



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

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Field Operations Memo 2000-9
February 23, 2000

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Random Moment Sampling (RMS)

Overview

The Random Moment Sampling Coordinators at Central Office have received numerous inquiries about Random Moment Sampling (RMS). This Field Operations Memo addresses many of the questions and issues that have been raised in an effort to clear up any misunderstandings about the purpose of RMS and the implementation process.

RMS Requirement Federal regulations require the Department to determine administrative expenses for federal and state programs.

RMS can be done through several methods, including face-to-face observations and/or telephone observations. The Department chose telephone observations as the method to comply with the federal requirement because it is the least disruptive method to Transitional Assistance Workers. This is an ongoing process and will continue unless the federal government deems the results to be inaccurate or mandates a different method of determining the administrative expenses.

If telephone observations are deemed inaccurate, the federal government may require the Department to implement a less desirable method of RMS such as face-to-face observations, or to implement 100 percent time-keeping. One hundred percent time-keeping would require every Transitional Assistance Worker to record his or her activities every fifteen minutes, beginning at the start of every workday and ending at the end of every workday. This would be intrusive and time consuming for Transitional Assistance Workers and as such would be administratively burdensome.

RMS Objective

The RMS Coordinators' primary objective is to complete the observations timely and accurately, and not to measure work performance or attendance. This objective can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of the Transitional Assistance Workers and the RMS Coordinators.

RMS Process

RMS must be conducted throughout each work day, without regard to news events, weather conditions, approaching holidays, or any other factor.

The selection of who will be called and at what time is computer-generated and is completely random. Consequently, it is possible that one Transitional Assistance Worker may be called more often than another.

Transitional Assistance Workers will be asked questions about what they were working on in the minute just prior to receiving the call. It is important that all of the RMS Coordinator's questions be answered. No confidentiality rules are broken by cooperating with this process. If the Transitional Assistance Worker is working on a specific case, the case SSN must also be provided to the RMS Coordinator.

To ensure the accuracy of the RMS process, it is important that the telephone calls be completed as close to the "random moment" as possible. If a Transitional Assistance Worker does not answer the telephone when called, the RMS Coordinator will leave a message on his or her voice-mail requesting that the call be returned as soon as possible. If the call is not returned within one day, the RMS Director may call or cc:Mail the Transitional Assistance Office Director or Assistant Director seeking assistance in completing the interview.

The Random Moment Sampling unit telephone number is (617) 348-5025.

If a Transitional Assistance Worker is not in the office at the time he or she is selected to participate in RMS, the RMS Coordinator requires a general explanation for the absence, such as illness, vacation, jury duty, lunch, training, flextime schedule, etc. The general explanation is necessary to monitor the integrity of the sampling process. For example, if a large number of observations occur during lunch breaks or during "flex" hours, it may be necessary to alter the hours of the RMS process. If the Transitional Assistance Worker's voice-mail indicates the reason he or she is out of the office on the date he or she is selected to participate, the RMS Coordinator can complete the observation accordingly. It is not necessary to provide a specific explanation for the absence, such as dental appointment, flu, family crisis, etc.

**Random Moment
Sampling Staff**

The Central Office Random Moment Sampling staff are:

Mary Halmkin, Director
Maryann Prokos, Assistant Director
Tedla Baleh
Roberta Maxson
John Pattavina
Joanne Valente
Patricia Cedrone

Telephone observations can only be successful with the cooperation of every Transitional Assistance Worker. The Random Moment Sampling staff appreciate your continued cooperation in the RMS process.

Questions

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