



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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RODERICK L. BREMBY
Commissioner

November 25, 2014

Kurt Messner
Acting Regional Administrator
USDA – Food and Nutrition Service
Northeast Region
10 Causeway Street, Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

Dear Acting Regional Administrator Messner:

The Connecticut Department of Social Services ("DSS") has received the Food and Nutrition Service ("FNS") formal warning letter dated November 18, 2014. We appreciate your acknowledgment of the significant progress that we have made in meeting the terms of the advance notification letter dated August 28, 2014. Of the progress achieved in accordance with the advance notification letter, we believe the most significant is the fact that there are no overdue SNAP applications or SNAP interim report forms in the ConneCT system. We were able to act promptly to process all outstanding SNAP applications and interim report forms because those forms were more readily identifiable as SNAP documents in our ConneCT computer system compared to other forms.

We also acknowledge that we were unable to fully meet all of the goals in the short period demanded in the August 28th letter, largely because it was impossible to prioritize processing of documents that were not readily identified as of the date the letter was received. As we have developed and refined our capability to identify likely SNAP recertification documents, we have processed those documents with increasing efficiency. As of November 20th, only 331 overdue SNAP recertification forms remained to be processed, down from the 4,135 that we had identified and reported to FNS three weeks ago. As with recertification forms, we continue to refine our method for identifying likely SNAP change documents, and we are confident that we will be able to complete processing of the remaining outstanding items in the near future.

While we agree that it is important to finish processing the remaining accrued SNAP documents in ConneCT, we also believe that it is vitally important not to lose sight of the significant improvement in application processing timeliness that DSS has achieved over the past year. By letter dated May 9, 2014, FNS cited timeliness data showing Connecticut with an upper bound timeliness percentage of 67.36% for the six month period of July–December 2013. In that same letter, FNS set forth expectations that DSS achieve an 85% upper bound timeliness rate for the period of July–December 2014, and 95% for the period of January–June 2015. Last week, FNS released data for January–June 2014 showing Connecticut with a 94.81% upper bound rate. We believe that this progress, well ahead of what was initially anticipated, demonstrates our commitment to timely processing and program access, and we look forward to sustaining and improving on the gains already achieved.

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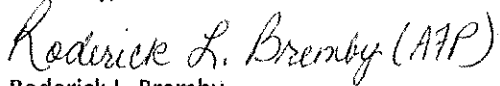
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We will submit a revised Corrective Action Plan (CAP) proposal to FNS no later than December 18, 2014 as required by the formal warning letter. We will also continue to work closely with the NERO team and provide updates in accordance with the current Corrective Action Plan.

Thank you for your encouragement and consideration as we continue to bring SNAP benefits to over 230,000 households in the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Roderick L. Bremby
Commissioner

cc: Jonathan Benett, FNS Acting Deputy Regional Administrator
Bonnie Brathwaite, FNS Regional Director for SNAP