



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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April 16, 2021

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period March 16, 2021 – April 15, 2021. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement
- DHS Employee Training
- Pending Applications
- SNAP Timeliness and Lobby/DHS Call Center Summaries
- CCAP Off-Cycle Payments
- LTSS Interim Payments
- Correspondence with Federal Partners (if any)

An update on staffing for this time period is not available. We will include it, if there are any, with the following month's report. We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



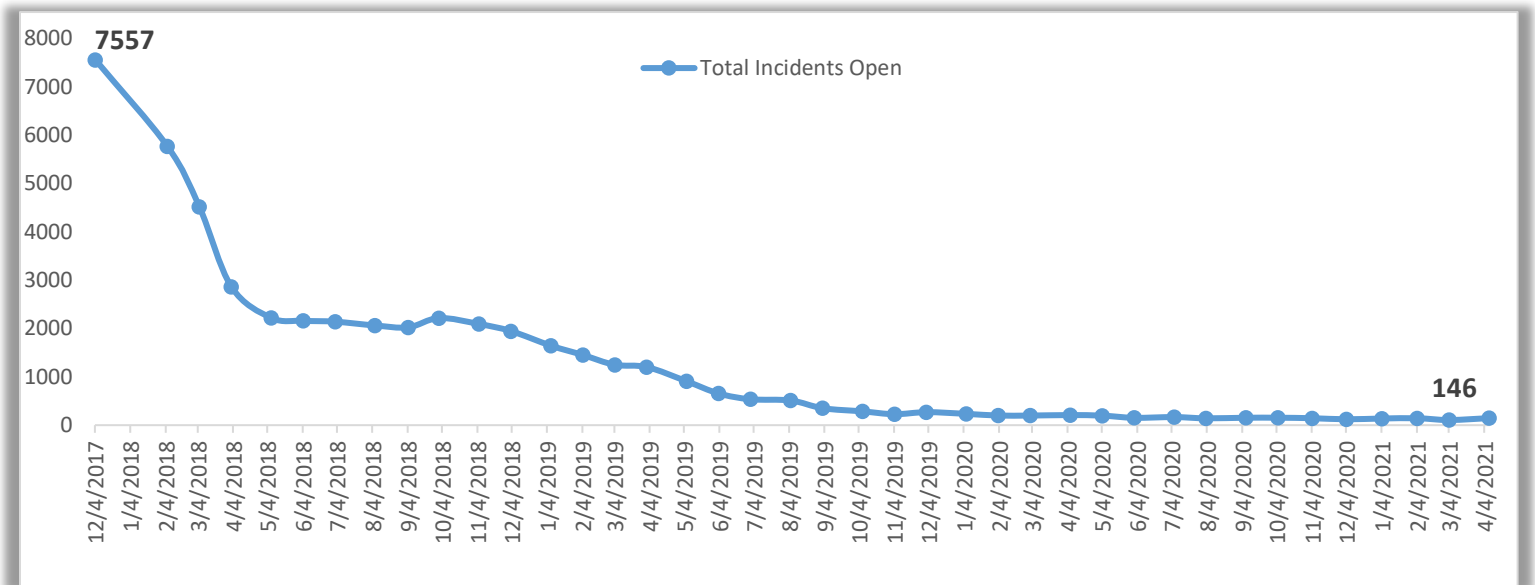
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

April 2021

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of the work on the RI Bridges system is an important part of the equation. With system stabilization under our belt, we continue to focus on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS customer, worker or provider) has **decreased by 98 percent** since December 2017. As of April 8, 2021, there were **146** open incidents.



DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation (4 – 3-hour sessions)	4-5-2021	12	3	0
	4-6-2021			
RI Bridges Basic Training Series (three sessions – varying hours)	4-7-2021	6	2	0
	4-8-2021			
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Training Series (5 sessions varying in length)	3-17-2021	20.5	0	24
	3-22-2021			
	3-24-2021			
	3-29-2021			

	3-31-2021			
Case Maintenance (1 one-hour session)	3-16-2021	.75	0	19
Customer Relations Training Series (1 two-hour session)	3-18-2021 3-25-2021	4	0	16
Knowledge Transfer (1 half-hour session)	3-31-2021	.50	0	13
STAR Supervisor Training (3 two-hour sessions)	3-16-2021 3-23-2021 3-30-2021	6	0	13
Civil Rights and Voter Registration Training (3 one-hour sessions)	3-16-2021 3-23-2021 3-25-2021	4	0	29
Elderly and Disability Training Series (EAD) (7 three-hour sessions)	3-16-2021 3-22-2021 3-23-2021 3-26-2021 3-29-2021 3-30-2021 4-2-2021	21	0	20
Telephonic Signature (1 1.25-hour session)	3-17-2021 3-24-2021	2.5	0	25
Totals		77.25	3	159*

** current number of staff trained is a duplicate number*

Workshop Descriptions

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Mini Training: Student: This training reviews policy surrounding who is considered a student, the impact of student status on eligibility, and student income. It includes a hands-on portion to practice correctly inputting student information in RIBridges.

Customer Relations Training: This training provides information for DHS staff members on strategies to build their customer service skills.

- **Session One: Understanding Your Customer:** Every customer brings unique and standard expectations. In this session, the participants will begin to understand what internal and external customers expect. They will explore how change affects their customers and begin to explore the role empathy plays in every interaction.

STAR Supervisor Training: This training was designed by supervisor for supervisors. The goals of the trainings are as follows:

- Instill the DHS Guiding Principles in everyday work
- Support supervisors by enhancing leadership, coaching, and mentoring skills
- Build professional capacity through the DHS workforce
- Create tools that encourage and support a culture of continuous improvement
- Understand what constitutes good supervision
- Incorporate the DHS guiding principles in everyday work and decision making
- Resetting from past experiences and looking to the future of DHS
- Identifying behavioral styles

Civil Rights and Voter Registration Training: This training will review civil rights laws and the policies that prohibit any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance to discriminate in the provision of services or benefits based on any of the protected classes. It will also review the agencies' processes and protocols as it relates to Voter Registration.

Telephonic Signature: In order to work new documents such as applications, recerts, interims (with a change) and employment plans over the phone, it is imperative that either a signed document is present in the case file OR the worker records a telephonic signature while the customer is on the phone. In this training, participants will learn the requirements for telephonic signatures and how to record them. This training is delivered virtually in one session that lasts an hour and fifteen minutes.

Rhode Island Works (RIW) Training Series: The RIW training will provide participants with an in-depth knowledge of program policy and system knowledge. Additionally, this training will include training on OCSS, Motivational Interviewing and CCAP.

- Session Three: RIW Work Employment and Training
- Session Four: RIW Work Employment and Training
- Session Five: RIW Income and RIBridges
- Session Six: RIW Resources and RIBridges
- Session Seven: RIW Non-Citizen

Case Maintenance: This training focuses on standardizing processes associated with working cases in RIBridges. It is a remote training delivered via Zoom. The learning outcomes for the training are as follows:

- Understand the Case Maintenance Checklist
- Learn where to find helpful documents (QRGs, Transmittals, etc.)
- Understand proper case maintenance practices

Knowledge Transfer Training: The purpose of these sessions is to communicate the system updates/changes to the attendees. The learning goals are:

- Explain new knowledge transfer process for releases
- Review each new/updated QRG, flash, etc. related to the upcoming release in the month of November.
- Recognize the end user impact of the system updates

New Hire Orientation: The goal of the session is to provide new employees with all the pertinent information they need to begin working at DHS and to familiarize them with organizational policies and procedures. In addition, to introduce employees to the RIBridges system.

Participants will learn:

- Understand organizational hierarchy
- Learn DHS' mission and vision
- Gain an understanding of DHS' programs and services
- Review and learn policies and procedures regarding payroll, dress code, and other practices
- Learn about the LEAN initiative
- Obtain mandated training for Federal Tax Information (FTI), Civil Rights, Voter Registration, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Hands on basic navigation and data collection training in RIBridges

RIbridges Basic Navigation Training Series: The goal of this training series is to provide participants hands on practice in three basic areas of the integrated eligibility system. They are:

- Application Registration
- Data Collection
- Case maintenance

Elderly and Disability Training Series: This training will assist staff in understanding the policy procedures and system requirements of processing of Complex Medicaid including EAD, Sherlock and Katie Beckett. It will consist of training on the use of policy, online help, and job aides in assisting the completion of Medicaid application and provide hands on practice in running eligibility for these cases. In addition, workers will gain an understanding of privacy requirements like HIPAA, general and financial eligibility requirements including the use of the Asset Verification System (AVS).

- Session One: EAD-Medical Premium Payment
- Session Two: EAD and Income
- Session Three: Resources
- Session Four: The Asset Verification System (AVS)
- Session Five: EAD and Retro Eligibility
- Session Six: EAD and Household Composition
- Session Seven: Working Adults with Disabilities

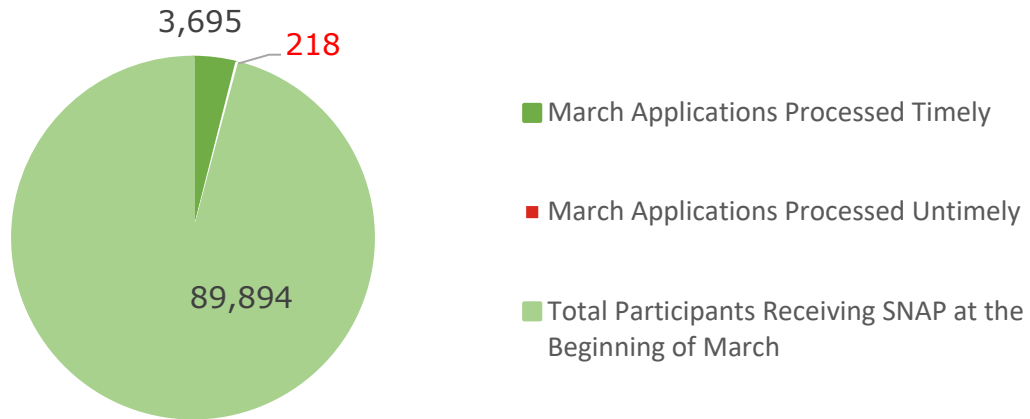
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **April 14, 2021**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **3,252**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **1,727**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	13	27	40	3	10	13	53
SNAP Non-Expedited	373	270	643	9	8	17	660
CCAP	15	78	93	2	6	8	101
GPA Burial	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
SSP	0	9	9	0	1	1	10
GPA	12	22	34	21	21	42	76
RIW	66	28	94	3	4	7	101
Undetermined Medical	15	168	183	32	1,013	1,045	1,228
Medicaid-MAGI	1	2	3	21	33	54	57
MPP	6	124	130	5	444	449	579
Complex Medicaid	11	35	46	15	89	104	150
LTSS	4	133	137	2	96	98	235
Totals	516	896	1,412	113	1,727	1,840	3,252

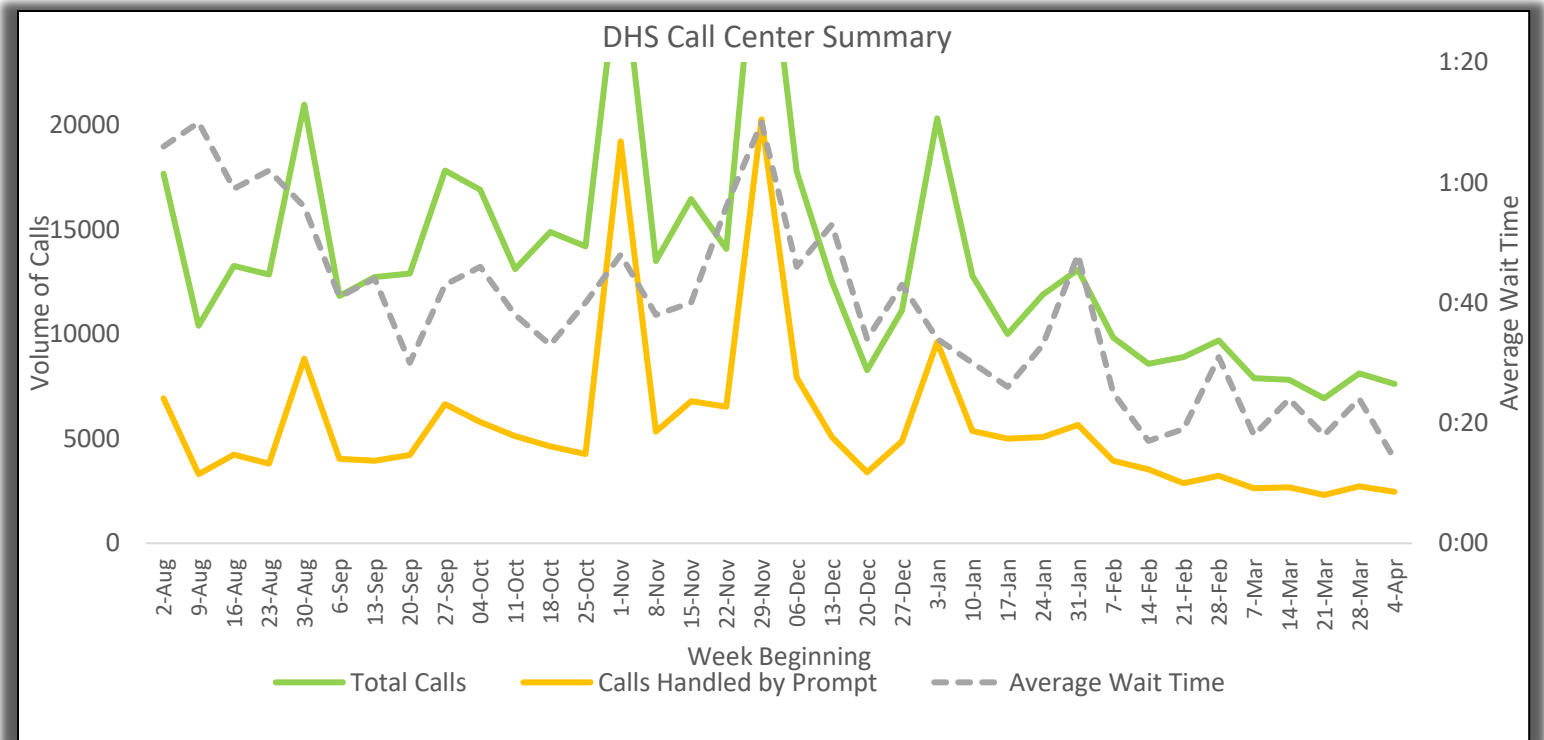
SNAP TIMELINESS

In March 2021, SNAP benefits were issued timely to **89,894** households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, **94** percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. The number of applications not timely processed represents less than 1 percent of the SNAP population receiving benefits.



CALL CENTER

For the four-week period of **March 14, 2021 through the week that started on April 4, 2021**, the average wait time to DHS staff was just shy of **20** minutes. The busiest week was the week beginning on March 28th, and there were **8,128** calls then. With the close of lobby facing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHS Call Center capacity was increased to accommodate customer interviews and questions regarding benefits.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between March 8, 2021 through April 1, 2021.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
20	03/08/2021	536	\$2,076,807
20A	03/11/2021	21	\$62,605
20B	03/18/2021	29	\$52,515
21	03/22/2021	536	\$2,249,073
21A	03/25/2021	10	\$12,636
21B	04/01/2021	23	\$38,241

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (20, 20A & 20B)	586	\$2,191,926
Off-cycle (20A & 20B)	50	\$115,120
Provider off-cycle/total	9.33%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	5.54%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (20, 20A & 20B)	569	\$2,299,949
Off-cycle (20A & 20B)	33	\$50,876
Provider off-cycle/total	6.16%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.26%	-

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are **96** overdue LTSS applications pending State action.

Through the contingency process, which ensures nursing and assisted living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, Rhode Island has paid out approximately **\$1.65 million** in interim payments to facilities for the State Fiscal Year 2021. The fiscal year for 2021 began on July 1, 2020.

Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the State has paid approximately **\$151.7 million**, and we have collected about **\$116.7 million** in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately **77** percent of the total amount of contingency payments made.

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RIBridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the RIBridges system. There were no UHIP related correspondences with our federal partners during this reporting period.