

efforts to increase access to the Food Stamp Program, going above and beyond her normal assignments, creating a database of callers and mailed food stamp applications, assisting the office's efforts on food stamp outreach.

Regional Director **Yasmin Otero** was honored for the leadership she exhibited and long hours of work she endured for many weeks at Camp Edwards, site of Massachusetts' efforts to assist those evacuated from the Gulf Coast due to last year's hurricanes. Yasmin traveled from Springfield to the Cape, putting in many long days and weekends. Her assignment lasted several months and to this day she continues to be relied upon to help those families transition to life in Massachusetts. Also volunteering to help hurricane victims access our services is **Evelyn French** who works in our Revere TAO. Evelyn was recognized for those efforts as well as her ever optimistic attitude in serving the homeless and those applying for food stamps. She also was recognized for her contributions during the phasing in of our Bay State CAP program.

**Dianne Juarez** is a BERS A/B worker in our Dorchester TAO. Not only does Dianne go above her normal duties in assisting co-workers with BEACON and training issues, she always is willing to help out and fill in for absent staff, making sure that essential functions of the office are covered. Working as a team, **Ana Nazario** and **Richard Pina** were recognized from the Newmarket Square TAO. Ana and Richard are front-desk reception clerks dealing with homeless and NPA food stamp cases in one of our busiest offices (often assisting over 400 clients per day). Due to staff retirements, Ana and Richard have taken on additional responsibilities and assignments and have managed them effectively and professionally.

From our Central Office Legal Unit, **Cushing Giesey** was honored for his assistance on the Department's development of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which will soon provide, for the first time, statewide reports and counts of homeless individuals. Above and beyond all of his legal assignments, Cushing participated on many committees and worked out the legal agreements which have made HMIS a successful reality.

In addition to our PRP winners, I must also mention the great work for which the North Shore TAO has been recognized.

## From the Hotline

- Q.** A TAFDC recipient came into our office today and reported that she just received \$3,000 in lottery winnings. Since the asset limit for the TAFDC Program is \$2,500, can she still be eligible for cash benefits?
- A.** Yes. In the TAFDC Program, lottery winnings are considered nonrecurring lump sum income. Once you are made aware of a recipient's lump sum payment, the next step is to find out what the recipient has done with the payment.
- Q.** When a TAFDC recipient reports winning \$3,000 in the lottery but then explains that all of the money has been spent, is any of the payment still countable?
- A.** Yes, a portion of the payment may still be counted. To determine the countable amount of the lump sum income in TAFDC, certain exclusions must first be applied. Refer to 106 CMR 204.240 for the complete list of allowable exclusions.
- In addition, *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and*

AR Referral Search List (Overpayments and Recovery), BEACON	
Changes to Reevaluation Types	8
FYI - BEACON Online Help	8
FYI - Changes to DTA Online	8
FYI - Changes to EOHHS mass.gov DTA Homepage	9
FYI - Changes to Policy Online	9
FYI - Expiring IPV Disqualifications	9
FYI - Fuel Assistance 2006	10
FYI - New "Benefit Type" for Certain AUs and Display of ESP and Employment Participation Hours Clarification	10
FYI - Update to the DTA EOHHS Homepage - ESP Component / Activity Descriptions	10
FYI - Voluntary Request to Close Case - Recipient Mailing	11
FYI - Work Program Sanction Desk Guide	12

*BEACON*, pages XIV-E-1 through XIV-E-6 list the step-by-step procedures for entering lump sum income into BEACON.

- Q.** Can lump sum exclusions include expenses paid by the TAFDC recipient after she actually receives her lump sum payment?
- A.** Yes. Expenses paid by the TAFDC recipient after she receives her lump sum payment are allowable exclusions as long as the costs were incurred while awaiting receipt of the lump sum payment.

Later this month, representatives from that office will be featured in an award ceremony in Phoenix, receiving a national "Hunger Champions" award from USDA, for their impressive efforts to help recipients access the Food Stamp Program.

Join me in congratulating all of these DTA employees for their exemplary and inspiring work. Their recognition and honor shines upon us all as DTA employees and provides me with great pride, admiration, and motivation!

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner



**COMMUNICATION is the KEY**

For example, a recipient may have put off going to the dentist because she didn't know how she would pay for it. Two days after notification of her upcoming property damage award, she schedules a dental appointment. The dental bill is paid after the lump sum is actually received but the cost was incurred while awaiting receipt of her lump sum and therefore it is an allowable exclusion.

- Q.** Since the TAFDC recipient who won \$3,000 in the lottery also happens to be receiving food stamp benefits, are there any adjustments that I need to make in her food stamp benefits?
- A.** In this situation, you do not need to make any adjustments in the food stamp benefits. In the Food Stamp Program, lottery winnings are considered a lump sum treated as an asset in the month of receipt. Since she and her child are still eligible and receiving TAFDC and there are no other individuals in the home, this is a categorically eligible food stamp assistance unit. Assistance Units that are categorically eligible, as defined in 106 CMR 365.180, automatically satisfy the asset eligibility criteria for food stamp benefits.
- Q.** If a 40-year-old, able-bodied food stamp recipient with no children who lives alone reports timely on a \$3,000 lottery payment, should I stop his food stamp benefits because the payment exceeds the food stamp asset limit?
- A.** If receipt of a lump sum payment puts the individual over the asset eligibility limit, then the recipient must be allowed to update his asset statement. This means that if, for example, the individual takes \$2,000 from his lottery payment to pay a rental arrearage, then only \$1,000 from the lottery payment may actually be considered a countable asset. This recipient would then remain below the asset limit for the Food Stamp Program. For information on nonrecurring lump sum payments in the Food Stamp Program, refer to 106 CMR 363.130(E).

**NOTE:** The Food Stamp Program has a transfer of assets regulation that applies to applicants as well as recipients. If an applicant or recipient knowingly transfers assets for the purpose of establishing or maintaining eligibility for food stamp benefits, the entire Assistance Unit may be disqualified. For more information on transfer of assets in the Food Stamp Program, refer to 106 CMR 363.150.

## From the Forms File

### New Form

*13-310-0906-05*

*STR-1 (9/2006)*

*Shelter Transfer Request*

This form was designed to facilitate the transfer of a homeless family to a shelter that can deliver more appropriate services. Refer to Field Operations Memo 2006-42 for more information.

### New Desk Guide

*26-410-1006-05*

*WPS-DG (10/2006)*

*Work Program Sanction Process*

This desk guide was created for use as a reference tool by AU Managers and Supervisors to help manage the work program sanction process. Refer to the FYI Work Program Sanction Desk Guide in this issue of *Transitions*.

### Revised Forms

*18-070-1006-05*

*18-185-1006-05 (S)*

*VLA (Rev. 10/2006)*

*Shared Housing Verification*

This form has been revised to include a question to help AU Managers determine whether the AU should receive the rent allowance. This was a suggestion received from a TAO staff person.