



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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August 18, 2022

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 July 16, 2022 – August 15, 2022. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System Performance and Improvement
- RI Department of Human Services (DHS) Employee Training
- Pending Applications
- SNAP Timeliness and Lobby/DHS Call Center Summaries
- CCAP Off-Cycle 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. Please note that Yvette Mendez has returned to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services as the Acting Assistant Secretary. Moving forward, I will be submitting these reports as the Acting Director of the RI Department of Human Services. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimberly Merolla-Brito".

Kimberly Merolla-Brito, Acting Director
RI Department of Human Services



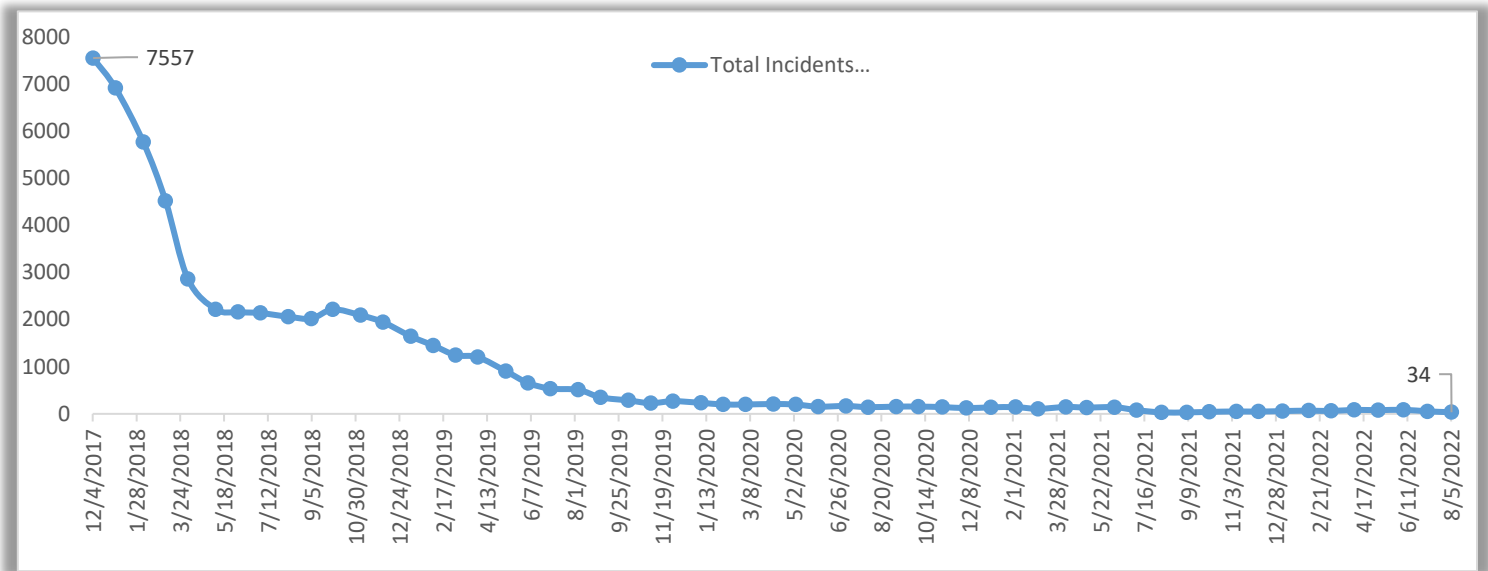
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

August 2022

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 system compliance. 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 99 percent** since December 2017. As of August 5, 2022, there were **34** open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified*. Since July, DHS hired 27 employees. This includes:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Customer Service Aide | 1 Social Caseworker LTSS |
| 12 Eligibility Technician I | 1 Chief Public Affairs Officer |
| 3 Eligibility Technician II (Lobby) | 1 Clinical Training Specialist |
| 3 Eligibility Technician III | 2 Quality Control Reviewer |
| 2 Employment and Career Advisor | 1 Senior Casework Supervisor |

The Department has completed the recruitment of the priority 71 front facing and back-office positions. Of the 71 positions, 67 were filled and 4 positions were promotional opportunities influenced by the pool of qualified and interested candidates.

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
Interface Walkthrough: BEERS (Two one-hour sessions)	7-27-2022 10 AM and 2PM	2	0	12
Time Management Training Series (One two-hour session)	8-11-2022	2	0	22
Multicultural Competency Training Series: Module Four (One -one and a-half-hour session)	7-19-2022	1.5	0	6
Integrating RIW Concepts (Two full -day sessions)	7-25-2022 7-26-2022	11	0	3
Rhode Island Works Eligibility Basics (One full-day session)	7-18-2022	4	0	14
Processing Lab for Supervisors (Two half-day sessions)	7-22-2022 7-25-2022	6	0	27
Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Training Series (Three full-day sessions with two half day sessions of processing lab)	7-28-2022 7-29-2022 8-1-2022 8-2-2022 (half day) 8-3-2022 (half day)	22.5	0	16
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training series (Eight full-day sessions and two half day processing lab sessions)	7-18-2022 7-19-2022 7-20-2022 7-21-2022 7-22-2022 (half day) 7-23-2022 (half day) 8-10-2022 8-11-2022 8-12-2022 8-15-2022	50	11	13
	Totals	99	11*	113*
Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings (These trainings are self-directed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Telephonic Signature' -- 125 staff enrolled • 'Telephonic Signature -Elderly and Disabled Adults (EAD)' -- 40 staff enrolled • 'Asset Verification System (AVS)' -- 118 staff enrolled • 'Customer Portal' 412 staff enrolled 	Combined total of 1,572* staff trained on LMS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 completed 'Telephonic Signature' • 21 completed 'Telephonic Signature EAD' • 86 completed 'AVS' • 289 completed 'Customer Portal' • 184 completed 'SNAP Reinvestment Training' • 231 completed 'Visit Record Training' • 67 completed 'the RIW Mini-Series' • 207 completed 'Scheduling Refresher' • 158 completed 'Medicaid Renewal refresher' • 159 completed 'SNAP Eligibility Redetermination' • 129 completed 'SNAP Work Registrant and ABAWDS Script Knowledge Transfer' 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'SNAP Reinvestment Updates' -- 408 staff enrolled • 'Visit Record' -- 409 staff enrolled • 'RIW Mini-Series Completed' -- 116 staff enrolled • 'Scheduling Refresher' -- 330 staff enrolled • 'Medicaid Renewal Refresher' -- 274 staff enrolled • 'SNAP Eligibility Redetermination Results' -- 263 staff enrolled • 'SNAP Work Registrant and ABAWDS Script Knowledge Transfer' -- 259 staff enrolled 	
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* This number is duplicative and based on number of staff enrolled to attend training.

Workshop Descriptions

Multicultural Competency Training Series: 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 Four: Combating Microaggressions with Inclusive Language in the Workplace: Traditional notions of oppression hold that it is rare, occurring by a handful of rogue agents who intend to inflict harm on targets. However, it also occurs by well-meaning agents who convey unintentional, but no less harmful, “hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults.” The effects of these indignities, coined microaggressions, are cumulative. The purpose of this interactive module is to present and discuss the contours of microaggressions, offering examples of inclusive language to combat microaggressions as a target or a bystander. This module is intended to help participants:

- Learn the origins of the term microaggressions (i.e., identity-based abuse)
- Differentiate between agents and targets of microaggressions
- Identify the manifestations of microaggressions (e.g., intent vs impact)
- Delineate the three types of microaggressions
- Understand the consequences on targets
- Delineate select microaggression themes

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training Series: The SNAP Training Series is designed to introduce new Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. A wide range of operational tasks are covered and/or discussed

to help ensure Eligibility Technicians are prepared for the variety of questions and challenges they may encounter in their role.

Time Management Training Series: “Time Management” is working more efficiently to maximize customer satisfaction. We encourage our workers to prioritize what is truly important. In this series, our workers explore the reality of time and the everyday obstacles of managing time, all while assessing competing and shifting priorities. By the end of the program, participants have tools to maximize their time, prioritize effectively, and most importantly, leave work feeling accomplished.

- **Session One: Understanding the Realities of Time**

There are only 24 hours in a day. This is the first reality. In this session, workers explore the realities of how to spend their time. Discussed are examples of practices that may be costing more time than realized.

Interface Walkthrough: BEERS: This training walks through the BEERS interface and the process and procedures Employment Career Advisors (ECAs) will follow to verify and/or enter self-employment data linked to customers newly approved for Rhode Island Works (RI Works).

Rhode Island Works (RIW) Basics Training: This training will provide a basic overview of the Rhode Island Works program and its eligible participants.

Integrating Rhode Island Works (RIW) Concepts Modules: This training builds off the Rhode Island Works (RIW) Basics Eligibility Training, providing more depth of the concepts. The areas covered are Work Employment and Training; Program Requirements; Changes, Recertifications, and Interims; Relationship Requirements; Office of Child Support Services: Referral Process; Motivational Interview Skills, Categorically Eligible Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP); Income Eligible CCAP; and RIBridges System Knowledge including hands-on practice in the RIBridges training environment working through multiple scenarios of the RIW concepts.

The MAGI Medicaid Training Series: This provides participants with an overview of the Medicaid hierarchy, an introduction to MAGI Medicaid policy and process, a working knowledge of RIBridges screens relating to MAGI, and insight into related interagency units. This a four session training series that includes a final day in the MAGI Medicaid Processing Lab where participants apply learning concepts in the RIBridges production environment with support from a cross-agency team made up of staff development (Trainer), operations (Supervisor), and policy (Senior Human Services and System Specialist) with the goal of providing trainees hands-on processing experience. Participants must attend all sessions to get the full training scope of the knowledge and skills offered. This training is offered in-person via 6.5 hour sessions. This training is targeted to new Eligibility Technicians and employees who have not attended MAGI Medicaid Training since the RIBridges roll-out in 2016.

Processing Lab for Supervisors: A space for staff who attend program trainings (i.e., SNAP, RIW, Medical and LTSS) to apply the learning in the RIBridges production environment with support from a cross-agency team made up of staff development (Trainer), operations (Supervisor), and policy (Principal Human Services and System Specialist) with the goal of providing trainees with hands-on experience in processing applications.

Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings: These trainings are self-directed. Staff are enrolled through the Learning Management System.

- **FTI/HIPAA:** This is a required training for all DHS employees. This refresher training covers the federal regulations and internal procedures that staff need to follow in protecting customer information.
- **Telephonic Signature/Telephonic Signature - EAD:** To work new documents such as applications, recerts, interims (with a change) and employment plans over the phone, it is imperative that either a signed document is present in the case file OR the worker records a telephonic signature while the customer is on the phone.
- **Asset Verification Training System:** This training provides guidance to staff processing EAD and LTSS requests for Medicaid determinations at the time of application and renewals.
- **SNAP Reinvestment:** This course is designed as a refresher for operations staff on SNAP six-month interim processing. The intent of this course is to review best practices for interim processing.

- **Customer Portal:** This training provides a walk-through of the front and back end of the Customer Portal.
- **Visit Record Refresher:** This course will provide an overview of the Visit Record functionality in RIBridges. The purpose of the training is to increase knowledge on the Visit Record function in RIBridges that will be included in all field offices, enhancing consistency in our processes by appreciating the customer journey.
- **Scheduling Refresher:** This course provides a review of how to use the scheduling functionality in RIBridges.
- **Medicaid Renewal Refresher:** This training provides an overview on how to process Medicaid enrollment.

PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

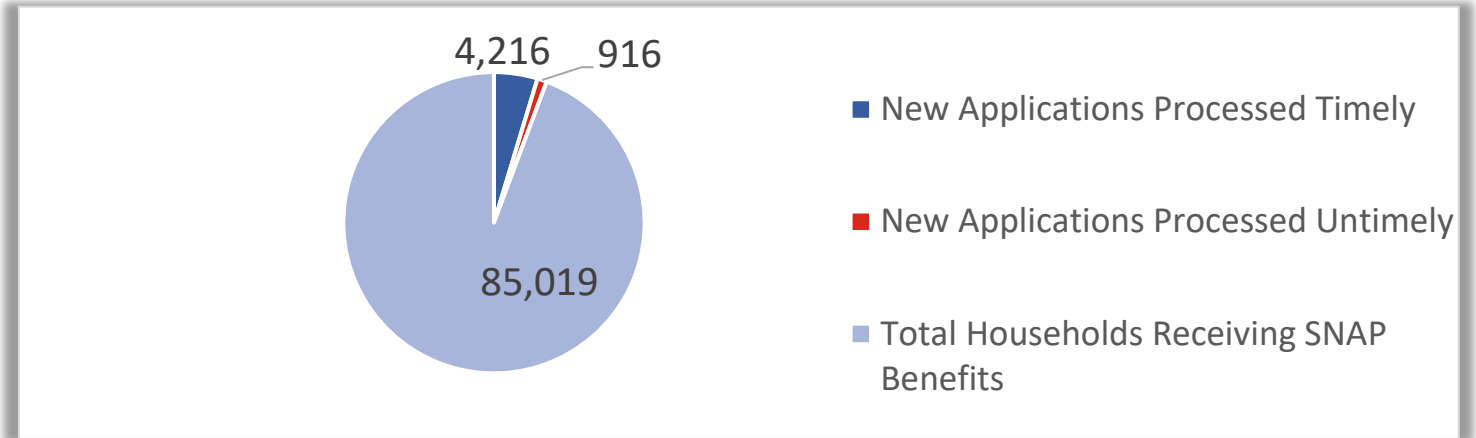
The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **August 9, 2022**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **7,148**. The total overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **2,857**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	40	410	450	28	104	132	582
SNAP Non-Expedited	538	847	1,385	54	49	103	1488
CCAP	11	321	332	6	72	78	410
SSP	0	51	51	0	6	6	57
GPA	11	42	53	1	10	11	60
RIW	124	310	434	24	30	54	488
Undetermined Medical	23	455	478	161	2,028	2,189	2667
Medicaid-MAGI	38	46	84	132	139	271	355
Medicare Premium Payments	22	172	194	30	112	142	336
Medicaid Complex	10	57	67	25	337	290	357
LTSS	17	287	304	3	48	51	355
Grand Total	834	3017	3,851	464	2,857	3,321	7,148

Please note that some undetermined medical cases awaiting state action have already been resolved but were added to this reporting metric as part of broader system fixes in 2022 to ensure an accurate accounting of applications. A future update will archive pending applications that require no further action.

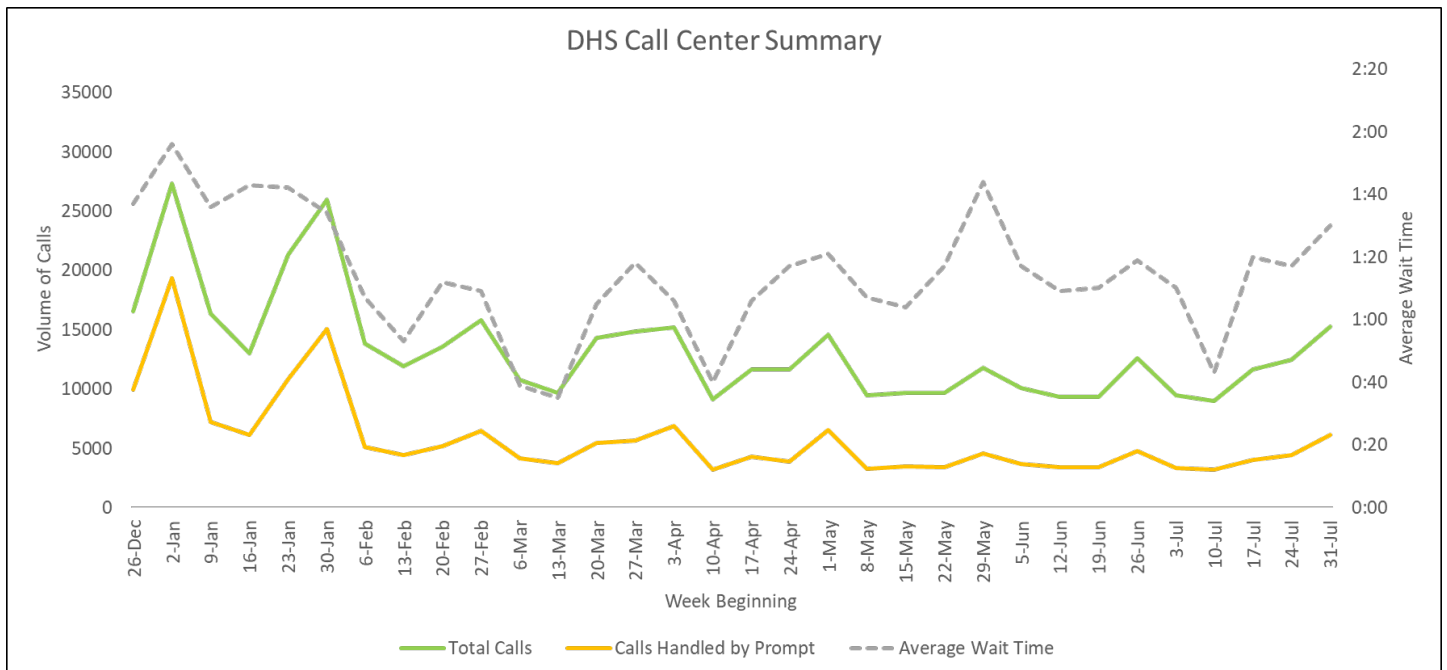
SNAP TIMELINESS

Despite the impact of COVID-19, **85,019** households received benefits in July 2022. About **82** percent of new SNAP applications were processed in a timely manner. About 18 percent of applications were processed untimely.



CALL CENTER

For the period between **July 3, 2022, through the week that started on July 31, 2022**, the average wait time to connect to DHS staff was about **1 hour and 15 minutes**. DHS recognizes this average wait time is longer than it should be due to pressure points. The busiest week at the Call Center was the week beginning July 31, 2022, and there were **12,596** calls.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between July 16, 2022 through August 15, 2022.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
3	7/14/2022	556	\$2,190,604.92
3A	7/15/2022	11	\$22,637.48
3B	7/22/2022	37	\$140,656.94
4	7/28/2022	494	\$2,480,712.02
4A	7/29/2022	32	\$57,296.84
4B	8/2/2022	48	\$58,848.33

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (3, 3A & 3B)	604	\$2,353,899.34
Off-cycle (1A & 1B)	48	\$163,294.42
Provider off-cycle/total	8.63%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	7.45%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (4, 4A & 4B)	574	\$2,596,857.19
Off-cycle (4A & 4B)	80	\$116,145.17
Provider off-cycle/total	16.19 %	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.68 %	-

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 wasn't any communication during this reporting period.