

VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On January 26, 2026, DHS mailed the Appellant an Important RIW Time Limit Notice informing her that her RIW case would close effective March 31, 2026.
2. A request for additional documentation (ADR) was mailed to the Appellant on February 16, 2026, requesting proof of US citizenship, birth, and social security application for her newborn. Deadline for submission was March 3, 2026.

3. A BDN was mailed to the Appellant on March 4, 2026, informing her that her RIW was ending as of March 16, 2026, because she failed to provide required information within a specified timeframe.
4. On March 16, 2026, the Appellant filed an appeal stating that “ I am appealing the decision to end my cash assistance early because there was no way I could send in my baby’s social security number or birth certificate by the due date”.
5. The Appellant provided the requested documents to DHS on March 25, 2026, and the case was subsequently reinstated as of the date the documents were received. However, the Appellant remained ineligible for benefits due to the Appellant reaching her 60-month lifetime limit.
6. On March 28, 2026, the Appellant filed a second appeal stating that “I am appealing the decision to end my cash assistance because I am currently experiencing a hardship and need more time to return to work and help finding a good job”.
7. According to the Agency’s testimony the Appellant needs to meet with an Employment Career Advisor (ECA) to complete a new assessment and apply for a hardship extension.
8. The Appellant maintains that she already completed an assessment over the phone. She argues that she has done everything the Agency has requested of her and she still has not received any benefits.

VII. DISCUSSION

The Agency maintains the Appellant’s RIW closed effective March 16, 2026, for not providing required information pertaining to her child that was born in January 2026. The Appellant states she had difficulty obtaining the birth certificate and social security card by the

March 3, 2026, deadline. According to regulation 218-RICR-20-00.2.21.2 the adult member is made aware of their responsibility to report any changes in income, resources, family composition, or other factors which can affect eligibility or payment level, within ten (10) days of the change in circumstances.

The Agency concedes that the required information was subsequently received by the Agency on March 25, 2026, allowing the Agency to reinstate the case as of March 25, 2026. Per regulation 218-RICR-20-00-2.21.1 the date the Department is notified of the addition of the family member constitutes the official application date for that member. However, the case could not be reinstated because as of March 31, 2026, the Appellant was reaching her maximum lifetime limits for RIW benefits. The Agency maintains that the Appellant needs to meet with an ECA to complete an assessment and request a hardship extension in order for the Appellant's RIW case to be re-opened, which as of the date of the hearing has not been done.

Per regulation 218-RICR-20-00-2.6.2 any individual approaching the 60-month lifetime limit, or who has met or exceeded the time limit, is notified that they may request a reassessment to determine whether or not they may meet the criteria for an extension beyond the time limit. Individuals are required to complete an application for RI Works Program Hardship Extension.

The Appellant was made aware by a notice dated January 26, 2026, that she was approaching her RIW 60-month time limit and that her case would close as of March 31, 2026. The time limit notice also advised her that in order to continue to receive cash assistance she must reach out to her nearest DHS office to make an appointment and discuss her circumstances to see if she could qualify for a hardship extension. The Appellant does not dispute that she has met her lifetime limit for RIW benefits but argues she should receive a hardship extension. She testified that she spoke to several different people at DHS and was given different information as

to what was needed to re-open her RIW case. She further argues that she has already completed what she believes was the assessment over the phone, has done everything DHS has requested of her, and still has no benefits.

According to DHS the Appellant was informed multiple times she needed to meet with an ECA to request a hardship extension. After several attempts to resolve the appeal informally through conversations with DHS representatives, the Appellant believed she had completed the required assessment for a hardship extension. The Appellant did not provide any documentary evidence other than her testimony to support her claim that an assessment or a hardship application had been completed. DHS states that there is evidence she had spoken to several DHS workers, however, the records do not show she met with an ECA, which is required.

VIII. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After careful review of the testimony and evidence presented at the Administrative Hearing, it is clear by the preponderance of evidence that DHS attempted to reinstate the Appellant's RIW benefits when they received the requested information after the Appellant failed to provide the requested information by the required deadline. DHS has correctly determined that the Appellant remains ineligible for benefits because she reached the RIW 60-month time limit. The Appellant must meet with an ECA and request a reassessment to determine whether she qualifies for an extension beyond the time limit.

IX. DECISION

Based on the foregoing Findings of Facts, Conclusion of Law, and testimony it is found that a final order be entered that there is sufficient evidence to support DHS's action to close the Appellant's RIW case due to failure to provide requested information within a specified

timeframe. The Appellant remains ineligible due to her meeting the RIW time limits without a hardship extension.

APPEAL DENIED

/s/ Vermont Richardson
Appeals Officer

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 02920.

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 [REDACTED], to DHS

Appeals, DHS Policy Unit, and Kirsten Cornford on the 22ND day of

JUNE, 2026.

