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

[redacted]

V. DOCKET No. 26-4843

Department of Human Services

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A Microsoft Teams hearing on the above-entitled matter came before an Appeals Officer on September 28, 2026, with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Appellant, [redacted], for Appeal ID #[redacted] regarding Case #[redacted] The Appellant declined the option of a video hearing. The Appellant initiated this matter to appeal DHS' closure of their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) case. DHS asserts that the Appellant's SNAP case was closed correctly because the Appellant failed to submit a SNAP interim form to DHS. For the reasons discussed in more 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 regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2 to be the 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 et seq.) and EOHHS regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2.

III. ISSUE

Did DHS correctly close the Appellant's SNAP case?

IV. STANDARD OF PROOF

It is well settled that in formal or informal adjudications modeled on the Federal Administrative Procedures Act, the initial burdens of production and persuasion rest with the moving part. See 2 Richard J. Pierce, Administrative Law Treaties §10.7 (2002). Unless otherwise specified, a preponderance of the evidence is generally required to prevail. See *Lyons v. Rhode Island Pub. Employees Council 94*, 559 A.2d 1130, 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. See *Narragansett Electric Co. vs. Carbone*, 898 A.2d 87 (R.I. 2006).

V. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

Eligibility Technician, Steven Gossman (ET Gossman), attended the Hearing on DHS' behalf. The following exhibits were offered as evidence by DHS:

Exhibit #1 – June 30, 2026, Appeal Form.

Exhibit #2 – June 17, 2026, Benefit Decision Notice (BDN).

Exhibit #3 – Eligibility Determination Results for Case #[redacted]

Exhibit #4 – May 8, 2026, SNAP Interim Report.

Exhibit #5 – June 3, 2026, Six-Month Interim Report Reminder Notice.

Exhibit #5 – Relevant Regulations - Title 218 - Department of Human Services - Chapter 20 - Individual and Family Support Programs (218-RICR-20-00-1.13.2).

The Appellant was present and testified on their own behalf. They did not present any exhibits as evidence.

VI. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

All SNAP households are subject to Interim reporting requirements, with the exception of the following households: 1) Households with no earnings and in which all members are elderly or disabled (ESAP households); and 2) Households which include migrant and seasonal farmworkers. See 218-RICR-20-00-1.13.2(A)(1-2). Households must complete the form in its entirety and mail the form along with the required verifications back to the agency by the fifth (5th) day of the sixth (6th) month of certification. See 218-RICR-20-00-1.13.2(B)(3). Failure to return the Interim Report Form will result in closure of SNAP benefits. See 218-RICR-20-00-1.13.2(B)(3)(c).

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Appellant was previously approved for SNAP.
2. DHS sent the Appellant a SNAP interim form on May 8, 2026. The interim form provides clear instructions on how to complete the form, and it instructs the Appellant to sign and return the form by June 5, 2026. The form states that if the complete interim

form is not returned to DHS by June 5, 2026, the Appellant's SNAP case will close on June 30, 2026.

3. DHS then sent the June 3, 2026, Six-Month Interim Report Reminder Notice to the Appellant, reminding them to submit a complete SNAP interim form to DHS before June 17, 2026, to prevent the Appellant's SNAP case from closing on June 30, 2026.
4. DHS sent the June 17, 2026, BDN to the Appellant explaining that their SNAP case was going to close on June 30, 2026, because the Appellant failed to return a complete SNAP interim form to DHS.

VIII. DISCUSSION

As stated above, all SNAP households are subject to Interim reporting requirements with limited exceptions and a failure to return the Interim Report Form will result in closure of SNAP benefits. DHS testified that the Appellant's SNAP case was closed because the Appellant did not submit a SNAP interim form to DHS and that there was nothing in the Appellant's record with DHS to show that they submitted a SNAP interim form.

DHS submitted both the June 3, 2026, Six-Month Interim Report Reminder Notice and the June 17, 2026, BDN, as evidence to show that DHS did not receive a complete SNAP interim form from the Appellant before the due date. During the hearing ET Gossman's responses to questions posed by the Appellant were forthcoming and straightforward. Because of ET Gossman's forthcoming demeanor during the hearing and because their testimony is supported by evidence, I find ET Gossman's testimony to be credible.

The Appellant testified that they went to a DHS office located on Holden Street in Providence on three separate occasions in July 2026 to "fill out paperwork." The Appellant

testified that they went to "fill out another update" in June but that it seemed that DHS did not receive it until July. The Appellant further testified that they went to a DHS office on July 7, 2026, and filled out "another paper" and "dropped it in the box." Lastly the Appellant testified that on either the 20th or 25th of July they filed out another paper. The Appellant's testimony was vague as the Appellant failed to sufficiently articulate what sort of forms they were completing and submitting to DHS. While the Appellant testified that they dropped of "another paper" in a box on July 7, 2026, they did not clearly articulate the other times that they mailed or dropped of a SNAP interim form to DHS. Furthermore, the Appellant failed to provide any evidence to support these claims. Because of the lack of evidence to support their testimony and because of the vague nature of the Appellant's testimony, I don't find the Appellant's testimony to be credible.

Because I don't find the Appellant's testimony to be credible and I do find ET Gossman's testimony to be credible and because the Appellant did not provide any evidence to support their testimony that they submitted a SNAP interim form to DHS, I find that there is a preponderance of evidence to show that DHS correctly closed the Appellant's SNAP case.

IX. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After careful review of the testimony and evidence present at the Administrative Hearing, I conclude that:

1. A failure to return the Interim report form will result in the closure of SNAP benefits.
2. The Appellant failed to return an Interim report form to DHS.
3. DHS correctly closed the Appellant's SNAP case.

X. DECISION

Based on the foregoing findings of fact, conclusions of law, evidence, and testimony it is found that a final order be entered that there is sufficient evidence to support DHS' closure of the Appellant's SNAP case.

APPEAL DENIED

/s/ Jack Peloquin

Jack Peloquin

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 02908.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I mailed, via regular mail, postage prepaid, a true copy of the foregoing to [redacted], Kirsten Cornford, the DHS Policy Office at dhs.policyquestions@dhs.ri.gov, and the DHS Appeals Unit at DHS.Appeals@dhs.ri.gov on this 1st day of October, 2026.

Rebecca Ott