



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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May 18, 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 April 16, 2021 – May 15, 2021. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement
- DHS Staffing
- 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)

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 blue ink that reads "Celia J. Blue".

Celia J. Blue, Interim Director



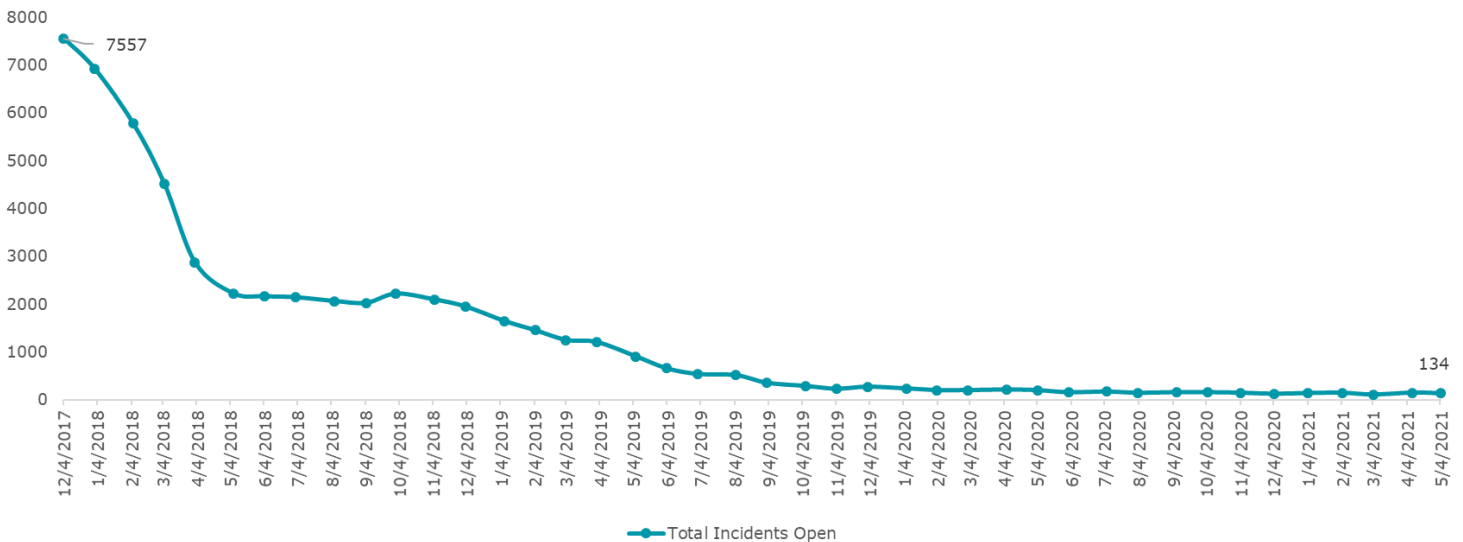
RIBridges: Monthly Update

May 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 RIBridges 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 May 3, 2021, there were **134** open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since April 2021, DHS hired eight employees including:

A Productivity Project Director

- 1 Principal Human Services Business Officer
- 1 Chief of Information and Public Relations
- 1 Eligibility Technician dedicated to the Middletown Field Office
- 1 Office Manager dedicated to the Pawtucket Field Office
- 1 Supervising Eligibility Technician dedicated to the Providence Field office
- 1 Assistant Administrator, Community and Planning Services dedicated to the Office of Child Care
- 1 Interdepartmental Project Manager dedicated to the Office of Child Care

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
SNAP Mini Training: Student (3 forty-five-minute sessions)	4-16-2021 4-27-2021 4-30-2021	2.25	0	32
SNAP Training Series (6 two-hour sessions)	4-19-2021 4-21-2021 4-22-2021 4-26-2021 4-28-2021 4-29-2021	12	0	14
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Pre-Training Session (1 session)	5-5-2021	2	0	28
Case Maintenance (1 forty-five-minute session)	4-20-2021	.75	0	21
Customer Relations Training Series (1 two-hour session)	5-6-2021	2	0	16
Multicultural Competency Training: Module One (4 one-and-half hour sessions)	4-20-2021 5-6-2021	6	0	84
STAR Supervisor Training (1 two-hour sessions)	5-4-2021	2	0	10
Child Care Assistance Program Training (2 five-and-half hour sessions)	4-19-2021 4-26-2021	11	0	13
Courageous Conversation Circle (2 one-and-half hour session)	4-23-2021 4-30-2021	3	0	14
Totals		41	0	232*

* current number of staff trained is a duplicate number

Workshop Descriptions

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Mini Training: Student: This training reviews policy surrounding the definition and/or classification of student regarding eligibility. It includes a hands-on segment to practice correctly inputting student information into the RI Bridges System.

Customer Relations Training: This training provides information and strategies to DHS staff members for customer service skills enhancement.

- **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* supervisors *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; and
- Identifying behavioral styles

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

- Understanding the Case Maintenance Checklist;
- Learning where to find helpful documents (QRGs, Transmittals, etc.); and
- Understanding proper case maintenance practices

Multicultural Competency Training: The Multicultural Competence Modules offer contextualized, scaffolded anti-oppression educational workshops for RIDHS employees. There are four foundational modules that introduce participants to frameworks, concepts, and strategies so RIDHS personnel are better equipped to advance our strategic goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion- individually and collectively. The workshops are offered virtually. Each session meets for 1.5-2 hours. The format for the sessions includes facilitated dialogue with individual as well as group activities.

- **Module One: *Advancing Anti-Oppression in the Workplace*** is the first of the four workshops. This session presents and discusses the multicultural competencies that are necessary to advance anti-oppression in the workplace (e.g., awareness, understanding, knowledge, interaction, and sensitivity).

Courageous Conversation Circle: This session is created to be safe and open space to discuss race. DHS staff members are invited to discuss their race openly and honestly with the intention to help promote our goal of developing shared language and understanding about race equity. Space is limited and its first come basis.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP): The SNAP Training is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. The virtual sessions are focused on SNAP policy.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP): This training will provide participants with policy content as it relates to CCAP categorically eligibility for customers who are receiving RIW. In addition, provide policy content as it relates to Low Income Child Care. Participants will have hands on practice in RIBridges and interactive activities.

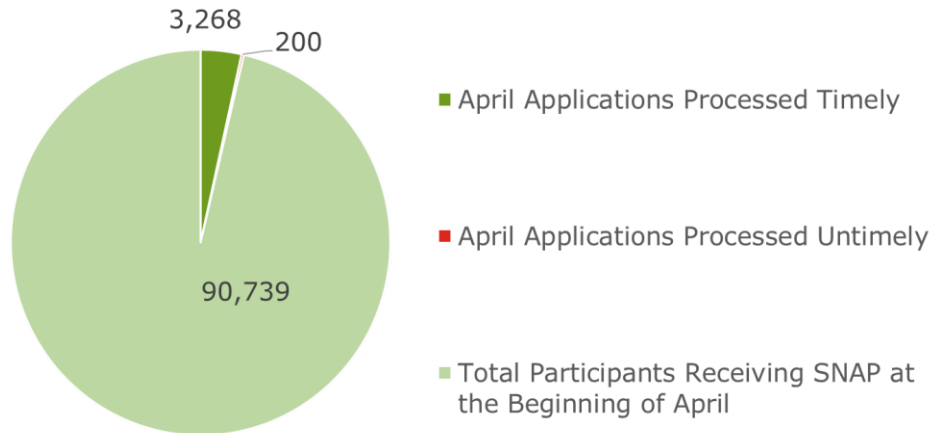
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **May 6, 2021**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **3,134**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **1,727**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	2	9	11	0	8	8	19
SNAP Non-Expedited	321	289	610	9	7	16	626
CCAP	10	90	100	4	4	8	108
GPA Burial	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
SSP	0	9	9	0	2	2	11
GPA	12	29	41	32	15	47	88
RIW	64	37	101	8	3	11	112
Undetermined Medical	17	145	162	29	1,007	1,036	1,198
Medicaid-MAGI	0	4	4	22	32	54	58
MPP	9	39	48	4	479	483	531
Complex Medicaid	10	30	40	14	87	101	141
LTSS	3	155	158	1	81	82	240
Totals	448	836	1,284	123	1,727	1,850	3,134

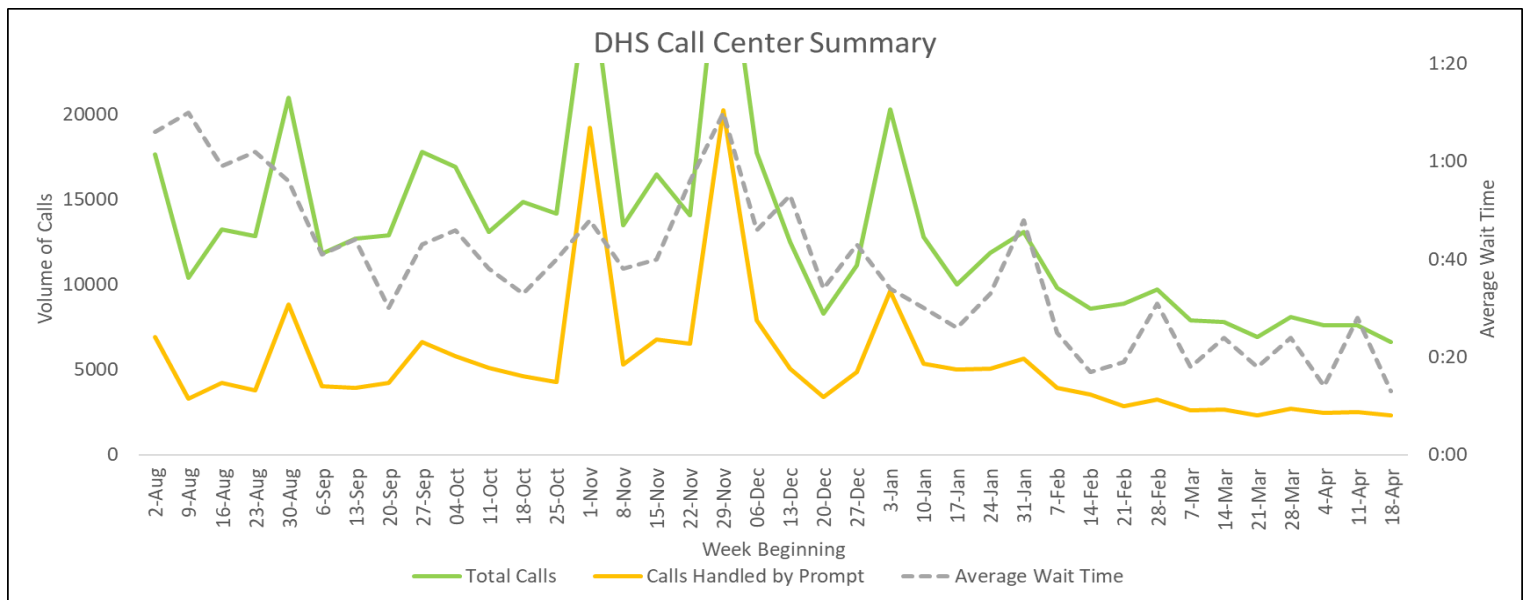
SNAP TIMELINESS

In April 2021, SNAP benefits were issued timely to **90,737** 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 28, 2021 through the week that started on April 18, 2021**, the average wait time to DHS staff was about **20** minutes. The busiest week was the week beginning on March 28th, when we received **8,128** calls. 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 April 5, 2021 through May 15, 2021.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
22	04/05/2021	528	\$2,166,410
22A	04/08/2021	15	\$34,333
22B	04/15/2021	32	\$78,350
23	04/20/2021	51	\$2,183,326
23A	04/22/2021	11	\$36,552
23B	04/29/2021	36	\$78,813
24	05/06/2021	515	\$2,189,520
24A	05/07/2021	13	\$38,627
24B	05/15/2021	34	\$55,986

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (22, 22A, 22B)	575	\$2,279,094
Off-cycle (22A & 22B)	47	\$112,683
Provider off-cycle/total	8.9%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	5.20%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (23, 23A & 23B)	562	\$2,298,691
Off-cycle (23A & 23B)	47	\$115,365
Provider off-cycle/total	9.14%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	5.28%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (24, 24A & 24B)	562	\$2,284,133
Off-cycle (24A & 24b)	47	\$94,613
Provider off-cycle/total	9.13%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.32%	-

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are **81** 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 **\$1.67 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 **\$120.8 million** in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 80 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.

- Rhode Island Follow Up Letter 4.19.21