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Governor



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Lieutenant Governor

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

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Secretary

JOHN A. WAGNER
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2005-27
June 22, 2005

To:  **Transitional Assistance Office Staff**
From:  **Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**
Re: **Bay State CAP Outreach Plan**

Background

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Combined Application Project (Bay State CAP) created a new and simpler way for eligible Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applicants/recipients to apply for food assistance. The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) implemented the project on February 1, 2005. As part of the initial implementation, DTA converted existing eligible Food Stamp Assistance Units (AUs) to Bay State CAP.

Approximately 60,000 recipients of SSI are eligible for, but not receiving, Food Stamp benefits. Nutritional assistance in the form of food stamps would be a vital benefit to this vulnerable and under-served population in Massachusetts. In the waiver with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), DTA agreed to outreach to these individuals.

DTA will outreach to SSI recipients who appear to be eligible for Bay State CAP in two phases.

Overview

Phase One will target 30,000 Bay State CAP eligible individuals who are coded for SSI purposes in State Living Arrangement A (living alone) and will be implemented through automatic enrollment. DTA chose these individuals for Phase One, because SDX provides all the information required to determine eligibility.

**Overview
(Continued)**

Phase Two will target SSI recipients who are coded for SSI purposes in State Living Arrangement B (sharing expenses). For individuals who share expenses, SDX does not provide all the information required to determine eligibility. DTA must explore the “purchase and prepare” arrangement for these households.

**Phase One
Process**

On June 11 and 12, MIS selected SSI recipients (applied/redetermined by the Social Security Administration (SSA) before 2/1/2005) who:

- Met the Bay State CAP criteria;
- Were coded State Living Arrangement A; and
- Were not active Food Stamp recipients, or active or ineligible in a cash assistance household.

For these individuals, BEACON:

- Created a pending Bay State CAP FS AU in BEACON;
- Calculated the initial Bay State CAP Outreach benefit using SSA income, the Bay State CAP low shelter standard, and the Bay State CAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA);
- Certified the AU through the August, 2005 benefit cycle; and
- Placed a note in the BEACON Narratives tab in each Bay State CAP AU, stating: *Bay State CAP Outreach AU/AP—benefits effective 7/2005.*

On June 24, Bay State CAP Outreach packages will be mailed. The packages will include a notice (see Attachment A) as well as the *Bay State CAP Outreach* and *How to Use Your Bay State Access Card* brochures (see Attachments B and C).

On June 27, EBT vendor will mail Bay State Access Cards to the target group.

On June 28, EBT vendor will mail PINs to the target group.

On June 30, two months of Bay State CAP food assistance benefits will be issued to the AU.

Note: For Bay State CAP purposes, the benefits will be for July and August 2005.

**Phase One
Process
(Continued)**

From June 30 to August 12 (44 days), Phase One target group members may choose to access Bay State CAP benefits by making a food purchase using the Bay State Access Card and PIN.

On August 13, MIS will determine which Phase One target group members have accessed Bay State CAP benefits.

- If a target group member does not access Bay State CAP benefits, BEACON will:
 - √ Close the pending Bay State CAP FS AU on BEACON; and
 - √ Reduce Bay State CAP Outreach food assistance benefits to zero in the EBT account.
- If a target group member does access Bay State CAP benefits, BEACON will:
 - √ Switch the pending FS AU to active on BEACON;
 - √ Extend the AU certification for 34 months;
 - √ Assign the AU to an AU Manager; and
 - √ Generate a Bay State CAP Extension Notice (see Attachment D).

Between August 15 and August 30, the Bay State CAP Extension Notice will be mailed (staggered based on ending SSN). The notice will provide the following information:

- Monthly Bay State CAP benefit amount;
- Extended certification period;
- Transitional Assistance Office (TAO);
- Assistance Unit Manager (AUM); and
- Information regarding shelter costs.

A Bay State CAP Shelter Statement (see Attachment E) requesting shelter cost information will also be included in the mailing.

**Bay State CAP
Outreach Call
Center**

The Bay State CAP Outreach notice mailed on 6/24 will instruct the target group members to call 1-888-203-4610 if they have questions about Bay State CAP. Beginning on 6/27, a Bay State CAP Outreach Call Center will be established. The Outreach Call Center will be staffed by DTA personnel from Local Office Quality Control (LOQC) and Central Office.

**AU Manager
Responsibility
for Bay State
CAP Outreach
Cases**

No AU Manager action is necessary to create a Bay State CAP Outreach AU, issue Bay State CAP food assistance benefits, or activate a Bay State CAP AU for a target group member.

The Bay State CAP Extension notice mailed in August will tell the Bay State CAP recipient the name and phone number of the AU Manager.

Upon receipt of a completed and signed Bay State CAP Shelter Statement, the AU Manager must:

- Enter \$450 on the Shelter Expense Window in BEACON; and
- Go to the Verification Tab, select Shelter Expense in the Verified With field, select Other (Specify), and type *Bay State CAP Outreach AU*.
Note: No additional verification of the shelter expense amount is required.

Once the AU Manager processes the change in the Interview Wrapup window, BEACON will recalculate the Bay State CAP benefit using the new information.

**Important
Phase One
Dates**

- On June 24, Outreach Packages mailed to the target group by Schraffts.
- On June 27, Bay State Access Cards mailed to the target group by the EBT vendor.
- On June 27, DTA Bay State CAP Outreach Phone Number is available and staffed.
- On June 28, PINs mailed to the target group by the EBT vendor.
- On June 30, benefits become available in EBT accounts.
- From June 30 through August 12, 2005 target group members can access benefits.
- On August 13, MIS will determine which target group members have accessed Bay State CAP benefits.

Phase Two

In the Fall, DTA will outreach to Phase Two target group members (SSI recipients coded for SSI purposes in State Living Arrangement B). A future Field Operations Memo will provide detailed information regarding the Phase Two process.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

DTA - Bay State CAP
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

{RECIPIENT_ NAME}
{RECIPIENT_ ADDRESS}
{RECIPIENT_ CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP}

6/24/2005

**WELCOME TO BAY STATE CAP
A New Way to Help You Pay for Food**

Dear {Recipient}:

The Social Security Administration (SSA), United States Department of Agriculture and Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) worked together to bring you a new food assistance program called Bay State CAP. We are writing to tell you that based on SSA information you are automatically eligible for this new program.

Bay State CAP was designed to provide more money for food for elders and people with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Just like food stamps, you can use Bay State CAP food assistance benefits to buy food in supermarkets or pay for prepared meals at special meal programs.

If you choose to participate in Bay State CAP:

- ◆ You will get food assistance benefits for 36 months.
- ◆ Your food assistance benefits will be deposited in an account created just for you.
- ◆ You will use your Bay State Access Card and PIN like a credit or debit card when you go food shopping.

\$ { _____ } has already been deposited in an account for you.

- ◆ You will receive your Bay State Access Card in the mail in a day or two. Be sure to watch your mail for your Bay State Access Card.

- ◆ You will receive your PIN a day or two later. Be sure to watch your mail for an envelope with a light blue backing.

If you choose to join Bay State CAP simply make a food purchase with your Bay State Access Card by August 12, 2005. You will receive a separate letter telling you about your continued eligibility, monthly food assistance amount and case worker name during the last two weeks of August.

If you choose not to be part of Bay State CAP, do not use your Bay State Access Card. Your account will be closed and reduced to zero on August 13, 2005.

If you have any questions about Bay State CAP or this notice, please call 1-888-203-4610 and a DTA worker will help you. The enclosed brochure will also tell you more about Bay State CAP.

If you have questions about using your Bay State Access Card and PIN, please call 1-800-997-2555 and a customer service representative will help you.

Bay State CAP can help you buy nutritious foods. We encourage you to take advantage of this new benefit.

Where to call for more information on Bay State CAP

If you have any questions about Bay State CAP, please call 1-888-203-4610 (toll free) and a DTA worker will help you.

If you have questions about using your Bay State Access Card and PIN, please call 1-800-997-2555 (toll free) and a customer service representative will help you.



BAY STATE CAP

A FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FOR

ELDERS AND

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

IN

MASSACHUSETTS



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance
FS_BSC (5/2005)
09-529-0505-05

What is Bay State CAP food assistance?

Bay State CAP is a program designed to make it easy for recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to get food assistance benefits. It is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). Based on information from the Social Security Administration (SSA), you are automatically eligible to receive Bay State CAP food assistance benefits.

What are the benefits of Bay State CAP?

- You don't have to go a DTA office.
- You don't have to give us copies of your personal records.
- Your redetermination for SSI will be your redetermination for Bay State CAP food assistance benefits.
- Your food assistance benefits go into a special account, and we send you a card to use when you buy groceries. The card works just like a bank debit card.

How can you use your Bay State CAP benefits?

You may only use your Bay State CAP benefits to buy food, for home consumption. Certain households may use Bay State CAP benefits to buy prepared meals or to make it easier for them to obtain food. Some examples of these special uses of Bay State CAP benefits are: communal dining for elderly persons or Meals on Wheels. You are not required to have cooking facilities to be eligible for Bay State CAP benefits.

Who is eligible for Bay State CAP food assistance benefits?

You can get Bay State CAP food assistance benefits if you get SSI and you:

- Live alone; OR
- Live with other people but buy and prepare your food separately from them; OR
- Are homeless, even if you are living in a shelter.

In addition to meeting the above requirements, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old; AND
- Not be living with a spouse or children; AND
- Not be working.

What are your rights and responsibilities?

You are required to report to SSA changes in your circumstances that may affect your eligibility for and the amount of your SSI payments. This information will also be used for your Bay State CAP benefits. Report changes to SSA by calling 1-800-772-1213 or by visiting your local Social Security Office.

You may report to DTA changes in your household expenses which may result in higher food assistance benefits.



PIN (Personal Identification Number):

This four number code must be used with your card. It is very important to keep your code a secret.

What to Do if: The System is Not Working or The Store Does Not Have a Card Reader

The clerk may fill out a manual voucher, for your food purchases.

MANUAL VOUCHER	
□□□□□□□□□□	\$□□□.□□
Card Number	Amount
Print Cardholder Name	
Cardholder Signature	Date
Cardholder Verification Statement. Merchant Altered Voucher Warning Statement.	

This voucher will list:

- Your card number
- The amount of your food purchase.

After the clerk fills in the voucher, the clerk will call to see if you have enough benefits to buy the food. Before you sign, make sure the amount on the voucher is correct. If it is, sign the voucher, and you will be given a copy of the voucher. Keep this voucher so you can subtract this amount from your balance. This will give you the correct amount in your account.

It may take a few days for the amount to be subtracted from your account.

Legal Notice

- Misuse or abuse of your card will result in investigation by State and/or Federal authorities. Documented violations will result in sanctions including:
 - Disqualification from program
 - Recovery through recoupment/restitution
 - And/or referral for Criminal prosecution
- *It is a crime to defraud the system or to sell your card and PIN to others!* Repeated loss and replacement of your card may result in a special investigation of your case.

When to Call Customer Service



1-800-997-2555

This is a free call.

Customer Service is open **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** to answer any questions you may have about how to get your benefits.

The customer service number is first answered by a computer. You will be asked questions to help direct your call.

Call to find out:

- Where you can use your card.
- Your account balance.



Call 1-800-997-2555 if:

- You have questions or problems using your card or secret PIN.
- Your card is lost or stolen. You must report this immediately.
- Your card does not work.

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Transitional Assistance
BSC-EBT (6/2005)
09-525-0605-05*

HOW TO USE

YOUR

BAYSTATE

ACCESS

CARD



TO

MAKE

FOOD

PURCHASES

Welcome to Bay State CAP

Your food assistance benefits are kept in a special account for you until you want to use them. This brochure tells you how.

Where to Use Your Card

You can use your card to get your benefits where you see this mark:



➔ **ACCEPT FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS**

How to Use Your Card at the Store



1. Before you shop, check your last receipt to find out how much money is in your account, or call **1-800-997-2555** for your balance.



2. Look for the Quest® mark on the door or window of the store.



3. At check-out, you swipe your card through the machine.



4. You enter your secret PIN on the number pad, then press **Enter**.

5. Tell the clerk how much money to enter or enter the amount yourself. Remember, you can only buy food items with your food benefits.



6. Always check your receipt to make sure that the amount on the EBT receipt is the same as the grocery receipt.

Benefit Availability

- You will receive your benefits on the same day every month.
- Based on the last digit of your SSN you will receive your benefits on the following **dates:**

SSN Ending	Benefits Available
-0	1
-1	2
-2	4
-3	5
-4	7
-5	8
-6	10
-7	11
-8	13
-9	14

When you receive your account balance(s) and the amount is higher or lower than you expect, you may call 1-800-997-2555 and obtain your last ten (10) transactions on your account.

Your PIN



PIN stands for Personal Identification Number.

- Your secret PIN is your electronic signature. It is the key that unlocks your benefit accounts.
- To use your card, you must enter your 4 number secret PIN into the machine.
- Keep your secret PIN a secret.
- Never write your secret PIN on your card.
- Never let anyone see you enter your secret PIN at a machine, even a store clerk.
- Never give anyone your card or secret PIN. If a person has your card and knows your secret PIN, they can use ALL of your benefits.
- If someone else uses your secret PIN and card, your **BENEFITS WILL NOT BE REPLACED**.

How to Take Care of Your Card/PIN

- Keep your card in a safe place when you are not using it.
- Never write your secret PIN on your card.
- Do not damage or bend your card.

- Do not write on or scratch the black stripe on the back of your card.
- Do not put your card near magnets, TV's, stereos, VCR's, or even the magnetic clasp on a purse.

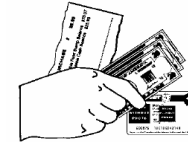
Safety First



- Have your card ready.



- Never let anyone see you enter your secret PIN.



- Put card and receipt away quickly.

Words to Remember



EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer):
The way you will get your food assistance benefits.



POS Machine (Point of Sale Machine):
This machine reads your card so you can buy food with your food stamp benefits. This can also be called a card reader machine.

{BEACON_USER_STREET_ADDRESS} Important Notice - Read Carefully
{BEACON_USER_CITY, STATE, ZIP} Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

{RECIPIENT_NAME} {RECIPIENT_SSN}
{RECIPIENT_ADDRESS} {BEACON_USER_OFFICE_NAME}
{RECIPIENT_CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP}

8/XX/2005

BAY STATE CAP FOOD ASSISTANCE
A New Way to Help You Pay for Food

Dear {Recipient}:

Congratulations on accessing your Bay State CAP food assistance benefits. We are glad you took advantage of this new benefit program.

Your certification period for Bay State CAP benefits is from {FS_CYCLICAL_START_DATE} through {FS_CYCLICAL_END_DATE}.

Your monthly Bay State CAP benefit amount will be {FS_AMOUNT}.

You will get your Bay State CAP benefits on the {FS_BENEFIT_DAY} of each month.

You already received your monthly benefits for July and August 2005. The next Bay State CAP benefits you will receive will be for the period of {SEPTEMBER_CYCLICAL_PERIOD}.

Your monthly food assistance benefit amount is based on a standard shelter amount. If you pay \$450 or more per month for shelter (rent/mortgage), you may be eligible for higher Bay State CAP benefits. Complete and sign the enclosed Bay State CAP Shelter Statement if you pay more than \$450 per month for shelter costs.

If you pay less than \$450 per month for shelter, do nothing to continue getting your food assistance benefits.

Your Bay State CAP worker is {WORKER_NAME} at {USER_TELEPHONE_NUMBER}. Please call your worker if you have any questions about your case.

A117 You are entitled to {FS_TYPE} benefits, if eligible, without regard to age, race, color, sex, handicap, religious creed, national origin, or political beliefs. If you believe that the Department, in making your eligibility determination, has discriminated against you, contact your local Transitional Assistance Office to find out how you can file a complaint.

A125 To ask about free legal services, call: {LEGAL_SERVICE_INF}.

**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
Bay State CAP Shelter Statement**

NAME OF FOOD ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

My monthly housing cost, not including utility bills, is:

\$450 or more a month

I understand that I can choose to get regular food assistance benefits at any time if I would get a higher benefit amount than the Bay State CAP amount. The regular amount might be higher if I:

- Pay more than \$35 a month in out-of-pocket medical expenses;
- Pay a higher amount for my shelter;
- Pay heating or cooling costs separately from my rent/mortgage;
- Pay child support for a child outside my home; or
- Pay for child or adult dependent care.

I can call my DTA case manager to find out if the regular food assistance benefit amount would be higher than the Bay State CAP amount.

SIGNATURE

DATE

Return the completed and signed form to:

**Malden Centralized SSI Office
200 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148**