March 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 February 16, 2022 – March 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.

Yvette Mendez, Acting Director

RIBridges: Monthly Update
March 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 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 March 7, 2022, there were **61** open incidents.
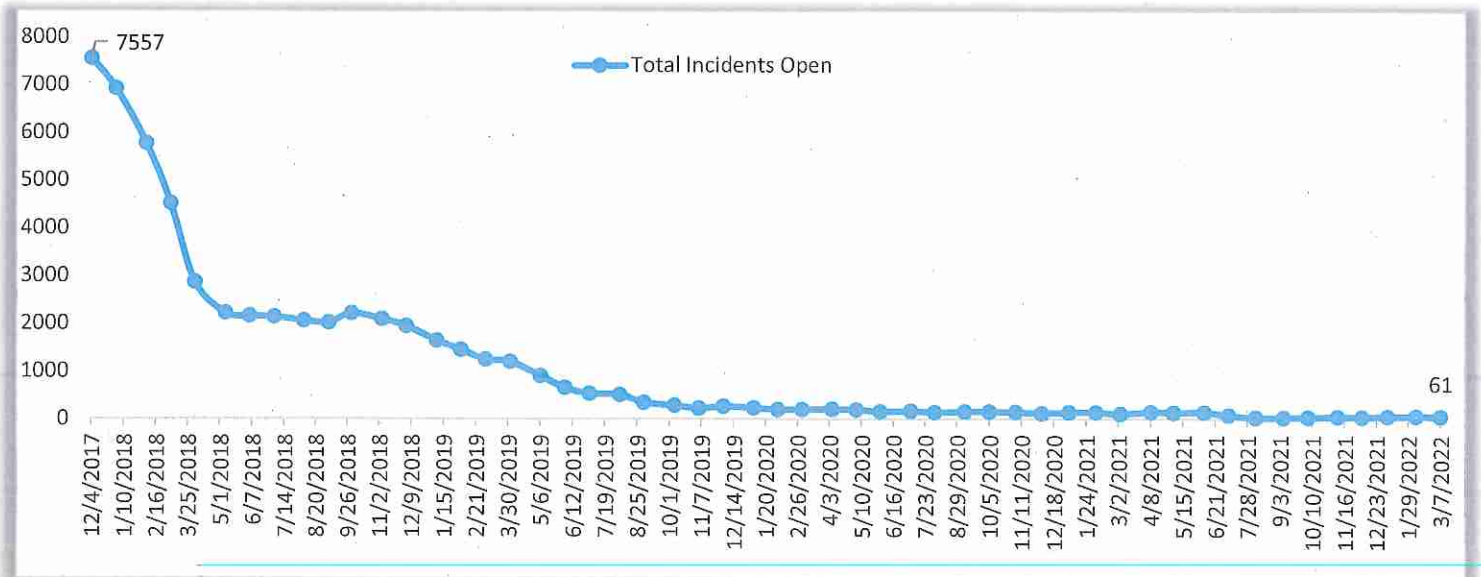
DHS STAFFING
DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified*. Since February, DHS hired eight employees. This includes:

- 1 Assistant Administrator
- 1 Associate Director of ORS, OCSS, and OCC
- 2 Clinical Training Specialists
- 1 Interdepartmental Project Manager
- 1 Supervising Eligibility Technician
- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Human Services Business Officer

As of March 17, 2022, the Department has filled 22 of the priority 71 front facing and back operations positions while continuing to make progress on the agency's overall hiring goals.

DHS TRAINING
Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Office Hours (One one-hour session)	2-18-2022	1	0	11
RIBridges Basics Training (One full day session)	2-17-2022	4.5	0	10
Knowledge Transfer (Two one-hour sessions; two half hour sessions)	2-23-2022 2-24-2022 3-9-2022 3-11-2022	3	0	40
Medicaid Office Hours (One one-hour session)	2-22-2022 2-24-2022	1	0	38
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Wellness Trainings (One one-hour session)	2-22-2022	1	0	7
Interface Walkthrough: SOLQ (Two one-hour sessions)	2-21-2022 2-24-2022	2	0	38
Time Management Training Series Session One (Two two-hour sessions)	2-18-2022 3-4-2022	4	0	19
	Totals	**16.5**	**0**	**188***
Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings (These trainings are self-directed)	"DHS FTI, HIPAA, and Confidentiality" -- 675 staff enrolled "Telephonic Signature" -- 52 staff enrolled "Telephonic Signature: Elderly and Disabled Adults" -- (EAD) 41 staff enrolled "Asset Verification System (AVS)" -- 117 staff enrolled - Customer Portal – 424 enrolled "SNAP Reinvestment Updates" – "422 enrolled "Visit Record" -- 427 enrolled "RIW Mini-Series Completed" -- 79 enrolled	Combined total of **1,377*** staff trained on LMS: 495 Completed FTI 30 Completed Telephonic Signature 22 Telephonic Signature EAD 85 Completed AVS 290 Completed Customer Portal 184 Completed SNAP Reinvestment Training 234 Completed Visit Record Training 37 Completed the RIW Mini-Series		

* This number is duplicate and based on number of staff enrolled to attend training.

Workshop Descriptions

Medicaid Office Hours: Medicaid Office Hours are designed to be an open forum to ask system and policy questions related to actual medical cases you are processing. Participants are invited to bring specific cases and/or questions for discussion with a Clinical Training Specialist.

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 Rhode Island Works (RI Works) cases with the purpose of having them bring real case examples so that the trainer and program staff member can answer or walk through RIBridges and/or policy questions.

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

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

Interface Walkthrough: SOLQ: This session will provide a breakdown of how to understand data from the SOLQ interface and how the interface can be used to verify information in RIBridges. This walkthrough will include a general overview of where to enter the information into the RIBridges Unearned Income Screen.

Time Management Training Series: Time Management is more than just getting more done in the day. It is finishing the day feeling accomplished and being able to prioritize what is truly important. In this series, you'll 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 the tools needed to maximize time, prioritize effectively, and 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, participants explore the realities of some habits that may be costing them more time than realized. You'll also learn how much your brain can help you and hold you back from managing your time through an interactive activity.

- *Session Two- Handling Competing Priorities:* Days are filled with constant competing and shifting priorities including interruptions. Each of these can pull you away from your true priorities. In this session, participants explore tools to help determine what work is most important, strategies and tactics to remain focused, and tools to handle interruptions.

Employee Assistance Training

COVID-19 and PTSD: This class provides helpful information regarding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic. We a focus on PTSD, the session provides an overview of the criteria for diagnosis, and the types of people it can affect. Following the presentation, attendees will be able to identify PTSD symptoms and triggers, assess whether treatment should be pursued, and evaluate their own mental health with a simple exercise.

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 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 and enhancing consistency in our processes by appreciating the customer journey.

PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **March 14, 2022**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **4,355**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **1,895**

|	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	62	46	108	5	33	38	146
SNAP Non-Expedited	534	314	848	53	27	80	**928**
CCAP	9	165	174	6	44	50	**224**
GPA Burial	0	16	16	0	2	2	**18**
SSP	0	17	17	0	3	3	**20**
GPA	9	51	60	1	1	2	**62**
RIW	113	92	205	13	14	27	**232**
Undetermined Medical	16	189	205	121	1335	1456	**1661**
Medicaid-MAGI	39	43	82	94	88	182	**264**
MPP	13	109	122	13	115	128	**250**
Complex Medicaid	4	48	52	21	198	219	**271**
LTSS	22	218	240	4	35	39	**279**
Totals	821	1308	**2129**	331	1895	**2226**	4355

SNAP TIMELINESS

Despite the impact of COVID-19, **82,618** households received benefits in February 2022. About **71** percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. About 29 percent of applications were processed untimely.

4,472   1,853

82,618

■ February Applications Processed Timely

■ February Applications Processed Untimely
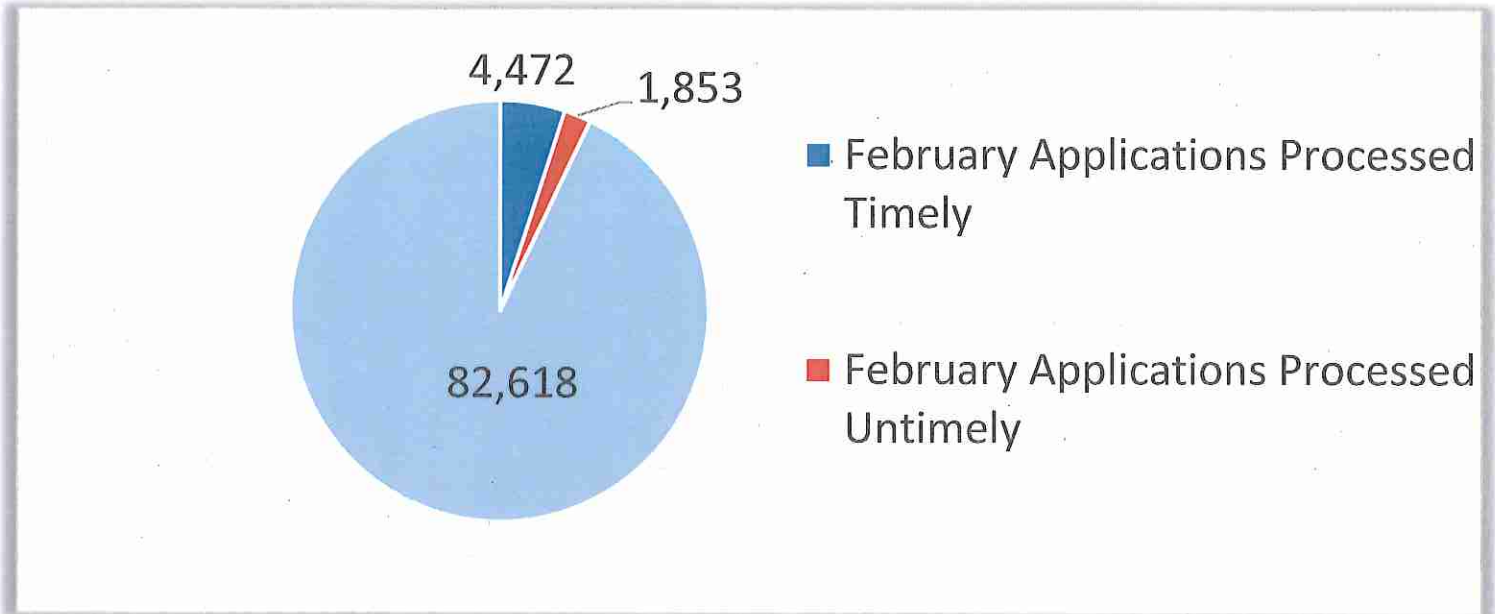
CALL CENTER

For the five-week period of **January 30, 2022, through the week that started on February 27, 2022,** the average wait time to DHS staff was about **1 hour and 11** minutes. DHS recognizes this average wait time is longer than it should be due to pressure points DHS is experiencing, however, we are seeing continual improvements to wait times through operational changes. The busiest week was the week beginning January 30, 2022, and there were **25,972** calls then.

DHS Call Center Summary

Total Calls   Calls Handled by Prompt   Average Wait Time
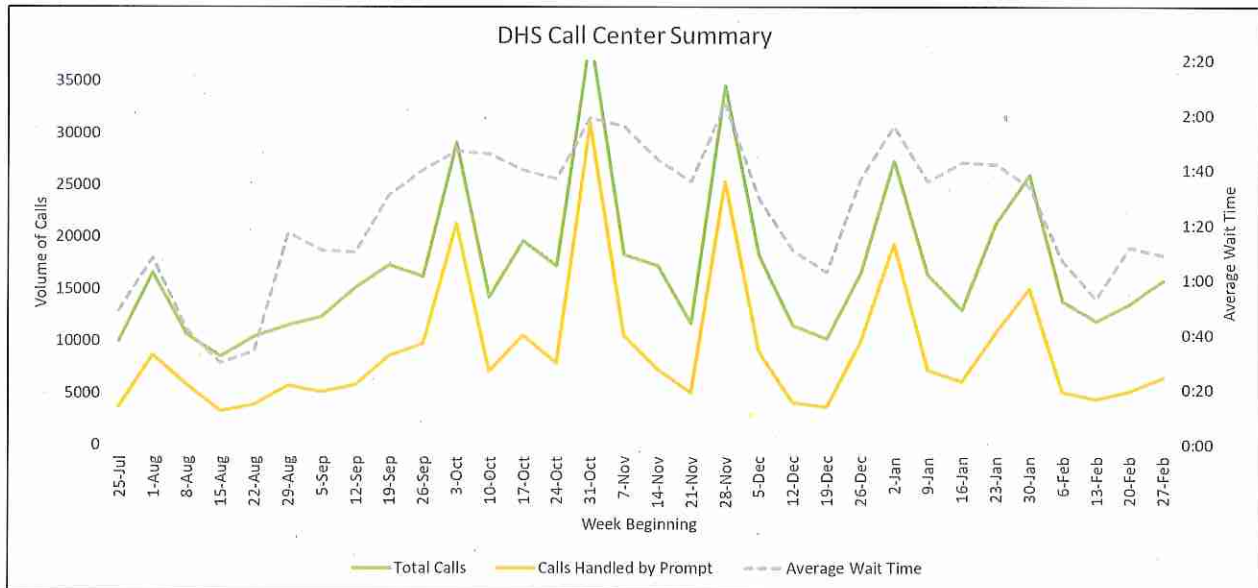
CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

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

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
18	2/10/2022	521	$2,205,409.98
18A	2/11/2022	12	$27,299.30
18B	2/18/2022	29	$121, 275.71
19	2/25/2021	529	$2,186,990.11
19A	3/25/2022	11	$81,523.68
19B	3/4/2022	19	$173,868.51

		Providers	Payments
Total Batch (18, 18A &18B)		562	$2,353,984.99
Off-cycle (18A & 18B)		41	$148,575.01
Provider off-cycle/total		7.87%	-
Payments off-cycle/total		6.74%	-
		Providers	Payments
Total Batch (19, 19A & 19B)		559	$2,442,382.30
Off-cycle (19A & 19B)		30	$255,392.19
Provider off-cycle/total		5.67%	-
Payments off-cycle/total		11.68%	-

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.