

TESTIMONY OF
LINDA TSARK
SNAP ADMINISTRATOR
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
BENEFIT, EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
INTERIM OF 2010
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Monday, August 30, 2010
12:15 pm
Conference Room 325

Testimony to review the concern with higher caseloads for employees of DHS and the adverse impact of such workloads on the community and employees.

My name is Linda Tsark and I have been an employee of the DHS for 30 years and 9 months. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue which is of great concern to me. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rep. John Mizuño for the extraordinary measures he and Senator Susanne Chun-Oakland took in January of this year to avert what would have surely been a catastrophe for DHS employees and the clients we serve. That being said I want to be clear that the testimony I am about to provide represents my own personal opinion and thoughts and may not represent the official position of the Department of Human Services.

How did we get here? Isn't that the question we are all asking ourselves? For me the answers are simple and profound. A lack of vision and a lack of leadership. Ten years ago technology was already starting to change in the public assistance arena. Our HAWI or Legacy system was already old and outdated. Mainland states were beginning to develop new computer systems and were experimenting with call centers, online applications and document imaging. Hawaii decided to follow suit and began looking into the feasibility of developing a new computer system. Hawaii also purchased software and planned to implement a pilot project to test document imaging in the child care program. By the time both of these projects were ready for implementation or decision making the new administration was in office and both ideas were flatly rejected as ridiculous and permanently shelved

So what happened next? For a while Hawaii held our own in SNAP accuracy, which with a 2% to 3% error rate ranked us at #1 to #7 in the nation. However, as other states perfected their enhanced technology and processes their error rates started decreasing dramatically so that today with Hawaii's error rate of 3.03% we now rank #20.

However, even more important to this discussion is what happened when the economy turned sour and caseloads started growing. This is the part where timeliness of SNAP application processing becomes a critical part of the equation. Timeliness has never been our forte. Federal law requires SNAP applications to be processed timely 95% of the time, which means an applicant must have their EBT card in hand by the 7th day if expedited or by the 30th day if regular processing. I guess we would argue that to be so accurate takes time and the end result is

that historically our applications have been accurate 97% of the time, but consequently our timeliness hovered around 90%. Then the economy went downhill and the caseloads started to grow. A staff hiring freeze was mandated and the start of 2 mandatory furlough days per month. We sadly saw loss of staff through a reduction in force. We could no longer manage our caseloads. Timeliness plummeted to 87% in July 2009, to 80.2% in January 2010, to 77.5% in May 2010. I am proud to say that our staff has fought hard the last two months and brought timeliness up to 79.1% and 79.8% for June and July 2010 respectively, but that isn't nearly good enough for those families still waiting 2 months to get an appointment so they can put food on the table. And what is really frustrating about this situation is the fact that other states not only experienced the same caseload growth and staff reductions and furloughs, but that they did so to a much greater degree than Hawaii has and still maintained a high degree of timeliness. Why? Because their leadership had the foresight and the vision to start taking advantage of new technology and for building a new infrastructure and/or processes that were able support what happened when the economy went bad. They were prepared, Hawaii wasn't.

So what do we do now? There are two points I want to discuss briefly here that are going to sound a little incongruent. First, I disagree with some of the testimony that you first heard from my BESSD colleagues in January when they talked about the absolute necessity of case management as the only meaningful way to provide services to a public assistance recipient. There were many, many problems with the EPOD concept, most notably the lack of planning, no staff involvement and the fact that one shoe can not fit all with such a diverse client population, but I don't want to get into an EPOD discussion here. The point I want to make is that case management is what our service model is built around, but it is this model that we can no longer afford because of the staffing requirement and other states are proving it is inefficient and not necessary. In fact, there are only a small percentage of our clients that need one-on-one service; some of the elderly or disabled and clients of limited English proficiency. Most other clients would rather have less, not more contact with our offices. Many states are moving into process management. Cases are not assigned to an individual worker. There are different workers for different tasks; intake, pending actions, processing, drop off changes, recertification's/reviews, etc. At the end of July the Food and Nutrition Service paid for a team of 5 of us to fly to New Mexico to review their process management effort. We were extremely impressed by what we saw, so much so that the supervisor from one of the Maui units returned to Maui and restructured her office into a mini process management office. She said in just 4 weeks her staff loves it and doesn't want to go back to case management. But this is small scale dabbling and it is going to take time and planning to do something like this on a large statewide basis.

So what do we do in the interim? This is my second point. We need to hire some staff. We are dying. As hard as we try, you are unlikely to see any more improvement from where we are at this very moment until we hire some more staff and clean up the backlog and have the opportunity to use staff to plan and reorganize and develop a new more efficient process. If we don't lift the freeze and hire some staff soon, then you are going to see things go from bad to much worse in short order. I say this for two reasons. First, in October, 2010, SNAP will be implementing Broad-based Categorical Eligibility and Transitional Benefits Alternative. Both of these programs are the right thing to do because they will help more low-income families qualify for SNAP benefits and that will further stimulate the local economy because for every \$5 in new SNAP dollars it will generate up to \$9.20 in community spending. But the bottom line to

eligibility workers is that even if it is good for the economy it will simply translate into more applications for them that they already can't handle, so your constituents that are already waiting 2 months now might have to wait 3 months or longer to have their eligibility determined. Also consider the possibility that as our untimeliness increases so does the risk of legal action being taken against us.

This brings me back to my first line of my testimony. My name is Linda Tsark and I have 30 years and 9 months of public service. That means I am eligible for retirement. I am not only tired, I am exhausted. Like many of my colleagues, I don't want to leave the state in such dire straits, but I am only one person and I feel like I am being worked to death. Under normal circumstances, I am supposed to have myself and 4 program specialists. Unfortunately, one of my program specialists was terminated due to the RIF and one retired right after the RIF and now that position is frozen. I lost staff and I lost time, but I didn't lose any of the work. I now have 3 staff to do the all work in less time than was previously done by 5. So what do I do? This past year I frequently worked on furlough Fridays and often worked on Saturdays. This annoyed my husband to no end and I had to promise him that this year I would not work on furlough days, so this past Friday I didn't, but to do that I worked until 7 pm on Wednesday and until 8 pm on Thursday and I snuck in on Saturday for a couple of hours after a dentist appointment. What is truly sad is I am not the only state employee doing this because on Wed and Thurs I had company in the office on both nights. So what am I trying to say here? There are a lot of dedicated state employees out there doing exactly what I'm doing because we don't know what else to do because there is so much work to do and no one to do it, but at some point those of us with 30 years are just going to say the heck with it and call it quits. My fear is that with a new glut of applications in October and with no lifting of the hiring freezing, staff will just give up and we may see another big retirement this December. We can't afford to lose any more staff.

So, what is the answer? We need some staff relief now. We need to catch up. We need to regroup and redesign and reorganize. Once that is accomplished we can start pulling back on staffing through attrition until we have the right staff mix and ratio that makes us competent and cost efficient, but we need to do something now. If you wait it will be too late.



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The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Interim of 2010
Hawaii State House of Representatives
Committee on Human Services

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association
August 30, 2010

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The RIF guiding principles presented by the department included: (1) minimize adverse effects to public service; (2) improve efficiency and public service; and (3) maximize federal funds and compliance with federal and state legal mandates and performance. The department claimed that it could make significant personnel cuts without any adverse effects on eligibility determinations and quality assurance. That was a simplistic and unrealistic assumption that deserved closer scrutiny because it turned out to be completely false.

DHS cut approximately 366 positions in the first round of the RIF. The three divisions with most cuts were SSD (133), BESSD (115) and MQD (59). DHS recently reported to the Senate Ways and Means Committee (WAM) that 214.75 general fund positions were eliminated through the RIF process. No comments on the effects of the RIF on programs and services were provided to WAM by DHS. Also, the 214.75 general fund positions cited do not take into account the numerous vacant positions related to employees retiring and resigning after the RIF. The department continues to leave these positions vacant without justification or explanation, making the situation even worse.



DHS employees in BESSD, SSD and MQD consistently report higher case loads since the RIF, which have become unmanageable and detract from the quality and level of service they provide to vulnerable populations. Two grievances that were filed in November 2009 and February 2010 warned DHS about the problems related to an inadequate number of remaining Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff to monitor existing cases properly or respond to new ones in a timely manner.

Our grievances remain unresolved because the department refuses to fill funded vacant positions unrelated to the RIF. In addition, the department has also chosen to not fill many of the 112 funded positions restored to Child Protective Services (HMS 301) by the 2010 Legislature.

CWS staff report that they are unable to meet federal guidelines requiring children to be visited each month. Response times depending upon the severity of the case are not being met either. The quality of their work has also declined as phone calls cannot be returned promptly, service plan compliance is not being achieved and court reports cannot be completed within the required time frames.

CWS caseloads far exceed the recommended levels of 12 – 15 cases per worker recommended by the Child Welfare League of America, or the 18 cases recommended by the Council on Accreditation. The complexity of family problems and issues require more time, documentation and direct client contact, which cannot be achieved when carrying caseloads, which in some instances, reach as high as 100. On the Big Island, CWS employees are doing more than one job in response to the RIF and the high demand for services. In addition, many cases involve instances of severe child abuse or neglect.

Similar types of problems exist for BESSD employees who have experienced caseloads increasing from 180 to about 500. To our understanding, a manageable caseload (on a short term basis) is about 250 cases. MQD employees also report large increases in applications for medical coverage due to layoffs and the recession. Even during a healthy economy, SSD, BESSD and MQD employees face work-related challenges or obstacles that may cause them to feel overwhelmed and stressed. These problems become more intense when staffing is reduced and caseloads rise. There are certain conditions or risk factors that are known to contribute to workplace stress.

HGEA has been contacted by workers complaining of stress-related health problems. In recent meetings, we have been told by workers they have been prescribed anti-depressants, seen a risk in high blood pressure, raised blood sugar levels, and inability to sleep. Workers reporting these conditions insist that their health problems have been brought on by the stress of having more work than can be reasonably handled and,

perhaps more seriously, the upset of not being able to service clients who are in dire situations. In Child Welfare or Adult Protective Services, employees have to deal with the stress of knowing that their inability to provide services can result in a child or elderly person being hurt or losing their life.

Due to the combined effects of lower staffing levels and the growing demand for their services, DHS staff cannot be held responsible if federal or state standards regarding investigations, reports, client visitations, assessments, processing payments or other requirements are not met. Yet, this does not mitigate the damage to our safety net, the effects on individual lives and the undue stress on workers who must daily face the clients needing assistance which cannot be provided on a timely basis. The RIF, combined with resistance from DHS to filling funded vacant positions, has damaged our social safety net.

Shortcomings in the social safety net have broader economic and legal consequences for state governments, including legal jeopardy, financial penalties and increased governmental outlays in the future. Particularly in these times of economic crisis, we need a safety net that supports children, elderly and others in need of human services. We ask the Legislature's assistance in encouraging the Department of Human Services to fill the vacant funded positions as well as those restored by the Legislature.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our testimony to your committee.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Director

The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Interim of 2010

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Monday August 30, 2010
12:15 PM, Conference Room 325, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Testimony by
Priscilla Badua, BESSD Employee

Good Morning! My name is Priscilla Badua; I am an Income Maintenance Supervisor for the West Kauai IM Unit. I have been a state employee for the Department of Human Services for 39 years. I am here to testify that the current caseload has an adverse affect on our clients and our DHS worker.

Share caseload statistics from the 1) Kauai Med Quest Division, and 2) Kauai Section IM Units:

- A. All statistics were taken from monthly reports generated from the HAWI (Hawaii Automated Welfare Information System) system.
- B. EWs (Eligibility Workers) from the Kauai Med Quest Division and Income Maintenance Units process applications and perform case maintenance. No specialized unit for applications only.
- C. Review Med Quest Division statistics. Refer to handout:
 - 1. Kauai has one Med Quest office.
 - 2. Description of tables: Total Cases = Represent the total active cases; No. of EWs = at work; self-explanatory.
 - 3. Prior to January 2010, the unit had 7 authorized EW positions. One EW position was abolished due to the RIF, and another EW position transferred to another unit.
 - 4. Effective January 2010, the Kauai Med Quest Division was left with 5 EW positions.
 - 5. Effective April 2010, one EW has been on extended sick leave and is not known if the employee will return.
 - 6. Average caseload prior to the RIF was approximately 614; after 920 cases; and currently 1182.

7. Report KHSB1D3R Timeliness Measurement Of MN/MO/MS Applications and Dispositions for April 2010:

* 253 applications from March were pending as of April 1; 421 applications were received in April which amounts to 674 applications due in April for processing. Of the 674 applications, 560 were processed in April attaining a 97% timeliness rate. Average applications assigned per EW are 109 based on April's number.

D. Review Kauai Section IM Units statistics (refer to handout)

1. Kauai has three IM Units that process applications in addition to the case maintenance of active cases.
2. Effective 12/09, one EW position was abolished due to the RIF.
3. There were four retirements from June and July 2010 and we are now left with eleven EWs with a caseload of 400 each. Each EW also is assigned an average of 50 applications per month.
4. The timeliness rate for the Kauai IM Section is as follows: Refer to attachments.

E. How is the high caseload affecting our clients and employees?

1. Clients

- a. Occasional complaints to supervisor about delayed benefits, however, when informed about the high caseload they are willing to wait sometimes 1 to 2 weeks for their benefits.
- b. Delayed benefits translate into not being able to pay their rent/utilities on time, delay in picking up medications, not being able to put food on the table, therefore, utilize community resources, meeting personal needs of the family, etc.

2. Employees

They continue to get the work done, but at a high price.

- a. Not taking vacation. Staff does not want to take vacation because of the workload.
- b. Working through lunch and not taking breaks;
- c. Working beyond their normal work hour schedule without compensation. I.e. Some staff works on weekends to complete their paperwork...
- d. Staff under a tremendous amount of stress and frustration as a result of the increased work load.
- e. As a result of the furlough, some of the staff has a second job to alleviate financial issues. When the overload at work compounds what already exists it does not make for a unpleasant scenario.

- f. You have supervisors functioning as a clerk by registering applications, interviewing applicants or carrying a caseload.

F. Solutions

- a. Reinstate for the IM Units, public hours from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Workers will be able to do paperwork from 7:45 – 9:00 am and 3:00 – 4:30 pm. The Med Quest Division had public hours reinstated by the Director shortly after the implementation of our furlough.
- b. Lift hiring freeze.

Thank for giving me the opportunity to testify, I am hopeful that our working conditions will improve.

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perhaps more seriously, the upset of not being able to service clients who are in dire situations. In Child Welfare or Adult Protective Services, employees have to deal with the stress of knowing that their inability to provide services can result in a child or elderly person being hurt or losing their life.

Due to the combined effects of lower staffing levels and the growing demand for their services, DHS staff cannot be held responsible if federal or state standards regarding investigations, reports, client visitations, assessments, processing payments or other requirements are not met. Yet, this does not mitigate the damage to our safety net, the effects on individual lives and the undue stress on workers who must daily face the clients needing assistance which cannot be provided on a timely basis. The RIF, combined with resistance from DHS to filling funded vacant positions, has damaged our social safety net.

Shortcomings in the social safety net have broader economic and legal consequences for state governments, including legal jeopardy, financial penalties and increased governmental outlays in the future. Particularly in these times of economic crisis, we need a safety net that supports children, elderly and others in need of human services. We ask the Legislature's assistance in encouraging the Department of Human Services to fill the vacant funded positions as well as those restored by the Legislature.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our testimony to your committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Nora A. Nomura
Deputy Executive Director

The Twenty-Fifth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Interim of 2010

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Rep. Tom Brower, Vice Chair

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Monday August 30, 2010
12:15 PM, Conference Room 325, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Testimony by
Priscilla Badua, BESSD Employee

Good Morning! My name is Priscilla Badua; I am an Income Maintenance Supervisor for the West Kauai IM Unit. I have been a state employee for the Department of Human Services for 39 years. I am here to testify that the current caseload has an adverse affect on our clients and our DHS worker.

Share caseload statistics from the 1) Kauai Med Quest Division, and 2) Kauai Section IM Units:

- A. All statistics were taken from monthly reports generated from the HAWI (Hawaii Automated Welfare Information System) system.
- B. EWs (Eligibility Workers) from the Kauai Med Quest Division and Income Maintenance Units process applications and perform case maintenance. No specialized unit for applications only.
- C. Review Med Quest Division statistics. Refer to handout:
 - 1. Kauai has one Med Quest office.
 - 2. Description of tables: Total Cases = Represent the total active cases; No. of EWs = at work; self-explanatory.
 - 3. Prior to January 2010, the unit had 7 authorized EW positions. One EW position was abolished due to the RIF, and another EW position transferred to another unit.
 - 4. Effective January 2010, the Kauai Med Quest Division was left with 5 EW positions.
 - 5. Effective April 2010, one EW has been on extended sick leave and is not known if the employee will return.
 - 6. Average caseload prior to the RIF was approximately 614; after 920 cases; and currently 1182.

7. Report KHSB1D3R Timeliness Measurement Of MN/MO/MS Applications and Dispositions for April 2010:

* 253 applications from March were pending as of April 1; 421 applications were received in April which amounts to 674 applications due in April for processing. Of the 674 applications, 560 were processed in April attaining a 97% timeliness rate. Average applications assigned per EW are 109 based on April's number.

D. Review Kauai Section IM Units statistics (refer to handout)

1. Kauai has three IM Units that process applications in addition to the case maintenance of active cases.
2. Effective 12/09, one EW position was abolished due to the RIF.
3. There were four retirements from June and July 2010 and we are now left with eleven EWs with a caseload of 400 each. Each EW also is assigned an average of 50 applications per month.
4. The timeliness rate for the Kauai IM Section is as follows: Refer to attachments.

E. How is the high caseload affecting our clients and employees?

1. Clients

- a. Occasional complaints to supervisor about delayed benefits, however, when informed about the high caseload they are willing to wait sometimes 1 to 2 weeks for their benefits.
- b. Delayed benefits translate into not being able to pay their rent/utilities on time, delay in picking up medications, not being able to put food on the table, therefore, utilize community resources, meeting personal needs of the family, etc.

2. Employees

They continue to get the work done, but at a high price.

- a. Not taking vacation. Staff does not want to take vacation because of the workload.
- b. Working through lunch and not taking breaks;
- c. Working beyond their normal work hour schedule without compensation. I.e. Some staff works on weekends to complete their paperwork...
- d. Staff under a tremendous amount of stress and frustration as a result of the increased work load.
- e. As a result of the furlough, some of the staff has a second job to alleviate financial issues. When the overload at work compounds what already exists it does not make for a unpleasant scenario.

- f. You have supervisors functioning as a clerk by registering applications, interviewing applicants or carrying a caseload.

F. Solutions

- a. Reinstate for the IM Units, public hours from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Workers will be able to do paperwork from 7:45 – 9:00 am and 3:00 – 4:30 pm. The Med Quest Division had public hours reinstated by the Director shortly after the implementation of our furlough.
- b. Lift hiring freeze.

Thank for giving me the opportunity to testify, I am hopeful that our working conditions will improve.

Kauai Medquest Division

Mo/Yr	Total Cases	No. of Ews	Av Cases per EW	Auth EW Positions
02/10	4684	5	936	5
03/10	4742	5	948	5
04/10	4756	4	1189	5
05/10	4796	4	1199	5
06/10	4788	4	1197	5
07/10	4729	4	1182	5

1. Prior to 1/10, the unit had 7 authorized EW positions. One EW position was loss due to the RIF and another EW position was transferred to another unit.
2. Effective 1/10, the Kauai Med Quest Division was left with 5 EW positions.
3. Effective 4/10, one EW has been on extended sick leave and is not expected to return.

HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 HAWAII
 TIMELINESS MEASUREMENT OF MN/MO/MS APPLICATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS
 FOR JANUARY , 2010

TOTALS FOR UNIT 443

UNIT SUPERVISOR: IRIS H VENZON

DISPOSITIONS	MED		MN		MO		MS	
	TOTALS	PERCENT	TOTALS	PERCENT	TOTALS	PERCENT	TOTALS	PERCENT
APPS PENDING BEGINNING OF REPORT PERIOD	231	34.58	176	76.19	19	8.22	36	15.58
APS RECEIVED THIS REPORT PERIOD	668 (437)	65.41	311	71.16	69	15.78	57	13.04
APS PENDING AT END OF REPORT PERIOD	142	21.25	122	85.91	10	7.04	10	7.04
APS PNDG AT BEG OF PER STILL PNDG AT END OF PER	18	7.00	14	77.00	1	5.00	3	16.00
APS RECVD THIS PERIOD STILL PNDG AT END OF PER	124	28.00	108	87.00	9	7.00	7	5.00
* TOTAL DISPOSITIONS	526	100.00	365	69.39	78	14.82	83	15.77
AVG DAYS PROCESSING	15		16		9		15	
* TIMELY	518	98.47	361	69.69	77	14.86	80	15.44
UNTIMELY	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
UNTIMELY DUE TO SPECIAL REASON	8	1.52	4	50.00	1	12.50	3	37.50

HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 HAWAII
 TIMELINESS MEASUREMENT OF MN/MO/MS APPLICATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS
 FOR APRIL , 2010

TOTALS FOR UNIT 443

UNIT SUPERVISOR: IRIS H VENZON

DISPOSITIONS	MED		MN		MO		MS	
	TOTALS	PERCENT	TOTALS	PERCENT	TOTALS	PERCENT	TOTALS	PERCENT
APPS PENDING BEGINNING OF REPORT PERIOD	253	37.53	189	74.70	21	8.30	43	16.99
APS RECEIVED THIS REPORT PERIOD	674 421	62.46	303	71.97	57	13.83	61	14.48
APS PENDING AT END OF REPORT PERIOD	114	16.91	97	85.08	6	5.26	11	9.64
APS PNDG AT BEG OF PER STILL PNDG AT END OF PER	5	1.00	3	60.00	2	40.00	0	0.00
APS RECVD THIS PERIOD STILL PNDG AT END OF PER	109	25.00	94	86.00	4	3.00	11	10.00
* TOTAL DISPOSITIONS	560	100.00	395	70.53	72	12.85	93	16.60
AVG DAYS PROCESSING	16		16		9		19	
* TIMELY	548	97.85	391	71.35	71	12.95	86	15.69
UNTIMELY	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
UNTIMELY DUE TO SPECIAL REASON	12	2.14	4	33.33	1	8.33	7	58.33

Kauai Section IM Units

Mo/Yr	UNITS			Total Caseload	No. of Ews	Av. Cases per EW	Auth. EW Positions
	Central	West	East				
09/08	680	889	1036	2605	16	163	16
10/08	709	923	1055	2687	16	168	16
11/08	709	965	1074	2748	16	172	16
12/08	736	973	1094	2803	16	175	16
01/09	773	1014	1118	2905	16	182	16
02/09	795	1027	1185	3007	16	188	16
03/09	817	1087	1219	3123	16	195	16
04/09	838	1095	1274	3207	16	200	16
05/09	843	1162	1321	3326	16	208	16
06/09	879	1178	1362	3419	16	215	16
07/09	914	1223	1364	3501	16	219	16
08/09	944	1249	1410	3603	16	225	16
09/09	904	1347	1445	3696	16	233	16
10/09	871	1353	1508	3732	16	231	16
11/09	915	1343	1559	3817	16	239	16
12/09	991	1481	1381	3853	15	257	16
01/10	1018	1515	1372	3905	15	260	15
02/10	1060	1538	1436	4034	15	269	15
03/10	1097	1566	1458	4121	15	275	15
04/10	Not Available						
05/10							
06/10	Not available				12		15
07/10	1231	1289	1772	4292	11	390	15
08/10	1243	1332	1825	4400	11	400	15

Notes

1. Effective December 2009, one EW position was abolished due to the RIF. Reduced total EW positions on Kauai to 15.
2. Effective June 2010, 3 EWs retired from West unit and another EW retired effective July 2010 leaving Kauai Section with a total of 11 EWs.
3. Effective October 2010, one EW will be relocating to the mainland which will increase the average caseload to 440.

Month	Central	West	East	South	North	Total
01/10	1081	1088	1033	1031	1031	4264
02/10	1098	1098	1037	1031	1031	4305
03/10	1115	1087	1039	1031	1031	4304
04/10	1132	1095	1037	1031	1031	4326
05/10	1149	1102	1037	1031	1031	4352
06/10	1178	1087	1035	1031	1031	4363
07/10	1229	1095	1031	1031	1031	4418
08/10	1248	1098	1031	1031	1031	4439
09/10	1347	1098	1031	1031	1031	4538
10/10	1383	1031	1031	1031	1031	4497
11/10	1343	1031	1031	1031	1031	4467
12/10	1381	1031	1031	1031	1031	4495
01/11	1315	1031	1031	1031	1031	4439
02/11	1338	1031	1031	1031	1031	4462
03/11	1388	1031	1031	1031	1031	4481
04/11	1391	1031	1031	1031	1031	4484
05/11	1531	1031	1031	1031	1031	4655
06/11	1589	1031	1031	1031	1031	4682
07/11	1543	1031	1031	1031	1031	4646
08/11	1589	1031	1031	1031	1031	4682
09/11	1531	1031	1031	1031	1031	4655
10/11	1589	1031	1031	1031	1031	4682
11/11	1531	1031	1031	1031	1031	4655
12/11	1589	1031	1031	1031	1031	4682

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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII
TIMELINESS MEASUREMENT OF FS TRANSACTIONS AND ISSUANCES
FOR JULY 2010

SNAP

08/09/10
11

TOTALS FOR SECTION 4

DISPOSITIONS

INITIAL APPLICATIONS

RECERTIFICATIONS

TOTALS

PERCENTS

TOTALS

PERCENTS

NA

PA

TOT

NA

PA

TOT

APPLS PENDING AT BEG OF REPORT PERIOD
(BOTH NON-EXPEDITED AND EXPEDITED)

207 4 211 100.0 116 4 120 100.0

APPLS RECEIVED THIS REPORT PERIOD
(BOTH NON-EXPEDITED AND EXPEDITED)

350 5 355 100.0 216 15 231 100.0

TOTAL DISPOSITIONS

360 7 367 100.0 205 13 218 100.0

TIMELY

314 5 319 86.9 205 13 218 100.0

UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)

19 0 19 5.2 0 0 0 0.0

UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)

27 2 29 7.9 0 0 0 0.0

TOTAL APPROVALS

253 5 258 100.0 193 13 206 100.0

TIMELY

228 3 231 89.5 193 13 206 100.0

UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)

7 0 7 2.7 0 0 0 0.0

UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)

18 2 20 7.8 0 0 0 0.0

TOTAL NON-EXPEDITED APPROVALS

173 4 177 100.0

TIMELY

157 3 160 90.4

UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)

6 0 6 3.4

UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)

10 1 11 6.2

TOTAL EXPEDITED APPROVALS

80 1 81 100.0

TIMELY

71 0 71 87.7

UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)

1 0 1 1.2

UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)

8 1 9 11.1

TOTAL DENIALS

107 2 109 100.0 12 0 12 100.0

TIMELY

86 2 88 80.7 12 0 12 100.0

UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)

12 0 12 11.0 0 0 0 0.0

UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)

9 0 9 8.3 0 0 0 0.0

TOTAL NON-EXPEDITED DENIALS

90 2 92 100.0

TIMELY

72 2 74 80.4

UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)

11 0 11 12.0

UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)

7 0 7 7.6

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TOTALS FOR SECTION 4

DISPOSITIONS	INITIAL APPLICATIONS				RECERTIFICATIONS			
	TOTALS		PERCENTS		TOTALS		PERCENTS	
	NA	PA	TOT		NA	PA	TOT	
TOTAL EXPEDITED DENIALS	17	0	17	100.0				
TIMELY	14	0	14	82.4				
UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)	1	0	1	5.9				
UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)	2	0	2	11.8				
TOTAL EXPEDITED DISPOSITION	97	1	98	100.0				
TIMELY	85	0	85	86.7				
UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)	2	0	2	2.0				
UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)	10	1	11	11.2				
TOTAL NON-EXPEDITED DISPOSITION	263	6	269	100.0				
TIMELY	229	5	234	87.0				
UNTIMELY (AGENCY CAUSED)	17	0	17	6.3				
UNTIMELY (CLIENT CAUSED)	17	1	18	6.7				
TOTAL APPLICATIONS PENDING AT THE END OF REPORT PERIOD	197	2	199	100.0	127	6	133	100.0
TOTAL NON-EXPEDITED APPLICATIONS PENDING AT END OF REPORT PERIOD	160	2	162	100.0	110	6	116	100.0
30 DAYS AND UNDER	148	2	150	92.6	96	6	102	87.9
31 - 40 DAYS	3	0	3	1.9	6	0	6	5.2
41 - 50 DAYS	3	0	3	1.9	2	0	2	1.7
51 - 60 DAYS	4	0	4	2.5	1	0	1	0.9
61 + DAYS	2	0	2	1.2	5	0	5	4.3
TOTAL EXPEDITED APPLICATIONS PENDING AT END OF REPORT PERIOD	37	0	37	100.0	17	0	17	100.0
7 DAYS AND UNDER	13	0	13	35.1	2	0	2	11.8
8 - 19 DAYS	13	0	13	35.1	12	0	12	70.6
20 - 30 DAYS	5	0	5	13.5	2	0	2	11.8
31 - 60 DAYS	6	0	6	16.2	1	0	1	5.9
61 + DAYS	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0

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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWI
TIMELINESS MEASUREMENT OF PA APPLICATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS
FOR JULY , 2010

08/09/10
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Financial Assistance

TOTALS FOR BRANCH 04

DISPOSITIONS-----	PA		AF-F		AF-S		AF-M		ES		SS		GD		GA		AABD	
	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT
APS PENDING BEGINNING OF REPORT PERIOD	126	44.3	45	35.7	17	13.4	5	3.9	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	54	42.8	4	3.1
APS RECEIVED THIS REPORT PERIOD	158	55.6	71	44.9	30	18.9	1	0.6	2	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	53	33.5	1	0.6
APS PENDING AT END OF REPORT PERIOD	139	48.9	59	42.4	30	21.5	2	1.4	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	46	33.0	1	0.7
APS PENDING AT BEGINING OF PERIOD STILL PENDING AT EOM	26	20.6	10	38.4	4	15.3	1	3.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	42.3	0	0.0
APS RECVD THIS PERIOD STILL PDNG AT END OF PERIOD	114	72.1	49	42.9	26	22.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	35	30.7	1	0.8
TOTAL DISPOSITIONS	145	100.0	57	39.3	17	11.7	4	2.7	2	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	61	42.0	4	2.7
AVG DAYS PROCESSING	25		26		29		39		15		0		0		24		21	
TIMELY	128	88.2	52	40.6	15	11.7	3	2.3	2	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	52	40.6	4	3.1
UNTIMELY	2	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
UNTIMELY DUE TO SPECIAL REASON	15	10.3	5	33.3	2	13.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	53.3	0	0.0

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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 HAWAII
 TIMELINESS MEASUREMENT OF PA APPLICATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS
 FOR JULY , 2010

TOTALS FOR BRANCH 04

DISPOSITIONS	PA		AF-F		AF-S		AF-M		ES		SS		GD		GA		AABD	
	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT	CNT	PCT
TOTAL APPROVALS	62	42.7	36	58.0	1	1.6	4	6.4	2	3.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	29.0	1	1.6
AVG DAYS PROCESSING	29		28		49		39		15		0		0		30		27	
TIMELY	55	88.7	33	60.0	0	0.0	3	5.4	2	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	29.0	1	1.8
UNTIMELY	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
UNTIMELY DUE TO SPECIAL REASON	6	9.6	3	50.0	1	16.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	33.3	0	0.0
TOTAL DENIALS	83	57.2	21	25.3	16	19.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	43	51.8	3	3.6
AVG DAYS PROCESSING	23		24		27		0		0		0		0		21		18	
TIMELY	73	87.9	19	26.0	15	20.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	36	49.3	3	4.1
UNTIMELY	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0
UNTIMELY DUE TO SPECIAL REASON	9	10.8	2	22.2	1	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	66.6	0	0.0

Good afternoon Chairman John Mizuno, Vice Chairman Tom Brower, and all Representatives on the Committee of Human Services. Thank you for this opportunity for us to speak of the hardships we have been dealing with due to the cut in staff.

When I started as an Eligibility Worker just 3 years ago, a full case load was considered to be in the range of 180 cases per worker. Back then, our office had 22 workers. We are now down to 12. Our average caseload is currently nearing 500. My testimony as follows will refer to the North Hilo office only and based mostly on my personal experiences.

Honorable members on the Committee of Human Services, we need more staff. The Big Island units do both new applications and carry an on-going caseload. Because of the furloughs, we have been mandated to have our office open to the public from 7:45 to 4:30. Besides losing 16 hours of work per month, we also lost all of our desk time.

Due to this loss, we are taking longer to process cases. We are getting bogged down with phone calls, voice mails, and walk-ins from clients asking why they aren't receiving benefits. They are frustrated and angry and so are we. Although I get upset at them for not understanding the situation, I realize I would be mad if I didn't get my pay check on time. I went from a meticulous, conscientious worker who knew everything about each case to one who is just constantly, as we say in the office, "putting out fires."

Between yearly re-certifications, Six-Month Reports, and General Assistance clients, we may have to touch up to 80 of our on-going cases per month. All these cases require a lot of preparation time and documentation. Verifications and other requests easily get misplaced or buried because we can't tend to it on the day we get it and we actually spend more time trying to follow up on it.

We also have to process monthly reports from the Social Security Administration, Child Support Enforcement Agency, Department of Labor, and the Internal Revenue Service. We are required to go through these reports and make changes to a case if necessary.

Hilo units are being mailed approximately 700 of Maui's re-certifications per month for three months, two of which have past. We are being required to process these with instructions that they take priority over our own. How is that fair or even right for us as workers or our clients? Now, we are hearing that there is a possibility of being required to do Medical eligibility. Where does it end? We simply can't do it! It is physically not possible to do that much work in the amount of time we are given.

Something needs to be done now! We need to fill vacant positions like those left after retirements. If these positions are in the budget, why can't they be filled? Our inability to process timely like we used to has affected our clients because they can't buy food, pay their rent, go to the doctor, or pick up medications. We are constantly stressed and getting sick. Morale is low because we feel there is no relief in sight for us and several workers have even sought out therapy. We take it out on our co-workers and our clients daily and sadly, I often take it home to my wife and daughter by being constantly irritable and short-tempered.

I've accepted an invitation to participate on the steering committee for this New Mexico processing method that is currently being studied. Even if we were to change to this system, any transitioning time will not happen soon enough and I don't think it would be possible to do it with the small staff we have now. We simply cannot keep up this pace much longer. We need the bodies now!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

ARE YOU STILL WAITING FOR FOOD STAMPS?

Have you applied for Food Stamps (SNAP benefits) and waited longer than 30 days for approval from DHS?

Have you applied for Food Stamps, eligible for Emergency or Expedited Food Stamps, and waited longer than 7 days for approval from DHS?

If you have applied for food stamps or are helping someone who has whom you believe is (1) eligible for food stamps; (2) has filed an application; and (3) has not had the application processed within the time periods listed below, we would like to hear from you.

Federal law requires that DHS must process your food stamp application and give you a response **within 30 days of the day** you applied.

At the time you apply for food stamps, DHS must screen your application to determine if you are eligible for **expedited service** of your food stamps.

Expedited Food Stamps are generally available to:

- Households with very low income and liquid assets,
- Households whose housing costs exceed the sum of the income and liquid resources, and
- Certain migrants and seasonal worker households.

If your household is eligible for **expedited service**, food stamps must be provided within **7 days** of the date of the application.

Ongoing food stamps must be provided to eligible applicants not later than **30 days** after the date of the application.

For more information about your rights to receive timely processing of your food stamp application or help with enforcing your rights, please call Lawyers for Equal Justice (LEJ) on Oahu at 587 7605 immediately. If you call after hours, please leave your name, telephone number and times we can reach you on our office voice mail system.

Lawyers for Equal Justice (LEJ) is a Hawaii non profit legal aid program that advocates for individual rights and systemic change. Our website (lejhawaii.org) has more information about our mission and activities.

THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM IN HAWAII

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, also known as Food Stamps, are intended to alleviate hunger and malnutrition in low-income households by providing fully federally-funded benefits to help them purchase food. Participating states are required to comply with federal SNAP requirements, created by the US Department of Agriculture, which administers the program at the federal level.

These federal requirements were designed to ensure that those in need would have timely access to SNAP benefits (food stamps). Under federal SNAP law, households must be permitted to file an application on the same day they contact the Department of Human Services (DHS) office and applications must be accepted as long as they include the applicant's name, address and signature. If a cash assistance application is also made at the same time, any delays in processing of the application for cash assistance may not result in any delay in processing the application for SNAP benefits.

In addition, there are federal timeliness requirements for processing SNAP applications. **DHS must process SNAP applications within 30 days and provide ongoing SNAP benefits to eligible applicants no later than 30 days after the application.** Expedited application processing and issuance of SNAP benefits is available to households have very low income and liquid resources, or whose housing costs exceed the sum of their income. DHS must affirmatively identify households eligible for expedited service at the time the household requests assistance and must process qualifying applications within 7 days. **Expedited food assistance must be provided to eligible households not later than the 7th day following the date the application is filed.**

Currently, DHS is failing to process applications for regular and expedited applications within the federal timeframes. Since July 2009, DHS's food stamp application timeliness has dropped from 87% to 79.5% in February 2010. Expedited SNAP application timeliness, for which delays to households are most harmful, is even worse. Since November 2008, 30% of the SNAP expedited applications are not processed within 7 days. It is suspected that DHS's timeliness figures have dropped even further during the recent months.

It is unlikely that DHS will be able to meet the federal requirements due to Reductions in Force policies and hiring freezes occurring during the past years. Indeed, due to these policies, DHS staff available for processing applications has been significantly reduced.

In light of DHS's inability to timely process SNAP applications, LEJ's goal is to advocate for the improvement of DHS's SNAP application processing policy and procedure so that applicants receive food stamps in a timely manner.

If you have questions about your eligibility for food stamps for yourself or someone you are helping, call Lawyers for Equal Justice (LEJ) on Oahu at 587 7605 immediately. If you call after hours, please leave your name, telephone number and times we can reach you on our office voice mail system.

Lawyers for Equal Justice (LEJ) is a Hawaii nonprofit legal aid program that advocates for individual rights and systemic change. Our website (lejhawaii.org) has more information about our mission and activities.