



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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Office of the Director
Kimberly Merolla-Brito

May 18, 2026

The Honorable Patricia A. Serpa
Chair, House Committee on Oversight
State House, Room 101
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Serpa:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, please accept the attached May report as the most recent monthly update on RIBridges-related operations and SNAP performance improvement activities.

Beginning May 2026, DHS is updating the content and refining the format of the monthly submission to reduce duplicative reporting and provide a clearer view of the agency's work to improve quality, accuracy, timeliness, and program integrity. While prior versions of this report included performance updates from the original RIBridges/UHIP stabilization period, DHS is now focusing this report on the operational areas most directly tied to current performance, customer access, SNAP accuracy, and federally required payment error rate improvement activities.

This report includes monthly updates for the period of April 1 through April 30 on the following topics:

- Pending New Applications
- SNAP Timeliness
- Training and Staff Readiness
- SNAP Overpayment Recovery
- SNAP Accuracy / Payment Error Rate Improvement Activities
- Call Center Performance and Customer Access

Sections that were previously included but are addressed through other reporting mechanisms, such as the Staffing and Operations Report, or are no longer relevant to critical restoration processes related to RIBridges have been removed. This includes legacy system incident reporting, detailed training attendance tables, CCAP batch payment reporting, and federal correspondence related to the stabilization of RIBridges.

Revisions to this report were made to provide a more useful and transparent snapshot of current performance, the actions DHS is taking to improve outcomes, and the areas where continued work remains underway relating to payment error rate reduction efforts. DHS will continue to refine this report with new dashboards, data tools, and internal performance-monitoring structures.

DHS appreciates your continued advocacy on behalf of Rhode Islanders and your interest in DHS's efforts to serve Rhode Islanders.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Kimberly Merolla-Brito in black ink.

Kimberly Merolla-Brito
Director
RI Department of Human Services



RIBridges: Monthly Update

May 2026

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. This report provides a focused update on current operational performance across the RIBridges system, with an emphasis on application timeliness, SNAP accuracy, customer access, and program integrity. In alignment with ongoing improvement efforts, this report highlights key performance indicators, actions underway to strengthen case processing, and planned efforts to reduce payment error risks.

As implementation efforts continue, DHS is increasingly transitioning from planning activities to operational execution across policy, business process redesign, training, quality improvement, and technology workstreams. Current activities are focused on implementation readiness, operational stabilization, and sequencing of high-impact initiatives tied to SNAP accuracy improvement and federal compliance requirements.

PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

DHS continues to prioritize the efficient processing of applications through improvements to technology, processes, and communications, with the goal of reducing any application backlog across all programs.

Currently, the number of overdue applications awaiting state action is 2,121 (see table below) reflecting a moderate increase from the prior month. The chart below provides a snapshot in time as applications move to different workflows including, from requiring customer action to requiring state action.

It is important to know that the increase in total pending caseload is mainly attributable to new applications, specifically for undetermined medical and complex Medicaid. To provide a more accurate picture of overdue applications, DHS is currently tracking pending customer cases versus those pending state action to identify impacts from process changes. The volume of cases fluctuates from month-to-month, and implementation of new federal SNAP changes may partially contribute to an overall increase in pending caseload as the same staff are trained to determine eligibility for all programs. Please know the pending caseload figures in the chart reflect a moment in time and currently aligns with DHS applying new federal eligibility rules related to SNAP, such as policy changes to able-bodied adults without dependents, and changes to work requirements and immigration rules.

DHS has notified families impacted by H.R. 1 changes and has shared information about the federal changes through the website, social media, phone and other avenues. DHS will continue to leverage staycovered.ri.gov/snap-updates as a one-stop resource to keep customers and the general public apprised of timely updates and other available resources.

Through all of these major changes, DHS has demonstrated its operational resilience through initiatives such as **SNAP Connect** and Technology Adoption Days, which collectively help minimize administrative disruptions as much as possible. In addition, as staff continue to learn and apply new federal policy to eligibility, they will become more efficient and move the state overdue applications downward that will be viewable in time series data that is not yet available.

Operational and digital tools such as SNAP Connect and Tech Adoption increasingly support customers' needs by providing flexible interview scheduling, education around resources, and other support to help ensure uninterrupted access to benefits.

Over the next few months, DHS is preparing for an upcoming Business Process Redesign (BPR) initiative centered on a "One-Touch" processing model. This approach is designed to resolve cases as completely as possible at initial contact, reducing

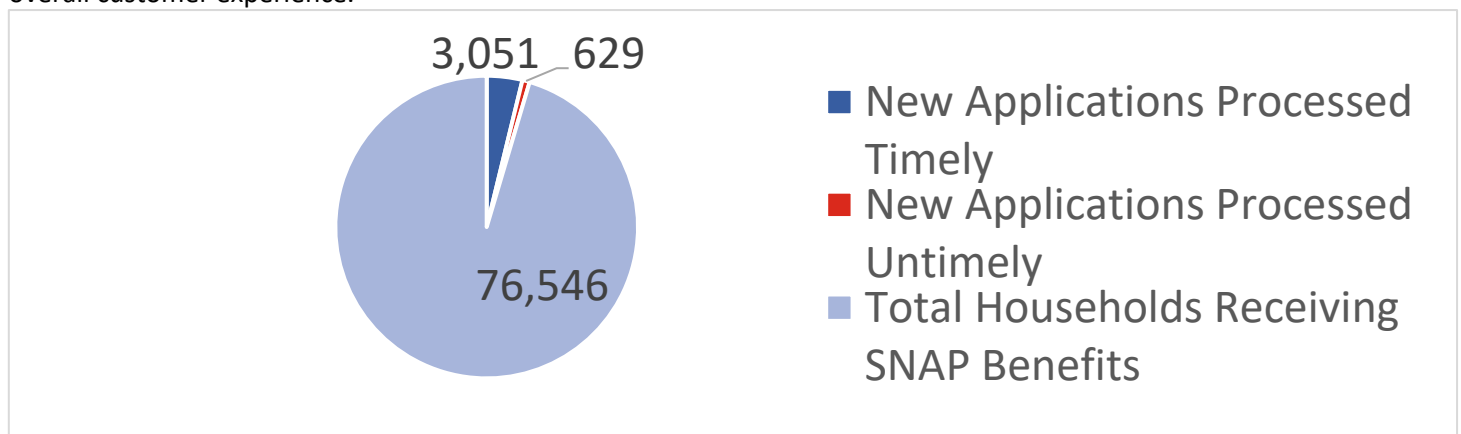
the need for follow-up actions, repeat client interactions and extended pending periods for customers. By streamlining workflows and reinforcing quality during the first point of contact, this model is expected to decrease pending customer volume while improving both timeliness, backlogs, and the customer experience. DHS has also finalized a structured 30, 60, and 90-day backlog reduction strategy focused on reducing actionable pending work while improving visibility into system-generated task volume. Current efforts include refinement of lobby routing practices, workflow redesign, document handling improvements, and implementation of a “Finishing Team” model to support timely resolution of aging work items. DHS is also continuing to refine reporting to better distinguish customer-caused delays from operational or system-generated workload impacts.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	Grand Total
SNAP Expedited	263	107	370	67	96	163	533
SNAP Non-Expedited	841	454	1295	115	131	246	1541
CCAP	30	236	266	19	74	93	359
GPA - Burial	0	25	25	0	0	0	25
SSP	0	44	44	0	1	1	45
GPA	19	89	108	8	2	10	118
*RIW	144	186	330	25	25	50	380
Undetermined Medical	34	503	537	104	728	832	1,369
Medicaid - MAGI	12	13	25	42	64	106	131
Medicare Premium Payments	13	367	380	37	324	361	741
Medicaid Complex	12	257	269	14	493	507	776
LTSS	61	406	467	19	183	202	669
Grand Total	1,429	2,687	4,116	450	2,121	2,571	6,687

**This is an estimate of pending applications for RI Works and is subject to change.*

SNAP TIMELINESS

In **April 2026**, there were 76,546 households that received benefits. For new SNAP applications in April, approximately 83% (3,051) were processed timely. Approximately 17% (629) of new SNAP applications were processed untimely. Importantly, cases needing to be processed that are awaiting customer or state action (such as completion of interviews or receipt of requested documents) may become overdue, leading to the untimely authorization of benefits that is not reflective of the overall customer experience.



DHS Training & Staff Readiness

During the reporting period of April 1-30, 2026, the Center for Staff Development and Learning (CSDL) continued workforce development activities focused on strengthening program accuracy, policy implementation, and consistency in eligibility determination practices across public assistance programs. Training efforts prioritized areas connected to federal policy updates, quality improvement, and application processing accuracy to support improved service delivery for Rhode Islanders.

Key activities during this reporting period included delivery of Medicaid Refresher training for eligibility staff, which help reinforce accurate Medicaid application processing and strengthen consistency in eligibility determinations. In response to recent federal policy changes, CSDL implemented targeted a skills lab focused on Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) policy application and verification requirements. Additional supervisor skills lab sessions were also conducted on Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) and immigrant eligibility policy updates to support consistent application of federal requirements, reduce potential error risk in complex case processing, and improve supervisory coaching capacity.

CSDL also delivered foundational Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) training designed to improve staff knowledge and increase accuracy in CCAP application processing. Collectively, these activities supported DHS efforts to strengthen staff readiness, improve program integrity, and promote consistent customer service practices across eligibility programs. Ongoing training, coaching, and policy reinforcement activities will continue to support operational effectiveness and compliance with evolving federal and state requirements.

SNAP OVERPAYMENT RECOVERY

DHS has resumed the collection of SNAP overpayments due to Inadvertent Household Error (IHE), Agency Error (AE), and Intentional Program Violations (IPV). While collections are part of a process that had been paused since 2017, DHS has been directed by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to resume collections in instances of overpayments that would, if left unaddressed, lead to higher payment error rates for the agency. The initial notices were issued to households with most collections dating back to September 2023.

Beginning May 2026, the data in this section will be presented on a **month-to-month basis** to provide a clearer view of current activity and trends. Prior cumulative totals and historical data remain available in earlier oversight reports. This change is intended to streamline reporting and reduce redundancy.

		Agency Error (AC)		Household Error (CE)		Total
		SNAP	TANF	SNAP	TANF	
APRIL-26	No. Of Claims	24	1	56	4	85
	Transaction Amount	\$590	\$43	\$2,132	\$126	\$2,891

These collections are required per federal guidance and is in alignment with the goal to reduce payment error rates as mandated in H.R. 1. All data included is preliminary and subject to change. The causes for error vary, including reasons relating to court orders, provider errors, fraud, etc. As the agency begins gathering more information, DHS will update this section to provide greater clarity as needed.

-see next page-

SNAP Accuracy and Payment Error Rate (PER) Improvement Activities

This section provides a monthly update on implementation progress and performance related to the SNAP Payment Error Rate (PER), as required under the Enacted FY 2026 Budget. DHS continues to advance a coordinated strategy across policy, operations, technology, workforce, and communications, with a focus on reducing high-impact error drivers and strengthening accuracy in an increasingly complex federal environment. This section includes key indicators on:

- Payment timeliness and accuracy;
- The status of PER-related technology modernization and system improvements;
- Staff training, readiness, and change management activities; and,
- Customer service enhancements; and any correspondence with federal partners related to SNAP PER.

Collectively, these updates are intended to promote transparency, minimize administrative burden, and align PER oversight with the State's fiscal, operational, and policy planning cycles.

Accuracy and Timeliness

DHS continues to monitor monthly Quality Control (QC) findings alongside historical trends to assess performance and identify primary error drivers. Additionally, Quality Assurance (QA) measures have been strengthened to identify errors before case approval. QA includes case reviews in error-prone areas, enhancements to eligibility screens to identify potential errors, and ongoing support to understand how system actions affect errors. Current analysis confirms that earned income, shelter/SUA, household composition, and ESAP case characteristics continue to account for a disproportionate share of payment error and associated financial risk.

DHS is aligning corrective actions to these high-impact areas, with a focus on improving accuracy at the point of entry and reducing preventable errors through stronger case processing practices. The most recent self-reported PER for FFY25 remains above the federal threshold. Early FFY26 indicators showed improvement; however, as a lagging indicator, the state's overall PER for FY26 continues to exceed the federal threshold despite recent QC and QA interventions. Sustained progress through September 30, 2026 remains critical, as this performance period will determine future federal cost-share exposure.

Operational timeliness remains strong. Processing for expedited and non-expedited applications continues to meet federal standards. DHS maintains active monitoring of overdue cases and differentiates between delays attributable to customer action versus agency processing to ensure accurate performance assessment and continued access to benefits.

Technology Modernization Efforts

Technology modernization remains a core component of the PER reduction strategy. DHS continues implementation planning tied to the SNAP PER Improvement Plan, including development of a Performance Monitoring Framework, Business Process Redesign (BPR) readiness activities, and governance structures to oversee system-related improvements.

During this reporting period, DHS leadership formally approved several system enhancement initiatives to enter the 2026 system runway for scoping, design, development, and phased implementation. These initiatives are intended to strengthen decision support, reduce data entry and budgeting errors, and address QC error drivers at the point of entry and action. Approved initiatives include:

- Enhanced contextual help text within the Customer Portal and Worker Portal to clarify verification requirements, reporting expectations, and key eligibility definitions;
- Development of a Navigator Tool to guide eligibility staff through high-risk policy areas (e.g., household composition, earned income, shelter deductions) with structured prompts and embedded policy references; and

- Expanded BOT integration within RIBridges to automate routine inquiries, support discrepancy identification, and reduce unnecessary task generation associated with common customer-reported changes.

These initiatives will be scoped in alignment with PER priorities and incorporated into the 2026 technology roadmap. Implementation sequencing will be informed by QC findings, operational risk areas, and system capacity planning.

DHS continues to evaluate system-generated task volume, document handling constraints, and routing inefficiencies that contribute to operational workload and potential delays in case action. During this reporting period, DHS and implementation partners continued reprioritization of system enhancement requests based on operational impact, implementation feasibility, and available system capacity. Certain initiatives continue to require coordination across system capacity, federal guidance, and policy implementation timelines to support phased and operationally aligned rollout activities.

In parallel, DHS is operating during the statewide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP/Workday) transition led by the Department of Administration (DOA). While ERP reporting refinements are ongoing, this transition has not disrupted core eligibility operations, caseload processing, or call center performance. DHS is coordinating closely with DOA to ensure continuity of data reporting and anticipates improved efficiency and visibility while system refinements are being completed.

Collectively, these efforts advance a shift from manual processing to guided, system-supported decision-making, improving consistency and reducing error risk at the point of entry.

Staff Training and Readiness

DHS continues to prioritize workforce readiness as a key driver of sustained PER improvement, particularly in the context of increased complexity under H.R.1. Training and readiness efforts are focused on building staff capability in high-risk areas and reinforcing consistent case processing practices, including:

- Targeted huddles and training refreshers on ABAWD and immigration policy changes
- A blended learning model (awareness, knowledge, and practice) to strengthen the application of policy in real-world scenarios
- Supervisor-led coaching, reinforcement of one-touch processing, and interview quality expectations
- Additional implementation readiness activities underway include development of standardized interview guides, case note tools, simulated interview training models, and targeted huddle scripts aligned to high-risk QC findings. DHS is also launching supervisor-focused workgroups to strengthen coaching consistency, implementation readiness, and reinforcement of operational expectations across offices.
- Ongoing onboarding and development of newly hired staff

DHS has formally implemented its SNAP PER Change Management Plan, establishing:

- Clear governance and decision-making structures across policy, operations, QA, and technology
- Structured communication cadence to ensure consistent messaging
- Integrated feedback loops connecting QC findings to training, policy clarification, and system enhancements
- Performance monitoring tied to measurable outcomes

Additionally, DHS continues to advance staff engagement through the Improvement Captain Network, cross-functional implementation teams, town halls, and feedback channels to support adoption and continuous improvement.

This approach reinforces a culture of confidence, consistency, and shared accountability, which is critical to sustaining improvements in accuracy and performance.

Customer Service Enhancements

DHS continues to modernize service delivery to improve customer access while supporting accuracy and compliance.

Operational enhancements include:

- Expansion of SNAP Connect and phone-based service delivery, increasing access to interviews and reducing missed appointments
- Continued shift toward appointment-based service models, improving predictability and reducing lobby congestion
- DHS is also advancing refined lobby and triage practices in pilot office locations, including updated signage, scripts, workflow testing, and routing approaches intended to improve customer navigation, reduce unnecessary transfers, and support one-touch processing objectives.
- Increased use of digital and self-service tools, allowing customers to access services through multiple channels (phone, online, in-person)
- Ongoing monitoring of call center performance, including wait times, callback utilization, and service levels

These efforts reflect a transition to a multi-channel access model, improving customer experience while aligning staffing resources with demand.

Updates related to work requirements, eligibility changes, and benefit adjustments are being incorporated into operations, training, and customer communications. In addition, DHS maintains ongoing engagement with community partners and stakeholders to support coordinated implementation, minimize customer confusion, and ensure continued access to services.

Federal Correspondence

During this reporting period, DHS continues routine engagement with federal partners regarding SNAP administration and payment accuracy. There is no federal correspondence related to SNAP PER penalties to report for the May 2026 Oversight Report. DHS remains committed to transparency and will promptly report any future federal communications related to PER as part of this monthly oversight framework.

Ongoing PER Governance and Next Steps

PER oversight is coordinated through a structured governance model that includes:

- Monthly SNAP Accuracy Oversight Working Group to review performance trends, corrective actions, and key decisions
- A QA Governance and Collaborative model to analyze QC findings, identify root causes, and drive cross-functional corrective actions
- An Office of Program Integrity (OPI) to integrate QA, QC, Appeals, and Claims and shift toward proactive error prevention
- Executive Leadership Team (ELT) oversight to align PER efforts with H.R. 1 implementation and budget strategy

This structure ensures error trends are translated into actionable improvements with clear ownership and accountability.

DHS continues to strengthen its Performance Monitoring Framework, with a focus on:

- Tracking top error drivers (earned income, shelter/SUA, household composition, ESAP) and financial exposure
- Monitoring case-level accuracy and timeliness
- Differentiating between agency and client-caused errors
- Integrating QC and operational data to prioritize high-impact actions

This supports a shift toward targeted, data-driven decision-making focused on reducing overall PER and financial risk.

DHS is prioritizing high-impact actions in alignment with key error drivers to focus on:

1. Point-of-Entry Accuracy

- Reinforce one-touch processing and interview quality
- Expand supervisor coaching and QA-aligned reviews
- Advance real-time decision support tools

2. ESAP Corrective Actions

- Complete caseload validation and eligibility review
- Correct misclassified cases and assess structural changes
- DHS continues implementation of ESAP find and fix activities, including data validation, State Wage Information Collection Agency (SWICA) integration review, and refinement of closure logic. Early implementation activity has also identified process gaps and manual processing constraints that are being addressed prior to broader scaling efforts. DHS continues to coordinate QA, QC, policy, and operational teams to improve targeting accuracy and reduce unintended impacts during implementation.

3. Policy Alignment

- Finalize updates to household composition and reporting rules
- Align policy, system logic, and training

4. Technology Sequencing

- Advance Navigator, help text, and automation initiatives
- Prioritize tools that improve accuracy at intake

5. Program Integrity Integration

- Expand pre-authorization reviews for high-risk cases
- Strengthen QA feedback loops and OPI monitoring

DHS will continue to support adoption and operational consistency through the following activities:

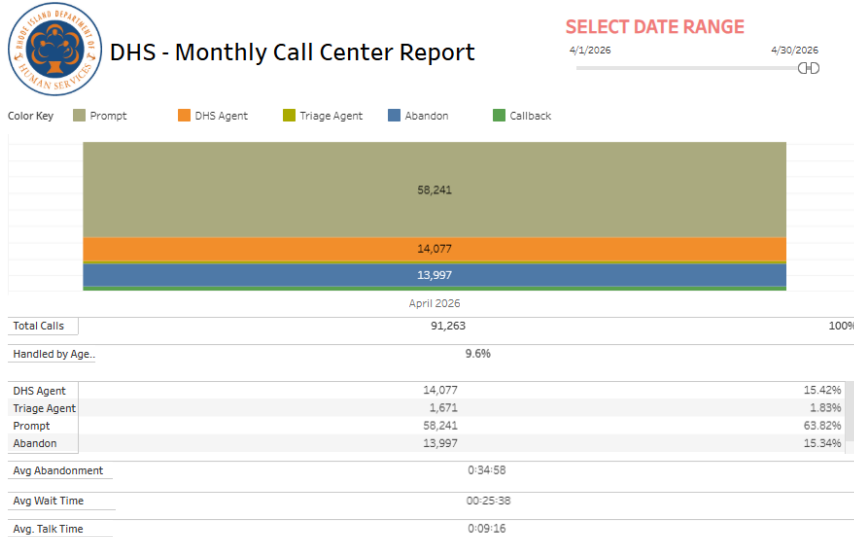
- Expansion of the Improvement Captain Network and implementation teams
- Targeted, error-driver-based training and coaching
- Reinforcement of standardized expectations across offices
- Sequenced training and communication ahead of policy and system changes

Organizational Change Management activities continue to expand through ongoing SNAP Scoop communications, Improvement Captain engagement, and development of the PER Knowledge Hub intended to centralize operational guidance, training resources, implementation updates, and reinforcement materials for staff. DHS is also increasing in-person engagement and implementation readiness activities as workstreams transition from planning to operational rollout.

CALL CENTER

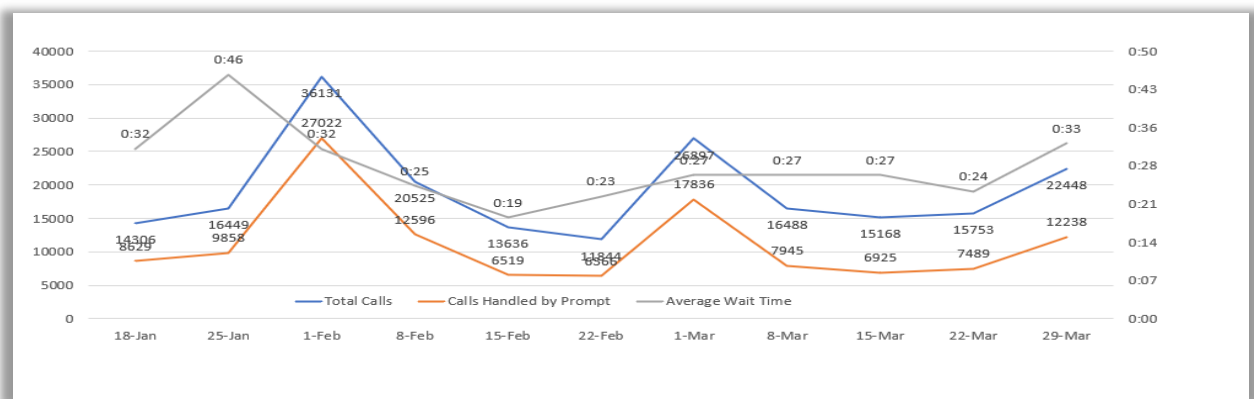
Performance and Customer Access

The volume and duration of calls for the month of April 2026 resulted in an approximate wait time of **25 minutes and 38 seconds**, which is consistent with the operational goal of keeping wait times below 30 minutes. The recorded wait time remains a key metric to help ensure we are prioritizing customer access, which is supported by ongoing initiatives such as SNAP Connect, Technology Adoption Days, and IVR enhancements that together reduce abandonment rates while also promoting one-touch processing.



As part of our efforts to improve efficiency – in alignment with federal PER requirements – the agency is prioritizing call center modernization efforts that will also improve service delivery for customers. DHS has established a cross-agency Call Center and Policy Engine Modernization Working Group to plan for, identify and procure the technology enhancements needed to boost worker accuracy, improve customer service, and lower the PER. These modernization efforts seek to create more efficient and customer-centric services while ensuring responsible stewardship of public funds. DHS, together with the Enterprise Technology Strategy and Services division, is currently in the process of reviewing bids for vendor engagement to acquire enhanced technology.

The busiest week at the Call Center is the **week beginning April 26, 2026, with nearly 28,370 calls** to DHS. While this is a higher than usual call volume, it aligns with increased call volume typically seen near the beginning or end of a month. Additionally, the implementation of federal SNAP eligibility changes due to H.R. 1 have solicited additional calls, as DHS customers reach out to the agency with questions and to report new information. The federal changes have been communicated to customers by direct mail, shared on staycovered.ri.gov/SNAP-updates, and posted on DHS’s social media channels. DHS continually monitors and reviews Call Center data to effectuate appropriate operational changes.



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