



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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June 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 May 16, 2021 – June 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)

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



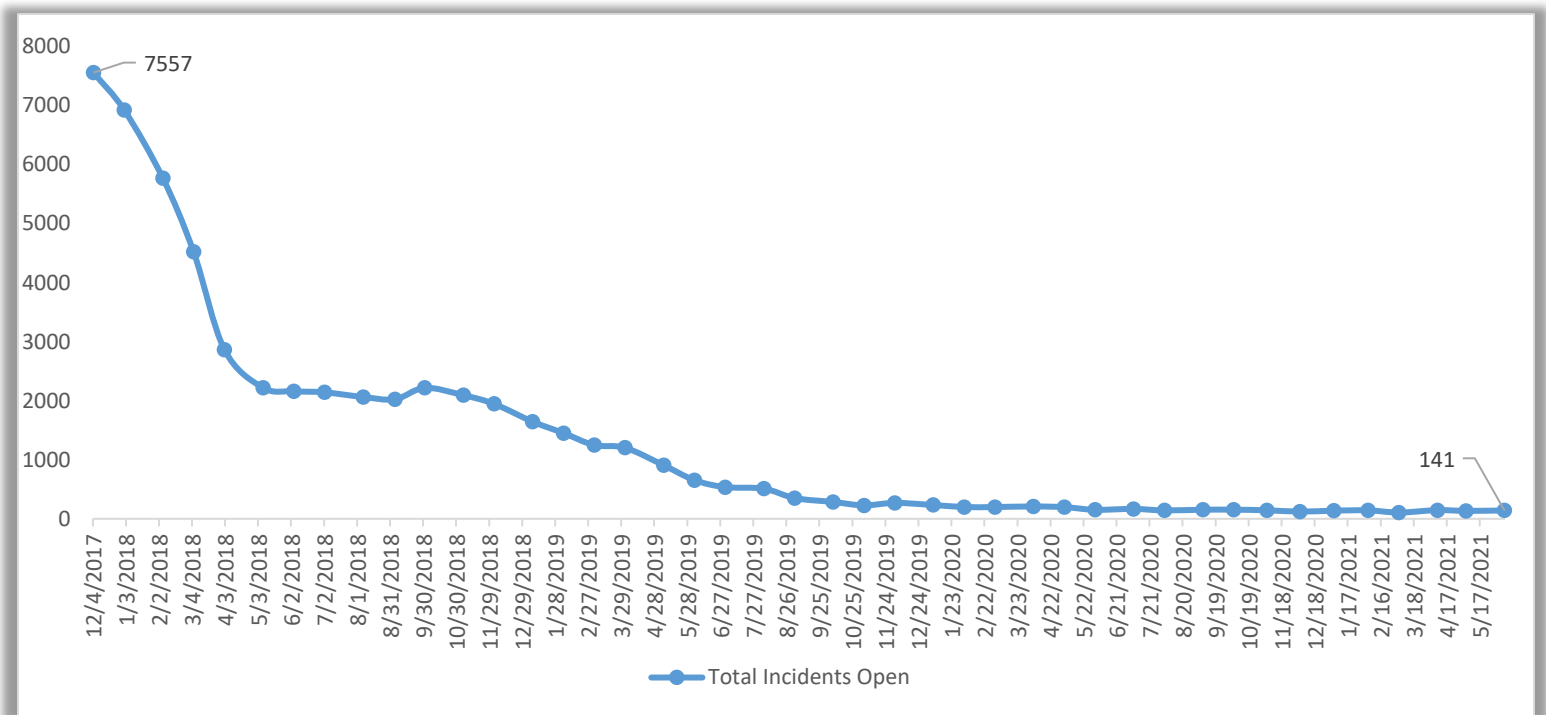
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

June 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 June 8, 2021, there were **141** open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since May, DHS hired seven employees for the following positions:

- 1 Customer Service Aide dedicated to Central Scanning
- 1 Assistant Administrator of Assistance Payments dedicated to Child Support
- 2 Eligibility Technician I dedicated to the Wakefield field office
- 1 Chief Clerk dedicated to the Providence field office
- 2 Senior Casework Supervisor dedicated to the Providence field office

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Training Sessions (One four-and-half hour session and ten three-hour sessions)	5-17-2021 5-18-2021 5-19-2021 5-25-2021 5-26-2021 6-1-2021 6-2-2021	34.5	0	38
Multicultural Competency Training: Module Two (Three one-and-half hour sessions)	6-8-2021 (2) 6-9-2021	4.5	0	59
STAR Supervisor Training (Two two-hour sessions)	06-01-2021 06-02-2021	4	0	10
Courageous Conversation Circle (One one-and-half hour session)	5-19-2021	1.5	0	3
Knowledge Transfer (Two half hour sessions)	06-09-2021 06-11-2021	1	0	32
MAGI Training Parts One and Two (One full day session)	06-04-2021	4.5	0	23
New Hire Orientation (Three full-day sessions)	06-07-2021 06-08-2021 06-09-2021	18	5	0
Customer Relations Training (Two two-hour sessions)	05-20-2021 05-27-2021	4	0	39
Community Spousal Resource Allocation (Part Two) (Two three-hour sessions)	05-17-2021 05-18-2021	6	0	10
Customer Service Aid Huddles (Two half hour session)	05-18-2021 05-25-2021	1	0	38
Totals		79	5	252

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

Workshop Descriptions

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

Multicultural Competency Training: The Multicultural Competence Modules offer contextualized, scaffolded anti-oppression educational workshops for DHS employees. There are four foundational modules that introduce participants to frameworks, concepts, and strategies so DHS personnel are better equipped to advance its diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic goals 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 and group activities.

Module Two: *Understanding Social Identity, Power, and Privilege in the Workplace.*

The purpose of this session is to introduce the concept of social identity, power, and privilege. Special emphasis will be placed on social identity, power, and privilege in human services settings. The objectives of this session are to

- Define the concept of social identity
- Explore the major forms of social identity in the U.S.
- Describe the three processes of social identity
- Describe the systems of power, privilege, and oppression
- Identify one's position on the social identity scale and discuss implications for practice.

Courageous Conversation Corner: 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.

Knowledge Transfer Training: The purpose of these sessions are 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 (HIPPA)
- Hands on basic navigation and data collection training in RIBridges

Medical Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Part One and Two: MAGI Parts one and two provide history on the onset and development of managed health insurance and takes participants through a journey over the years on how managed care has changed while building on Medicaid eligibility in present day. Participants explore Medicaid at the federal and state levels, eligibility criteria, groups covered, and other eligibility requirements. Following an in-depth analysis of the history and context, the training transforms into combining concepts with system knowledge and processing simple MAGI cases in RIBridges. Video

demonstrations take the participants through simple scenarios to introduce and capture the process as it unfolds to meet one of many objectives in feeling confident to process simple MAGI cases.

Community Spousal Resource Allocation (CSRA) Part One and Two: The two-part Community Spouse Resource Allocation (CSRA) training will discuss the protections for Non-LTSS spouses to avoid "spousal impoverishment" when there is an LTSS requesting spouse. The procedures for allocating resources, approving CSRAs, spending down to resource limits and entering resources will be discussed and practiced.

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. The schedule will operate such that all participants will attend the information sessions together, then split into two groups (A and B) to complete the hands-on portion of training at different times.

Customer Service Aid Huddle: This huddle is to serve as a refresher to discuss best practices around document processing and to ensure consistent practices across offices regarding date stamping documents and scanning and indexing in RIBridges.

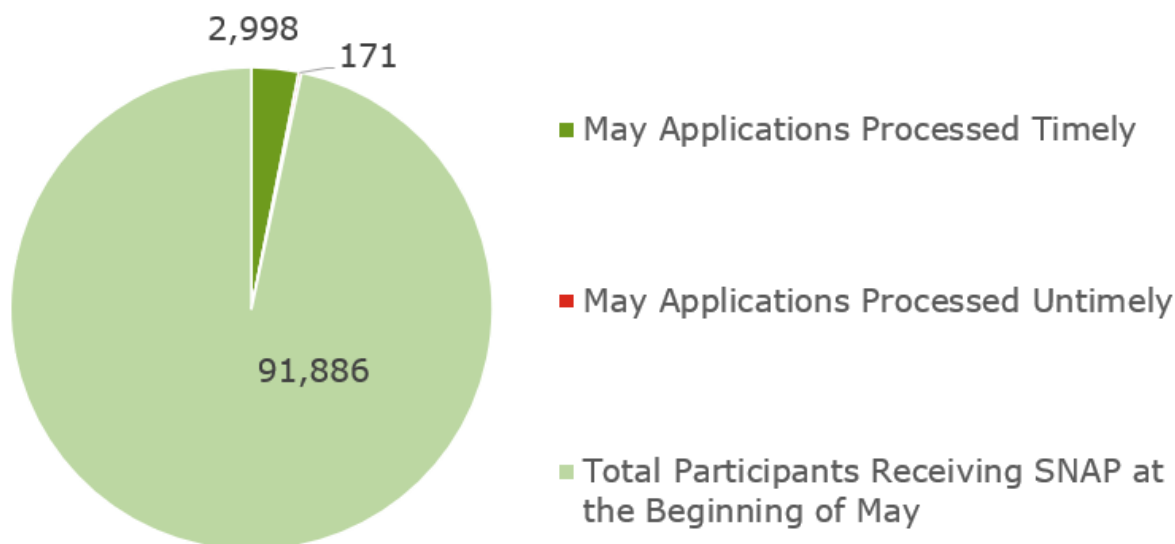
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **June 11, 2021**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **3,043**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **1,667**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	4	16	20	3	3	6	26
SNAP Non-Expedited	312	282	594	21	4	25	619
CCAP	19	130	149	1	3	4	153
GPA Burial	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
SSP	0	7	7	0	2	2	9
GPA	10	26	36	19	19	38	74
RIW	56	52	108	2	4	6	114
Undetermined Medical	8	127	135	27	985	1,012	1,147
Medicaid-MAGI	2	1	3	22	36	58	61
MPP	3	38	41	4	443	447	488
Complex Medicaid	6	31	37	12	80	92	129
LTSS	8	125	133	1	87	88	221
Totals	428	836	1,264	112	1,667	1,779	3,043

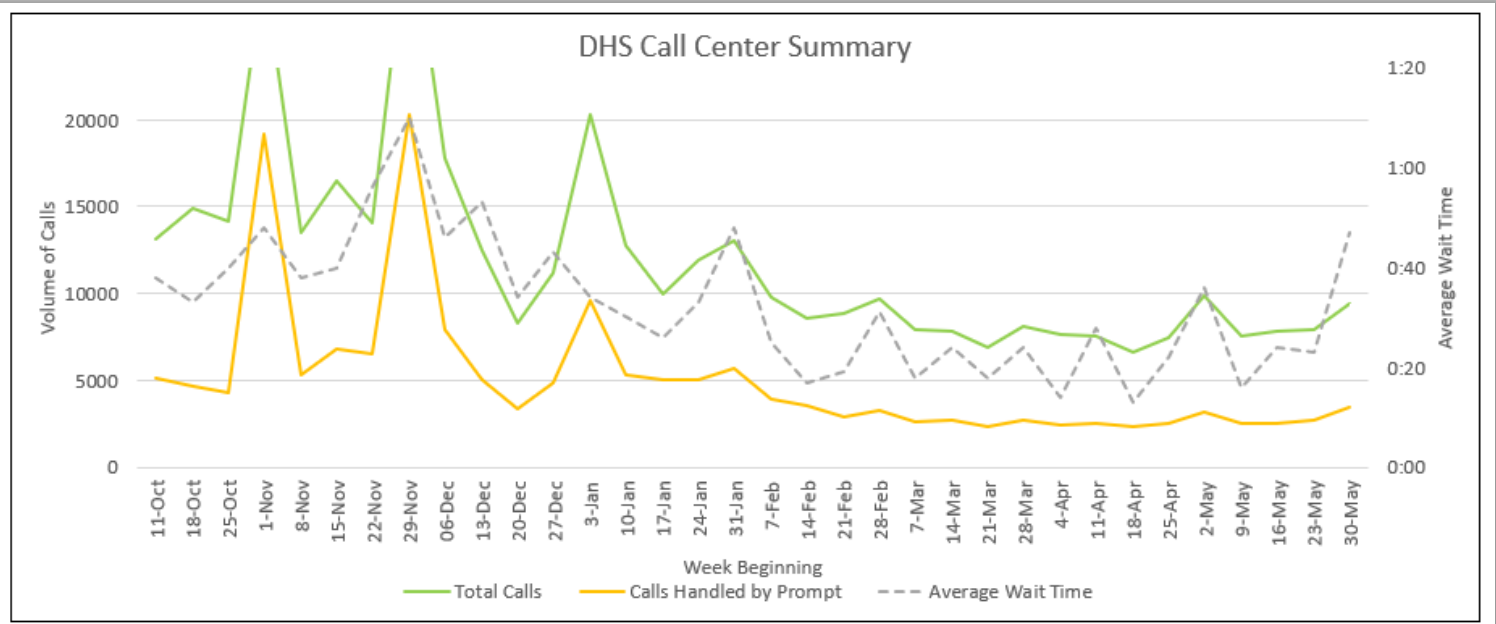
SNAP TIMELINESS

In May 2021, SNAP benefits were issued timely to **91,886** households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, **95** 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 five-week period of **May 2, 2021 through the week that started on May 30, 2021**, the average wait time to DHS staff was about **29** minutes. The busiest week was the week beginning May 2nd, and there were **9,882** 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 April 5, 2021 through May 15, 2021.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
25	05/20/2021	514	\$2,277,124.94
25A	05/21/2021	13	\$22,012.49
25B	05/28/2021	34	\$69,606.75
26	06/3/2021	518	\$2,201,176.95
26A	06/4/2021	12	\$20,843.63
26B	06/11/2021	24	\$92,922.72

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (25, 25A, 25B)	561	\$2,368,744.18
Off-cycle (25A & 25B)	47	\$91,619
Provider off-cycle/total	9.14%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.02%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (26, 26A & 26B)	554	\$2,231,943.30
Off-cycle (26A & 26B)	36	\$113,766
Provider off-cycle/total	6.95%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	5.17%	-

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are **87** 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 **\$1.68M** 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 **\$151.7M**, and we have collected about **\$123.4M** in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately **81** 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.