

From the Hotline

Q. I have a food stamp recipient who is up to date in his child support payments. He is required by a court order to pay \$200 monthly in child support. For the past nine months, he has also been providing an additional \$75 per month in child support payments and verified this with his cancelled checks. Can I include the additional \$75 monthly amount in his child support deduction when calculating his food stamp benefit amount?

A. Although child support is an acceptable food stamp benefit deduction, it must be “legally obligated” child support. This means it must be legally binding by court order or some other administrative process to be an acceptable deduction. Since the \$75 is not a legally enforceable payment or arrearage amount, the additional payment may not be deducted from his income. In addition to child support payments, remind your recipient that legally obligated health insurance and arrearage payments may be deducted as well. For more information on this topic, refer to 106 CMR 364.400 (G), *A User’s Guide*, pages XIV-G-1 and XIV-G-2, as well as Field Operations Memo 95-30. Effective March 24, 2003, the monthly amount of child support payments made by an AU member may also be excluded from the AU’s gross income test.

Q. I took a TAFDC application. The applicant completed all the information needed on the Child Support windows and signed the T-A34/36 form. Some verifications are outstanding and the AU can not yet be approved. Should I send the documents to DOR now?

A. No. The child support documents should not be sent to DOR until the AU has been authorized to receive TAFDC benefits. When DOR receives the documents, they match the information to the child support data that is sent nightly from BEACON. This data is not sent until the AU is authorized for benefits. Also, DOR cannot start child support procedures until the AU is an active TAFDC AU. Please refer to *A User’s Guide*, XIII-G-14 for more information.

Q. Yesterday, a food stamp recipient informed me that she was leaving for Florida to visit her sister on a six-week vacation. Can I close this food stamp AU?

A. Vacations are not an acceptable reason to terminate a food stamp AU. In this example, ask the client further questions to determine whether or not the family intends to return to Massachusetts once the vacation is over. Food stamp regulations concerning residency do not require the intent to permanently reside in the State. In addition, individuals vacationing in an area are not considered residents of that area. For more information on this topic, refer to 106 CMR 362.100.

Emergency Assistance Program

EA
EA User’s Guide: Emergency Assistance, SSI Special Benefits and BEACON Update 010

The *EA User’s Guide* has been revised to include the names of two new SSPS screens: the **EA Close - Entry** and the **EA Reactivate - Entry** screens. It also gives the name of a new contact person at TransActions Associates.

BEACON Todays Issued in March 2003

BT 102 BEACON Increment
2.1.2 (3/24/2003)

BT 103 Veterans’ Benefits
(3/26/2003)