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**Operations Memo 2013-24**  
**May 14, 2013**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

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

**Re:** Unemployment Benefits Reduced by Sequester Cuts

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**Overview**

Beginning with the claim-week ending May 4, 2013, **all** claimants on Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) extensions will have their benefits reduced by 12.8%. This reduction, known as Sequestration, is mandated by federal law. Sequestration refers to budget cuts to particular categories of federal spending that began on March 1, 2013. The reduction of the EUC benefit will be effective until September 29, 2013.

On April 10, 2013, the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) mailed notices to claimants who are scheduled to have a reduction in EUC benefits because of Sequestration.

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**Purpose of Memo**

This Operations Memo:

- advises staff of the automatic recalculation of certain cash and SNAP cases with EUC benefits;
  - outlines case manager responsibilities for the recalculation of cash and SNAP cases with EUC benefits; and
  - informs staff of a temporary DUA Mailbox.
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**The Automatic Recalculation of TAFDC and SNAP Cases**

DTA will:

- obtain a file from DUA that includes all recipients who receive EUC benefits and who have filed a timely claim for benefits for week ending May 4, 2013.
- match this file to the caseload, update the EUC Benefit amount and automatically recalculate identified cash and SNAP cases on the evening of Tuesday, May 14, 2013. The income will be verified on the Verifications Tab with, “Electronically verified by DUA.”
- automatically enter a narrative into BEACON identifying the batch job and explaining the effective date of the cash or SNAP benefit change. The narrative will read as follows:

“DUA Sequestration: DUA sent DTA all the Unemployment Compensation Extension Claims that were reduced by 12.8%. A Special Batch recalculated eligibility with the reduced unemployment compensation amount. The new SNAP benefit amount will be effective in June. The new cash benefit amount will be effective in May.”

This recalculation will cause an increase in SNAP benefits for June. It will cause an increase in cash benefits effective either May 6<sup>th</sup> or May 13<sup>th</sup>, depending on when the client received the reduction in EUC benefits. As is always the case, the cash or SNAP benefit increase could be counteracted by other simultaneous case activity and cause the benefit amount to decrease.

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**Case Manager Responsibilities for Recalculation of TAFDC and SNAP Benefits**

When the automatic recalculation of benefits is run on May 14, 2013, **it will only include those clients who filed a claim with DUA for week ending May 4** (must have filed by May 10, 2013). Claimants who file weekly through the web or by telephone are paid weekly. Claimants who file through the mail are paid every two weeks.

If on May 15 or after, a client reports that their unemployment compensation benefits have been reduced, the case manager must access BEACON to determine if the case was already recalculated using the new, lower UC benefit. If the case was not updated with the lower UC benefit, the case manager must:

- access the UC Screen and review the Payment History field to confirm the UC benefit reduction;
  - enter the new UC benefit in the Other Income Status page of BEACON;
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**Case Manager Responsibilities for Recalculation of TAFDC and SNAP Benefits (Continued)**

- on the verifications tab, select the item to be verified and select the proof used from the Documents of Evidence list;
- click Save; and
- wrapup the case for a recalculation of benefits.

When the case manager reviews the UC screen, if the PROGRAM field is EUC, but the most recent check listed under Payment History does not reflect a reduction in benefit, the case manager must ask the client if they renewed their claim with DUA.

- If the client responds that the claim was renewed, then this information is discrepant and should be referred to the DUA mailbox via the TAO's daily email to DUA.
- If the client responds that they have not renewed the claim, the case manager should advise the client to file a claim with DUA so that EUC benefits may be adjusted, if the client believes they are eligible.

**IMPORTANT:** The recalculation of cash and SNAP benefits discussed in this memo **only applies to claimants who are receiving EUC benefits.** Claimants who receive other kinds of unemployment compensation must be processed in accordance with standard procedure.

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**Temporary DUA Mailbox**

Effective May 13, 2013 through May 31, 2013, designated DTA staff will have access to a DUA Mailbox. The DUA Mailbox will be operational for a limited time to allow for a review of discrepant cases.

Each TAO director must designate a manager or supervisor (one per office), to be the primary DUA Mailbox contact. There must also be a substitute manager or supervisor designated to fill this role in the event of planned or unplanned absences from work. The designee will be expected to be familiar with the case specifics to answer any questions from a DUA liaison should they arise.

If the information on the UC screen appears to be discrepant based on client report or based on verification the client provides, the case manager must email the case name, SSN, and any other relevant detail to the mailbox designee.

By 3 pm each day, the mailbox-designated staff must send an email to the DUA Mailbox listing the name and SSN of all clients in that TAO whose UC information requires review. The mailbox address will be sent to TAO directors and mailbox designees under separate cover.

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**Temporary  
DUA Mailbox  
(Continued)**

**IMPORTANT:** Each TAO may send only one email per day to the DUA Mailbox. The email must be sent using the Department's secure connection procedure. Type SECURE: before the subject in the subject line of the email.

The DUA team expects to respond by the close of business on the next business day.

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**Questions**

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

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