



# Transitions

February 2013

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Dear Colleagues,

I want to thank you for the warm welcome I have received from all of you since joining the Department of Transitional Assistance a few weeks ago. I am excited for the opportunity to work with you. As you know, we have a lot of work ahead of us and I know that this team is capable of great things.

While I have not met everyone yet, I have had an opportunity to visit 10 of our 22 Transitional Assistance offices and to meet with Central office staff. I am scheduled to visit the rest of the field offices by the end of March. During these visits, I have witnessed firsthand that the Department is comprised of compassionate, knowledgeable staff who take pride in the work we do to help our most vulnerable residents. I have been truly impressed by the ideas and input people have shared with me.

Governor Patrick and Secretary Polanowicz have given us a mandate to make meaningful improvements to the Department's practices and policies. In the next week, our Short Term and Long Term Initiatives plan will be released that will outline the Department's next steps to strengthen program integrity efforts, manage caseload growth and ensure that DTA benefits are being used by those who truly need them. I will share that plan with you and it will serve as our road map over the coming months.

In addition, we are launching a state-wide listening tour that will begin March 8th. This will be an opportunity to hear from staff, current and former clients, our community advocates, residents and local officials about their experiences with DTA. Following the final session, a report will be filed with the Governor and legislature that incorporates the ideas and concerns raised during the tour. I want to invite everyone to attend one of the listening tours and share your ideas on how we can continue to improve DTA and tell your story of how your work has positively impacted the lives of the people we serve.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

**From the Commissioner** *(continued from page 1)*

Finally, I am excited to announce two additions to our DTA team. Matthew Kitsos has joined DTA as the Director of Communications and Carrie Peters as Administrative Unit Manager. Matt Kitsos comes to us from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, where he spent the past two years as Deputy Director of Communications. He previously served as an aide to Representative Alice Peisch. He is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Boston. Carrie Peters brings more than a decade of experience in office operations to our team. She is a former member of the U.S. Army National Guard Reserves and holds a Master Degree in Nonprofit Management from Northeastern University. Please make sure to stop by or drop them an email to say hello.

Please feel free to contact me at any time by calling 617-348-8400 or by emailing [Stacey.Monahan@state.ma.us](mailto:Stacey.Monahan@state.ma.us).

Sincerely,



Stacey Monahan

Interim Commissioner



## Quality Corner

This month we will review an error regarding the calculation of the shelter expenses of a resident of a licensed group home. We will also review an invalid denial.

### Shelter Expenses for Residents of Licensed Group Homes

This case included a 71-year-old client who was a resident of a licensed group home. The client reapplied for SNAP benefits on June 25, 2012. At reapplication, the following income and expenses were used in the household's SNAP benefit calculation: Retirement Survivor and Disability Insurance (RSDI) of \$607, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of \$83, earned income of \$51, rent of \$251 and the heating/cooling SUA.

A BEACON narrative dated July 2, 2012 indicated that the client was a resident of a group home. Quality Control determined from the *Other Agency Certification of Shelter Expenses for Licensed Group Home Residents* (FS-ACSE) form, available in the case record, that the client paid \$251 per month for rent. The case manager entered rent of \$251 on BEACON, inadvertently omitting a step in the calculation of the shelter expense. This caused an overissuance of \$51 for the review month.

### What's a Case Manager to Do?

Since this client is the resident of a group home, the maximum SNAP benefit for one-person of \$200 must be subtracted from the shelter expense to account for food provided by the home in accordance with 106 CMR 365.630(B). This instruction is found in the *For DTA Use Only* section of the FS-ACSE form. When processing cases from licensed group homes, case managers and supervisors must remember to follow the procedures in Field Operations Memo 2004-41.

### Invalid Denial

A web application was received on July 3, 2012. A telephone interview was conducted on July 19, 2012 but the case manager did not issue a verification checklist to the client at the time. On July 24, 2012 (day 21), a verification checklist was issued to the client with a due date of August 3, 2012. On August 3, 2012, the case was denied for failure to provide verifications.

### What's a Case Manager to Do?

The verification checklist should have been completed and mailed to the client on the day the client was interviewed instead of being mailed on the 21<sup>st</sup> day. This would have allowed the client sufficient time to provide the requested verifications.

In addition, on the same day that the verification checklist was issued, a pending denial form (SNAPNL-2) should have also been issued, allowing 60 days from the date of application for the verifications to be provided. On day-30, the case manager should have denied the case on BEACON, being careful to suppress the BEACON-generated denial notice.

The case manager did issue the verification checklist on July 24, and this was appropriate. A verification checklist with a due date beyond day 30 is a signal to BEACON that this case must not be included in the automatic SNAP denials on day 30. Please refer to Operations Memo 2012-17 for detailed procedures.

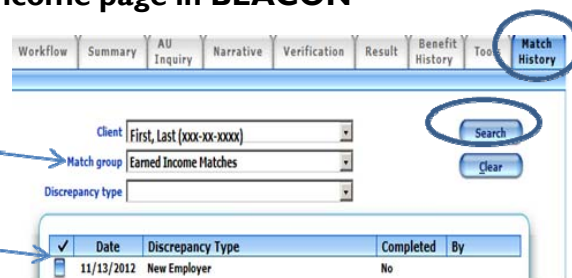
# Training Corner

## Earned Income Matches

**Introduction** When you are aware of a client’s employment, but Earned Income Matches keep returning, there is a solution. When one or more pieces of information are not entered in the Earned Income Page or are entered incorrectly (e.g., misspelled employer names, etc.), an Earned Income Match discrepancy occurs. To dispose of Earned Income Match discrepancies, case managers must ensure that the correct Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and employer name, documented in the DOR Income Match Page, are entered in the Earned

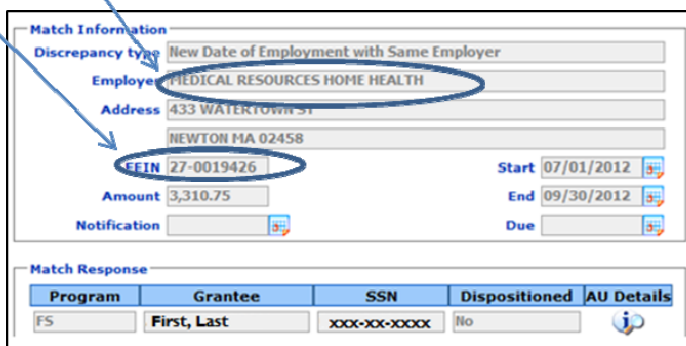
**Disposition** Follow the steps below to update the Earned Income page in BEACON  
**Earned Income matches**

1. Click on the **Match History** tab.
2. From the Match Group drop-down box, select Earned Income Matches and click the Search button.

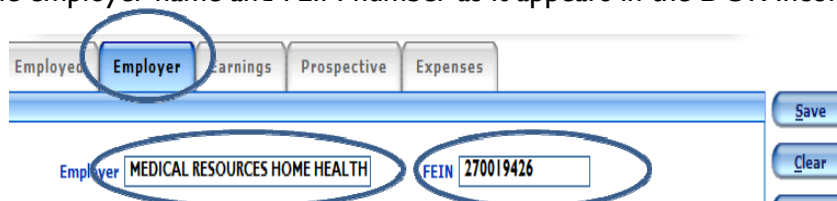


3. Below **Discrepancy Type**, click on the match with **NO** under the **Completed** column\*. Result: The DOR Income Match page will be displayed.

4. Note the FEIN number and employer’s name for entry on the Earned Income page. This information should be entered exactly as it is written on the Match Information Page.



5. Go to the Earned Income page and select the Employer tab. This is where you will be able to enter the FEIN number and employer name.
6. Enter the employer name and FEIN number as it appears in the DOR Income Match page.

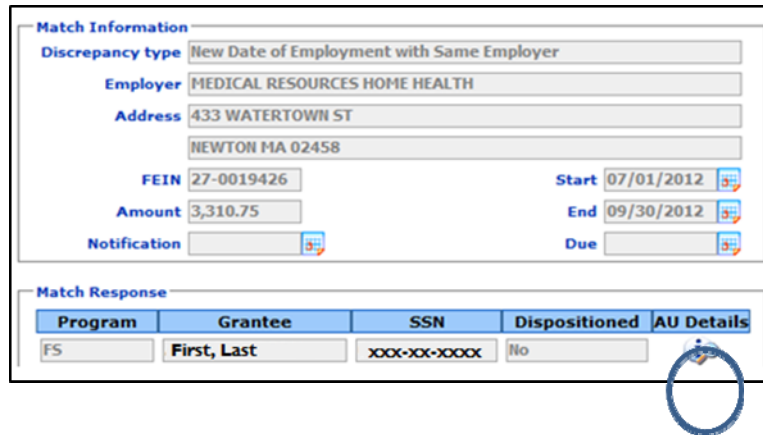


\* You must disposition each New Employer match that has occurred due to this issue.

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**Training Corner** *(Continued from Page 4)*

- Return to the DOR Income Match and disposition the match on BEACON by clicking on AU Details.



**Match Information**

Discrepancy type: New Date of Employment with Same Employer

Employer: MEDICAL RESOURCES HOME HEALTH

Address: 433 WATERTOWN ST  
NEWTON MA 02458

FEIN: 27-0019426      Start: 07/01/2012

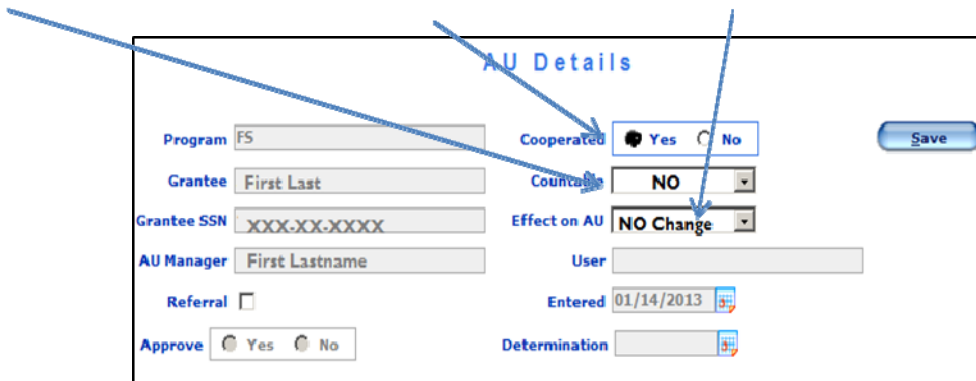
Amount: 3,310.75      End: 09/30/2012

Notification:      Due:

**Match Response**

Program	Grantee	SSN	Dispositioned	AU Details
FS	First, Last	xxx-xx-xxxx	No	

- On the AU Details Page, click Yes in the Cooperated field, set the Countable drop-down box to **No**, and in the Effect on AU drop-down box, select **No Change**.



**AU Details**

Program: FS      Cooperated:  Yes  No     

Grantee: First Last      Countable: NO

Grantee SSN: xxx-xx-xxxx      Effect on AU: NO Change

AU Manager: First Lastname      User:

Referral:       Entered: 01/14/2013

Approve:  Yes  No      Determination:

**Reminder:** Don't forget to **SAVE** your changes before leaving each page, go to the Verification tab and verify the changes, and wrap up the case.

**Note:** Refer to **Operations Memo 2013-5** to see how you can now submit fraud referrals based on Match information more easily.

## From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the **Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478**.

- Q. 1.** I know that the cash surrender value of a client's life insurance policy is considered a countable asset in the TAFDC and EAEDC programs, but what happens when a client reports cashing in his life insurance? In my particular client's case, his life insurance policy had a cash surrender value of \$1,500. Are these funds countable as an asset or are they treated as a one-time lump sum payment?
- A. 1.** The \$1,500 received by your TAFDC client is still treated as an asset. See 106 CMR 204.120(E) for more information. This payment is treated as an asset in the EAEDC Program as well. See 106 CMR 321.120(E) for more information.
- Note:** In SNAP policy, the cash surrender value of life insurance policies is noncountable, provided the insurance policies are not cashed in. For more information, see 106 CMR 363.140(B).
- Q. 2.** When a SNAP client cashes in his life insurance policy, are the proceeds treated as an asset?
- A. 2.** Yes. These payments are counted as an asset and are excluded as income. For more information on these types of payments, refer to 106 CMR 363.230(I.) For more information on assets in SNAP, refer to categorically eligible households in 106 CMR 365.180.
- Q. 3.** Payments such as Social Security, Worker's Compensation and Unemployment Compensation are ongoing payments for some of our clients. However, in policy these payments are also listed as potential lump sum income sources. How can I tell when one of these payments is ongoing, as opposed to a one-time payment?
- A. 3.** To treat Social Security, Worker's Compensation or Unemployment Compensation as a lump sum, there needs to be an indication from the payer that the income covers a specific period of time and that the situation will not be repeated. For example, a client might normally receive \$700 in Social Security benefits, but because of a delay in the processing of his case, he is sent a notice from the Social Security Administration that he is owed \$5,600 in retroactive benefits. This \$5,600 retroactive, one-time amount is considered a lump sum in the SNAP and cash programs. For more information, refer to 106 CMR 363.130(D) in the SNAP regulations, 106 CMR 204.240 in the TAFDC regulations and 106 CMR 321.240 in the EAEDC regulations.
- Q. 4.** In both TAFDC and EAEDC, the cash surrender value of burial insurance is countable. What is the difference between burial insurance and prepaid funeral arrangements?

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## From the Hotline *(Continued from Page 6)*

- A. 4.** Both burial insurance and prepaid funeral arrangements can cover similar costs, such as funeral services, cemetery plots, headstones and caskets. However, burial insurance can build up cash value over time while a prepaid funeral arrangement typically cannot be converted into cash. For more information on prepaid burial plans in the cash programs, see 106 CMR 204.140(N) in TAFDC regulations and 106 CMR 321.140(N) in EAEDC regulations. For more information on the cash surrender value of burial insurance, see 106 CMR 204.120(F) in the TAFDC regulations and 106 CMR 321.120(F) in EAEDC regulations.

**Note:** In SNAP, one burial plot per household member and the value of a prepaid funeral arrangement, not to exceed \$1,500, are noncountable assets. If any portion of these assets are used for purposes other than funeral or burial arrangements, then the balance of the asset is countable, under the provisions of 106 CMR 363.130.



## From the Forms File

### Revised Forms

02-754-0113-05

02-753-0113-05 (S)

24-EX (Rev. 1/2013)

*Extension Request*

Language on the *Extension Request* form has been updated. Please discard all old versions of the form and use the revised version.

### Revised Brochures

The *Your Right To Interpreter Services* brochure are now available in translation. A supply of the following brochures will be shipped to all TAOs. Please discard all old versions of these brochures and use the revised versions.

18-124-0113-05 *IS-Brochure (Khmer) (Rev. 1/2013)*

18-121-0113-05 *IS-Brochure (Chinese) (Rev. 1/2013)*

18-117-0113-05 *IS-Brochure (Haitian Creole) (Rev. 1/2013)*

18-119-0113-05 *IS-Brochure (Portuguese) (Rev. 1/2013)*

18-125-0113-05 *IS-Brochure (Russian) (Rev. 1/2013)*

18-120-0113-05 *IS Brochure (Vietnamese) (Rev. 1/2013)*

18-116-0113-05 *IS-Brochure (Spanish) (Rev. 1/2013)*

*How to Get SNAP Benefits*

09-075-0113-05

09-076-0113-05(S)

*SNAP-BB (Rev. 1/2013)*

The **SNAP Income Standards** chart has been updated in the *How to Get SNAP Benefits* brochure. Please discard old versions of this brochure and use the revised version.

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

*Community Information - How may we help you?*

25-670-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (English)

25-671-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Spanish)

25-674-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Khmer) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-676-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Chinese) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-672-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Haitian Creole) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-675-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Portuguese) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-673-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Russian) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-677-0113-05 CI-DTA Brochure (Vietnamese) (Rev. 1/2013)

Community Information Brochure (Rev. 1/2013)

The *Community Information – How may we help you? (CI-DTA)* brochure has been revised to include new EBT Cash Restriction language. Please discard old versions of this brochure and use the revised versions.

**Revised Inserts**

SNAP-BB Senior Inserts

09-078-0113-05

09-077-0113-05(S)

SNAP-BB Senior Insert (Rev. 1/2013)

The *How to Get SNAP Benefits Senior Inserts* have been revised. Please discard old versions of these inserts and distribute the revised versions with the *How to Get SNAP Benefits (SNAP-BB)* brochure.

*Community Information - How may we help you? Inserts*

25-666-0113-05 (Cambodian/Khmer) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-677-0113-05 (Chinese) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-660-0113-05 (English) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-661-0113-05 (Spanish) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-662-0113-05 (Portuguese) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-663-0113-05 (Haitian Creole) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-664-0113-05 (Vietnamese) (Rev. 1/2013)

25-665-0113-05 (Russian) (Rev. 1/2013)

The *Community Information (CI-DTA) Income Eligibility Charts* have been revised. Please discard old versions of these Inserts and distribute the revised versions with the *Community Information (CI-DTA)* brochure.

## Operations Memos

### TAFDC – CIES Special Projects for Fiscal Year 2013

TAFDC

Operations Memo 2013-3

DTA received additional funding for FY'13 for Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES). Certain CIES vendors who receive this funding will enroll TAFDC clients into CIES special projects designed for targeted populations. This Operations Memo:

- informs TAO staff about the additional fiscal year funding for CIES special projects and identifies the vendors who will be involved;
- describes the CIES special projects and how to distinguish these CIES slots from “regular” CIES slots; and
- instructs TAO staff on how to refer clients to the CIES special projects slots.

### TAFDC and SNAP: 2013 Federal Poverty Guidelines

TAFDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-4

This memo informs staff that the 2013 the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines were increased and published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2013. The SNAP and TAFDC charts and tables affected by the poverty guidelines posted at [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) were updated to reflect the increase in the 2013 poverty guidelines.

Effective February 1, 2013, BEACON began using the increased eligibility standards in the calculation of income eligibility for TAFDC teen parents under age 18 living with a parent and the gross monthly income test for categorically eligible SNAP households.

## Operations Memos

### **TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – BEACON Matches Functionality Change**

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP  
Operations Memo 2013-5

Effective with BEACON Build 45.3, a functionality change was developed for BEACON matches. When making a referral to the Fraud and Overpayment Referral Screening (FORS) Unit, case managers will no longer have to enter the AR workflow to complete the fraud/overpayment referral. They will now be able to click a newly created Referral check-box on the AU Details page.

This Operations Memo provides DTA staff with the new Matches functionality change as well as procedures for making fraud/overpayment referrals.

### **TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – FY 2011 and 2012 Audit Findings: Card Issuance Procedures**

SNAP  
Operations Memo 2013-6

The Single Audit Act of 1984 established requirements for audits of states, local governments and Indian tribal governments that administer federal financial assistance programs. Each year, as a result of this act, the Department is subject to the Single State Audit conducted by an impartial auditing firm. It is the responsibility of this firm to ensure that the Department is in compliance with the requirements of this federal act.

As part of the Single State Audit, all facets of the Department are examined, including compliance with federal/state policy and procedures. The overall report from the auditors was very favorable; however some findings were noted. This Operations Memo:

- describes the FY'11 and '12 audit findings regarding misapplication of policy/procedure;
- informs TAO staff of new policy/procedures to follow in these instances; and
- reminds TAO staff that the Benefit Issuance Unit at Central Office is an available resource for questions on any aspect of EBT operation.

## Operations Memos

### Facsimile and System Generated Social Security Numbers (SSNs) Cleanup

Operations Memo 2013-7  
TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2012-48 described an automated process for updating the SSNs of clients for whom there are DTA-assigned facsimile or System Generated Social Security numbers (SSNs) on file. This process has been established as a means to help ensure program integrity and to address issues raised in an audit by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Office of Inspector General regarding clients who have not provided the Department with valid SSNs.

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise staff of changes to BEACON and the revised procedures for updating client facsimile and System Generated SSNs.

Operations Memo 2013-7 obsoletes Operations Memo 2012-48.

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## FYI

### Increase in Federal Mileage Rate

Effective immediately, TAO staff must use the federal mileage rate of 56.5 cents per mile when calculating allowable transportation costs to be used as a medical deduction or a dependent care deduction for SNAP purposes. The new federal mileage rate represents an increase from the rate issued in an FYI in *Transitions* of July 2011.

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### Diversity Quote

**“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”**

**Maya Angelou**

## TAO Meeting Notes