



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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September 18, 2019

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 Rhode Island Bridges system, which covers the reporting period August 16, 2019 – September 15, 2019. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- Department of Human Services (DHS) staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) timeliness and lobby/Department of Human Services (DHS) Call Center summaries;
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) off-cycle payments;
- Correspondence with federal partners and Special Court Master

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the Rhode Island Bridges 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, flowing style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



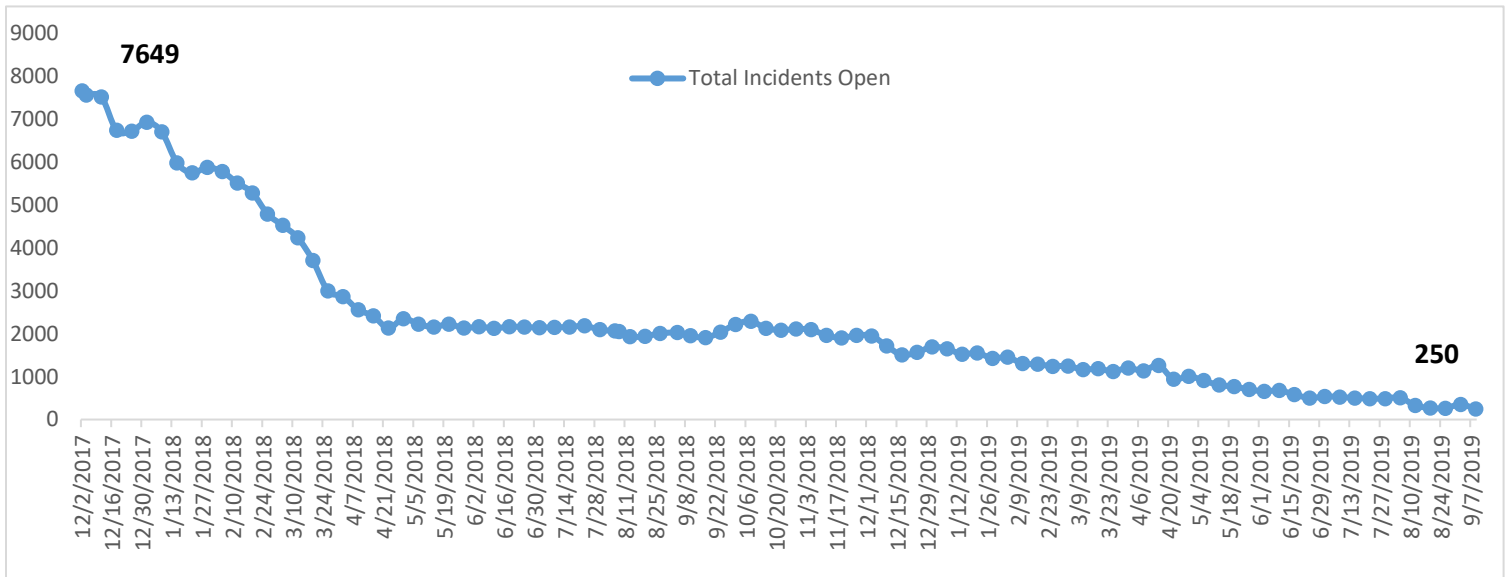
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

September 2019

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on Rhode Island Bridges is an important part of the equation. With significant improvements to system stabilization under our belt, we are looking ahead to refocus our efforts 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 Department of Human Services client, worker or provider) has decreased by 7,399 incidents. As of September 7, 2019, open incidents totaled 250 – a 97% improvement since December 2017.



DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

Hiring Update

Department of Human Services continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. Since August, the Department of Human Services hired eight employees. These include:

- 3 Eligibility Technicians
- 1 Social Caseworker
- 1 Employment and Career Advisor
- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Principal Human Services Business Officer
- 1 Assistant Administrator dedicated to the Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) unit

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation	9/3 thru 9/6	18	6	0
Basic Navigation	9/9	6	6	0
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Program Training	8/14 thru 8/21	36	0	9
Run, Hide, and Fight Federal Tax Information (FTI)/Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Training	8/15 8/27 8/28 8/29	21	0	405**
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training	9/11-9/23	54	0	9
Totals		135	12	423*

* Current number of staff trained is a duplicate number

** This number includes staff members from the Office of Rehabilitative Services and the Office of Child Support Services

New Hire Orientation

This period we held one New Hire Orientation and an introduction to Rhode Island Bridges, Basic Navigation. A total of nine new staff members attended the training.

Current Staff Overview

Over the last month, staff members were offered training in several areas. New and current staff were offered training in several program areas such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Rhode Island Works (RIW). In addition, staff members from several of the Department of Human Services' divisions were offered active shooter training and annual training on confidentiality and federal tax information.

Workshop Descriptions

New Hire Orientation: The New Employee Orientation (NEO) Program is the first step in welcoming new hires to Rhode Island Department of Human Services. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the organization, its organizational structure, and its policies and procedures.

Rhode Island Works Training: This training follows a "Tell me, show me, let me try" design that allows lessons to be reinforced through a combination of auditory, visual and hands-on experiences. This means participants will have multiple opportunities to engage with key points of learning. The scenarios the participants will learn will increase in complexity to reflect common activities.

Learning objectives:

- Overview of application and data collection for Rhode Island Works (RIW) and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Understanding Rhode Island Works and Child Care Assistance Program eligibility

- Understand how to read the time clock
- Understand how to read the Work Employment & Training (E & T) Module
- Differences between the Employment & Training (E&T) and Employment and Career Advisor (ECA) roles for Rhode Island Works
- Understand how to enter and lift a sanction
- Financial requirements for Rhode Island Works and Child Care Assistance Program
- Interviewing for Rhode Island Works
- Understand how to process an application for a hardship

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP): The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Workshop is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program’s program policy and Rhode Island Bridges. The workshop approach combines instructor led portions, demonstrations, and hands on exercises to provide a complete integrated policy and system learning experience.

Basic Navigation: This is a one-day course that introduces a new DHS employee to the foundational skills on how to navigate through the Rhode Island Bridges system.

Annual Trainings:

- **Run, Hide, and Fight:** Workplace safety instructor from the Rhode Island State Police, Captain Borek provided a training on how staff members can maximize their safety during an active shooter scenario.
- **Federal Tax Information/Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act:** This is a required training for all DHS employees. This refresher training covered the federal regulations and internal procedures that staff need to follow in protecting customer information.

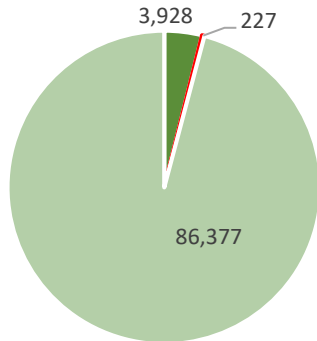
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of September 10, 2019, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 4,713. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action total is 2,120.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Grand Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	6	25	31	5	5	10	41
SNAP Non	320	253	573	14	17	31	604
CCAP	7	162	169	2	16	18	187
GPA Burial	0	2	2	1	6	7	9
SSP	0	59	59	0	34	34	93
GPA	19	38	57	53	31	84	141
RIW	75	81	156	12	91	103	259
Undetermined Medical	23	213	236	50	597	647	883
MAGI	20	23	43	27	62	89	132
MPP	0	10	10	0	11	11	21
Complex Medicaid	18	27	45	44	123	167	212
LTSS	134	751	885	119	1127	1246	2,131
Totals	622	1,644	2,266	327	2,120	2,447	4,713

SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 96.2 percent for expedited and 97.9 percent for non-expedited for August 2019. SNAP timeliness was 56 percent in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90 percent timeliness since April 2018.

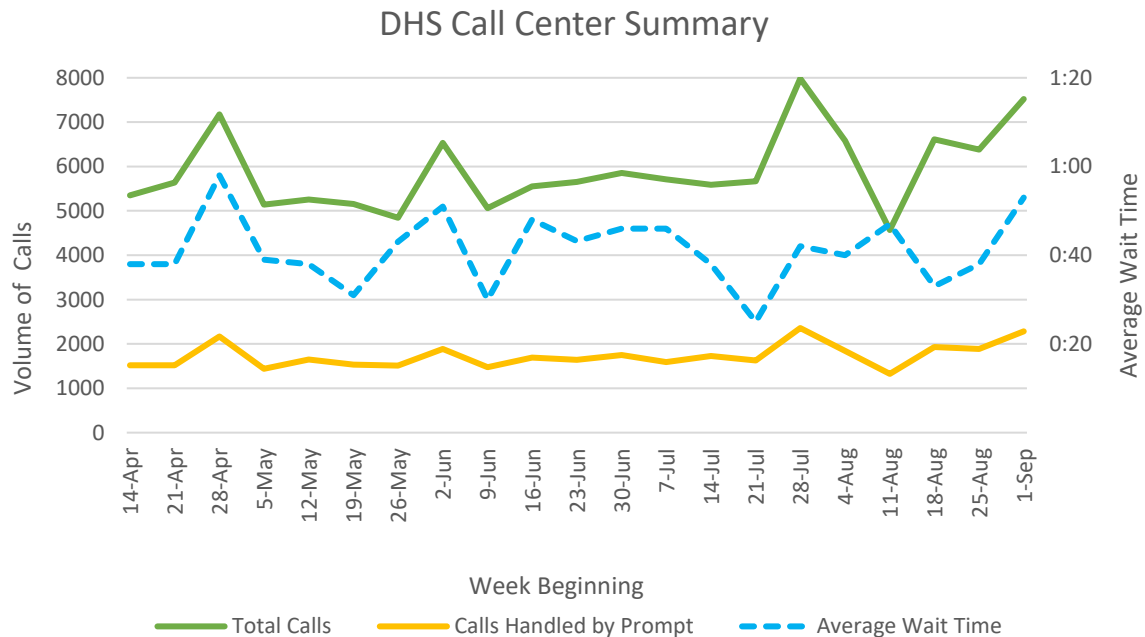


In August 2019, SNAP benefits were issued timely to more than 86,000 households. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population.

Untimely August Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

CALL CENTER

With more than 7,500 calls during the week of September 1, 2019, the average wait time was approximately 53 minutes. The six-week average is 48 minutes, 8 seconds.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between July 16 – August 8, 2019.

Note: Off-cycle 4B is abnormally high due to two large sites (YGP and Boys & Girls) having prior batches ready for approval.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
5	08/13/2019	613	\$2,946,085
5A	08/16/2019	44	\$75,102
5B	08/22/2019	43	\$84,533
6	08/27/2019	626	\$3,045,381
6A	08/29/2019	6	\$69,581
6A1	08/30/2019	1	\$11,032
6B	09/05/2019	32	\$51,380

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (5, 5A & 5B)	700	\$3,105,720
Off-cycle (5A & 5B)	87	\$159,635
Provider off-cycle/total	12.43%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	5.14%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (6, 6A, 6A1, & 6B)	665	\$3,177,375
Off-cycle (6A, 6A1 & 6B)	39	\$131,996
Providers off-cycle/total	5.86%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.15%	-

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the Rhode Island Bridges System in compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS AND SPECIAL MASTER

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to meet regularly to review progress on Rhode Island Bridges. Below is a list of federal correspondence during this reporting period:

- August 20, 2019: Rhode Island Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Quality Control Review Corrective Action Response letter
- August 22, 2019: Rhode Island Department of Human Service is asking for a decision from FNS regarding Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents time limit waiver
- September 10, 2019: Special Master's 22nd report to the courts
- September 13, 2019: SNAP Application Timeliness report as part of Gemmell agreement