OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL MASTER

Gemmell v. Hawkins – C. A. No. 16-350 WES

Report (#11) to the Court

This Report is filed pursuant to Section IV.A.4 of the Order Appointing Special Master. My activities in August and September are set forth in the attached time sheet.

On July 21/22, the new worker inbox was deployed. While it is operating well generally, there are three technological issues that have arisen, all relating to the assignment of tasks shown the screen of the inbox of the eligibility technicians ("ETs"). This is the principal reason that DHS is still short of the goal of 96% timeliness of the processing of SNAP applications. These deficiencies have an impact not only on the processing of SNAP applications, especially the expedited SNAP applications, but on the processing of the applications for the other four social services within the R.I. Bridges program.

On September 19, 2018, I met with Deloitte and DHS to address these task-related issues, all of which either have been or are in the process of being addressed by three further releases. The first release occurred on August 30, 2018, and appears to have fixed the problem addressed. The second release occurred on September 21, 2018, and I do not have sufficient information to state whether it fixed the problem. The third release is scheduled for October 6, 2018.

The DHS personnel have been trained on the updated worker inbox and look forward to the final fixes so that they can achieve the 96% standard. While the ETs make occasional mistakes in using the new inbox, as would be expected, they appear to be performing well but have been hampered to some extent by the three defects now being addressed. There are now 193 ETs, a substantial increase over the number of ETs at the beginning of my appointment.

With respect to the process for scanning applications, DHS rolled out a new scanning functionality across all offices that has improved the process of scanning applications into the computer system.

The timeliness numbers for August are as follows: expedited applications - 91.4%, and non-expedited - 93.8% (compared with 93.2% for both applications in July). There were 3860 total applications filed in August, slightly more than in July, of which 3575 were processed timely and 285 were not. Despite the problems with the technology, DHS is within hailing distance of meeting the 96% standard for both types of applications, and has been in excess of the 90% for the past 5 months. DHS needed to process timely only an additional 130 applications in August to be in compliance with the consent Agreement. A chart of the progress toward meeting the timeliness standard is attached to this Report.

I will be visiting the DHS office in Providence on October 3 to view the updated worker inbox and meet with DHS staff.

The call center wait times continue to improve for SNAP and other applicants. The wait times for all applicants average less than 30 minutes. Also, as a result of operational changes at the DHS offices, 80% of customer wait times average less than 30 minutes.

In summary, there is progress on all fronts affecting SNAP applications.

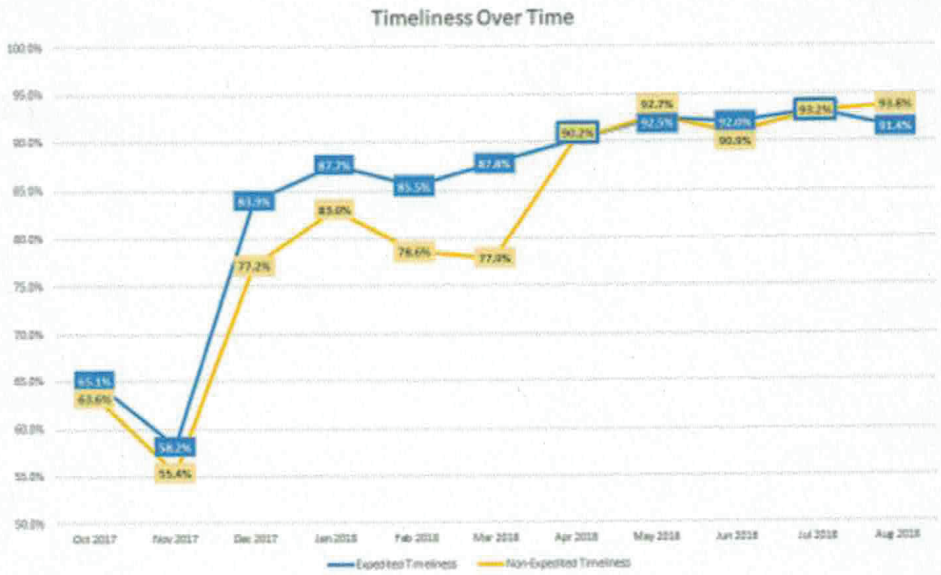
Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Deming E. Sherman

Special Master

September 30, 2018

cc Counsel of Record (by email)


Timeliness Over Time
100.0%
95.0%
90.0%
85.0%
80.0%
75.0%
70.0%
65.0%
60.0%
55.0%
50.0%
Oct 2017
Nov 2017
Dec 2017
Jan 2018
Feb 2018
Mar 2018
Apr 2018
May 2018
Jun 2018
Jul 2018
Aug 2018
65.1%
63.6%
58.2%
55.4%
81.9%
77.2%
87.7%
83.0%
85.5%
78.6%
87.8%
77.9%
90.2%
92.5%
92.7%
92.0%
90.9%
93.2%
93.8%
91.4%
Expedited Timeliness
Non-Expedited Timeliness