



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


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-42
June 15, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: Cross Program: Telephonic Signature

Overview

DTA now accepts telephonic signature for applications for the SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC programs. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has approved a temporary waiver allowing the Department to accept telephonic signatures for SNAP applications. Telephonic signature provides another access point for applicants.

Telephonic signature means clients are able to apply for DTA benefits, including SNAP, over the phone without having to submit a signed paper application or a web application. Additionally, telephonic signature allows clients who inadvertently submitted an unsigned application to complete the application process without re-submitting the application with a wet or electronic signature.

Telephonic signature is restricted to applications. It is not valid for use during Recertification, Interim Report, Reevaluation or any other document or form that requires a signature.

The following BEACON updates were made to accommodate the implementation of Telephonic Signature:

- Telephone was added to the Method of Application drop list in The Request for Assistance workflow.
- Federal Telephone Call and Telephone Exception were removed from the drop list to avoid confusion; and
- Central Print functionality was added for cash/combo applications.

Purpose

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of procedures for implementing the Telephonic Signature Waiver. Specific sections include:

- Signing an application by telephone;
 - Completing the RFA for a SNAP, TAFDC and/or EAEDC Telephone Application; and
 - Processing a telephonically signed application.
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Signing an Application by Telephone

When a SNAP, TAFDC or EAEDC client is applying by telephone, an interview must be completed and then the case manager must read the 8 items listed below to the client:

1. The information you give as part of your application is subject to verification.
2. By applying for benefits DTA will share your Social Security Number (SSN) and the SSN of each household member with the Social Security Administration and other government agencies to check the identity and eligibility for benefits of the individuals in your household.
3. DTA will get and share information with banks, schools, government and other agencies to check your eligibility for benefits.
4. If this applies to you, DTA will verify your immigration status through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
5. DTA will tell electric, gas and telephone companies that you receive public benefits so you can get discounts.
6. DTA will share information about you and your dependents under age 19 with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). DESE will certify your dependents for school breakfast and lunch programs.
7. DTA will share information about you, your dependents under age 5 and anyone pregnant in your household with the Department of Public Health (DPH). DPH refers these individuals to the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program for nutrition services.
8. DTA will share your information with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the purpose of enrolling you in the Heat & Eat Program.

If the client agrees to the Rights and Responsibilities and that the information they have provided is accurate, the case manager must then write a narrative detailing that the application was telephonically signed and that the Rights, Responsibilities were reviewed, understood and agreed to. If the client does not agree in full, the application must be denied as a voluntary withdrawal.

**Completing
the RFA for
a Telephone
Application**

When completing the RFA workflow for an application that originates as a result of a telephonic request, staff must select Telephone as the Method of Application.

Once the RFA is completed, the SNAP applicant will be automatically mailed the FS App Info Notice and applicable program brochures such as the Your Right to Know, SNAP Program Brochure and Help for Those in Need: A Resource Brochure.

For TAFDC and EAEDC: Case managers must refer applicants to the DTA website or to DTACconnect.com to view all program brochures. On DTACconnect.com program brochures can be found under the following links: *Just applied for TAFDC? - Click here for information about the program and More supports for you and your family!* or *Just applied for EAEDC? - Click here for information about the program.*

**Processing a
Telephonically
Signed
Application**

For SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC: After the interview is completed, the application must be printed centrally so the client will be mailed a copy of the completed application which includes the Rights, Responsibilities and Penalties. The client must be informed that the application does not need to be returned; it is for their records.

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
