



Date of Notice: August 14, 2020

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING

In accordance with Rhode Island General Laws (R.I. Gen. Law 42-35), as amended (specifically Section 42-35.2.11 of the Administrative Procedures Act) and pursuant to the provisions of Chapters 42-12-23 of the General Laws of Rhode Island as amended, the Department of Human Services (DHS) hereby proposes to adopt an amendment for the following program:

RICR Title 218 – Rhode Island Department of Human Services
Chapter 20 – Individual and Family Support Programs
Part 1 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Department of Human Services (DHS) hereby proposes to file a Direct Final Rule to amend the following Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The DHS does not expect this proposed amendment to the rule to be controversial and does not anticipate any objections. This proposed amendment will implement the following, per Federal Regulations:

- Adjusted numbering and lettering throughout document.
- Amended citations for better ease of reference.
- Updated Federally mandated increases to SNAP allotments, the maximum shelter deduction (shelter cap), the homeless shelter deduction, and the minimum standard deduction for household sizes (4-6+).
- 1.3.1 (A)
Amended language for the date of application for inclusion of the telephonic application.
- 1.3.2 (B)
Incorporated the option of utilizing a telephonic signature as an acceptable means of signing an application as outlined in the agency's State Plan.
- 1.5.7(A)(6)(b)(2)
Amended standard deduction amounts for household sizes 4-6+ to reflect Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase per Federal regulation effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.
- 1.5.7 (A)(6)(e)(1)(AA)
Amended homeless shelter deduction from \$152.06 to \$156.74 to reflect Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase per Federal regulation effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.

- 1.5.7 (A)(6)(e)(2)
Amended shelter cap amount from \$569.00 to \$586.00 to reflect COLA increase per Federal regulation effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.
- 1.7 (D)(1)(a)
Amended the recertification process to include the use of telephonic signature
- 1.15 (E)(1)(a)(1) and (2)
Amended Table I (Gross Monthly) and Table II (Net Monthly) Income Limits which have been amended to reflect Federal COLA changes effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.
- 1.15 (E)(1)(b)(1)
Amended Table IV (Gross Monthly) Income Limits for Categorically Eligible Households which have been amended to reflect Federal COLA changes effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.
- 1.15 (E)(1)(c)(2)
Amended Table III (Gross Monthly) Income Limits for Elderly or Disabled, or a Disabled Veteran or Surviving Disabled Spouse/Child(ren) of a Veteran which have been amended to reflect Federal COLA changes effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.
- 1.15.(E)(1)(d)(1)
Amended Table V (Gross Monthly) Income Limits for Elderly/Disabled Not Categorically Eligible Due to Receipt of a TANF-Funded Service which have been amended to reflect Federal COLA changes effective October 1, 2020, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.
- 1.15 (D)(4)(d)
Amended the maximum allotment amounts per Federal regulation.
- 1.20
Added new section to include the utilization of certain flexibilities afforded to the Department through Federal governance in the event of a declared pandemic to ensure the continuity of, and safe access to SNAP benefits during any severe pandemic conditions.

Updates that allow for inflation will increase allowable deduction amounts as well as income eligibility standards resulting in increased benefits to SNAP participants.

The addition for the use of the telephonic signature provides for a more efficient and cost effective application process for individuals and the agency by allowing SNAP applicants to avoid lengthy and unreliable mail exchange to submit written/inked signatures and removing barriers that reduces delays in processing initial applications and recertifications as well as the number of cases that will be closed due to procedural reasons rather than financial ineligibility.

This proposed rule is accessible on the R.I. Secretary of State website (<https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/218-20-00-1>), on the Department of Human Services website (<http://www.dhs.ri.gov/Regulations/Proposed.php>) or available in hard copy upon request (401-462-2018 or RI Relay, dial 711). If no formal objection is received on or before September 13, 2020, the Department of Human Services will file the amendment without opportunity for public comment. All written objections should be sent to Karen Vartebedian, Office of Policy Analysis, Research & Development, Department of Human Services, Louis Pasteur Building Bldg. #57, 25 Howard Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920 or karen.vartebedian@dhs.ri.gov and must be received not later than 11:59 PM Sunday, September 13, 2020.

The Department of Human Services does not discriminate against individuals based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religious belief, political belief or handicap in acceptance for or provision of services or employment in its programs or activities.