

## From the DTA Mailbox

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your manager or supervisor contact the **DTA Mailbox**.

**Q. 1.** The last time I represented the Department at a hearing, I realized I forgot to bring copies of certain documents that were necessary to defend our Department's actions. We ended up losing the appeal. In the future, can I ask the Hearing Officer for extra time to present the information?

**A. 1.** Yes. It is important to arrive at the hearing prepared, but despite your best efforts, this may not always be possible. The Hearing Officer can hold the hearing record open to allow you to submit additional evidence or materials after the hearing. You must request that the record be kept open during the hearing. The Hearing Officer will determine how long it will remain open. A copy of any evidence or materials you submit while the record is open must be sent to the Appellant, and the Hearing Officer must give the Appellant time to respond to your new information. The Hearing Officer can also continue the hearing, which means that the hearing will reconvene with the same Hearing Officer at a later date. For more details on this, see 106 CMR 343.450(B).

**Q. 2.** My supervisor did not approve the application I submitted because she said my narrative was incomplete. Is there a list of what to include and what not to include in case action narratives?

**A. 2.** Yes. Generally, every narrative should answer the following questions:

- What did I learn about the case?
- What has changed about the case?
- What should happen next with the case?

Remember, narratives are important permanent parts of a case record. A narrative should be entered any time you speak with a client, update the Electronic Case Folder or when an Action is completed, dismissed, or paused. A detailed narrative will help you and your co-workers understand actions that are taken, how actions impact a case and any needed follow-up on a case.

To find the list of narrative criteria, go to the Online Guide, [Business Process Redesign \(BPR\)](#) > [BPR - Overview](#) > Narrative Guidelines Overview.

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**Q. 3.** I just completed a TAFDC/SNAP application interview. What should be entered in my narrative?

**A. 3.** When an application is taken be sure to enter on the Narrative tab:

- The program(s) for which the client is applying;
- Work program requirement status;
- Who is receiving income as well as the type of income received, if any;
- Asset ownership and accessibility, if any;
- Type of housing, rent and utility information;
- Additional details explained to the client,
- Other relevant case details and referrals made such as domestic violence, household size, children subject to the family cap rule, etc. and
- All required follow-up on the case.

For example:

Household of three applying for TAFDC and SNAP. Single mother of two children. Only income is SSI for youngest child, James. No assets. Currently resides in private housing, rent is \$800 per month and pays all utilities. Client states she is 2 months behind in rent. Client is work program required for 30 hours per week. States that she last worked 8 months ago. Issued referral for CIES program and explained available support services (child care and transportation reimbursement). VC-I issued for proof of children's school enrollment and relationship. Client's shelter expenses exceed monthly income, expedited SNAP issued.