



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


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-48
June 26, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: **Cross Programs: Termination of Temporary COVID Procedures for Wage Verification and Resumption of Recertifications, Interim Reports and Reevaluations**

Overview

Over the past few months the Department has modified procedures to support staff teleworking and the surge of applications related to COVID-19. These temporary procedures are the result of both federal waivers and state policy decisions. As such some of the suspended or modified procedures are now resuming.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise DTA staff of the:

- return to standard procedures to verify wages at application, case maintenance and during the recertification/reevaluation process;
 - resumption of Recertification, Interim Report and Reevaluation for all programs and
 - related systems changes.
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**Procedural
Changes**

When a client reports that they are newly employed or has a change in the hours they are working, and the wages are unverified, staff must consider the client's reporting requirements prior to taking any action. If the wages must be verified, staff must first explore if the required wage information is available on the Work Number.

Verifying Wages

If the Work Number includes the required wage information, staff must inform the client of the listed gross amounts and frequency. If the client disputes the information from the Work Number, a mandatory VC-1 must be sent to the client.

Note: When a client disputes information on the Work Number, the client must provide documentary evidence of their wages.

If the Work Number does not have the wage information for the client's job, staff must send a mandatory VC-1 for earnings and encourage the client to obtain and submit documentary evidence such as wage stubs, screen shots, or a printout/letter from the employer.

If a client cannot verify wages using documentary evidence, we will accept the best available information including a written self-declaration.

Important: Temporary COVID procedures are still in place for all other verification factors, except wages.

**Redetermination
of benefits**

Work related to SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC benefit redetermination has begun for the August benefits cycle.

Note: If you have a client recertifying for any program without a telephone number listed in BEACON, with an in-office ADA Accommodation, or with Heightened Level of Security, please contact the Ombuds office directly.

**SNAP
Recertifications
and IRs**

The Department will resume the Recertifications and IR processes, starting with households due to complete either of these forms in late June or during the month of July (for August benefits).

Until further notice, the COVID-19 waiver of the interview requirement for applications will also apply to Recertifications. Interviews remain a non-requirement for IRs.

Staff must continue applying the temporary COVID-19 procedures for verifications (with the exception of wages). Because the Recertification form does not include questions related to income, staff must carefully review a recertifying client's case record to determine if they had income on file. Sections on the form that the client left blank are to be accepted by staff as a self-declaration that the eligibility factor has not changed. Clients are instructed on the Recertification form to send verification of new income sources.

Staff must continue to check available data sources when completing the IR and Recertification process.

**TAFDC/EAEDC
Reevaluations**

The resumption of Economic Assistance reevaluations (TAFDC/EAEDC) includes the requirement to conduct an interview.

Case managers will see clients under the **Daily Priority Actions-Reevaluation Due** view beginning June 16, 2020. Only telephonic appointment interviews are to be scheduled.

**TAFDC/EAEDC
Reevaluations**
(Continued)

Important: For cash and combo cases, the central print option is now available for reevaluations. After completing the reevaluation interview staff must select the central print option to populate the VC1 with the reevaluation. The Reevaluation form will be listed as a mandatory factor on the VC-1 and the form will print out with the VC-1 for the client to sign and return to the Department. Staff must continue applying the temporary COVID-19 procedures for verifications (with the exception of wages).

The case manager is not required to sign the Reevaluation form. Their signature when wrapping up the case on BEACON is sufficient.

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency (PSS) and Disability Determination are separate processes from reevaluation, and they remain suspended at this time.

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 them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

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