



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Operations Memo 2012-41
September 12, 2012

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: Changes to the Client Portal and Provider Access to My Account Page (MAP) Pilot Project

Overview

In January of 2010, the Department launched the My Account Page (MAP) client portal through the Virtual Gateway. MAP improves customer service by providing clients with access to information about their benefits without the need to call or visit a local office. The MAP client portal has recently been updated to provide additional information about cash and SNAP benefits to our clients.

Later this summer, the Department will implement a MAP access pilot project for the Social Security Administration (SSA) and select contracted providers. The pilot project will allow these providers access to the same level of information that is currently available to DTA clients who create a MAP account.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to inform Department staff about:

- changes to the MAP client portal; and
 - the pilot project and the agencies which will be accessing MAP during the pilot.
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Changes to the Client Portal

Currently, DTA's client portal displays the following information to clients who create an account:

- case status;
- benefit amount;
- the date the benefit will be received;
- TAO and case manager contact information;
- the next recertification due date for SNAP cases; and
- DTA notices sent to clients in the last 90 days.

To provide more information about client benefits, the following information has been added:

- the effective date of TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP benefits;
 - the status of the benefits (pending, approved or denied);
 - twelve months of benefit information;
 - scheduled re-evaluation dates for TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP;
 - household composition information, including a dependent's relationship to the grantee; and,
 - most BEACON notices sent to the household in the last twelve months.
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Provider Access to MAP

Expansion of MAP to providers will further enhance DTA's customer service by allowing key providers direct access to MAP information to assist our clients with the application for and continued receipt of benefits. DTA plans to pilot this portal with SSA and two contracted providers: Project Bread of Worcester and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. The provider's level of access to MAP information will depend on their security clearance. Job aids to assist navigation in MAP have also been created for these organizations.

The objectives of the pilot project are :

- to provide better client service. Clients will be able to access information about their case when working with contracted providers and on their own without having to contact a local office manager;
 - reduce the number of phone calls from clients and contracted providers assisting client with issues, such as current case status, content of notices, amount of benefits, and dates of recertification;
 - reduce duplicate applications, as contracted providers will be able to determine a client's status in MAP before submitting a new application for a client; and
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**Provider Access
to MAP
(continued)**

- improve accuracy of data, as contracted providers will work with clients proactively to keep data up-to-date.

SSA will have access to MAP without requiring permission from a client.
SSA:

- must search for a client using predefined data elements and will have immediate access to client information; and
- will be able to view the previous 12 months of documents and the previous 36 months of benefit information.

Authorized users at SSA will be able to search by:

- SSN only; or
- the following demographic data: last name, first name, date of birth and gender; **and**
- either the DTA Agency ID (APID) or client EBT card number.
Note: The demographic data must match exactly to client information.

For purposes of this pilot, Project Bread and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts are defined as “Business Partners.” Business Partner providers:

- will be required to obtain a Permission to Share (PSI) form signed by the client. The provider must forward the form to DTA Central Office for processing;
- (upon the signing of the PSI) must search for the client using predefined data elements and will have immediate access to certain client information; and;
- will be able to view the previous 12 months of documents and the previous 12 months of benefit information.

Authorized users at each business partner must search by:

- the following demographic data: last name, first name, date of birth, and gender; **and**
- either the DTA Agency ID (APID) or client EBT card number.
Note: All demographic data must match exactly to client information.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.
