



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance*

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

KARYN POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

JEFF McCUE
Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2017-80
September 29, 2017**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Paul Sutliff, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: TAFDC: Allowing the Rent Allowance Benefit for Certain Household Expenses

Overview

The Rent Allowance policy found at 106 CMR 705.910 states that TAFDC clients are eligible for a Rent/Mortgage allowance (hereafter referred to as rent allowance) of \$40 per month in their TAFDC grant, provided they do not live in public, state or federally subsidized housing, and have rent, mortgage, or room and/or board expenses.

Currently, clients who live in private housing where the mortgage has been paid off do not get the rent allowance benefit.

With BEACON changes scheduled for production on October 2, 2017, those clients will be paid the \$40 rent allowance benefit provided certain other homeowner expenses exist.

Purpose of Transmittal

This Online Guide Transmittal advises DTA staff of:

- changes made to allow the rent allowance benefit for clients in private housing with zero mortgage expense, but where Property Taxes, Condo Fees, Home Insurance, Residence Loan, or State and Local Assessments expenses exist;

Purpose of Transmittal (continued)

- revisions made to pages in the Online Guide to reflect the changes for the rent allowance benefit; and
 - a new page in the Rent Allowance chapter of the Online Guide entitled, Rent Allowance for Zero Mortgage Expense. This new page provides guidance for entering data in BEACON to ensure the rent allowance benefit is calculated in the TAFDC grant.
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BEACON Change

BEACON will be changed so that the \$40 rent allowance benefit will be included in the TAFDC grant for households with no mortgage payment when the following circumstances exist:

On the Address page:

- the Homeless checkbox is **not** checked; and
- Private Housing is selected on the Type drop-down list

On the Shelter Expenses page:

- the No shelter expenses checkbox is **not** checked; and
- in the Type drop-down list, one or more of the following is selected:
 - ✓ Property Taxes
 - ✓ Condo Fees
 - ✓ Home Insurance
 - ✓ Residence Loan, or
 - ✓ State and Local Assessments

Retroactive Payment

TAFDC benefits will be automatically recalculated for active clients who are currently not getting the rent allowance and meet the rent allowance rule change. A one-time payment will be issued for up to 12 months of retroactive rent allowance benefits, provided the client was receiving TAFDC and met the rent allowance rule during the 12-month retroactive period.

Once a TAFDC case is recalculated and the retroactive payment is issued, the following narrative will display on the Narrative tab in the client's Electronic Case Folder (ECF): "One-time Related Benefit issued for TAFDC Rent Allowance owed retroactively."

The client will receive a related benefit notice advising them of the retroactive payment.

**Revised Online
Guide Pages**

The following pages in the Online Guide have been revised to reflect the change to the rent allowance calculation:

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Financial Requirements
Chapter: Rent Allowance
Page: TAFDC Rent Allowance

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Financial Requirements
Chapter: Rent Allowance
Page: Rent Allowance Chart

**New BEACON
Online Guide
Page**

A new page is added to the Online Guide:

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Financial Requirements
Chapter: Rent Allowance
Page: Rent Allowance for Zero Mortgage Expense

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email the DTA Mailbox.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
