Transitions

August 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Quality Corner

This month we will review an error that occurred in a Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP case caused by the inadequate review of a scanned document.

Inadequate review of Scanned Document

This NPA SNAP household was a 74-year-old client who lived alone. On December 22, 2015, the grantee returned a completed and signed *Returned Mail Form SP-RMN*, which had been automatically sent due to a National Change of Address (NCOA) match. On the form, the client reported no change in address but did report a change in rent and utilities. The client was now paying $361 monthly in rent and was only responsible for his telephone bill. The case manager dispositioned the scanned document as Entered and authorized a new Electronic Benefit Calculation (EBC) without correcting the shelter and utility expenses. The benefit amount remained the same at $72 with the rent in the incorrect amount of $305 and the heating/cooling SUA.

During the March 2016 Quality Control review, it was determined that the reported change in rent to $361 and telephone utility expense had not been used in the SNAP benefit calculation. This unprocessed change resulted in a $56 overissuance of SNAP benefits.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

When processing scanned documents, it is important to thoroughly review the documentation submitted. The client properly completed the *Returned Mail Form SP-RMN* by checking No Change to Address and Change to both the Shelter Expenses and Utility Expenses sections of the form. In addition, the client also indicated that gas and electricity were now included in the rent amount. While there was no change in the client's address, other changes were clearly reported which were not used in the new SNAP benefit calculation.

Diversity Quote

We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.

                                                                                    Maya Angelou

Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC – Pathways to Self Sufficiency

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-37
TAFDC

Self-Sufficiency Specialists provide intensive case management and support to all teen parents who are heads of household, whether parenting or pregnant. Other clients who *may* receive the assistance of an SSS include:

- young parents (pregnant and/or parenting heads of household under the age of 24); and
- residents of an emergency assistance shelter, Hotel/Motel, Congregate Shelter, Scattered Site Shelter or Domestic Violence Shelter.

In limited circumstances, and as determined by a DTA manager, SSSs may also assist other clients who have been identified as having significant challenges in moving towards self-sufficiency.

The purpose of this Online Guide transmittal is to advise staff of:

- changes to the cases the Self-Sufficiency Specialist may be managing, namely; clients in EA Shelters, as well as continuing to provide case management services for Teen Parents; and
- a revised Online Guide page.

Clothing Allowance

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-38
TAFDC

The Department will issue a nonrecurring clothing allowance of $250 per eligible TAFDC client under the age of 19 for September 2016. For clients eligible effective September 1, the clothing allowance becomes available on August 30, 2016.

If a client under age 19 becomes eligible effective September 1, 2016, at a later date s/he will receive a supplemental payment of $250 on one of the following dates: September 23, October 21, November 18 or December 23. Clients will receive a notice about their eligibility for a clothing allowance on or about the same date.

Please note that every eligible client will receive $250, regardless of their eligibility date. The amount is no longer prorated.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs – Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) BEACON Changes and Updates to SNAP Reevaluation Forms

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-39

Cross Programs

Effective August 29, 2016, the Standard Utility Allowance page will have two tabs—Standard Utility Allowance and Standard Utility Allowance Tracking.

The Standard Utility Allowance tab will list all utility responsibility questions. The Standard Utility Allowance Tracking tab will display Allowance type, H-EAT Start and End Dates, and LIHEAP Start and End Dates.

Additionally, utility questions were standardized across all SNAP Reevaluation forms, requiring clients to answer utility questions at each Interim Report and Recertification.

Cross Programs – DTA Connect

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-40

Cross Programs

Scheduled for Monday, August 29, 2016, the Department will launch a mobile app, DTA Connect. This app will be available to clients who have access to a Smartphone or tablet. This app is free through the App Store and Google Play.

To access DTA Connect, the head of household must enter her/his Social Security Number and Year of Birth.

DTA Connect will provide immediate access to case-specific information without requiring a visit to a Transitional Assistance Office, calling the DTA Assistance Line, or calling their case manager. The Department will continue to roll out additional features to make DTA Connect a helpful resource to clients, staff, and outreach providers.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Program: Globe Santa Mailing

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-42
Cross Program

Each year, the Globe Santa Program provides age-appropriate holiday toys and books to eligible children who live in the geographical areas designated by the Globe Santa Program.

This year, the Holiday Gift (Globe Santa) Verification mailing will be sent the week of September 5, 2016. A second mailing to new cases approved for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP after August 31, 2016 is scheduled for the week of October 17, 2016.

In addition to the *Globe Santa Program Holiday Gift Verification* notice, clients receive the *Holiday Gift Verification Form*, which includes the name, date of birth and gender of all eligible children in the household. This form includes specific instructions for drafting letters to the Boston Globe to submit with the verification, and a checklist to ensure that all information is provided to meet the client's request.

This Online Guide Transmittal also advises DTA staff about a revised:
- *Globe Santa Program Holiday Gift Verification* notice;
- Holiday Gift (Globe Santa Program) Verification Mailing page; and
- Cross Program Notices page.

TAFDC - BEACON: Absence Page Changes and Related Absent Parent Domestic Violence and/or Safety Concerns for Child Support Enforcement

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-43
TAFDC

A joint effort has been undertaken by DTA and the Department of Revenue Child Support Enforcement Division (DOR/CSE) to update the systems exchange of absent parent information and to improve the TAFDC child support enforcement requirements process. This process highlighted mutual concerns of the two agencies concerning child support enforcement for cases with reported past or present domestic violence.

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise DTA staff about:
- enhancements to the Cooperation tab of the Absence page for recording, processing and tracking Good Cause claims for not cooperating with child support requirements due to domestic violence, as well as Good Cause claims not involving domestic violence;
- a new view to track clients who require a Domestic Violence Specialist to review reported domestic violence, safety concerns or the threat of domestic violence in the past or present; and
- updates to the Online Guide.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs – SVES Automated Inquiries

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-46
Cross Programs

This Online Guide Transmittal informs staff that, effective with BEACON Build 48.5, new SVES automated inquiries of specific SNAP populations will be run daily, monthly, quarterly, or yearly based on predetermined specifications.

To maintain program accuracy and consistently obtain accurate RSDI information, the following SNAP clients will have automatic inquiries made through the SVES database:

- Pending new or reopened household members;
- Pending, active or ineligible household members with an RSDI claim number ending in W or B;
- Pending, active or ineligible household members age 60 or over who do not have an active RSDI and/or SSI claim;
- Pending, active or ineligible household members between the ages of 16 and 18 who have an active RSDI claim;
- Pending, active or ineligible household members with a parent, spouse or sibling who have an active RSDI claim; and
- Pending, active or ineligible household members that have had no updates since the last COLA (BENDEX and SSI).

A benefit recalculation will be automatically performed on active and ineligible cases with data from these inquiries. The SNAP benefit recalculation occurs for SNAP-only as well as SNAP/Cash combination households.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs – LEAD Changes in SNAP

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-47

SNAP

LEAD (Leadership, Empowerment, Assistance, Development) is a major Department initiative created to help staff better serve clients and work more efficiently. The initiative enhances professional development and improves case review procedures. Other LEAD objectives include:

- developing a top-notch, nationally recognized workforce;
- improving accuracy and timeliness rates;
- maximizing staff potential; and
- making connections between agency performance and client outcomes.

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff about certain system changes being made to support SNAP case reviews. Since state-wide implementation in February, the LEAD Case Review Tool used by SNAP supervisors and managers has been available as an Excel document in the Department's shared drive. Beginning with BEACON Build 48.5, scheduled for August 29, 2016, the following changes will occur:

- a new Case Review workflow and functionality will be integrated into BEACON;
- new Case Review Pages and Views (Primary and Secondary) will be accessible to field staff; and
- new BEACON Accuracy Measures will be summarized for supervisors and managers to review with their staff.

From the Forms File

Revised Forms

02-070-0816-05
VW-1 (Rev. 8/2016)
Request to Stop Benefits or Withdraw Application

18-831-0816-05
EBT-4 (Rev. 8/2016)
Request for Deduction from EBT Account

09-010-0816-05
09-044-0816-05 (S)
SNAP-9B (Rev. 8/2016)
Request for Replacement SNAP Benefits Due to Household Disaster or Misfortune

18-034-0816-05
CA-DD (Rev. 8/2016)
Direct Deposit

Based on suggestions from the Forms and Notices workgroup the above forms have been revised. Please destroy existing supplies of these forms and use the revised versions.

Revised Brochures

Client Assistance Coordinators (CACs)(Rev. 7/28/2016)
This brochure has been revised. A supply has been sent to the TAOs and is available on the Online Forms section of Policy Online. Please use the revised version.

25-671-0816-05
CI-DTA (S)(Rev. 8/2015)
How may we help you?

04-041-0816-05
EAEDC-PB (S) (Rev. 8/2016)
Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program

From the Forms File *(Continued from Page 8)*

09-170-0816-05
SNAP-PB (S) (Rev. 8/2016)
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

02-213-0816-05
TAFDC-PB (S) (Rev. 8/2016)
Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program

02-231-0816-05
TPB (S)(Rev. 8/2016)
Do You Need Transitional Assistance? Important Information for Teenage Parents

17-151-0816-05
WPIB (S)(Rev. 8/2016)
The TAFDC Work Program: Your Pathway to Self-Sufficiency

02-212-0816-05
YRTK (S) (Rev. 8/2016)
Your Right to Know

The Spanish versions of the above brochures are now available. Other language versions will soon be available.

Obsolete Form

18-842-0903
EBT-9 (9/2003)
EBT Card Fee Collection Form

FYI

Fuel Assistance 2016-2017

The Fuel Assistance Program begins accepting applications for fuel assistance on November 1, 2016. TAOs will receive a supply of Fuel Assistance brochures in October for clients who are interested in applying for fuel assistance, which contains information on how the program works. The brochure will also be available on our website at www.mass.gov/dta/fuelassistance.

Clients can obtain income verification letters to submit with their Fuel Assistance application in the following ways by:

Accessing My Account Page (MAP), which displays case specific information. For more information on how clients can access MAP, see the Online Guide:

Topic: Cross Programs,

Book: MAP,

Page: Informing Clients How to Access My Account Page (MAP).

Accessing the DTA Assistance Line at1-877-832-2363

Visiting a TAO

Note: The DTA Assistance Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Clients who access the Assistance Line will receive the income verification letter within five days at the mailing address identified in BEACON.

Clients who visit a TAO to request an income verification letter must be given the letter before leaving the TAO. Those who telephone their case manager to request an income verification letter should be directed to use the DTA Assistance Line or to access MAP to print out their case information.

Each TAO received a poster advertising the availability of income verification letters through the DTA Assistance Line and MAP.

TAO Meeting Notes