

approved vocational educational program and a TAFDC parent's total contributions amount to \$2,000, a combined total of \$4,000 will be contributed by our Department and the United Way. This means that a TAFDC family can save up to \$6,000 by taking advantage of the IDA Program for Educational Advancement.

On a more personal and bittersweet note, as you know I will be soon leaving Massachusetts to head up the state of California's Department of Social Services. In fact, this will be my last column in *Transitions*. From the first day I arrived at DTA, I have been nothing but proud of the agency and the work that we do. We have some of the finest employees across state government, providing critical services and supports to so many of the most vulnerable residents of our Commonwealth. Each and every day, you have done that with precision and compassion, helping hundreds of thousands of families move to a better place economically. The past five years as your Commissioner has been one of the most rewarding times of my life.

With gratitude and respect,



John Wagner



COMMUNICATION is the KEY

Quality Corner

This month we will review an error related to shelter expenses.

Shelter Deduction Error

This case involved a mother, her daughter and the daughter's child who were in one NPA FS AU.

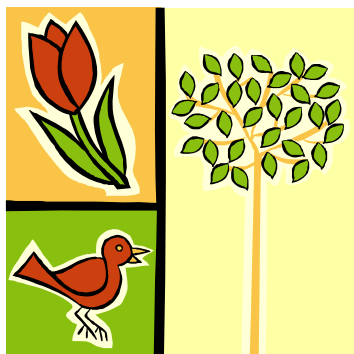
The mother was the grantee of the FS AU. The daughter and her child were also TAFDC recipients. The grantee's rent was correctly used as the FS shelter expense. The daughter had been paying her mother \$75 each week as her portion of the rent, which prevented an income-in-kind deduction from her TAFDC grant. However, the daughter's rent was not allowed as a shelter deduction in the FS AU since the mother was being credited with the total rent and utility expenses for the AU.

When the daughter turned 22-years-old and no longer had to be in the same FS household with her mother, an FS AU was established for her and her son. She also continued to receive TAFDC benefits. She was now entitled to the shelter expense of \$324.98 ($\75×4.333) that she paid to her mother. QC determined that the shelter deduction should have been allowed since it was correctly reported and verified. This resulted in an underissuance error.

FYI - Types of Non-Countable Reimbursements and Income	8
FYI - Verifications Due View	8

What's an AU Manager to Do?

Whenever there is a change in household composition, the AU Manager must review all eligibility factors before wrapping up the AU for authorization. In this AU, the income and household size were correctly changed, but the Shelter Expenses window needed more attention. When processing an AU containing an AU member who was a part of another AU, it is important to make sure that both the original AU and the newly established AU are correct. The AU Manager should have changed the 'Countable for FS' radio button to 'Yes' so that the \$75 weekly rental amount would in fact be allowed in the calculation of the shelter deduction for the AU.



From the Hotline

- Q.** A father with over five years of Legal Permanent Resident status has been receiving food stamp benefits and TAFDC. He lives with his two children. One of his children has an eligible noncitizen status but was recently taken out of the TAFDC AU because she is 18-years-old. The other child is only ten years old, but he doesn't have an eligible noncitizen status for either TAFDC or the Food Stamp Program. Can I leave the father on TAFDC as an open AU consisting of one individual?
- A.** Yes. An otherwise eligible grantee, whose only dependent child is ineligible due to noncitizen status, is eligible to receive TAFDC as an AU of one.
- If otherwise eligible, the father and the 18-year-old eligible noncitizen child may continue receiving food stamp benefits as an AU of two.
- Q.** A TAFDC grantee's former boyfriend has recently left the home, and the grantee is now caring for his disabled child, even though she is not related to the child. This disabled child is not receiving TAFDC, but two of the grantee's children are members of the AU. The grantee is claiming the caretaker exemption. To qualify as an exempt AU, must there be a relationship between the TAFDC grantee and her former boyfriend's child?
- A.** No. As long as the caregiver meets the other requirements of this exemption, no relationship is necessary between the caregiver and the disabled child. However, other requirements may apply in order to meet this exemption. Refer to 106 CMR 203.100 (A) for further details.
- Q.** A disabled EAEDC applicant who met with me this afternoon handed me a completed Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Medical Report signed by a certified physician who qualifies as a competent medical authority. However, this physician is not a MassHealth provider. Is this medical report still acceptable?
- A.** Yes. While the applicant must provide a completed Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Medical Report signed by a competent medical authority, the regulations at 106 CMR 320.200 do not specify that a MassHealth provider is required. A Medical Report completed by an individual who meets the definition of competent medical authority as specified at 106 CMR 701.600(H) is acceptable.