

DHS Response to Oversight Committee Questions **2.15.22**

RI Department of Human Services (DHS)

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Please note our responses on the following slides:

- ❑ Monthly staffing numbers broken down by department for the past two years. *Slide 3*
- ❑ Number of people working at home versus in office by month for the past two years. *Slide 4*
- ❑ Any reports tracking the production of workers, including call center workers and eligibility technicians. *Slide 5 & 6*
- ❑ The total amount of interim payments for FY 2022, the number of these payments and how many applications these payments represent. *Please note previous response provided by EOHHS.*
- ❑ Any staffing changes made due to Covid (for example if people who worked in walk in centers changed to call center). *Slide 7*
- ❑ When were walk-in centers closed and when did they open to the public and what are the operating hours? Also, are there any future plans to open walk in centers or expand hours? *Slide 8, 9, & 10.*
- ❑ How and when was the public notified that the offices were closed to the public and when they were reopened? *Slide 8*



DHS Staffing SFY 2021 & SFY 2022

In 2021, the Department filled approximately 80 positions through a combination of promotional opportunities, lateral transfers, and new hires from outside the agency, however we did see a high number of employees who opted to take the voluntary retirement initiative (VRI).

DHS Filled vs. Budgeted Positions SFY21 to January 2022

SFY 21 (Jun 2020 - Jul 2021)

Programs	Total FTEs Budgeted	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Central Management	46	48	49	45	45	45	45	46	46	45	45	44	44
Child Support Enforcement	60	57	57	57	57	58	57	57	56	56	56	57	52
Health Care Eligibility	75	69	67	64	64	64	65	62	60	59	58	58	54
Individual and Family Support	562	514	510	504	508	506	508	514	507	507	504	501	491
Office of Healthy Aging	31	26	28	27	27	27	29	28	28	29	28	28	28
Veterans' Affairs	264	233	236	229	230	226	233	236	233	230	231	232	226
	1038*	947	947	926	931	926	937	943	930	926	922	920	895

* Budget only supported hiring 974 positions

SFY 22 (Jun 2021 - Jul 2022)

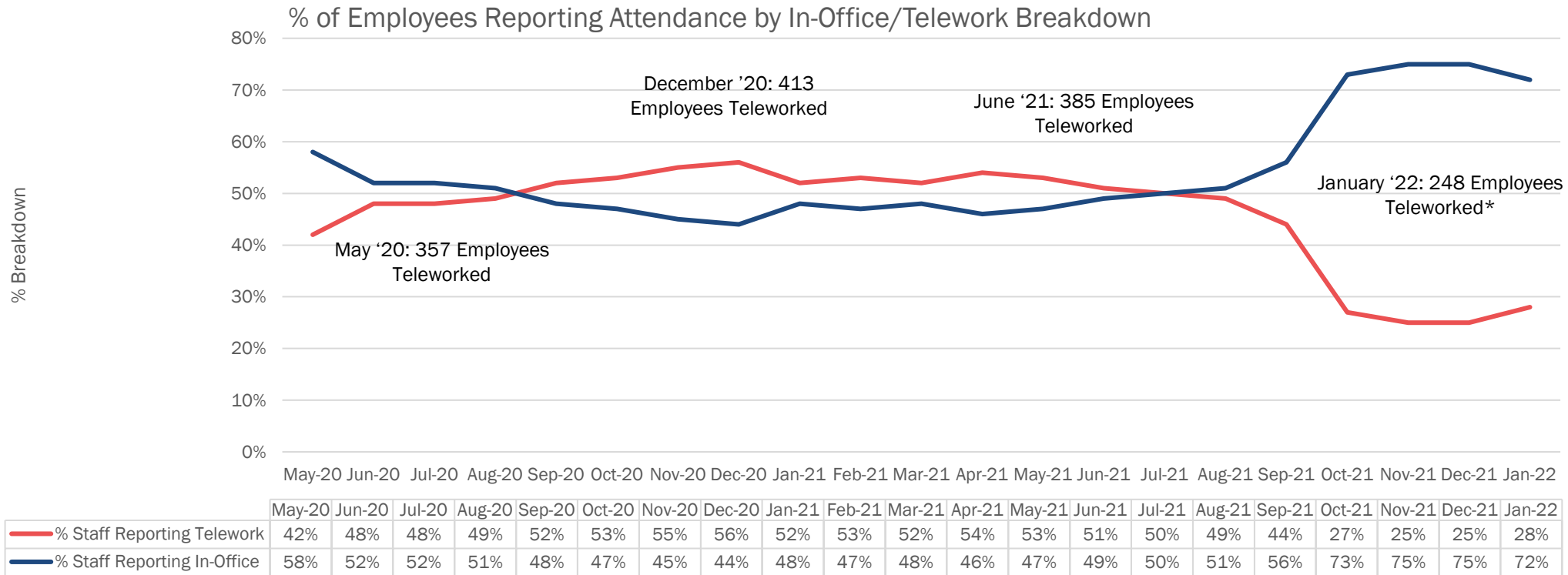
Programs	Total FTEs Budgeted	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
Central Management	45	41	40	39	37	37	37	37
Child Support Enforcement	61	57	59	58	58	57	57	56
Health Care Eligibility	76	52	58	60	60	60	60	59
Individual and Family Support	571	488	483	483	482	482	481	476
Office of Healthy Aging	31	29	29	28	28	28	27	27
Veterans' Affairs	263	230	221	214	219	214	216	220
	1047*	897	890	882	884	878	878	875

* Budget only supports hiring 978 positions



Telework Overview

Due to COVID-19, DHS closed customer facing lobbies in March 2020. The Department shifted its customer facing eligibility workforce to a remote customer service model to continue to provide access to benefits during the public health emergency. We began to shift employees back to in-person work in September 2021.



*All customer facing employees returned to the office in January 2022.



Application Processing

The below indicates the average number of days from when an application is received by DHS to the date when the application is authorized for eligibility. For context, the required timeliness standard is also included.

Average Days to Authorization

- CCAP: 18 days
- RIW: 19 days
- GPA: 20 days
- MAGI: 16 days
- Complex Medicaid: 38 days
- SNAP: 12 days

Mandatory Timeliness Standard

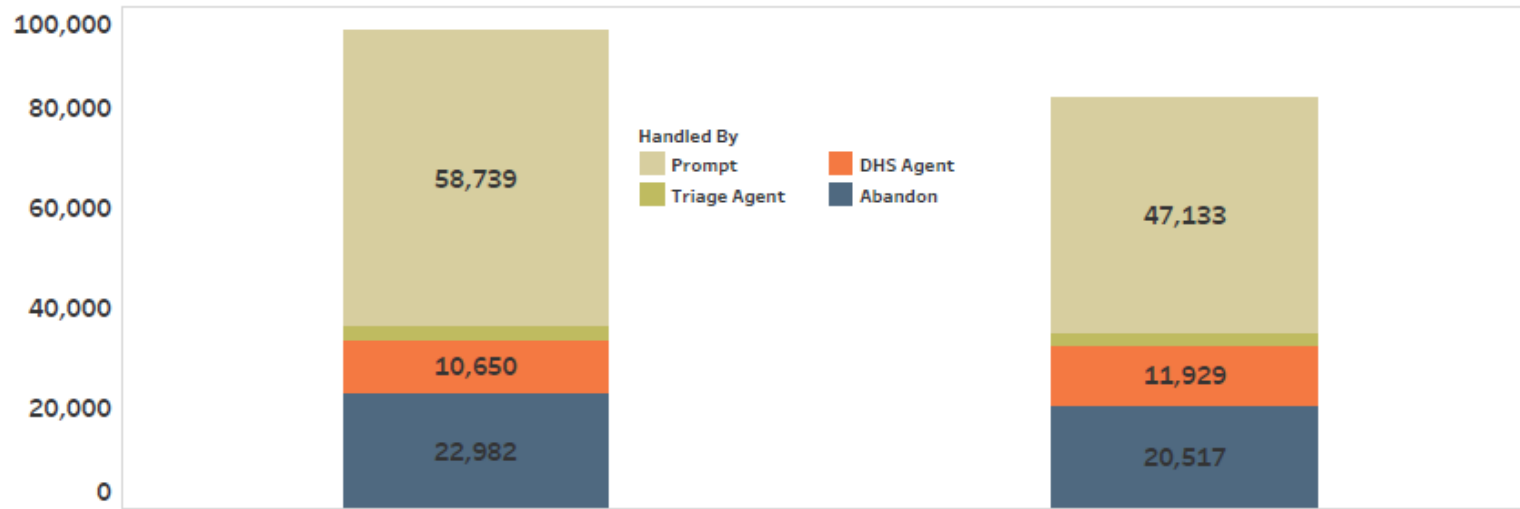
- CCAP: 30 days
- RIW: 30 days
- GPA: 30 days
- MAGI: 30 days
- Complex Medicaid: 45-90 days
- SNAP: 30 days (for non-expedited applicants)

*Data reflects November and December 2021



Call Center Details

DHS Call Center Dashboard - November/December 2021



	01-Nov-21		01-Dec-21	
Total Calls	95,284	100%	81,995	100%
Handled by Agent	13,563	14.2%	14,345	17.5%
DHS Agent	10,650	11.2%	11,929	14.5%
Triage Agent	2,913	3.1%	2,416	2.9%
Prompt	58,739	61.6%	47,133	57.5%
Abandon	22,982	24.1%	20,517	25.0%
Avg. Abandon	0:49:30		0:42:30	
Avg. Wait Time	1:51:07		1:27:34	
Avg. Talk Time	0:13:46		0:12:57	

*Data reflects November and December 2021



Responding to COVID-19: Shift to Remote Model in March 2020

- ❑ DHS closed our lobbies to in-person services on March 16, 2020, in response to COVID-19.
- ❑ We notified the public about the closure of customer facing lobbies through our website, social media, and through email communication to our community partners.
- ❑ Customers had access to benefits via the Customer Portal (healthyrhode.ri.gov), Call Center (1-855-697-4347), and the ability to drop off applications and supporting materials at all our regional office locations.
- ❑ While lobbies were closed, DHS staff continued to process applications and distribute benefits to our customers. We increased our capacity at the Call Center and implemented new technology solutions, such as text messaging services, to expand remote access to our customers.
- ❑ DHS provided updates via our website, social media, and email communication throughout the pandemic to our customers and community about ways to connect with the Department.



Resuming In-Person Services

- ❑ On Jan. 18, 2022, DHS resumed in-person services at all regional offices due to increasing customer demand.
- ❑ Prior to this update, customer facing lobbies were open beginning November 2021 at four regional offices for Rhode Island Works (RIW) customers who needed to recertify their benefits and chose to complete their interview in-person.
- ❑ The Department notified the public about the resumption of in-person lobby services at our regional offices via our website, social media, and through email communication to our community partners.



Key Operational Facts

- ❑ The RI Department of Human Services (DHS) customer facing regional offices resumed in-person services on January 18, 2022.
- ❑ DHS hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays.
- ❑ DHS staff are available at each regional office to provide a range of services for all programs.



Key Operational Facts Continued

In addition to the services available at reopened regional offices, customers continue to have access to:

- The Call Center (1-855-697-4347) Hours: 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM*
- The Customer Portal (healthyrhode.ri.gov)
- The HealthyRhode mobile app and text messaging
- Community partners and vendors listed in the Customer Resource Guide available at dhs.ri.gov in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

These resources offer different tools to the customer, including application assistance, application submission, checking benefits, uploading documents, seeing notices, conducting interviews, getting general and case-specific information.

*The Call Center is staffed until 4 p.m. to ensure all calls in queue are addressed. Any calls received before 3 p.m. are addressed in the order the call was received.

