



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


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Governor

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ
Secretary

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Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2013-63
December 19, 2013**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Lydia Conley, Acting Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC), Child Care Assistance and Electronic Document Management (EDM) Mailing

Overview

In January 2014, DTA will issue the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC), and child care assistance informational mailing. Included with this mailing, DTA will take the opportunity to inform clients about the implementation of the new Electronic Document Management (EDM) process. DTA will implement EDM in early 2014.

This mailing will be sent to all active TAFDC clients, certain former TAFDC clients whose cases closed on or after January 1, 2013, and all active SNAP cases, excluding SNAP cases in the Malden Centralized SSI Office and SNAP cases receiving TAFDC.

Note: TAFDC cases that closed on or after January 1, 2013 due to the death of the grantee or no longer being a Massachusetts resident will not be sent the mailing.

The mailing provides information to clients and certain former clients about:

- filing federal and state income tax returns at a free tax assistance site and receiving tax refunds to increase their financial resources;

**Overview
(continued)**

- claiming the Child Tax Credit (CTC) when they file, if qualified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS);
 - taking advantage of child care assistance, if eligible;
 - possible eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Households with a child under age 19 are categorically eligible for SNAP benefits; and
 - mailing verifications and other documents to DTA.
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**Purpose of
Memo**

This Operations Memo:

- informs DTA staff about the EITC/CTC/EIC, child care assistance and EDM mailing scheduled to occur in January 2014;
 - describes the documents sent in the mailing;
 - describes case managers' responsibilities for providing information to applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as clients) about EITC/CTC/EIC, child care assistance and EDM; and
 - advises staff of forthcoming resources regarding tax assistance sites, annual updates to the orientation PowerPoint and the EDM information sheet and poster.
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**Documents
Mailed**

This mailing includes an informational notice (Attachment A), an EITC/CTC/EIC brochure (Attachment B), a Child Care Fact Sheet (Rev. 12/2013) (Attachment C) and an Electronic Document Management and *You!* information sheet. (Attachment D).

All documents are available in English and Spanish. The documents provided in the mailing are provided in English, unless the primary language in BEACON is coded as Spanish. A multilingual notice is included with each mailing.

Note: NPA SNAP—only cases will not receive the Child Care Fact Sheet.

**Informational
Notice**

The notice provides information about:

- the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is an option for people who were employed in 2013 and whose income was below a certain limit;
- the Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC), which is an option for people who were employed in 2013 and who meet requirements for the Federal EITC;
- child care assistance, which is available to TAFDC clients and certain former TAFDC clients who are employed or who are in an approved employment development plan activity and have children who are infants through age 12 or through age 16, if the child has a special need; and
- the implementation of the EDM process, which requires all mailed documents to be sent to a central location instead of returning them to their case manager.

Note: NPA SNAP - only cases will receive a version of the informational notice that does not contain child care information. These households must access child care services by contacting the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

**Updated
EITC/CTC/EIC
Brochure**

The EITC/CTC/EIC brochure has been updated with 2013 tax filing and refund information. The IRS has approved the information.

The EITC/CTC/EIC brochure provides:

- basic information about qualifying 2013 income and family size guidelines;
- information about a child tax credit (CTC) for which families with children may qualify; and
- examples of typical estimated EITC and EIC refunds, specifically for the 2013 tax year.

In January, a supply of the EITC/CTC/EIC brochure in English and Spanish will be sent to TAOs for distribution to clients. TAOs may reorder brochures from Document Production at Schraffts as needed.

Child Care Fact Sheet

Each year, DTA collaborates with EEC to update the Child Care Fact Sheet. The updated Child Care Fact Sheet provides basic information for active TAFDC clients and certain former TAFDC clients about how to:

- obtain a DTA child care referral to receive EEC financial assistance for child care;
- get help with choosing the type of child care that is right for the client's family;
- get a child care voucher from a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency to pay for child care;
- receive Transitional Child Care (TCC) when their TAFDC case closes; and
- ask about SNAP eligibility for their family, if they are not currently receiving SNAP benefits.

If a client is not sure which CCR&R to contact, he or she can access the EEC website: <http://www.mass.gov/eec> identified on the back of the fact sheet. Under Programs & Services, (s)he should click on the Find Early Education and Care Programs link, click on the Search for a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) near you link, and enter a city or town to locate the appropriate CCR&R.

Clients may also dial 211, a statewide health and human services telephone information and referral system, to get information on CCR&R locations.

In January, a supply of the Child Care Fact Sheet in English and Spanish will be sent to TAOs for distribution to clients. TAOs may reorder fact sheets from Document Production at Schraffts as needed.

EDM Information Sheet and Poster In an effort to improve the way in which clients provide documents, DTA will provide postage paid return envelopes for clients to mail documents to a central Post Office box. Mail received at the central Post Office box will be scanned and uploaded to a new software application called DTA myWorkspace so that the mail can be processed in the appropriate TAO.

To inform clients about EDM, an Electronic Document Management and *You!* information sheet, printed on green paper, will serve as an insert in the mailing. The information sheet also has been printed on white paper and a supply has been shipped to each TAO to be used as a handout at the TAOs.

In addition, DTA developed an informational poster titled, “A NEW YEAR – A NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS”, (Attachment E) which talks about the centralized mailing process available to clients. A supply of the poster in both English and Spanish has been sent to TAOs and must be displayed in each TAO reception area.

Operations Memo 2013-61: *Electronic Document Management - Release 1*, introduces DTA staff to the EDM process. Several additional memos with details about EDM will be issued in the near future.

Free Tax Assistance Sites At the end of January 2014, TAOs will be emailed an updated list of free tax assistance sites where trained volunteers will be available to assist tax filers with filling out the necessary tax forms for EITC/CTC/EIC.

Once the list of free tax assistance sites is received by the TAO, it should be printed out and made available for TAO staff reference. The free tax assistance sites listed on the DTA MassCashBack website: <http://masscashback.ehs.state.ma.us> and on DTA Online in Resource Inventories will also be updated at the end of January 2014.

Clients may also contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at: 1-800-906-9887 for free tax assistance site locations, and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) at: 1-800-392-6089 for state tax information.

Case Manager Responsibilities

At application, redetermination and appropriate client contact, case managers should inform the client about EITC/CTC/EIC, child care assistance and EDM by giving them an EITC/CTC/EIC brochure, a Child Care Fact Sheet (when appropriate) and an Electronic Document Management and *You!* information sheet.

When requested, the case manager should provide the nearest free tax assistance site information by giving the client information from the printed list of free tax assistance sites, DTA Online, the MassCashBack website, or by giving them a copy of the list.

Note: Clients should be informed that they may go to any free tax assistance site on the list or named on the website.

Orientation PowerPoint Presentation EITC/EIC Update

The Department instituted the orientation PowerPoint presentation in April of 2007 as an application activity to ensure that all TAFDC clients receive important information in as timely and uniformly a way as possible. The PowerPoint presentation gives clients critical information regarding their rights and responsibilities as well as benefits and services for which they may be eligible, including EITC/EIC.

Each January, the orientation PowerPoint presentation is updated with the new EITC/EIC figures provided by the IRS. DTA uses the EITC/EIC figures to demonstrate to clients how their yearly income will increase by going to work and claiming the EITC/EIC, when eligible.

The updated PowerPoint presentation will be available for use on January 2, 2014.

Undelivered Mail

As this is a mass mailing, all undeliverable mail will be processed following the automated returned mail procedures described in Operations Memo 2013-13A: *Returned Mail Processing – Automation of Central Office Returns*.

Obsolete Material

The following are obsolete as of January 1, 2014:

- Operations Memo 2012-57;
 - Child Care Fact Sheet (CCFS (12/2012)); and
 - EITC/CTC/EIC 2012 brochure.
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Questions

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

Attachment A

P. O. BOX 129562 CAN 710
Boston, MA 02112
***** Malden
EITC 14

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante – Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Mary Jones
101 Main St.
Malden, MA 021485

Agency ID: 9999999
Malden TAO - DTA

01/2014

Dear Mary Jones:

DTA is sending this notice to tell you about earned income tax credits, free tax filing help, child care help and DTA's new Electronic Document Management (EDM) mail processing system.

There are 2 types of earned income tax credits you may be eligible for:

- **The Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); and**
- **The Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC).**

To get the EITC and EIC you had to have worked for pay in 2013. You also must:

- For the **EITC**, file federal tax Form 1040 or 1040A, and attach Schedule EIC, if you were raising children in 2013. If you were not raising children in 2013, you may file federal tax Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ and attach Schedule EIC.
- For the **EIC**, file both Federal and Massachusetts tax returns even if you do not owe any taxes.

You may owe less tax and could get cash back. Even if you don't owe income tax, you may get cash back. For more details see the enclosed brochure.

You can get your tax forms done for free. Here's how:

- Visit <http://masscashback.ehs.state.ma.us/> to find a location near you; or
- Contact DTA for a list of locations; or
- Call the IRS hotline at 1-800-906-9887 for locations ; or
- Call the Massachusetts Department of Revenue at 1-800-392-6089 for state tax information.

(See other side)

Child Care Help:

The enclosed Child Care Fact Sheet:

- Explains how to get and keep child care.
- Provides information on how to contact the Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) near you.
- Gives you information to discuss with the CCR&R.

Electronic Document Management (EDM):

The enclosed *Electronic Document Management and You!* information sheet introduces a new way for you to send documents to DTA by mail. DTA will provide postage paid return envelopes so you won't have to pay for stamps. Instead of visiting your DTA office, send your documents by mail.

If you have questions, call your case manager Mary Smith at 781-999-9999.

**If you no longer get benefits and have questions, please call Recipient Services at
1-800-445-6604.**

Some families can get a child tax credit (CTC) too!

Your family may qualify for the CTC, which may reduce your tax by as much as \$1000 for each qualifying child.

Extra state benefit

When you qualify for the federal EITC, you automatically qualify for a Massachusetts tax credit (EIC) that will give you an extra 15% of your EITC check. \$3250 turns into \$3738!

FACT:

Millions of families who could claim the EITC don't – leaving billions of dollars behind. Don't lose out!

I'm convinced. Where can I file?

You can go to a free tax assistance site. These sites have trained volunteers who will check your eligibility and then help you fill out your tax forms.

To find a free tax site near you:

- Visit www.irs.gov and use search term (VITA Site); or
- Call the IRS at 1-800-906-9887; or
- Visit <http://masscashback.ehs.state.ma.us>

File Your 2013 Tax.

Get Cash Back.

It's That Easy.



EITC-B (Rev. 12/2013)
25-650-1213-05

Attachment B

File Your 2013 Tax. Get Cash Back. It's That Easy.



Learn about 2013 tax credits and free ways to file.

<http://masscashback.ehs.state.ma.us>

How much money can I get back?

Your EITC check depends mainly on your family size and your 2013 earned income.

If your family has	And you earned less than	Then you can get up to
No “qualifying children” (see box)	\$14,340	\$487
One qualifying child	\$37,870	\$3,250
Two qualifying children	\$43,038	\$5,372
Three or more qualifying children	\$46,227	\$6,044

Note: TAFDC, alimony and child support payments are not earned income and do not count towards the income limits.

What is the EITC, and how can it help me?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is for people who work and meet certain income guidelines. You may **get money back** when you file your taxes and keep more of what you earned. It can make a big difference!

Learn more details and file for your tax credits at a **free tax assistance site** near you. There are about 300 in Massachusetts open during tax season.

You may even get tax credits for the last two years.

How do I know if I qualify for EITC?

- You must have worked and earned income
- You must have a valid Social Security number
- You cannot be counted as a “child” by someone else

There are more rules about age, citizenship, and non-earned/foreign income. A **free tax preparer** can explain these rules; or visit www.irs.gov/eitc for more information.

What if I don’t owe any tax?

No problem. You can still get the tax credits.

Will the EITC affect my benefits?

In Massachusetts, getting the federal EITC and the state EIC tax credit will not affect your eligibility for TAFDC, SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, or low-income housing.

(EITC and EIC do not count as income in determining eligibility for these benefits.)

A “qualifying child” can be your...

- Biological or adopted child
- Stepchild
- Foster child...
or a descendent of any of them such as your grandchild
- Brother or sister
- Stepbrother or stepsister...
or a descendent of any of them such as a niece or nephew.

A “child” must be younger than you; not have filed a joint return other than to claim a refund; and be under 19, unless they are a full-time student under 24, or any age and permanently and totally disabled.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE



Child Care Fact Sheet

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) works with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to help eligible families find, enroll in, and pay for child care. EEC financial assistance may be available to place children in a high quality child care program while parents are working or in employment-related activities.

You may be able to get help paying for child care if you get Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) or have received TAFDC within the last 12 months.

To get EEC Financial Assistance for Child Care You Must:

1) Contact your DTA case manager who will:

- ❑ See if you can get EEC child care financial assistance, based on your employment, job search, education, training or other employment-related activities; and
- ❑ Give you a referral for child care if you are eligible. This referral will tell the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) that you are eligible for a child care voucher.

2) Contact your local CCR&R to set up an appointment.

- ❑ See the back side of this fact sheet for how to contact the CCR&R near you.
- ❑ Bring your DTA referral for child care and a *valid photo ID* to the appointment.
- ❑ Talk to your CCR&R counselor about the different types of child care that you may get.

If you are currently getting TAFDC, you will **not** have to pay a co-payment fee for child care.

Important Things to Remember

You are responsible to:

- ◆ Choose the type of care that best meets your family's needs.
- ◆ Make sure you always have a valid child care voucher from the CCR&R.

Contact your DTA case manager and the CCR&R when you have a change in:

- ◆ Activity (school to work or change in employment);
- ◆ Wages; or
- ◆ Family size.

What happens when my TAFDC case closes?

When your TAFDC case closes, you may get transitional child care (TCC). You will need to contact the CCR&R *immediately*. The CCR&R will explain how TCC financial assistance works and ask you about your employment and income.

In order to be eligible, you must meet both:

- ◆ Income Requirement; and
- ◆ Activity Requirement, such as work or school.

You may be required to pay a co-payment fee for child care.

Types of child care:

Your CCR&R counselor will help you choose the type of child care that is right for you:

- ◆ Center-based care: Provides care for larger groups of children in a day care center
- ◆ Family-based care: A person who is licensed to care for children in their home
- ◆ In-Home Relative care: A relative cares for your child in your home or the relative's home
- ◆ In-Home care: A non-relative cares for your child in your home.
- ◆ Head Start programs
- ◆ Public pre-school programs
- ◆ Licensed summer camps

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) Contact Information:

If you are not sure which CCR&R to contact, go to the EEC website at <http://www.mass.gov/eec> and under Program & Services click on the Find Early Education & Care Programs link. Click on the link: Search for a Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (CCR&R) near you. Select the Massachusetts city/town you live in. The correct CCR&R information will be shown to you.

or

From any telephone, dial 2-1-1, the Massachusetts state-wide Health and Human Services information and referral phone line, and get information on the CCR&R near you.

SNAP Benefits:

Your family may be able to get SNAP benefits. Contact DTA to find out if your family's income meets the SNAP income requirement.

Electronic Document Management (EDM) and You!

DTA will begin EDM in early 2014. To serve you better, DTA has a new way of receiving your verifications called Electronic Document Management (EDM). EDM streamlines paper processing. This means fewer trips to your DTA office, faster service and fewer lost documents. With EDM, you mail your verifications to a central Post Office box instead of bringing them to your DTA office. This will save you time and effort.

You don't have to pay for stamps! DTA will provide you with postage paid return envelopes to mail your documents.

Verifications sent directly to your case manager! Once received at the P.O Box, your verifications will be scanned at a central location. Each DTA case manager will easily see your verifications on his or her computer screen. This will allow your case manager to spend less time with paperwork and more time helping you.

Fewer trips to your DTA office! Ask your case manager for more information.

