



## Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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*Office of the Director*

January 12, 2026

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

**RE: DHS Staffing and Operations Report**

Dear Chairman Abney:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on staffing and operations for the reporting period of November 4, 2025, through January 2, 2026, as formally requested in Article 1 of the enacted SFY24 Budget to demonstrate progress in recruiting, retaining, and supporting staff at the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS).

As required, this report is submitted on a 60-day cycle and addresses the following areas:

- Newly filled and vacant positions by title, including lateral transfers
- Civil service information, including the number of eligible and available candidates, plans for future testing, and anticipated candidate pools from upcoming exams
- Current average caseload backlog
- Call Center overview

### **Focus of this Staffing Report**

This reporting period will primarily focus on DHS performance through metrics such as the current caseload, call center wait times, federal timeliness thresholds, and civil service activity as these figures are indirectly related to the status of available staff and hiring activity at DHS.

Due to some reporting refinement that needs to take place as a result of the transition to the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, DHS does not have access to some regularly reported data that is typically included in this report. Please know this has not impacted the core functions of DHS to provide services and supports to our customers as federally required.

DHS will submit an amended report once the Department of Human Services and Department of Administration (DOA) have completed the refinement process to ensure continuity of the existing methodology.

DHS remains committed to transparency, continuous improvement, and timely legislative reporting. As ERP reporting capabilities mature, future 60-day updates will reflect expanded detail and improved visibility across staffing and operational metrics.

Thank you for your continued oversight and partnership. Please do not hesitate to reach out if additional clarification or follow-up would be helpful.

Sincerely,



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

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

FOR DATA FROM November 4 THROUGH January 2

### Enterprise Resource Planning Update

The RI Department of Administration (DOA) launched the full functionality of its ERP/Workday system as of November 16, 2025. The ERP/Workday system was implemented to streamline and modernize the state’s legacy human resources, payroll, and finance functions.

All state agencies are currently utilizing this system and navigating the implementation of this statewide modernization, which has eased and simplified payroll functions. However, the ERP requires additional customization and/or refinement to obtain all staffing information for the 60-day staffing report required by statute. With this modernization of key payroll functions, DHS anticipates that compiling data will be more efficient once adjustments occur.

The Department of Human Services is working closely with the Department of Administration on this effort. DHS will send an amended report to the General Assembly as soon as the necessary data is made available.

It is important to acknowledge the ERP implementation has not disrupted key DHS operations in recruitment, onboarding, workforce planning, caseload demand, or call center performance. These operations remain stable. Due to the ERP transition, the focus on this report –until more data is available—will be on the following and is based on verifiable information:

PENDING CASELOAD.....1,859 pending cases

CASELOAD PROCESSING AVERAGES .....Meeting Fed Requirements

CALL CENTER ACTIVITY..... 20 Min Avg. Wait Time

CIVIL SERVICE ACTIVITY..... Meeting Requirements



# Staffing and Operations Report

## January 12, 2026

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Processing applications timely and connecting people with essential services with compassion, dignity, and respect will always be a top priority for DHS. This report provides an update based on currently available data, detailing our efforts to date in helping Rhode Island families with food security, health services, cash and child care assistance as well as other health and human services supports.

### Current Caseload Backlog\* Snapshot

DHS continues to prioritize the efficient processing of applications through improvements to technology, processes, and communications, with the goal of reducing any application backlog across all programs. As of January 8, 2026, the number of overdue applications awaiting state action is 1,859 despite state personnel navigating a new HR system used to hire employees across all state agencies. The current caseload of 1,859 still represents a decline of approximately 23% since DHS was statutorily required to submit a staffing report (August 2022: 2,410).

Importantly, the caseload, while slightly heightened, represents the value of several strategic decisions launched under the current administration such as: SNAP Connect, Technology Adoption Days, Call Center modernizations, Document Scanning Centers and other ongoing investments in process redesign. DHS is continually making strides in key metrics while maintaining and/or improving the customer experience. These operational and digital tools increasingly support customers' needs by providing flexible interview scheduling, education around resources, and other support to help ensure uninterrupted access to benefits whenever possible. These strategies are expected to further improve operational efficiency in processing applications and handling of calls, which will improve customer satisfaction and the overall customer experience. For more details on SNAP Connect, please visit: [dhs.ri.gov/SNAPconnect](https://dhs.ri.gov/SNAPconnect)

### Pending Applications Awaiting State Action (Snapshot as of January 8, 2026)

Program Name	Overdue Awaiting State Action
	State
SNAP Expedited	120
SNAP Non-Expedited	88
CCAP	75
GPA Burial	7
SSP	1
GPA	2
*RIW	60
Undetermined Medical	565

*\*This is an estimate as of January 8, 2026, 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 pulling incorrect data and is now manually retrieved. The technical discrepancy has no impact on the customer experience and a fix is expected at a later time.*

Medicaid-MAGI	70
Medicare Premium Payments	298
Medicaid Complex	405
LTSS	168
Grand total	1,859

## NEW Hire FTE Impact on Pending Applications

DHS currently has eight Eligibility Technician positions needing supervisory approval (ETSAs), who are collectively processing over 100 cases per week. Of the eight ETSAs, there is one staff member with that designation who is not contributing to processing cases yet because they are newly hired. All ETSAs have, however, 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
4	Medical (applications, recertifications, LTSS)	Each assigned group is averaging, per week, approximately:  SNAP: 60 cases Medical: 40 cases
3	SNAP applications, recertifications, or interim reviews	

## 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. The federal requirement threshold as well as current agency statistics are further illustrated below.

**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	8
Non-Expedited SNAP	30 Days	22
Cash Assistance (RIW/GPA)	30 Days	17
Medicaid MAGI	30 Days	18
Complex Medical	45 Days	42
Long Term Care (LTSS)	90 Days	76

*See Appendix A at the end of the report for additional context.*

## Call Center

For the current Staffing and Operations Report dated January 12, the **Call Center average wait time to speak with a staff member was 20 minutes 21 seconds.**

The overall Call Center wait time remains below 30 minutes due to the implementation of the SNAP Connect initiative, which allows SNAP customers to complete their required interview at a time that is most convenient. Currently, there are 48 Eligibility Technicians assigned to the SNAP Connect process that answer interview calls five days a week. This is in addition to the designated call center staff. As of this report, the SNAP Connect pilot has been implemented across all cities and towns.

**The average wait for an interview is currently just under six minutes.** DHS remains committed to excellence in service delivery through optimized processes, workforce training, and innovative technological solutions. Through improved processes and technological solutions, DHS intends to further improve the wait times for all queues.

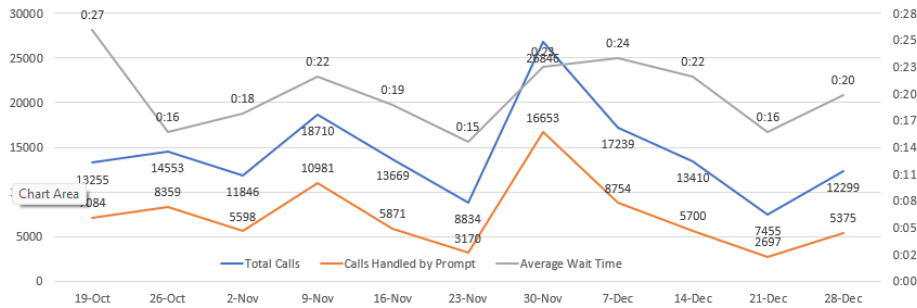
### Average Monthly Wait Times by Queue

	November		December	
	Callbacks	DHS Agent	Callbacks	DHS Agent
SNAP	00:11:57	00:46:57	00:11:18	01:13:24
SNAP_Connect_Intake	00:09:19	00:03:47	00:09:32	00:04:59
SNAP_Connect_Recert	00:08:45	00:03:59	00:08:45	00:06:26
SNAP Interviews/Intakes	00:07:53	00:04:40	00:08:51	00:07:38
LTSS	00:07:11	00:10:53	00:08:59	00:14:05
Tech Help	00:11:02	00:12:07	00:09:31	00:12:35
GPA	00:14:35	00:12:44	00:18:18	00:13:54
SSP		00:14:26	00:00:04	00:21:18
Specialty	00:14:12	00:28:13	00:08:32	00:26:18
ECA Transfer	00:14:48	00:38:32	00:11:02	00:40:57
Medical	00:13:09	00:59:07	00:12:11	01:02:53
Child Care	00:14:12	02:14:03	00:16:03	02:14:54
RIW	00:15:51	02:49:44	00:13:38	02:33:43
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>00:12:09</b>	<b>00:25:38</b>	<b>00:11:12</b>	<b>00:32:35</b>

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

During this time, there were approximately 47 dedicated call center staff members. An additional team of 48 field Eligibility Technicians supported the SNAP Connect interview lines. Current Eligibility Technician staffing levels support up to an average of 12.5 calls per day, per Eligibility Technician, with a current 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 worker portal.

## Call center summary 10/19 – 1/3



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, DHS 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 12 minutes waiting on the phone.

### Civil Service Information

The Department of Administration/Human Resources works closely with the Department of Human Services to fill critical positions. As part of this collaboration, DOA-HR's division of Human Capital Management (HCM) is responsible for administering Civil Service Examinations and qualified names are provided to DHS, per Merit System Law (RI General Laws § 36-4-26). Importantly, legislation to Merit System Law passed in the 2024 session (S3003) has enabled the DOA-HR to increase the cadence of examinations and conduct quarterly testing for social workers. The legislation also revised Merit System Law to allow for greater flexibility in contacting qualified candidates more efficiently. Please refer to the chart below for additional civil service information including exam dates, number of applicants, and candidates.

Exam Name	Date	Candidates Applied	Candidates on List
<b>Current Lists - ET-I</b>			
Q1 Exam ET-I	January 2025	164	33
Q2 Exam ET I	April 2025	72	13
Q3 Exam ET I	July 2025	68	12
Q4 Exam ET-I	October 3, 2025	24	Pending Testing
<b>Current Lists - SCW</b>			
Q1 Exam SCW	January 2025	122	30
Q2 Exam SCW	April 2025	85	23
Q3 Exam SCW	July 2025	75	18
Q4 Exam SCW	October 3, 2025	36	Pending Testing

###

## Appendix A.

### 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.