

## Massachusetts Food Stamp Program Access Review

FS, SSFSP  
Field Operations Memo  
2000-17

A random sample review of Transitional Assistance Offices was conducted by USDA in October 1999. The purpose of this review was to determine if barriers to program access exist and if the quality of services provided to applicants and recipients contributes to a national low participation rate.

USDA stated in the *Massachusetts Program Access Review* report that, over all, Massachusetts does a good job administering the Food Stamp Program. However, USDA recommended corrective action in four areas. This Field Operations Memo discusses each of the four areas requiring corrective action and provides instructions for modifying Department practices where appropriate.



## FYI

### Confirmation Notice of Direct Deposit

A new change is coming which will significantly reduce the amount of time to establish recipients on Direct Deposit.

Currently, Confirmation Notices of Direct Deposit are only produced weekly and First Deposit Notices are produced bi-monthly at the start of the cyclical payroll.

Beginning with the second cycle in May 2000, all Confirmation Notices of Direct Deposit will be produced daily rather than weekly and mailed to the recipient with a copy sent to the TAO for review by the AU Manager. The recipient will still have 10 days to contact the appropriate TAO if any information in the notice is incorrect. If no action is taken within the 10-day period, the recipient will receive the First Deposit Notice 15 days after the Confirmation Notice of Direct Deposit was produced.

The Department continues to stress Direct Deposit as the most efficient way for recipients to receive their cash benefits. Most banks offer Basic Banking accounts that allow an individual to maintain a checking and savings account in association with an ATM debit card for \$3 or less.

Direct Deposit is affordable and less costly than buying money orders. It is convenient because recipients can write checks in the privacy of their homes. It is safer because recipients do not need to keep large amounts of cash on hand since their money is in the bank.

Please take the time to promote the benefits of Direct Deposit to recipients.

## FYI

### List of Current Products Added to *Policy Online*

Effective May 1, 2000, a new feature is included in the List of Memos, State Letters and FYIs. The new feature, *Current Products*, is a list of the products sent to print during the previous month. This list includes BEACON Bulletins, brochures, Field Operations Memos, forms, guides/updates, posters and State Letters. This list will be updated monthly and only the current listing can be viewed.