



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


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Operations Memo 2014-20
March 5, 2014

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

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

Re: **SNAP: Mandatory SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program**

Overview

On March 3, 2014, the Department modified BEACON to allow for the enrollment of all clients who are mandatory participants or voluntary participants in the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program. This mandatory program applies to all nonexempt household members between the ages of 16 and 59. All nonexempt household members must register and comply with the SNAP E&T requirements. Exempt household members can also volunteer to participate in the E&T program.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to provide updated information about the mandatory SNAP E&T program. The following reminders are included in this memo:

- mandatory SNAP E&T program requirements for all nonexempt household members;
- changes to the BEACON Work Requirements-FS Page and a data fix to support the enrollment of certain previously exempted clients;
- where to find SNAP E&T exemption reasons;
- enrolling mandatory and volunteer participants in SNAP E&T through BEACON;
- instructions on Self-Directed Job Search;
- where to find the acceptable good cause reasons for nonparticipation of mandatory participants; and

Purpose of Memo (continued)

- instructions on how to disqualify a client for nonparticipation and how to remove an expired disqualification.
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Obsolete

Operations Memo 2012-21 is now obsolete.

Mandatory Population and Requirements

Under SNAP regulations, all household members between the ages of 16 and 59 who do not qualify for an exemption must meet SNAP E&T Program requirements.

Mandatory Population Reminders

All household members between the ages of 16 and 59 who are not exempt from SNAP E&T requirements must:

- register for work at application and every 12 months after initial registration;

Note: Work registration for nonexempt household members occurs when the applicant signs the SNAP application or recertification form.

- comply with Skills Training and Related Job Search Activities or the Self-Directed Job Search requirements; and

Note: At this time, the only available activity for nonexempt E&T household members is Self-Directed Job Search.

- provide information to the Department regarding employment status or job availability when requested.

Voluntary Population

All exempt household members between the ages of 16 and 59 may volunteer for an allowable activity.

Changes to the BEACON Work Requirements – FS Page

The BEACON FS/ET required radio button has been enabled to accept a Yes or No selection.

Certain selections in the drop down lists for the Required Status Reason for exempt clients have been modified.

The selection of Caretaker Incap. Person/Child <6 has been broken out to the following:

- Caretaker Incapacitated Person; and
 - Caretaker of Child under 6.
-

**Changes to the
BEACON Work
Requirements –
FS Page
(Continued)**

The selection of Empld. 30 hrs. or Min. Wage = 30 hrs. has been broken out to the following:

- Employed at least 30 hrs./wk; and
 - Weekly wages = min wage x 30 hrs.
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**BEACON Data
Fixes**

BEACON will automatically update all pending, active, or ineligible SNAP clients who have a FSET Required Status reason of:

- Unfit for work observed;
- ABAWD Waiver/FSWP participant; and
- Program exempt/April 2012 Waiver.

Note: These selection reasons have been removed from the FSET Required Status drop down list.

Data Fix Report

Clients with these designations are mandatory participants. The FSET Required Reason will be reset to FSET required Yes. An active ESP AU will be created for any client who does not already have one.

The Department will forward a Data Fix Report to each TAO that will identify SNAP clients between the ages of 16 and 59 who had been coded with the three reasons listed above.

The report will list the client's name, SSN, and the E&T exemption reason and will be broken out by TAO and case manager. At the next contact with clients listed on this report, the case manager should provide the SNAP-ET Job Search Declaration form (SNAP-JS, Attachment A), if no exemptions apply.

**SNAP E&T
Exemptions**

Exemptions for SNAP E&T can be found at 106 CMR 362.310(B).

**Enter SNAP
E&T Data**

The Work Requirements page, accessed through the Request for Assistance and Case Maintenance workflows, enrolls participating household members and captures information about the household's compliance with SNAP E&T work requirements. Use the Work Requirements page to record the E&T work requirements for each household member.

1. If client is FSET required, select a **Required Status Reason**.
 2. Enter the start date in the **Start** field.
 3. For **Meets Compliance**, select **Yes** or **No**. This field defaults to **Yes**.
 4. If **Meets Compliance** is **Yes**, select a **Compliance Reason**. This field defaults to **Participation**.
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**Enter SNAP E&T
Data
(Continued)**

5. If the compliance has ended, enter a **Compliance End Date**.
6. Click **Next** to save entries or changes and go to the next page in the workflow; or
7. Click **Finish** to save entries or changes and to exit the page and the workflow.

Note: A History icon is also available on the bottom right-hand side of the page. Click on the History icon to find when data was changed and to see the previous values of the data.

**Self-Directed
Job Search
Criteria**

To ensure that SNAP/ET-required clients are complying with SNAP rules, at the next client contact, the case manager must:

- review the case to determine if the client is still SNAP/ET-required;
- make changes to the FS/ET field of the Work Requirements page if the client has a SNAP/ET exemption reason; and
- if SNAP E&T is mandated, give the client the SNAP-JS form and inform the client that he or she must start job search activities within 30 days of enrollment.

Once a non-exempt SNAP participant's case is in Active status, a Self-Directed Job Search participant must:

- begin conducting a job search;
- make at least 18 job contacts or five job contacts and complete other job search activities which, combined, total 24 hours of effort, within next 30 days;
- list the job search activities on back of SNAP-JS form;
- sign and date the form; and
- return the form to case manager within 30 days.

Note: The case manager must note in the Narrative that the client has been informed about SNAP E&T requirements and provided the SNAP-JS.

**Good Cause
and Voluntary
Quit**

Generally, good cause for not meeting SNAP E&T requirements exists when suitable child care is unavailable, when there is a family crisis or emergency, or when there is an employment situation or an offer of employment that is unreasonable. Verification of good cause is required. For further information on Good Cause and types of verifications required, see 106 CMR 362.330.

**Good Cause
and Voluntary
Quit (Continued)**

Reminder: If a client voluntarily quits a job without good cause, the client must be disqualified. For information on voluntary quit, see 106 CMR 362.340.

**SNAP E&T
Disqualification
Penalties in
BEACON**

SNAP E&T regulations at 106 CMR 367.800 require that if the household member does not cooperate with SNAP E&T activities, the member will be disqualified:

- three months for the first disqualification;
- six months for the second disqualification; and
- one year for the third disqualification

Note: If the member who has not complied with SNAP E&T for a third time is the head of household, in addition to the client being ineligible for SNAP benefits for twelve months, the entire household will be ineligible for six months.

If a client has been disqualified, there is no relief from the disqualification until the disqualification expires, even if the client complies with the requirement after being disqualified.

To enter a disqualification in BEACON:

1. on the AU Composition Results page, select a member from the Members List;
2. for Reason category, select Work Requirements;
3. to save the disqualification to the select list, click Save;
4. to save the disqualification to the select list, click Save;
5. click Next to save entries or changes and go to the next page of the workflow; or
6. click Finish to save entries or changes and to exit the page.

Reminder: The case manager must disqualify the client by levels. A second disqualification cannot be given unless the first disqualification has been assigned and has ended. The third disqualification cannot be given unless the second disqualification has been assigned and has ended.

Once the disqualification reason has been entered, and all other case maintenance activities have been completed, if any, the case must be wrapped up and authorized. A BEACON notice will be sent automatically to the client stating that he or she has been disqualified, the reason, the level of the disqualification and when the disqualification will end.

**SNAP E&T
Disqualification
Penalties in
BEACON
(Continued)**

After a disqualification has expired, unless the client has an exemption, the case manager must send the client a new SNAP-JS form. The client is allowed another 60 days to cooperate. Failure to cooperate will result in another disqualification. The E&T requirement can be satisfied only by compliance with the program or by meeting an exemption.

Removing an Expired Disqualification from BEACON

If a client has been disqualified for noncompliance and the disqualification has expired, the case manager must access the Sanctions page and:

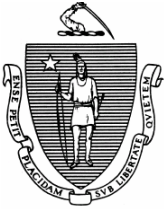
1. select the name of the client from Member List;
2. select the Sanctions tab situated next to the Results tab;
3. select the most recent disqualification;
4. click the Removal Reason drop-down list and select the appropriate removal reason from the list;
5. remove the disqualification by selecting Removed from the Status drop-down box and the Removal reason from the Removal Reason drop-down box; and
6. click Save.

**Policy
References**

SNAP - 106 CMR 362.310, 106 CMR 362.330, 106 CMR 362.340 and 106 CMR 367.800.

Questions

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



SNAP/ET Job Search Declaration

DTA
P. O. Box 4406
Taunton, MA 02780-0420

*Massachusetts Department
of Transitional Assistance*

Case Manager Name _____

Name _____
(please print)

Address _____
(street) (city/town) (ZIP Code)

SSN _____

You are a SNAP/ET Job Search Program participant. _____
(Job Search Date)

You **must** complete the back of this form and return it to: **DTA P.O.Box 4406 Taunton MA 02780-0420** by _____
(Due Date)

- When you have done this activity:
- list the activities you completed on the back of this form;
 - sign and date the form; and
 - return the form to: **DTA P.O.Box 4406 Taunton MA 02780-0420**.

If you have a good reason why you cannot complete this activity on time, call your case manager right away.

I certify that I have completed the activities as listed on the back of this form.

Client's Signature _____

Date _____

Job Search Activity Log

Fill out the Activity Log below listing the date, the activity completed, the time spent, and the location where the activity was completed. You must list either 18 job contacts you made in the last 30 days, or 5 contacts and other job search activities which must total 24 hours of effort in the past 30 days. If you cannot list all of your activities on this form, please attach another piece of paper with the information. Use this sample as a guide.

Date	Activity	Time Spent*	Location
1/08/2009	Completed Job Application	1 hour	Company, Anytown, Statewide
1/09/2009	Interviewed for Job	2 hours	DTA, Washington St. Boston
1/10/2009	Interviewed for Job	2 1/2 hours	MBTA, Transportation Bldg., Boston
1/10/2009	Career Center Job Search	3 hours	Various Locations Statewide

Date	Activity	Time Spent*	Location

Total _____

***Must** be 18 job contacts or 24 hours of job search activities*

* - Including travel time