



Rhode Island Department of Human Services
25 Howard Avenue, Building 57
Cranston, RI 02920
Phone: (401) 462-2121 Fax: (401) 462-6594

February 21, 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 January 16, 2022 – February 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. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yvette Mendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Yvette Mendez, Acting Director



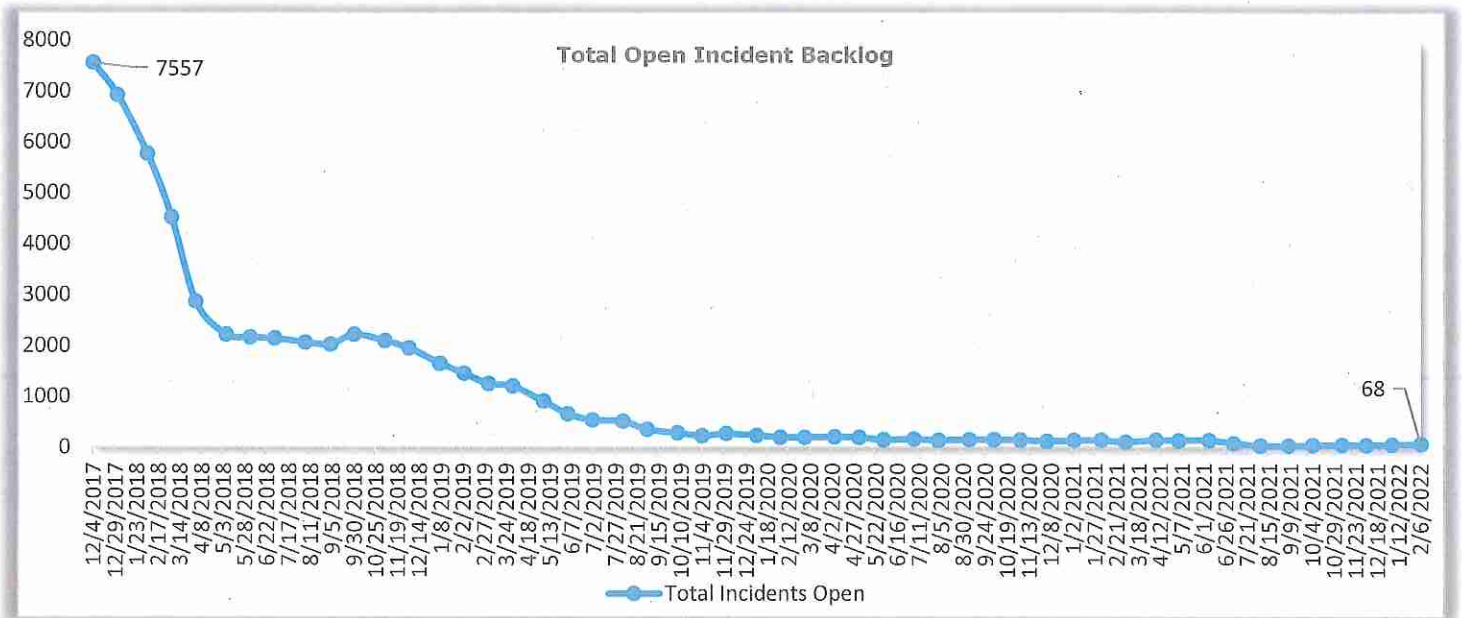
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

February 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 RI Bridges 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 99 percent** since December 2017. As of February 7, 2022, there were **68** open incidents.



DHS STAFFING

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

- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Employment and Career Advisor

DHS TRAINING

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Office Hours (Two one-hour sessions)	1-11-2022 1-26-2022	2	0	20
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Two one-hour sessions)	1-25-2022 1-28-2022 2-18-2022	2	0	27
RI Bridges Basics Training (One full day session)	1-20-2022 1-31-2022	4.5	0	10
Interface Knowledge Transfer (Two one-hour sessions)	1-24-2022	2	0	76
New Hire Orientation (Three full day sessions)	2-7-2022 2-8-2022 2-9-2022	13.5	5	0
Managing Fear and Anxiety Covid 19 (one – one hour session)	2-15-2022	1	0	10
Totals		25	5	143*
Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings (These trainings are self-directed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “DHS FTI, HIPAA, and Confidentiality” - 675 staff enrolled • “Telephonic Signature” -51 staff enrolled • “Telephonic Signature - Elderly and Disabled Adults (EAD)” - 41 staff enrolled • “Asset Verification System (AVS)” - 112 staff enrolled • “Customer Portal” – 423 enrolled • “SNAP Reinvestment Updates” - 427 enrolled • “Visit Record” - 425 enrolled • “RIW Mini-Series Completed” - 69 enrolled 	Combined total of 1,309* staff trained on LMS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 487 Completed FTI • 27 Completed Telephonic Signature • 22 Telephonic Signature EAD • 80 Completed AVS • 284 Completed Customer Portal • 184 Completed SNAP Reinvestment Training • 227 Completed Visit Record Training • 30 Completed the RIW Mini-Series 		

*current number of staff trained is a duplicative number

Workshop Descriptions

Rhode Island Works (RIW) Office Hours: The RIW office hours are led by a Clinical Training Specialist and the RIW program staff member. This space is created for eligibility staff that process RIW cases with the purpose of having them bring real case examples so that the trainer and program staff member can answer or walk through *RI Bridges* and/or policy questions.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Office Hours: The SNAP office hours are led by a Clinical Training Specialist and the SNAP Program staff member. This space is created for eligibility staff that process RIW cases with the purpose of having them bring real case examples so that the trainer and program staff member can answer or walk through *RI Bridges* and/or policy questions.

Knowledge Transfer Training: This workshop provides an overview of the Interface Review QRG associated with the upgrades.

RI Bridges Basics Training: This training session provides an overview of the integrated eligibility system. A full-day session, the training introduces *RI Bridges* functionality and offers an opportunity for hands-on case practice in the *RI Bridges* training environment.

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 including the introduction of our new workers to the *RI Bridges* eligibility system. New hire orientation goals include:

- Understanding organizational hierarchy;
- Learning DHS' mission and vision;
- Gaining an understanding of DHS' programs and services;
- Reviewing and learning policies and procedures regarding payroll, dress code and other practices
- Learning about the LEAN initiative
- Obtaining mandated training for Federal Tax Information (FTI), Civil Rights, Voter Registration, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA); and
- Hands-on basic navigation and data collection training in *RI Bridges*

Managing Fear and Anxiety Around Covid 19: Fears and anxieties are made up of thoughts that are based upon either personal experiences or beliefs of the world today. Pretending that these thoughts and fears do not exist, or are not that bad, can make them worse. In this class, participants learn how to talk through thoughts to realize that individual fears and anxieties are manageable and controllable to help participants through these challenging times.

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 covered 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:** A walk-through of the front and back ends of the Customer Portal.
- **Visit Record Refresher:** This course will provide an overview of the Visit Record functionality in *RI Bridges*. The purpose of this training is to increase knowledge on the Visit Record function in *RI Bridges* that will be included in all field offices and it enhances consistency in our processes by appreciating the customer journey.

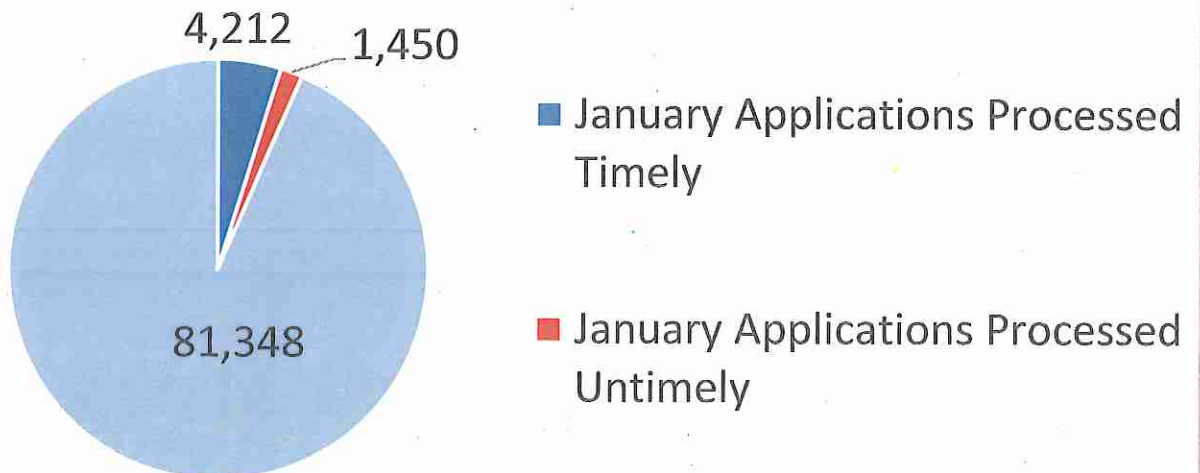
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **February 10, 2022**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **4,803**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **1,838**

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	114	3	147	64	112	176	323
SNAP Non-Expedited	633	391	1024	77	75	152	1176
CCAP	19	219	238	1	7	8	246
GPA Burial	0	3	3	0	0	0	3
SSP	0	28	28	0	1	1	29
GPA	26	42	68	1	3	4	72
RIW	166	123	289	20	18	38	327
Undetermined Medical	19	209	228	103	1262	1365	1593
Medicaid-MAGI	75	51	126	93	97	190	316
MPP	4	122	126	7	60	67	193
Complex Medicaid	5	40	45	20	163	183	228
LTSS	23	231	254	3	40	43	297
Totals	1,084	1,492	2576	389	1838	2227	4803

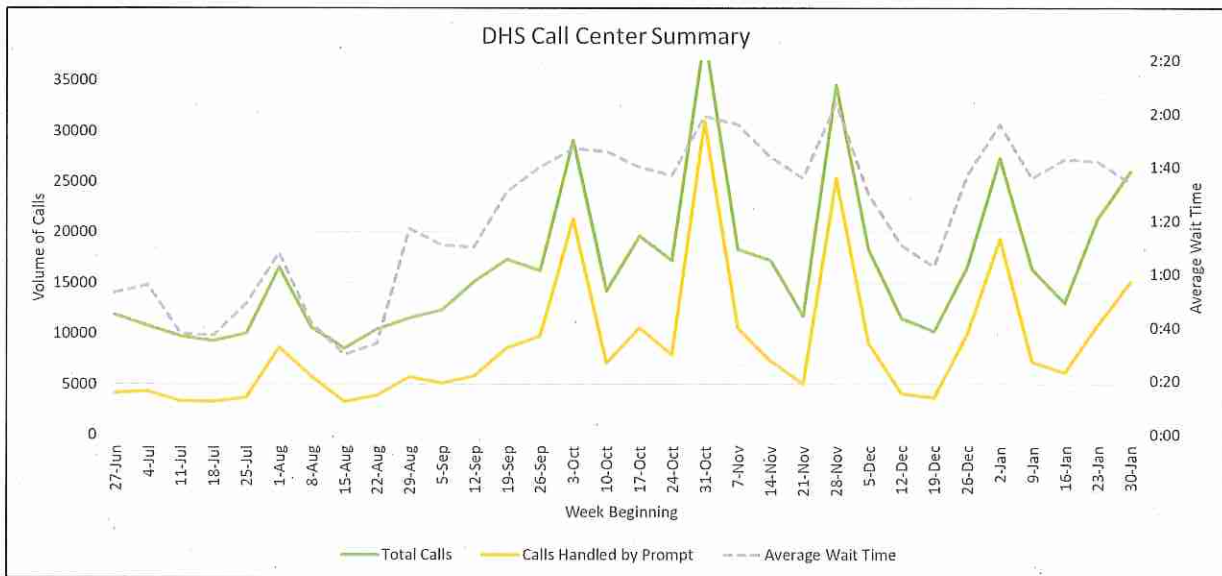
SNAP TIMELINESS

Despite the impact of COVID-19, **81,348** households received benefits in January 2022. About **74** percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. About 25 percent of applications were processed untimely.



CALL CENTER

For the seven-week period of **December 19, 2021 through the week that started on January 30, 2022**, the average wait time to DHS staff was about **1 hour and 36 minutes**. DHS recognizes this average wait time is an issue, and with understanding the pressure points that are impacting this longer wait, we have implemented operational changes. Additionally, as of January 18, 2022, we have hired 12 additional Call Center staff to address this issue. The busiest week was the week beginning January 2, 2022, and there were **27,316** calls then.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

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

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
16	1/13/2022	531	\$2,308,650.54
16A	1/14/2022	16	\$17,594.10
16B	1/21/2022	22	\$48,370.85
17	1/27/2021	527	\$2,135,217.73
17A	1/28/2022	47	\$75,501.59
17B	2/4/2022	41	\$82,481.30

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (16, 16A & 16B)	569	\$2,374,615.49
Off-cycle (16A & 16B)	38	\$65,964.95
Provider off-cycle/total	7.16%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.86%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (17, 17A & 17B)	615	\$2,293,200.62
Off-cycle (15A & 15B)	88	\$157,982.89
Provider off-cycle/total	16.70%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	7.40%	-

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.