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Field Operations Memo 2002-17A
September 3, 2002

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Shelter Placement and EA Eligibility Standard

Overview

The EA Eligibility Standard was lowered to 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level effective July 30, 2002. Field Operations Memo 2002-17 instructed staff to manually determine the financial eligibility for any new or pending EA application. Staff were advised that instructions would be provided at a later date if additional action was required. The new EA Eligibility Standard will be available in BEACON on September 9, 2002.

This memo provides instructions for reviewing the EA eligibility of families in shelter whose income may exceed the lowered EA Eligibility Standard. Also, this memo includes special instructions for calculating the date the benefits will be terminated.

Report

A report, *Shelter AUs Greater than Federal Poverty Level*, will be produced and sent by 9/9/2002 to each TAO that has an AU identified as potentially having a total income (earned and unearned) that exceeds the current EA Eligibility Standard. TAOs with AUs not impacted by this change will not receive this report. TAOs which will receive a report are:

Hyannis	Brockton	Framingham
Lowell	Malden	New Bedford
Pittsfield	Quincy	Revere
North Shore	Davis Square	Springfield State
Westfield	Springfield Liberty	Worcester
Boston Family Housing		

HAP providers serving the EA AUs in the specific shelters have been alerted to the potential EA termination and the need for intensive housing search activities.

**AU Manager or
Homeless
Coordinator
Responsibilities**

Although the name of the EA AU appears on the report, all income information must be confirmed before any action is taken to terminate shelter benefits. The AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator must schedule an appointment to complete an assessment with the grantee of the EA AU. If other EA AUs not listed on the report are known to have income that may exceed the EA Eligibility Standard, add the names of the grantees onto the report and schedule for assessment appointments. If the TAO does not receive a report but has an EA AU with income in excess of the EA Eligibility Standard, write the name, SSN, current address, total income and disposition of the EA AU on a separate piece of paper and follow the instructions on page 5, *Report*.

Every effort should be made to **mail the notice of an appointment by 9/12/2002** and to schedule the appointment with the EA AU as soon as possible **but no later than 9/20/2002**.

During the interview with the EA AU, it is extremely important that the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator explain that the grantee will be allowed 30 days from the date of the assessment interview to find other housing before the shelter benefits are terminated. During the 30 days, there will be **intensive housing search activities** with the HAP provider, including cooperation from DHCD to give Section 8 vouchers to families that need vouchers and are eligible for the vouchers.

Make sure the grantee understands that, if found to be ineligible, shelter benefits will be terminated and that it is in the best interest of the family to do everything possible during these 30 days to secure housing.

The following actions are to be completed by the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator for an EA AU that may have income in excess of the EA Eligibility Standard.

- Determine if the AU's income is earned or unearned by clicking on the Results Tab, highlighting and selecting the EA AU, clicking on the Financial tab and clicking on Gross Income.
 - Go to the Assessed Person Income and Expenses Statement for specific information about the income(s), such as name of employer, source of unearned income, etc.
 - Schedule the appointment with the grantee for the assessment as soon as possible **but no later than 9/20/2002**. On the Schedule Appointment tab enter the specific verifications the grantee must bring at the time of the assessment, such as, but not limited to, current verification of earnings, child support payments, or RSDI amounts.
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**AU Manager or
Homeless
Coordinator
Responsibilities
(continued)**

- When the grantee appears for the interview, advise the grantee that the Eligibility Standard has been lowered and the impact the lower standard may have on the family's EA eligibility.
- Advise the grantee that during **the next 30 days there will be intensive housing search activities with the HAP provider**. The result of the eligibility determination will be known if all of the verifications were provided at the time of the assessment interview. **Whether or not the result is known, the 30-day housing search period begins on the date of the assessment interview.**
- Advise the grantee that telephones are available at the TAO or at the HAP provider for calling prospective landlords. Also, transportation to a housing location is available through the HAP provider.
- Review the EA AU's eligibility for the \$750 Relocation Benefit. To be eligible for the relocation benefit, the EA AU must also be in receipt of TAFDC or EAEDC family benefits. (See 106 CMR 705.350.)
- Update the Self-Sufficiency Plan for the EA AU focusing on activities for the next 30 days.
- Complete the interview. Check the following BEACON workflows to ensure the correct information is being used for the eligibility determination.
 - Household Composition,
 - AU Composition and AU Composition Details,
 - Assessed Person Nonfinancial Statement, and
 - Assessed Person Income and Expenses Statement.

Enter or update the information as appropriate. Be sure the earned and/or unearned income is entered accurately. On the Other Income Status window ensure that \$148.50 (income-in-kind) is not being counted as unearned income for an AU that is no longer a TAFDC AU.

- Go to the Verification Tab and select and verify the information provided by the grantee. In the Return Date field, give the grantee 10 days from the review date to return all required verifications. Print the VC-1 for the outstanding verifications.
 - After all of the workflows have been completed and the verification provided, go to *Interview Wrap-up* and click on calculate EBC results to determine EA eligibility.
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**AU Manager or
Homeless
Coordinator
Responsibilities
(continued)**

- Following the EBC calculation:
 1. An EA AU whose income does not exceed the EA Eligibility Standard will continue, if otherwise eligible, to receive EA shelter placement.

Complete the Interview Wrap-up Authorization window.

Complete and send the original and one copy of the NFL-9 to the EA AU advising that based on the eligibility assessment, the EA shelter benefits will continue. Send the notice to the address the EA AU is receiving mail. File a copy in the AU record.

2. An EA AU whose income exceeds the EA Eligibility Standard or does not meet another EA policy requirement is ineligible for EA and the shelter placement will be terminated. Once the EA is terminated, the 12-month rule will prevent future eligibility until 12 months have expired from the original EA application date or the start of the most recent 12-month period.

The termination date generated from EBC will be for the next cyclical date but this is not the termination date that is to be used.

The actual benefit termination date will be a future date that reflects the 30 days from the date of the assessment interview plus 10 days for the advance notice time. Forty (40) days from the assessment interview is the new termination date.

Example: Interview is on 9/20/2002, counting 40 days from 9/21/2002 comes to 10/30/2002.

Because the actual benefit termination date is different from the date on the EBC Results window, **do not complete the Interview Wrap-up Authorization window at this time.**

Complete the NFL-9 notifying the EA AU that the EA benefits will be terminated. Write in the **actual termination date** (40th day) as the effective date. Give or send the original and one copy of the NFL-9 to the EA AU, using the address the EA AU is receiving mail. File a copy in the AU record. This gives advance written notice to the EA AU that the shelter benefits will be stopped in 40 days.

AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator Responsibilities (continued)

- On the 40th day, or on a later date if the termination was appealed and the appeal decision upholds the termination:
 - go to the Interview Wrap-up and complete EBC again. This will generate a termination date with the next cyclical date;
 - complete the Interview Wrap-up Authorization;
 - on the SSPS Shelter Invoice Adjustment Update screen enter the date of the last night the EA AU stayed in the shelter; and
 - enter a note on the Narrative tab about the EA AU being closed due to income in excess of the EA Eligibility Standard.
 - When it is known that the EA shelter placement will end and neither private nor public housing has been found for the EA AU, be sure to make a referral to F.O.R. Families. Give the EA AU the F.O.R. Families Brochure.
 - Contact any other resources in the community that may be able to help in providing shelter to the family.
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Report

Annotate each EA AU name on the report, including names added to the report, by indicating:

- EA eligible - shelter placement to continue;
- EA termination date, new address, type of new housing and new rental cost. Type of new housing includes:
 - subsidized housing - Section 8;
 - private housing- not sharing, not living with other person(s);
 - private housing - sharing, living with other person(s);
 - public housing - own apartment;
 - public housing - moved in with other person(s);
 - moved to another state;
 - moved, whereabouts unknown;
 - other (specify - trailer campsite, etc.).

Submit the annotated report to the TAO Director/designee.

TAO Director

The Director/designee will submit the TAO's annotated report to the Regional Director upon completion of the reviews or by November 15, 2002, whichever is earlier.

Questions

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