



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

25 Howard Avenue, Building 57

Cranston, RI 02920

Phone: (401) 462-2121 Fax: (401) 462-6594

October 19, 2020

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 September 16, 2020 – October 15, 2020. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- LTSS interim payments and;
- 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 black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



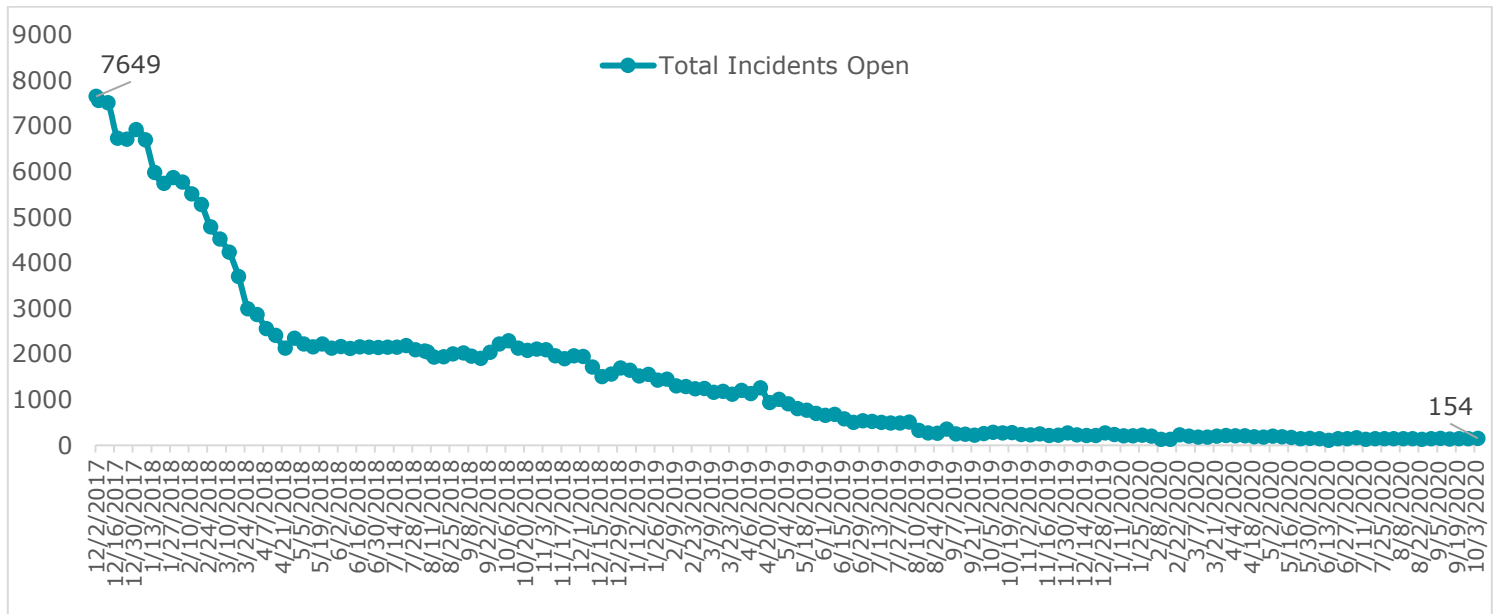
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

October 2020

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 RIBridges 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 client, worker or provider) has decreased by 98% since December 2017. As of October 3, 2020, there were 154 open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

Hiring Update

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since September, DHS hired two new employees. These include:

- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Eligibility Technician I

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
SNAP Training (5 – 1.5-hour sessions)	9/16/2020 9/23/2020 9/29/2020 10/6/2020 10/14/2020	7.5	0	20
SNAP Mini Training: Students (3 – two- hour sessions)	9/22/2020 9/29/2020 10/13/2020	6	0	45
SNAP Mini Training: Non-Citizen Requirements (1 -two-hour session)	9/22/2020	2	0	7
Application Registration (1-30-minute session)	10/2/2020	.50	0	19
New Hire Orientation (4 – two-hour sessions)	10/5/2020 (2) 10/6/2020 (2)	8	2	0
Case Maintenance (1 – 30 – minute session)	9/18/2020	.50	0	16
Quarterly Meetings (3-two-hour sessions)	9/16/2020 9/17/2020 9/18/2020	6	0	232
STAR Supervisor Training (2 – 1.5-hour session)	9/29/2020 10/6/2020	3	0	7
Introduction to MAGI	9/17/2020 9/22/2020 (2) 9/29/2020 (2)	10	0	66
Katie Beckett (1 – one-hour session)	9/17/2020	1	0	12
Health Insurance and Retroactive (1 – three -hour session)	9/21/2020	3	0	22
Sherlock Training	9/28/2020 10/2/2020	6	0	41
RIW Mini Training: Adding a Pregnancy (1 -30-minute session)	10/7/2020	.50	0	10
Multicultural Competency Training: Module One (4 -one and half hour sessions)	9/18/2020 9/24/2020 (2) 10/8/2020 (2)	7.5	0	92
Totals		59	2	589*

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

Workshop Descriptions

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

- Understanding the case maintenance checklist
- Finding helpful documents
- Understanding proper case maintenance practices

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

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 diversity, equity and inclusion of strategic goals, individually and collectively. The workshops are offered virtually. Each session meets for 1.5-2 hours. The format includes facilitated dialogue activities with individuals and groups.

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

Health Insurance and Resources: This training covers the policy surrounding countable and excluded resources for *Medicaid* and Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) applications and renewals. Participants will view resource documentation, understand how to calculate total countable resources and be able to enter resources into the IES system.

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

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

Introduction to MAGI: Participants will have acquired a foundation – especially those new to Medical determination – that will lay the foundation for a subsequent session incorporating introductory principles applicable to *RI Bridges*. This training session will serve as a hands-on process to combine theory with practice.

Following the conclusion of part one of Introduction to the *Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI)* program, participants will have an increased familiarity with government-provided health insurance programs of the past and present at the federal and state levels, general concepts of eligibility criteria, special population eligibility and the application process for DHS.

SNAP Mini Training Student: The audiences for this training are eligibility and supervisory staff. This training reviews policy surrounding student status, income, and eligibility. It includes a hands-on segment to practice the correct inputting of student information into *RI Bridges*.

New Hire Orientation: The New Employee Orientation (NEO) Program is the first step in welcoming new hires to DHS. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the department, its organizational structure, and its policies and procedures.

Quarterly Meetings: The meetings were held virtually by using *Skype* and *Conference Call* applications. The topics covered in the meetings were as follows: operational changes with COVID-19; policy guidance, review of *SNAP* topics and a presentation from the Department of Labor and Training (DLT).

Katie Beckett: Participants in this training will:

- Understand the link between *Medicare* and *Social Security* benefits
- Understand payments made for these benefits from Social Security
- Understand the differences between *Medicare A, B, C, D* – Supplemental coverage and managed care
- Demonstrate an ability to process *Medicare Premium Payment Program (MPPP)* applications
- Understand the eligibility criteria for *MPP* and verification for eligibility
- Understand the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) categories and eligibility factors for each program

Rhode Island Works (RIW) Mini Training (“Adding a Pregnancy”): Participants will learn about 3rd trimester pregnancy as a special circumstance and how this is a gateway for eligibility for moms with no children in the home.

Sherlock Eligibility: This training will focus on eligibility pathways and considerations for Working Adults with Disabilities, including the impact of the *Sherlock* consent form. Participants will practice entering *Sherlock Choice* into the Integrated Eligibility System (IES) and understand the *Sherlock Choice* for those with multiple eligibility pathways, both in LTSS and non-LTSS *Medicaid*. The policy for income disregards, exclusions and therapeutic employment are reviewed as well as the *Sherlock Medicaid Buy-In Program*. Participants will understand the process flow for cases with multiple eligibility pathways and eligibility requirements for each program.

Application Registration: Participants will demonstrate an understanding of the search function and application registration process in RIBridges. By completing this training, participants will learn to:

- Identify client needs
- Recognize and understand the relationship between the DHS-2 and RIBridges IES
- Search for customers as individuals and in cases
- Register eligibility applications in RIBridges
- Display an interest in learning about DHS and the customers we serve
- Communicate effectively with customers and colleagues
- Provide a warm welcome to visitors

SNAP- Non-Citizen Requirement: To gain the following policy/procedure knowledge and learn about the following system screens.

Knowledge:

- Non-Citizen eligibility
- Sponsor deeming
- 5 Year bar-waiting period for eligibility
- Declaring indigence

System Screens:

- Alien Additional
- Circumstance Start Change Dates
- Person Demographics
- Alien Sponsorship

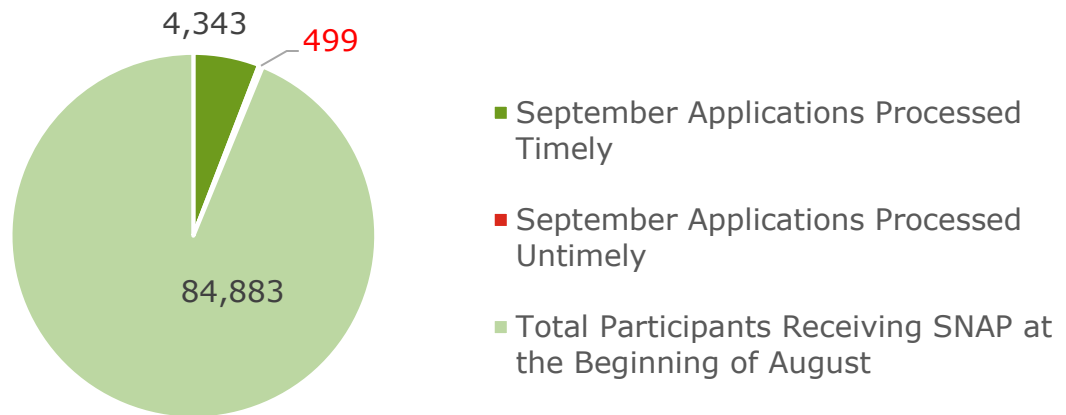
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of October 5, 2020, the number of pending new applications across all programs was 3,690. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting state action was 1,290.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	18	33	51	35	71	106	157
SNAP Non-Expedited	684	339	1,023	95	49	144	1,167
CCAP	27	136	163	6	13	19	182
GPA Burial	0	2	2	0	1	1	3
SSP	0	11	11	0	4	4	15
GPA	24	34	58	13	32	45	103
RIW	88	74	162	46	40	86	248
Undetermined Medical	17	219	236	36	826	862	1,098
Medicaid-MAGI	2	3	5	31	29	60	65
MPP	6	25	31	2	8	10	41
Complex Medicaid	11	20	31	9	80	89	120
LTSS	58	287	345	9	137	146	491
Totals	935	1,183	2,118	282	1,290	1,572	3,690

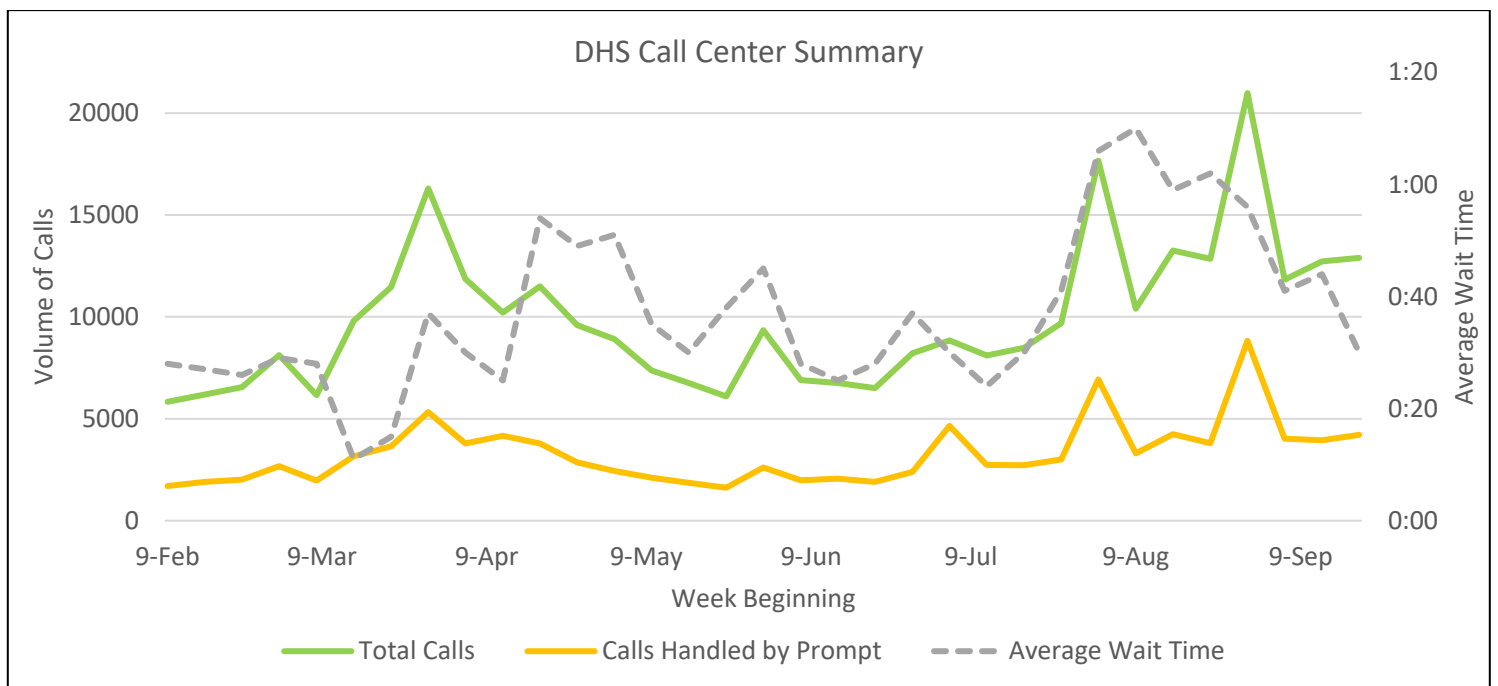
SNAP TIMELINESS

In September 2020, *SNAP* benefits were issued timely to nearly 84,800 households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, more than 89 percent of new *SNAP* applications were timely processed. The number of applications not timely processed represents less than 1percent of the *SNAP* population receiving benefits.



CALL CENTER

In August 2020, the average wait time was 62 minutes, 5 seconds. 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 8/11 – 9/10/2020.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
7	09/08/2020	559	\$2,579,313
7A	09/10/2020	6	\$12,799
7B	09/17/2020	14	\$17,145
8	09/27/2020	568	\$2,589,428
8A	09/24/2020	4	\$3,290
8B	10/01/2020	14	\$15,013
9	10/16/2020	574	\$2,453,111
9A	10/08/2020	8	\$9,337
9B	10/15/2020	11	\$13,876

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (7, 7A & 7B))	579	\$2,609,257
Off-cycle (7A & 7B)	20	\$29,943
Provider off-cycle/total	3.45%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	1.15%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (8, 8A & 8B)	586	\$2,607,730
Off-cycle (8A & 8B)	18	\$18,302
Provider off-cycle/total	3.07%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	0.70%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (9, 9A & 9B)	593	\$2,476,324
Off-cycle (9A & 9B)	19	\$23,213
Provider off-cycle/total	3.20%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	0.94%	-

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 137 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 \$194,000 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 \$149 million, and we have collected about \$97 million in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 65 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.