



MITT ROMNEY
Governor


KERRY HEALEY
Lieutenant Governor

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

TIMOTHY R. MURPHY
Secretary

JOHN A. WAGNER
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2005-33
August 2, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Bay State CAP - Additional Questions and Answers

Background

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Combined Application Project (Bay State CAP) was implemented on February 1, 2005. There have been a series of Field Operations Memos providing information relative to Bay State CAP. Field Operations Memo 2005-4 described the project in detail. Field Operations Memo 2005-18 provided information about implementation issues in a question and answer format. Field Operations Memo 2005-27 described Phase One of the Bay State CAP Outreach Plan.

This memo provides additional Bay State CAP process information as well as Phase One outreach issues. The format is a series of questions and answers, and is divided into two sections: ongoing process issues and outreach issues.

ONGOING PROCESS ISSUES

**Erroneous
Client Request
to Stop Bay
State CAP
Closings**

Q 1: My client called to inform me that her Bay State CAP case was closed at her request. She did not ask that her benefits be closed. When I called Central Office to report what had happened, I was told that Central Office was aware of the problem and was working on the solution. Has this problem been corrected?

ONGOING PROCESS ISSUES – Continued

Erroneous
Client Request
to Stop Bay
State CAP
Closings -
Continued

A: Yes. Working with Social Security Administration (SSA) staff, Central Office identified situations in which SSA incorrectly removed many recipients from Bay State CAP. MIS recently:

- Restored Bay State CAP status to 325 Assistance Units (AUs) that met the criteria for Bay State CAP. Approval letters were sent to these restored recipients.

Note: Most of these recipients were not harmed by the Bay State CAP closing due to the BEACON logic. When BEACON receives information from SDX that a recipient has requested to close Bay State CAP, BEACON will automatically switch the AU to regular food stamp benefits and shorten the certification period to 90 days. *During the 90 day period the recipient will continue to receive the Bay State CAP benefit amount.* Since MIS was able to restore the majority of AUs to Bay State CAP status within the 90-days, most recipients did not lose benefits as a result of the erroneous closing.

- Properly denied Bay State CAP status to those AUs that did not meet the criteria for Bay State CAP. Denial notices were sent to these recipients.

Although MIS and SSA have identified the problem, Central Office plans to develop a monitoring process to ensure that in the future all Bay State CAP AUs that close per request of the client are properly processed.

Treatment of
Fleeing Felons

Q 2: BEACON closed one of my Bay State CAP recipients for being a fleeing felon based on SDX information. Recipients of regular food stamp benefits are given an opportunity to resolve their felony status before their AU is closed. My recipient had no such opportunity because the closing occurred automatically. Does the Department intend to do something about this inconsistent treatment of food stamp recipients?

A. Yes. Beginning with Increment 2.1.16, BEACON will switch the Bay State CAP AU to regular food stamp benefits and shorten the certification period to 90 days when information from SDX indicates that a Bay State CAP recipient is a fleeing felon. The AU Manager must explore the fleeing felon status as part of the recertification process. Prior to this change, if you have any of these cases, call the MIS Help Desk, 617-348-5290.

Q 3: I work at the Malden Centralized SSI Office, and I want to know what my responsibilities are when a Bay State CAP AU closes for no longer meeting the Bay State CAP household requirement or for having earnings for more than three months?

A: As soon as you see that this has occurred, you can transfer the AU to the appropriate Transitional Assistance Office (TAO). You do not have to extend the certification period, because when a Bay State CAP AU closes for such a reason BEACON shortens the certification period to three months.

Bay State CAP
Recipient that
Moved Out of
State

Q 4: One of my Bay State CAP AUs moved out of state. The new address appears on SDX and BEACON. Should this AU be closed?

A: No. There is a delay in the SSA processing for AUs who moved out of state. An SR has been submitted to change the logic. Continue to use the instructions regarding out-of-state addresses that were provided in Field Operations Memo 2005-18 until further instructions are issued.

OUTREACH ISSUES

Address
Change for a
Pending Bay
State CAP
Outreach AU

Q 5: I've noticed that for some Bay State CAP Outreach AUs the address in BEACON does not reflect the address that appears on SDX. How long does it take an SSA address change to appear in BEACON?

A: SDX information received since the opening of the Bay State CAP Outreach AUs will be processed with the activation of the AU on the weekend of August 13, 2005.

Notification of
CAP recipient
entering a
Nursing Home

Q 6: DMA has been submitting forms to notify us that a SSI/CAP recipient has entered a nursing home. Should this AU be closed?

A: No. SSA does not automatically close an SSI AU because a recipient has entered a nursing home. Central Office is in the process of getting more information from SSA as to the reason they are not automatically closing. Do not make any changes on these AUs until notified.

OUTREACH ISSUES – Continued

Timeliness
Processing
Concerns

Q 7: Phase One of the Outreach Plan involved creating 29,600 pending Bay State CAP FS AUs on June 11 and 12. Many of these AUs have now been pending for more than 30 days. Do I have to worry about violating the application processing timeframes for these AUs?

A: No. As part of the outreach waiver granted by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department agreed to outreach to Bay State CAP-eligible SSI recipients who were not receiving FS. These Bay State CAP Outreach AUs are not true applications. Although these AUs will appear as untimely on the Tompkins Report, they are not subject to normal application processing timeframes.

Q 8: I have received calls from Bay State CAP Outreach AUs who live with other people and want to know if they are eligible for Bay State CAP. How should I respond to their questions?

Household
Composition
Issues

A: Here are some guidelines for Bay State CAP household composition inquiries:

- **If the SSI adult lives with an adult child**, the individual is eligible for Bay State CAP benefits.
- **If the SSI child (18—21) lives with parent(s)/siblings**, the individual is eligible for Bay State CAP benefits (through a waiver granted by USDA).
- **If the SSI adult lives with children under age 22**, the individual is not eligible for Bay State CAP. Tell them that the family may be eligible for regular food stamp benefits and that an application can be mailed to them if they want to apply.

Important: Per a USDA QC advisory, there will be no QC-related error based on an incorrect Bay State CAP household composition. SSA is considered a trusted federal source and all Bay State CAP outreach AUs are properly coded as Federal Living Arrangement A and State Living Arrangement A for household composition purposes.

OUTREACH ISSUES – Continued

Card and/or PIN
Replacement
Requests

Q 9: As part of the Bay State CAP Outreach Plan, the Department mailed out 29,600 Bay State Access cards and PINs. Many individuals did not receive/lost/threw away a card and/or PIN. I know that a centralized process of replacing cards/PINs by mail was established to handle the large number of replacement requests. As we get closer to the August 12th deadline for accessing benefits, will this process give the individuals enough time to access their benefits using a replacement card and/or PIN?

A: No. Effective July 25, 2005, individuals who contact the Bay State CAP Call Center to request a replacement card and/or PIN were told to go to the closest TAO. Call Center staff inform the individual to bring the Bay State Access Card and/or identification so that a replacement can be generated. Immediate issuance of a new card and/or PIN from the TAO will ensure adequate time to access Bay State CAP benefits before the August 12th deadline.

Streamlined
Authorized
Representative
Card Process

Q 10: Currently, when an SSI/FS recipient assigned to the Malden Centralized SSI Office contacts a TAO to request a Bay State Access card for an Authorized Representative, the TAO must contact the Malden Centralized SSI Office. A staff person in Malden must enter information about the prospective Authorized Representative into the Assisting Person window in BEACON before a card can be requested.

The implementation of the Bay State CAP Outreach Plan has greatly increased the number of such requests. Does the Department plan to streamline the process of issuing Authorized Representative cards?

A: Yes. Due to the increased volume of inquiries and requests for Authorized Representatives, particularly among Bay State CAP Outreach AUs, the Department has decided to give a manager in each TAO the ability to enter Assisting Person information into BEACON for SSI/FS AUs assigned to the Malden Centralized SSI Office. This will be in effect until the Bay State CAP Outreach Plan is completed.

Questions

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