

Operations Memos

SNAP-Virtual Gateway Minimal Data Applications

SNAP

Operations Memo 2011-51

This Operations Memo advises Transitional Assistance office staff about recent changes to the Virtual Gateway SNAP application made in order to comply with federal regulations. The memo focuses on the new functionality of Virtual Gateway to accept Minimal Data Applications that only contain the name, address and signature of the applicant. These applications will be processed by the Centralized Web Eligibility Unit. The Operations Memo also introduces a new BEACON view that will be used for tracking these applications and gives instructions to TAO staff on how to access the view.

FYI

Activities Meeting the Work Program Requirement

Case managers are reminded that the following activities (either alone or in combination with other activities) can be used to meet the client's TAFDC work program requirement:

- Working in a job for pay;
- Employment Ready (including self-directed job search);
- Employment Training and Education;
- Employment Supports;
- Basic, Secondary and Post-secondary Education;
- Skills Training;
- Supported Work;
- Enhanced Employment Supports; and
- *Volunteer to Succeed*: DTA's Community Service Program.

FYI

Fuel Assistance

The Fuel Assistance Program begins accepting applications for fuel assistance on November 1, 2011. TAOs will receive a supply of Fuel Assistance brochures during the last week of October for clients who need information about where to apply for fuel assistance and how the program works. The brochure will also be available on our website at www.mass.gov/dta.

As was the case last year, the Department will not be mailing income verification letters and Fuel Assistance brochures to clients. Clients can obtain income verification letters to submit with their fuel assistance applications in the following ways:

- Clients may use the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone number to request an income verification letter. The IVR telephone number is 1-877-DTA-BENE or 1-877-382-2363. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Clients will receive income verification letters within five days at the mailing address identified in BEACON.
- Clients may also use their “My Account Page” (MAP) screen of case information. For more information on how clients can access MAP, see Field Operations Memo 2010-6.
- Clients who come to the TAO requesting an income verification letter must receive the letter before leaving the TAO. Clients who telephone their case manager requesting an income verification letter should be directed to use the IVR telephone number or to access MAP to print out their case information.

Posters advertising the availability of income verification letters through the IVR telephone number and MAP were sent to TAOs last year. TAOs that need a new poster should contact Document Production at Schrafft’s for a new poster.

Globe Santa

In October, active TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP clients who reside in the Globe Santa geographic service area were sent the “Boston Globe Santa – Holiday Gift Verification Notice.” The notice lists the name, date of birth and gender of all children age 12 and under. Clients may submit this notice with their letter to Globe Santa requesting to participate in the Boston Globe Santa program. A second mailing will occur in the middle of November for new families who were approved for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP after the first mailing.

The notices were printed on green paper with a red Santa Claus watermark to assist the Globe in verifying the validity of the notices. TAO staff should encourage clients to use this notice, as it will help the Globe staff process the request.

Clients who did not receive or misplaced the “Boston Globe Santa – Holiday Gift Verification Notice” may contact their case manager to ask for another. As a replacement, case managers should use the Globe Santa letter option, which is available from the Letter Request page in BEACON. The case manager should print the letter from BEACON, date stamp it with the TAO date stamp, initial the letter and give it to the client making the request.



FYI

Suspension of ABAWD Rules Extended

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) allowed states that met the criteria of extended unemployment compensation (UC) benefits a 12-month statewide waiver of the work program requirements for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). Since Massachusetts continues to offer extended UC benefits, this waiver has been extended to cover the period from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. Case managers are reminded to follow procedures outlined in Field Operations Memo 2009-33 when processing SNAP cases that include ABAWDS.

Temporary Jobs Created Under the Workforce Investment Act

The U.S Department of Labor has awarded a \$3 million dollar National Emergency Grant to Massachusetts. It will be used to create temporary jobs for eligible dislocated workers to assist with cleanup and recovery efforts after the severe storms and tornadoes that struck the central and western areas of Massachusetts on June 1, 2011.

These temporary workers can receive wages of up to \$12,000 by working a maximum of six months or 1,040 hours (whichever comes first). Local office staff are advised that this earned income is non-countable for SNAP purposes under 106 CMR 363.230 K (26). These earnings are countable for TAFDC and EAEDC cash benefits.

Diversity Quote

“Insight, I believe, refers to the depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side, learning by letting them speak to one another.”

Mary Catherine Bateson