



Rhode Island Department of Human Services
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September 25, 2023

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairman, House Committee on Finance
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Staffing and Operations Report for September 25, 2023

Dear Chairman Abney:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on staffing and operations for the reporting period of July 18, 2023, to September 16, 2023, as formally requested in Article 1 of the enacted SFY23 budget to show progress in recruiting and retaining staff at the RI Department of Human Services (DHS). As detailed in the budget, this report will provide an update every 60 days beginning August 1, 2022, and will cover the following topics:

- Newly filled and vacant positions by title, including lateral transfers
- Civil service information including number of eligible and available candidates as well as plans for future testing and the anticipated number of eligible and available candidates from future testing
- Current average caseload backlog
- Call Center average wait time
- Other Call Center statistics and insights

We appreciate your patience as we continue to make adjustments to this report in an effort to provide a thorough overview of the staffing and operations outlook at this agency. In following the same methodology as previous staffing and operations reports, we are continuing to use payroll data as the basis of FTE counts to provide a more accurate, consistent, and reliable measure of staffing levels.

Thank you for your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in DHS staffing improvements, and the progress made to address outstanding issues. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Merolla-Brito

Kimberly Merolla-Brito
Director
RI Department of Human Services

CC: Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor
Christopher O'Brien, Committee Clerk, House Committee on Finance



Staffing and Operations Report

September 25, 2023

The DHS team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and providing stability to Rhode Island residents in need. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

FOR DATA FROM July 18 THROUGH September 16

This section reflects progress made in hiring and retaining staff at DHS, which filled a cumulative total of 339 positions between January 2022 – September 16, 2023. Reporting data reflects a 60-day window, with subsequent reports capturing data where the previous report concludes. Highlights for the Staffing and Operations Report dated September 25, 2023, include:

Total vacancies cited in ‘DOA Leave Report’ between July 18-September 16, 2023-----	45*
Total NET difference of filled positions for July 18-September 16, 2023-----	+ 4†
Total HIRING ACTIVITY for July 18-September 16, 2023-----	33††
Total REMAINING POSITIONS to be FILLED at DHS -----	103 ‡
Total POSITIONS IN RECRUITMENT PROCESS (defined in report) at DHS -----	99
Total PHE Positions FILLED -----	47 of 60

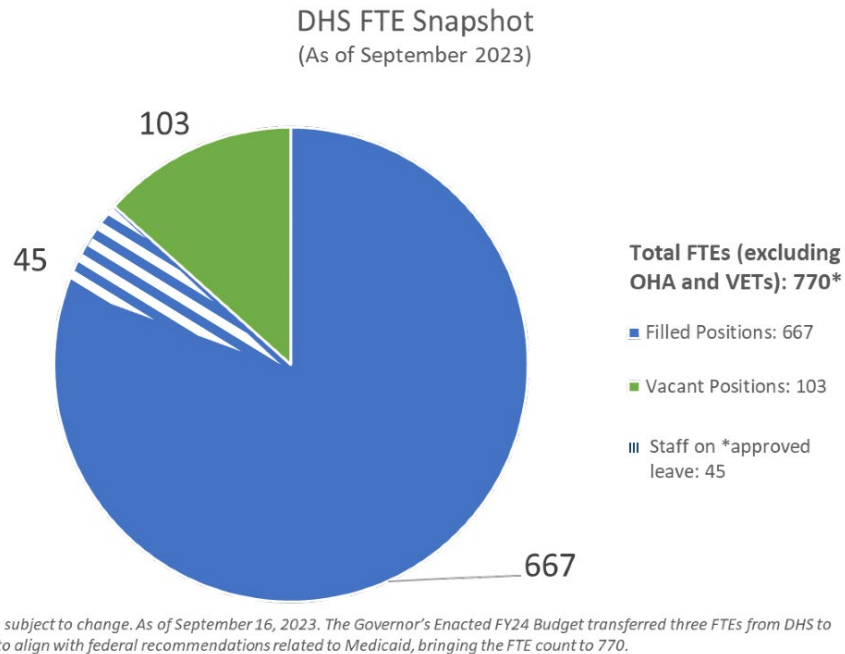
**The Leave Report refers to a report from the DOA that lists all employees who left DHS (includes staff from OCSS, OHA, ORS and VETS; DHS uses filters to remove VETS and OHA departures) during the reporting period. It is not intended to be compared with other stats/data points DHS uses in this report.*

† Initial August 2022 reports used a hybrid tracker that introduced irreconcilable data from payroll and HR.

††Total hiring activity includes all lateral, promotional, and new hires at DHS (includes OCSS and ORS) for the reporting period.

Newly Filled and Vacant Positions

DHS continues to prioritize the hiring of critical customer facing positions. From January 2022 through December 2022, DHS filled 196 positions through a combination of promotional opportunities, lateral transfers, and new hires. **Since January 1, 2023, the cumulative hiring activity at DHS for this year is 143 positions and this includes all promotional opportunities, lateral transfers and new hires.**



Additional information regarding staff on leave is available on page 7.

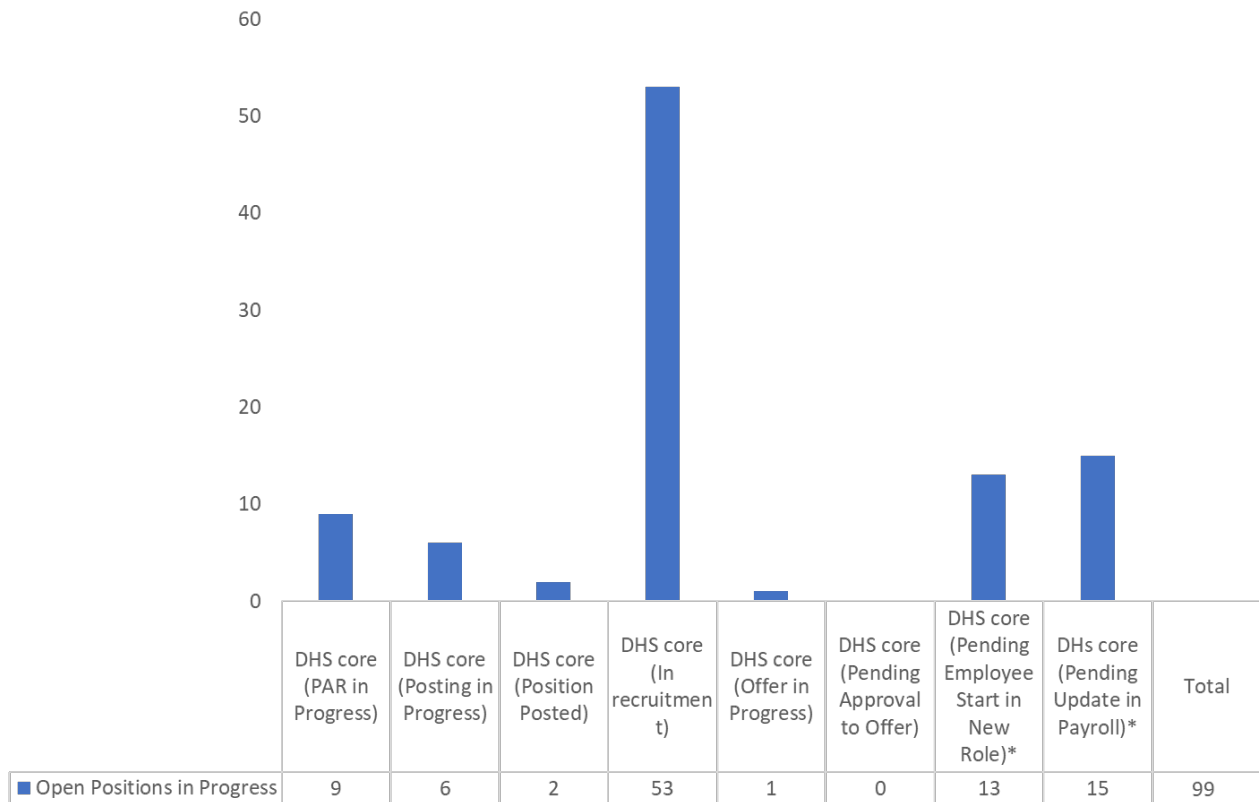
Between July 18, 2023, and September 16, 2023, **DHS filled 33 positions**. Using the payroll data closest to the reporting period for this report, you can find a snapshot of the FTE count at DHS, which will fluctuate from each payroll period as new staff join; are promoted; retire from state service; accept opportunities elsewhere or otherwise leave state service. Payroll data only counts individuals who have received a paycheck and/or are on leave. At the time of this reporting, 18 positions have been filled with candidates who have started in their new role but have not yet been updated in payroll.

Using payroll data as the basis of FTE counts at DHS, the bullet points below show the progress made on filling positions:

- Amended FTE count for August 1, 2022 report: 635
- Amended FTE count for September 30, 2022 report: 639
- FTE count for November 29, 2022 report: 656
- FTE count for January 28, 2023 report: 659
- FTE count for March 29, 2023 report: 656
- FTE count for May 28, 2023 report: 668
- FTE count for July 27, 2023 report: 663 (666 filled, but counts 3 FTEs that had not yet transferred)
- FTE count for September 25, 2023 report: 667

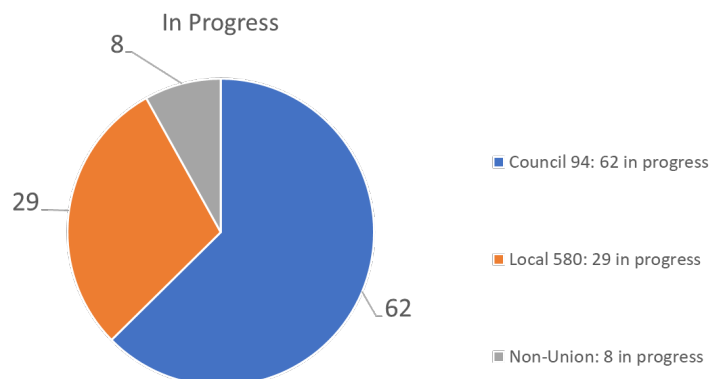
DHS’s FTE cap was reduced from 773 to 770 in FY 24 due to the transfer of three FTE staff to EOHHS. These positions were responsible for conducting required Medicaid eligibility determinations and quality control tasks. With the transference, potential compliance issues were addressed. Of the total 770 DHS FTEs (only includes DHS core, OCSS, and ORS), **99 of 103** vacant positions -- or approximately 96 percent -- of those positions are in the process of being filled as of **September 8, 2023** (payroll issued on 9/15/23). Please refer to the chart below for the status of these positions in the recruitment process.

Positions in Recruitment Process



*Recruitment and hiring activities change daily. Data is subject to change and may not reflect the latest status. *Additional categories are further explained in Appendix A.*

Positions in Recruitment by Union Affiliation



The recruitment process is multifaceted for both union and non-union positions. It is intended to help ensure qualified candidates are hired to perform critical functions for DHS. It can take several weeks to several months until a position is filled and a pending start date is confirmed by a candidate. The remaining vacant positions—not currently in the recruitment process—will be reflected in subsequent reports in tandem with payroll reporting of which 18 candidates are currently pending an update in payroll.

For consistency, please refer to the appendix section at the bottom of the report for definitions on terms from DHS and DOA.

Hiring Activity

(July 18-September 16)

New hiring activity for the reporting period between July 18, 2023, and September 16, 2023, is comprised of back-office and customer-facing positions. For this reporting period, DHS hired 33 employees through a combination of net new, lateral, and promotional opportunities.

Please note DHS and DOA will continue to work together to align hiring/staffing discrepancies reported. Position titles and the types of hire are outlined below:

	Lateral	Promotional	New Hires
Assistant Administrator, Community and Planning	0	0	1
Customer Service Aide	2	0	1
Eligibility Technician I	0	0	6
Eligibility Technician II Lobby	0	5	0
Eligibility Technician II Call Center	0	1	0
Eligibility Technician III	1	0	0
Employment and Career Advisor	1	0	1
Implementation Aide	0	0	1
Information Services Technician	0	1	0
Principal Clerk	0	1	0
Principal Human Services Business Officer	0	1	1
Programming Services Officer	0	1	0
Social Caseworker, LTSS	0	1	4
Supervising Eligibility Technician	3	0	0
Total*	7	11	15

**Positions listed in 'Hiring Activity' are filled but may not be reflected in the FTE count above since not all have received their first paycheck at time of reporting. Additionally, since this chart also includes those with only start dates, these positions will be reflected in the 'FTE impact' chart for subsequent staffing reports after a first paycheck is received.*

FTE Impact from Hiring Activity

Hiring fluctuates on a daily basis as employees join DHS, receive promotions, are transferred, or otherwise leave state service. The chart below focuses on the status of job classifications impacted by ongoing hiring activity, using payroll through September 16, 2023, as a basis for changes from the previous report.

Title	July 27, 2023	September 25, 2023	Change +/-
Administrator- Family and Adult Services	7	6	-1
Administrator Family and Children's Services	3	4	+1
Administrator, Operations Management	1	0	-1
Assistant Administrator, Community and Planning Services	6	7	+1
Associate Director (DHS) Division of Management Services	2	1	-1
Chief of Information and Public Relations	1	0	-1
Chief Program Development	5	6	+1
Customer Service Aide (DHS)	38	35	-3
Data Control Clerk	6	8	+2
Director, Department Of Human Services	0	1	+1
Economic and Policy Analyst I	1	0	-1
Eligibility Technician I	148	147	-1
Eligibility Technician II (DHS - Call Center)	17	18	+1
Eligibility Technician II (DHS - Lobby)	29	32	+3
Eligibility Technician III (DHS)	15	14	-1
Employment and Career Advisor	13	14	+1
Food Service Administrator	1	0	-1
Human Services Business Officer	7	6	-1
Implementation Aide	3	4	+1
Interdepartmental Project Manager	6	8	+2
Principal Clerk	1	2	+1
Principal Clerk-Typist	3	2	-1
Principal Human Services Business Officer	2	4	+2
Principal Human Services Policy and Systems Specialist	4	3	-1
Programming Services Officer	4	5	+1
Quality Control Reviewer	10	11	+1
Rehabilitation Counselor	31	30	-1
Senior Clerk	1	0	-1
Senior Word Processing Typist	8	7	-1
Social Case Worker	26	30	+4
Special Assistant	1	0	-1
Supervising Eligibility Technician	23	22	-1
Total net aggregate:			+4

All data is preliminary and subject to change. The total accounts for new staff (marked as +) in direct relation to new departures (-) resulting in an aggregate tabulation of new hires at DHS – not to be compared with 'hiring activity' since those include employees with start dates not yet on payroll. Please note, internal promotional opportunities may take more than one pay period to appear in their new job title.

Recent Departures/New Vacancies Resulting

From July 18, 2023, through September 16, 2023, the Department of Administration's Leave Report indicated there were nine departures and/or vacancies at DHS core (includes ORS and OCSS, excludes RIVETS and OHA). As the keeper of record for hiring across state agencies, DOA records show departures and new vacancies for the following positions:

- 1 Food Service Administrator
- 4 Eligibility Technician I
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Human Services Policy and Systems Specialist
- 1 Social Caseworker
- 1 Customer Service Aide

Please note the Leave Report provided by DOA may not align with other data points in this report because it is not connected to payroll, which serves as a basis of the DHS Staffing and Operations Report. Additionally, the different HR/payroll systems used by the state have delays due to legacy tracking methods that have not been updated. Please note certain positions, such as Eligibility Technician II and Eligibility Technician III, are only available as promotional opportunities that also create a new vacancy and the hiring process it entails.

Staff on Leave

Snapshot

This report corrects a clerical error from the prior staffing report dated July 27, 2023, which now accurately shows that DMU is working with Beacon Mutual to develop the functional job description.

For the current report dated September 25, 2023, DHS has 667 employees on payroll, of which approximately 45 staff members are currently on continuous or intermittent medical leave based on data provided by DOA.

These positions are filled and active on the payroll but represent a portion of the workforce who are out of the office either all or part of the time and not currently contributing to the day-to-day operations of the agency. Approved staff leaves reduce the agency's actual workforce since there are fewer employees performing duties than the FTE count may suggest. All cases of positions filled and on medical leave are managed by DOA's Disability Management Unit (DMU). In coordination with DMU, the State is pursuing a light duty pilot to support Call Center operations which will enable employees on medical leaves to return to work in a temporary transitional assignment. Participation in the pilot is not a requirement but will be offered as an opportunity for interested staff. Development is in the final stages with DMU and Beacon Mutual.

- Continued on next page-

Below, please find the latest snapshot of current staff on medical leave. Please note these numbers fluctuate every pay period as staff return and other leaves are approved or pending approval.

Staff on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA/PIL Leave)	14
Staff on Intermittent FMLA Leave	17
Staff on Maternity/Paternity Leave	5
Staff on Worker’s Compensation Leave	2
Staff on Military Leave	0
Light Duty	1
Pending Cases/Under Review*	6
Total:	45

**Cases pending or under review refers to staff whose cases and related medical documentation are under review by DOA’s Disability Management Unit.*

PHE Staffing

At the time of this report, **we have filled 39 of 49 PHE Eligibility Technician I positions.** The remaining 10 vacancies resulted from staff in Eligibility Technician I roles leaving the agency at around six months, where minimum qualifications must be met to pass the probationary status.

Independent of PHE staffing at DHS, and as recommended in the enacted SFY 2023 Governor’s Budget, DOA awarded a contract to Deloitte in May 2023, for data processing support so that DHS Eligibility Technicians can focus on Medicaid redeterminations through July 2024. Currently, all temporary support staff have been recruited and onboarded to provide data processing support to the DHS Eligibility Technicians working on Medicaid Redeterminations.

Position Titles	Status
Eligibility Technician Is	39 of 49 filled
ET II Call Center	4 of 4 filled
ET III (DHS)	1 of 1 filled
Supervising Eligibility Technician	4 of 6
*TOTAL	48 of 60 filled

Civil Service Information

DOA HR is responsible for administering Civil Service Exams, in addition to their responsibility to certify and rank the list of qualified names. Qualified names are provided to DHS, per merit system law (RI General Laws § 36-4-26)s.

DHS works closely with DOA to fill critical positions as each agency performs a crucial function in moving qualified candidates through the completion of the onboarding process. The DOA-HR completed the Eligibility Technician I test administration on August 25 with 68 candidates, with 61 passing the test:

- The new Eligibility Technician I list consists of 61 candidates on the Open Competitive list and 13 candidates on the promotional list. The total number of unique individuals is 61, as the 13 candidates on the promotional list appear on the Open Competitive list as well.
- DOA HR has provided DHS its ranked candidates, per merit system rules. To date, DHS has received 26 names all of whom have been called to schedule an interview and interviews are in progress.

There are currently 191 candidates remaining on the current Social Caseworker (SCW) Open Competitive list established in late 2019. This Civil Service list expires on December 4, 2023. A new SCW Civil Service recruitment period closed on June 2, 2023. This recruitment yielded 186 applicants with 108 deemed minimally qualified to participate in testing. Test administration is scheduled for September 29 and the projected timeframe for a new certified list availability is early October.

See Appendix C at the end of the report.

Current Caseload Backlog* Snapshot

For the Staffing and Operations Report dated September 25, 2023, the official backlog awaiting state action is 2,341. This number represents actual cases being worked by Eligibility Technicians across regional offices. The current caseload declined by approximately 6.8% from the July 27 report, despite shifts in federal policies and the ongoing Medicaid Redetermination work. As the workload related to Medicaid Redeterminations steadily increases, DHS expects to see some variances to pending applications in future reports.

The decline in the overall caseload backlog was achieved in several ways, including targeting pending applications that needed to be archived; newly onboarded staff gaining more policy knowledge and case processing skills; working with IT vendors to analyze overdue undetermined medical cases and prioritizing the closure, purging, and merging of duplicate cases; targeting incomplete applications submitted via the Customer Portal; the introduction of scanning centers, and the success seen from the pilot Processing Wednesdays initiative (*please refer to the Processing Wednesdays analysis below for more information*).

Importantly, DHS’s operational adjustments and initiatives have contributed to an approximate 45% reduction in overdue pending applications awaiting state action since January 2023 (Jan 2023: 4,274 vs Sept 2023: 2,341).

Program Name	Overdue Awaiting State Action	
	State	
SNAP Expedited	10	<i>Reporting as of September 20, 2023.</i>
SNAP Non-Expedited	43	
CCAP	53	
GPA Burial	0	
SSP	0	
GPA	10	
*RIW	31	
Undetermined Medical	1865	
Medicaid-MAGI	17	

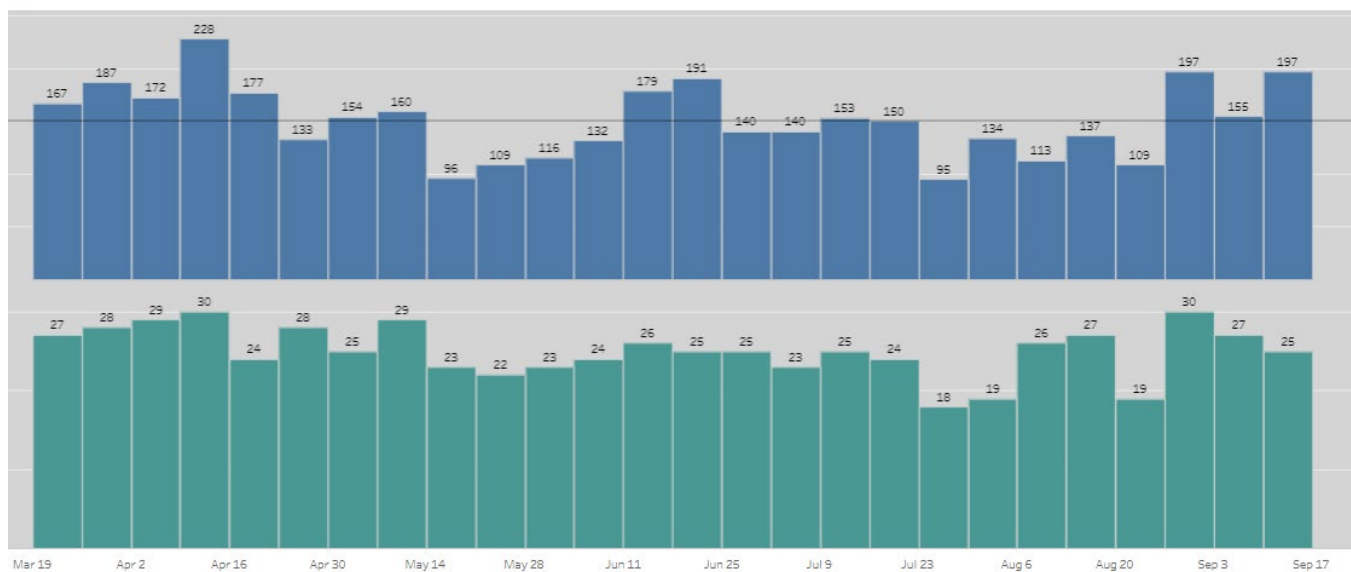
Medicare Premium Payments	6
Medicaid Complex	255
LTSS	51
Grand total	2,341

**This is an estimate as of September 14, 2023, of pending applications for RI Works and is subject to change. An estimate is necessary after a system enhancement to the system used for gathering RIW related caseload data started reporting incorrect data. The technical discrepancy has no impact on the customer experience and a fix is expected by the end of the year.*

Processing Wednesdays

On February 8, 2023, DHS launched a pilot initiative called Processing Wednesdays. With the goal of improving operational efficiency and customer service, the strategy shifts Call Center staff to prioritize case processing one day a week, deemed crucial for addressing any backlogs.

As of September 16, 2023, DHS has seen an approximate 62 percent increase in the number of tasks completed, or an increase from 101.5 to 164 cases completed on average, when comparing the last four Wednesdays prior to launch, to the most recent four Wednesdays. While this only examines the tasks completed, Processing Wednesdays has also increased the number of tasks worked and helped reduce the backlog, which directly helps reduce the need for customers seeking additional support services either by phone or in-person.



The blue bars show the number of tasks completed on Wednesdays. The green bars show the number of available staff on for the date listed, which impacts the number of cases that can be worked on Processing Wednesdays.

Scanning Center

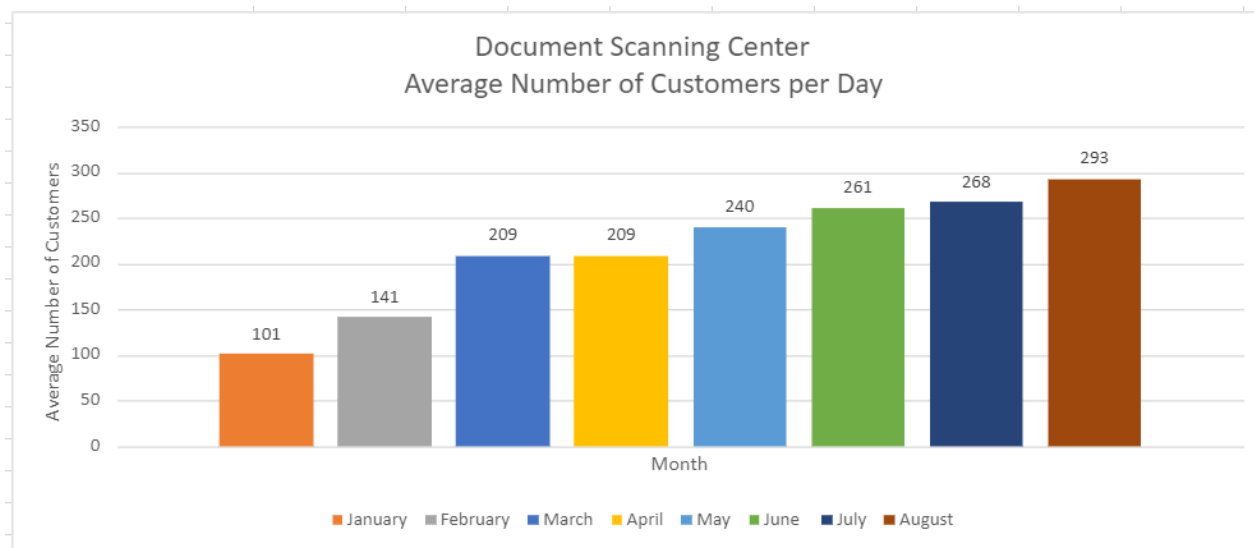
The latest data on customers served at the Document Scanning Center in Providence shows **293** customers per day were helped during August 2023, which is expediting the in-person process for thousands of customers. A tally for the month of September is not available until the end of the month.

DHS introduced a dedicated scanning center in January 2023 to improve the operational flow for customers visiting the 1 Reservoir Avenue office in Providence. The initiative has helped improve the customer experience

by expediting the lobby wait times for both individuals only needing to scan documents and individuals waiting to meet with an Eligibility Technician.

Generally, customers scanning documents spend less than 20 minutes at the Document Scanning Center, which has seen exceptional growth since its introduction. Document Scanning Centers are being planned for 125 Holden Street and 249 Roosevelt Avenue office locations. These additional resources will help improve lobby wait times, processing of applications, operational efficiency, and the customer experience. A soft launch for the Pawtucket Document Scanning Center is expected in October 2023.

Importantly, customers are able to scan documents at any regional office, but certain offices see a higher than usual need for document scanning only, necessitating a need for this dedicated resource. The number of customers served by month is available in the chart below.



Caseload Processing Averages

As the agency charged with administering health and human service public benefits, DHS must process applications that follow the federal government’s mandatory timeliness standard. While most programs have a mandatory 30-day threshold – the amount of time DHS has to process an application before it is considered overdue – there are programs with longer deadlines for processing before it is considered overdue.

Refer to the chart on the right to see the mandatory timeliness standard per program. While the majority of cases per program are processed in a timely manner, a select number of cases awaiting customer or state action that become overdue may see a delay in authorization of benefits that is not reflective of the overall customer experience.

Program	Overdue Threshold for Applications	Avg. Number of Days from Applications Received to Authorized
Expedited SNAP	7 Days	7
Non-Expedited SNAP	30 Days	14
Cash Assistance (RIW/GPA)	30 Days	16
Medicaid MAGI	30 Days	17
Complex Medical	45 Days	22
Long Term Care (LTSS)	90 Days	75

See Appendix D at the end of the report for additional context.

NEW Hire FTE Impact on Pending Applications

The Department currently has 28 Eligibility Technicians needing supervisory approval (ETSAs), who are collectively processing about 359 cases per week. All ETSAs have completed new hire training and have begun either SNAP or MAGI training. With direct coaching, training and support, ETSAs build their case completion month over month until their final assessment at six months. Importantly, since assessments are done in six months, ETSAs may be represented in multiple reports alongside new staff who are beginning their training.

# of ETSAs	Assigned to:	Outcomes
11	Call Center onboarding (MAGI/ SNAP training, partial-day answering calls)	Each assigned group is averaging, per week, approximately: Outbound: 0 cases SNAP: 349 cases Medical: 10 cases
0	outbound calls (branch based)	
17	SNAP applications, recertifications, or interim reviews	

**ETSAs require supervisory approval because they have not completed their probation period. As a result, a review by a supervisor for final eligibility determination is required, adding time but assuring accuracy in processing.*

Call Center

For the period between **July 18, 2023, through September 16, 2023**, the average wait time to speak to DHS staff was approximately **59 minutes**. DHS recognizes this average wait time remains longer than it should be and has implemented call back functionality to reduce the time customers spend waiting on the phone. The average wait time encompasses all calls (those opting for a call back and those that wait in queue) that are transferred and connected with a DHS worker.

In the charts below, data on average call wait time by program queue is provided. Wait times by queue can vary greatly due to various factors including, but not limited to high call volume, the availability of eligibility technicians or supervisors, and the type of action needed. DHS understands average call wait times, especially for queues such as SNAP, remain elevated and the agency remains committed to introducing strategic initiatives to improve the customer experience.

Through strategic planning, technology resources, additional progress on keeping up with back-office tasks and hiring efforts, DHS anticipates continued progress in reducing average wait times and improving customer satisfaction. Importantly, the availability of call-back functionality changes on a daily basis due to staff availability and call volume. In order to reach all those in the queue by the end of the day, DHS makes it available strategically in the morning until capacity is reached.

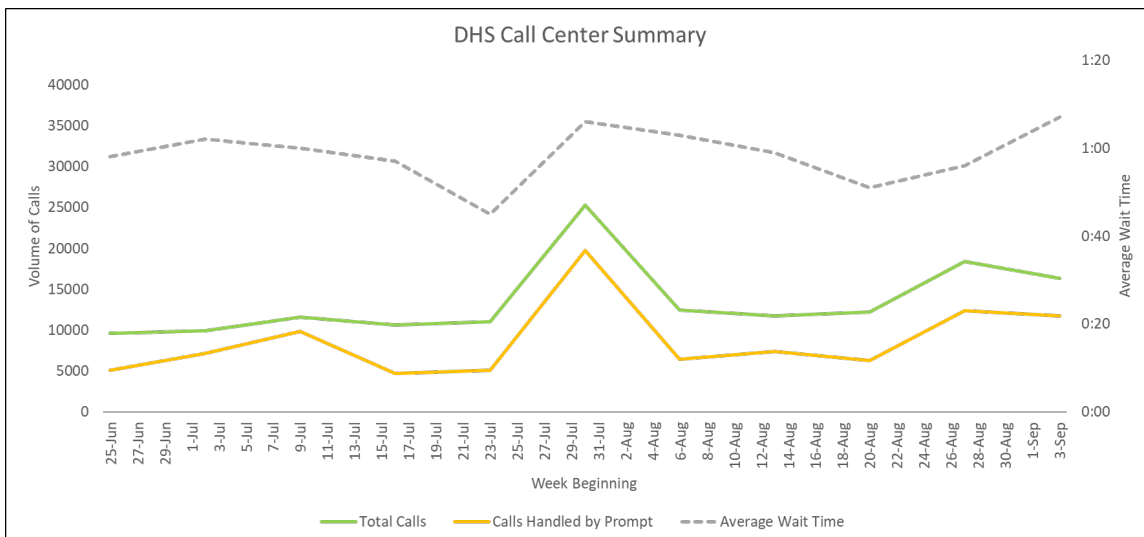
To help address current limitations with the resources available, DHS is actively exploring alternative solutions to improve support for customers seeking assistance. Among the Call Center strategies to address the volume of Medicaid related calls, DHS is leveraging partner agencies to assist in handling calls, making improvements to IVR functionality and strategically positioning contracted staff to the extent that non-merit rules allow. Additionally, to assist with managing increased Medicaid call volume, DHS launched a pilot on August 15 to support Medicaid Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) callers. The pilot routes appropriate Medicaid calls from the DHS Call Center to the HSRI contact center, with initial results showing decreased wait times for MAGI callers. DHS continually assesses its available resources and has started to shift additional resources to manage the SNAP volume through the initial success of this pilot.

Average Monthly Wait Times by Queue

	July 16, 2023		July 23, 2023		July 30, 2023		August 6, 2023		August 13, 2023		August 20, 2023		August 27, 2023		September 3, 2023		September 10, 2023	
	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent
SNAP Interviews/Intakes	00:16:27	02:48:30	00:14:04	02:40:44	00:14:15	05:01:07	00:08:36	04:26:22	00:13:51	05:46:45	00:17:05	03:59:42	00:22:00	03:28:00	00:17:07	05:16:04	00:16:26	02:22:55
RiW	00:16:55	02:42:10	00:19:39	02:47:26	00:18:04	02:17:38	00:20:18	02:45:38	00:17:18	03:02:34	00:16:08	02:58:35	00:16:27	02:48:51	00:22:30	04:22:41	00:21:11	03:24:10
Child Care	00:12:48	02:14:52	00:19:22	02:14:16	00:21:19	02:51:06	00:17:41	02:31:03	00:16:37	03:14:42	00:14:47	02:08:01	00:15:47	02:42:59	00:21:47	04:53:05	00:15:36	03:04:14
SNAP	00:16:11	02:23:58	00:16:14	02:55:55	00:19:27	03:11:11	00:19:01	03:03:41	00:14:48	02:55:33	00:18:10	02:45:47	00:16:28	02:52:44	00:19:57	02:41:43	00:17:12	01:57:25
Medical	00:17:47	02:48:20	00:18:03	02:33:29	00:21:45	04:02:46	00:18:50	02:54:24	00:15:17	03:13:45	00:14:12	01:53:32	00:14:16	01:08:41	00:15:20	01:09:17	00:11:49	00:57:59
ECA Transfer	00:12:54	00:28:14	00:08:52	00:38:26	00:13:44	00:18:42	00:18:20	00:24:32	00:01:44	00:19:07	00:26:53	00:17:43	00:12:09	00:19:14	00:15:38	00:31:49	00:12:34	00:10:16
GPA	00:15:16	00:40:49	00:24:59	00:24:59	00:25:42	00:16:58	00:08:51	00:13:36	00:25:50	00:11:21	00:12:58	00:07:18	00:13:11	00:18:15	00:09:34	00:20:46	00:15:67	00:15:67
SSP	00:14:59	00:43:13	00:07:00	00:07:00	00:33:01	00:10:36	00:02:16	00:13:32	00:20:55	00:05:31	00:12:58	00:16:53	00:03:08	00:03:08	00:03:08	00:03:08	00:03:08	00:03:08
Tech Help	00:10:17	00:15:31	00:13:23	00:12:04	00:10:36	00:10:36	00:14:39	00:13:08	00:10:27	00:12:45	00:09:18	00:18:19	00:06:25	00:12:58	00:11:14	00:19:38	00:19:38	00:19:38
Specialty	00:10:06	00:10:06	00:19:40	00:19:40	00:14:25	00:05:30	00:05:30	00:08:34	00:12:33	00:21:38	00:06:11	00:06:11	00:06:11	00:06:11	00:06:11	00:06:11	00:06:11	00:06:11
LTSS	00:12:22	00:17:17	00:10:01	00:10:01	00:09:44	00:13:13	00:12:36	00:12:52	00:04:16	00:12:02	00:08:32	00:11:07	00:09:01	00:10:05	00:10:05	00:10:05	00:10:05	00:10:05
Triage							00:00:28	00:00:28	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:00:13
Grand Total	00:16:17	01:34:05	00:17:00	01:13:08	00:19:35	01:42:16	00:18:48	01:39:01	00:15:07	01:38:15	00:17:01	01:20:21	00:16:16	01:24:44	00:20:01	01:46:39	00:17:04	01:23:18

The chart demonstrates the impact of call backs in lowering wait times for customers who opt for the added functionality, per program.

During this time, there were approximately 42 staff members supporting the Call Center. This includes one new Eligibility Technician, who was hired in July. Current Eligibility Technician staffing levels support up to an average of 14 calls per day for each Eligibility Technician, with a handle time of approximately 25 minutes. Several factors contribute to the average number of handled calls per day, including, but not limited to the availability of staff, the process for filling positions, and general interest in Call Center positions. The handle time includes both the time spent on the phone with the customer, as well as time spent taking action on the customer’s account in RIBridges.



The Call Center typically sees a pattern of high call volume toward the beginning and end of each month. Since call volume may vary from day-to-day, DHS on occasion publishes a website notification to announce high call volume days and any changes to operational hours for the day.

Impact of NEW FTEs to Call Center Activity

As the agency continues to make progress in filling critical positions overall, the Department has maintained and addressed incoming calls to the Call Center. Call back functionality across all programs has been an instrumental tool in lowering overall wait times with data indicating callers who opted for call backs averaged approximately 17 minutes waiting on the phone.

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Appendix A.

DOA Positions in Recruitment Definitions

Personnel Action Request (PAR) – The Personnel Action Request (PAR) is the requisition that begins the process of filling a position. It is entered by a designated individual at the agency level and goes through several levels of approval. The specific approval process for DHS PARs includes DHS (CFO and Director), EOHHS, HR, Budget Analyst and Budget Management. Once all approvals are in place, HR and DHS work together to finalize the posting and the recruitment begins.

PAR in Progress – The term ‘PAR in Process’ refers to PARs that have been entered into the system by DHS but have not yet completed the approval process.

Posting in Progress – Once the PAR is approved, the position is prepared to be posted on apply.ri.gov. DOA/HR confers with DHS to determine when the position should be posted and as a result of such discussion, HR prepares a draft posting for DHS approval. Once DHS finalizes and approves the posting, it is returned to DOA/HR for posting.

Position Posted – The position is posted on apply.ri.gov for the required 10 calendar days.

Pending Candidate Referral – After the posting closes, DOA/HR reviews applicant information to determine who is eligible based on Collective Bargaining Agreements (if applicable for the position). If the position is a non-union position, all applicants are referred to DHS.

In Recruitment – The posting has closed and candidates are referred to DHS. During this time, the DHS is reviewing candidates’ qualifications/screening to determine if they meet minimum qualifications. At this time in the process, interviews are conducted if appropriate.

Candidate Recommended for Hire/Pending Approval to Offer – The top candidate has been recommended by the DHS for hire in the Automated Applicant Tracking System (NeoGov). DOA/HR reviews and approves the hire recommendation and notifies DHS, which then makes a job offer to the candidate.

Candidate Accepted, Pending Start Date – The candidate has accepted the position and DHS is waiting on confirmation of when the employee will begin in their new role.

Pending Employee Start in New Role – Refers to employees who have started in their new role from the pay period used in the report to current date but would not have been included in a full pay period as of yet. This category also refers to individuals who have accepted a role and have a start date in the future.

Pending Update in Payroll – Refers to DHS and DOA payroll working to address discrepancies with regards to positions hired.

Filled – The candidate has accepted the position and has a confirmed start date for when they will move into the new role or join DHS.

Appendix B.

DHS Hiring Terminology

Lateral Transfer – A lateral hire is an employee moving to a new home office location within the same job classification title. For example, an Eligibility Technician I moving from a home office of Warwick to Middletown.

Promotional Opportunity – A promotional opportunity is then an existing DHS employee accepts a different position opening from within DHS.

When an existing DHS employee takes another position opening with DHS, the employee is promoted into their new role resulting in a new vacancy. For example, a Supervising Eligibility Technician is promoted into a vacant Senior Casework Supervisor position. While adhering to any collective bargaining agreements, DHS promotes the internal employee and now needs to recruit for the vacant Supervising Eligibility Technician. **Please note:** DOA considers a promotional opportunity to include the above but also includes when an employee from another state agency joins DHS and fills a vacant position, which increases DHS' workforce.

New Hire – A new hire is a completed hire resulting in an increase to DHS workforce. This person is new to DHS (either from another state agency or new to state) and fills a vacancy at DHS not resulting in another vacancy to be filled. **Please note:** DOA considers new hires as those new to state service.

Appendix C.

DOA Civil Service HR Definitions

'Active' Candidates – Refers to candidates who have passed the civil service examination with a score of 70 or more and appear in rank order of performance on this list.

'Certified' Candidates – Refers to candidates who have been reached on the list, based on their score/rank, and are eligible to be interviewed and considered for appointment by the Department's interview team.

'Available' Candidates – Refers to candidates on the list, who during exam administration, select "Regional Location" and "Position Type" preferences. These selections will influence their availability when "certified/reached" for Departmental interview.

Appendix D.

Caseload Key Terminology

Not Overdue—Refers to applications that are within the mandatory timeliness standard set by the federal government. Each program has its own timeliness standard before it is considered overdue.

Overdue—Refers to applications not yet processed and past the mandatory timeliness standard. Even if an overdue application is completed a single day later, it is tracked as overdue by the agency.