



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


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2023-68
October 3, 2023**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: TAFDC: Ensuring Benefit access for Temporarily Separated Cuban/Haitian Entrant Families

Overview

DTA has seen an increase in TAFDC applications for newly arriving Cuban/Haitian Entrant families who are temporarily separated from one parent due to the volatile situation in their home country, and their inability to relocate together. At times, one parent is temporarily separated from the rest of the family until they can reunite as an intact family. These families have not been able to find living accommodations for everyone in the family, but they are working towards reunification. Due to these unique circumstances, guidance has been developed as it relates to cooperation with child support to best support these families as they transition.

Purpose

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

- procedures for cooperation with child support for Cuban/Haitian Entrant families who are trying to reunify
 - detailed guidance on which Cuban/Haitian Entrant families these procedures pertain to
 - detailed instructions for case managers on how to correctly establish the TAFDC case in BEACON
 - a new script to explain assignment of rights to child support with these families
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**Case Manager
Responsibilities**

When completing an interview with a Cuban/Haitian Entrant that has an absent parent, case managers must explore whether the client:

- has recently arrived in the US,
- has a spouse or partner who is the other parent for one or more children in the household and is temporarily not residing with the family, and
- is working toward reunifying as an intact family as soon as they are able.

If **all three** of the above circumstances apply, the client is excused from the child support cooperation requirement due to there not being an absent parent. Staff must accept the client's verbal self-declaration of this fact and complete a detailed narrative of the family's circumstances.

While these families do not have to cooperate with the establishment of paternity or a child support order, they are still required to assign any rights to child support to the state of Massachusetts. Since the TA-34/36 will not generate when there is no absent parent, case managers must read the following script to these families:

“Because the other parent is temporarily separated from your family due to circumstances beyond your control but you plan to live together as soon as you are able to do so, you are temporarily excused from the cooperation with child support rules. This means you do not have to give information about the other parent to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue or cooperate with them to establish paternity or a child support order. While you are getting TAFDC any child support owed to you or given to you belongs to the state of Massachusetts. Call your case manager if you do receive any child support and they will tell you where to send it.”

If the client does report they have received child support from the other parent, inform them they must mail it to:

Child Support Finance
PO Box 9562
Boston, MA 02114-9562

Staff must inform the client that they must tell DTA as soon as the other parent joins the household so they can be added to the TAFDC benefit.

Entering Case Information

To establish the TAFDC case in BEACON staff must:

- include only the family members residing together in the Household window
- answer the Temporary absence question in the AU Composition Q&A Navigator “no”
- answer the Absence question in the Nonfinancial Q & A Navigator “no” if there is only one absent parent for the children in the household
- answer the Absence question in the Nonfinancial Q & A Navigator “yes” if there is more than one other parent for the children in the household, and only enter the absence information for the absent parent that is not part of the current family unit.

No information is to be entered in the Absence page for the other parent that is temporarily separated from the family.

Because the other parent will not be included in the household, any income they may have will not be deemed to the TAFDC case.

When to Review

At reevaluation, if the other parent has not been added to the TAFDC household, staff must talk to the client to determine if they still plan to reunify. If the family no longer plans to reunify they must cooperate with child support at that time. This conversation must be documented in the narrative. After one year (two six-month reevaluations), if the other parent has not reunified with the rest of the family, send an email to the procedural mailbox for additional guidance.

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.
