STATE GOVERNMENT

Letters from Pa. agencies weren't mailed because of vendor failure

The state fired the Harrisburg-based vendor after a month's worth of mail from Human Services and PennDOT never went out.

Gillian McGoldrick *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Approximately 2.7 million pieces of state agency mail never reached Pennsylvania residents last month after a state-contracted vendor failed to send them, affecting outgoing correspondence from the state Department of Human Services and the Department of Transportation, officials said.

From Nov. 3 through Dec. 3, officials said, the affected state agency mail was never presorted and delivered by the vendor to the U.S. Postal Service, resulting in a backlog of millions of unsent state communications.

Late last week, Pennsylvania state officials discovered that a month's worth of mail had never been sent to residents by the outside vendor, Harrisburg-based Capitol Presort Services LLC. Once the issue was discovered, the state fired the vendor for failing to fulfill its contract and hired another vendor to work through the backlog.

The state Department of Human Services, which oversees the care of the state's most vulnerable residents and children, is still determining "the exact volume and categories of delayed mail," said Paul Vezzetti, a spokesperson for the state Department of General Services.

However, DHS was able to confirm that some services were not interrupted: residents waiting on Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards for receiving food assistance, mail sent by county assistance offices, and notices about suspended benefits during the federal government shutdown were not affected, Vezzetti added.

PennDOT driver's license and vehicle registration renewal invitations, driver's license camera cards, vehicle registration cards and address update cards are all among the routine correspondences that were never sent to residents over the last month, Vezzetti said.

Driver's license suspensions were not impacted by the stalled mail. Vehicle registration and license renewal registrations are sent three months in advance, so anyone who was due to receive one at the start of November will have until February to submit it, the agency said.