



DHS SNAP Overpayment Collections Notification FAQs

Why am I receiving this notice now? RI Department of Human Services has recently been directed by the U.S. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to resume collection of SNAP overpayments. Prior to a pause placed in 2017, DHS regularly pursued collections for overpayments caused by inadvertent household errors, intentional program violations, and agency errors.

You do not have my correct mailing address or contact information. Please contact RI DHS to provide a current contact and address information for your case – dhs.ri.gov, or the Customer Portal.

If you received a demand letter

How much time do I have to pay the amount back? Individuals have 30 days from receipt of the demand notice to make payment.

How do I make a repayment? Please refer to your demand letter for specific details.

What if I cannot afford to pay this amount?

- Please review the payment options listed on your demand notice.
- You can establish a repayment agreement that allows for a reduction in your SNAP benefit to be paid directly to the amount you owe.
- You may be able to establish a payment plan and/or request the right to renegotiate the amount owed based on hardship or other factors. To do so, FIRST appeal the decision in order to STOP the 30-day timeline from when you receive the letter to the time you are mandated to pay.
- Contact the DHS Claims, Collections, and Recoveries Unit (CCRU) at 401.383.1821.

Will I be criminally liable if I don't make this payment? No. However, the overpayment/debt is legally enforceable. Once determined delinquent (non-payment over 120 days) a referral is made to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) for collection on the outstanding debt.

Why am I responsible for a payment on something that happened months or possibly years ago? As noted in your demand notice and/or your benefits stuffer received by mail, the RI DHS just recently received federal approval to resume collections practice, a standard practice prior to the pause referenced.

Why I am responsible for making a payment that was not my fault? Per FNS, households who have been overpaid in SNAP benefits are required to pay back any overpaid benefits, even if it was a result of an administrative error.

I believe I am receiving this payment request in error. What should I do? You should file an appeal. In addition, contact CCRU at 401.383.1821, a representative will schedule an appointment to review your overpayment and discuss repayment options.

I would like to contest this demand notice legally but cannot afford legal help. Do you offer any legal support? If you wish to obtain a lawyer, representatives from RI Legal Services, Inc., may be able to represent you, without charge. They can be reached at 401.274.2652 or 1.800.662.5034.