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Field Operations Memo 2005-52
October 28, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: TAFDC – Child Support Sanction Change

Background

Field Operations Memo 2005-37 informed TAO Staff that:

- this child support sanction rule change would result in a larger decrease of the recipient's TAFDC benefits; and
- a notice would be mailed to currently sanctioned recipients informing them of this change.

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.17:

- a recipient who is sanctioned for noncooperation of child support (without good cause) would be removed from the grant. The grant would be reduced by 25% of the grant he or she *would have received* prior to not cooperating.
- when the AU Manager enters the child support sanction *and authorizes the sanction on the Interview Wrap-up window*, EBC Results will **automatically** apply the sanction and send out a notice telling the recipient how the child support sanction affects the grant.

The sanction will remain in effect until the recipient cooperates with child support in accordance with 106 CMR 203.710. This change is being made to conform to Federal Welfare Reform regulations.

State Letter 1306 transmits this policy change *effective November 1, 2005*.

**Child Support
Sanction
Examples**

Currently, if a recipient is sanctioned for noncooperation of child support (without good cause), he or she would be removed from the grant and his or her grant would be reduced.

Example 1: John Doe was receiving a grant for three people of \$593. He does not cooperate with child support. His grant is reduced to \$491.

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.17, a recipient who is sanctioned for noncooperation of child support (without good cause) would be removed from the grant. The grant would be reduced by 25% of the grant he or she *would have received* prior to not cooperating.

Example 2: John Doe was receiving a grant for three people of \$593. He does not cooperate with child support. He is removed from the grant by the AU Manager for failure to cooperate with child support. Once the AU Manager authorizes this sanction on the Interview Wrap up window, BEACON calculates a 25% reduction of \$593 resulting in an amount of **\$445** as the new grant amount.

In Example 2 above, if John Doe were working and his gross income was \$500, the AU would close. This is because the \$500 would be deducted in total from the new grant amount of \$445 with **no** earned income disregards applied. See 106 CMR 204.310 (B).

**AU Manager
Responsibilities**

To sanction the recipient for failure to cooperate with child support (without good cause), the AU Manager must:

- select the child support sanction from the drop-down box on the **Sanctions** tab of the AU Composition Results window;
- click on “Save;”
- enter the food stamp attributed amount on the Other income window, if in receipt of food stamps, (See *A User's Guide*, Chapter XIV-D page 6 for additional information); and
- **authorize this action on the Interview Wrap-up window. Once released, the Responsibility will go to “Sanctioned Child Support” with a status of “Active.”**

For BEACON calculation purposes, **any** active recipient who is sanctioned for child support will continue to have a status of “Active” displayed. The status will no longer switch to “Ineligible.”

**Child Support
Sanction
Examples
(continued)**

*BEACON
Changes*

The reason of “Failure to Cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Unit” in the Reason Category of “Noncooperation” has been removed from the Results tab of the AU Composition Results window because all child support sanctions will be initiated on the Sanction tab of the AU Composition Results window.

Both the Financial tab of the Interview Wrap-up EBC Results window and the Results tab of the Eligibility Explorer will have a new row added below the Need Standard which will be called “CS Sanction Payment Standard Reduction.” This will display the amount that the Payment Standard will be reduced.

The food stamp attributed amount **entry** will be automated in a future BEACON Increment. Until that time, it must be entered by the AU Manager.

*Ineligible
Grantee*

Also effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.17, an ineligible grantee who fails to cooperate with child support (without good cause) will have his or her grant reduced by 25% of the grant he or she *would have received* prior to not cooperating.

Example 3: Jane Doe had been previously sanctioned for failure to meet Immunization requirements. She is receiving TAFDC for her remaining three children. She does not cooperate with child support. She is sanctioned by the AU Manager for failure to cooperate with child support. BEACON calculates a 25% reduction of \$593 resulting in an amount of **\$445** as the new grant amount.

*Once the AU Manager authorizes the child support sanction on the Interview Wrap-up window, BEACON will **automatically** apply the 25% reduction. She would have a status of “Ineligible” and a Responsibility of: “Sanctioned Child Support.” If at a later date she cooperates with the Immunization requirement and continues to be child support sanctioned, her status would change to “Active” and her Responsibility would remain: “Sanctioned Child Support.”*

For BEACON calculation purposes, **any** ineligible grantee who is already sanctioned and is subsequently sanctioned for child support will continue to have a status of “Ineligible” displayed. This also applies to the following ineligible grantees:

**Child Support
Sanction
Examples
(continued)**

- an SSI recipient who was sanctioned for failure to cooperate with child support would have a status of: “Ineligible” and a Responsibility of: “Sanctioned Child Support.”
 - an Ineligible Noncitizen with a Responsibility of “Ineligible Noncitizen,” who was sanctioned for failure to cooperate with child support would have a status of: “Ineligible” and a Responsibility of: “Sanctioned Child Support.”
 - an Ineligible Grantee with a Responsibility of “None” who was sanctioned for failure to cooperate with child support would have a status of: “Ineligible” and a Responsibility of: “Sanctioned Child Support.”
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**Currently
Sanctioned
Grantees**

Those grantees who have a current child support sanction when the new 25% sanction rule is implemented with Increment 2.1.17, must have the new sanction amount applied to his or her AU. MIS will run a datafix on these AUs over the weekend of October 29. The *recalculation* using the 25% sanction rule will be run Monday night (October 31).

Therefore, no EBC Calculations should be run on these AUs on Monday October 31, 2005

A narrative will be entered by MIS on the BEACON Narratives tab once the sanction is authorized stating: “EBC recalculated to apply the new 25% child support sanction rule.”

No additional AU Manager action is needed.

**Cooperation with
Child Support**

AU Managers are reminded to tell recipients about the benefits of cooperating with child support and helping the recipient with the cooperation process. If a sanctioned grantee wishes to cooperate with child support, the Cooperation with DOR Notice (DOR-CN) must be completed following procedures in *A User’s Guide*, Chapter XIII, Section G: Absence.

For recipients who agree to cooperate with child support, once the Department of Revenue (DOR) notifies the Department (with a Notice of Cooperation) that the recipient has cooperated with Child Support (or 70 days has lapsed from the recipient signing the DOR-CN, whichever comes first), the AU Manager must:

- go to the Assessed Person Nonfinancial Statement workflow;
 - click on the Absence window;
 - click on the Cooperation Tab;
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**Cooperation with
Child Support
(continued)**

- click on Yes for the Child Support Cooperation;
- click on Update to save the information; and
- remove the child support sanction by going to the Sanction Tab on the AU Composition Results window, selecting the assessed person, selecting the appropriate removal reason (cooperating) and clicking on Save.

Follow the procedures described in Chapter V, *Household Composition* and Chapter IX, *AU Composition Results of A User's Guide*, to include the assessed person in the TAFDC benefits. **This change must be authorized on the Interview Wrap up window.**

REMINDER: The TAFDC benefits for the *grantee* may not be increased if there is another sanction because he or she failed to cooperate with another TAFDC program requirement. However, the additional 25% reduction of benefits will be restored. In Example 3 on page 3 of this memo, the grant for Jane Doe would be restored to \$593, with Jane still out of the grant for failure to meet the Immunization requirements.

If the recipient is receiving food stamps, the AU Manager must remove the food stamp attributed amount entry from the Other Income window of BEACON (as long as no other “food stamp attributed amount” sanction exists for this recipient). AU Managers must look at the “Clients with Sanctions” view to determine which recipients need to have the food stamp attributed amount removed.

This food stamp attributed amount **removal** will also be automated in a future BEACON Increment.

**Notices, Forms
and A User's
Guide**

Notices and forms are being updated to reflect this policy and procedural change.

A User's Guide, Chapter XIII, Section G: Absence, will be updated to reflect the changes reflected in this Field Operations Memo.

Questions

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