



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

JANE SWIFT
Governor

WILLIAM D. O'LEARY
Secretary

CLAIRE MCINTIRE
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2001-23
April 27, 2001

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement for Assistance Units Receiving EA Temporary Emergency Shelter Benefits

Background

Emergency Assistance (EA) policy states an EA assistance unit (AU) placed in temporary emergency shelter must cooperate in the development of and participate in the activities outlined in the EA AU's plan for self-sufficiency (106 CMR 309.040(D)(1)).

EA policy also states an EA AU will be considered noncompliant with the requirement for maintaining temporary emergency shelter if it fails to cooperate in developing or participating in the activities required by the plan for self-sufficiency (106 CMR 309.040(E)(1)(c)).

The EA AU's plan for self-sufficiency will be developed in two steps.

First, each adult member(s) (age 18 and older) of the EA AU must sign the ***EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement - Phase I*** (EA-15) (Attachment A).

Second, each adult member(s) must cooperate in completing the three-part ***EA Self-Sufficiency Plan*** (EA-Plan).

The purpose of this memo is to provide procedures for completing the ***EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement - Phase I*** on each AU applying for or receiving temporary emergency shelter.

**EA
Self-Sufficiency
Plan/ Agreement -
Phase I**

Starting May 1, 2001, anyone applying for or receiving temporary emergency shelter benefits must sign the *EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement - Phase I* form which sets out the activities required of all EA AUs.

If the EA applicant refuses to sign the form, the AU is ineligible for shelter benefits. (106 CMR 309.040(D)(1))

If the current EA recipient refuses to sign the form, the EA AU will be in noncompliance with shelter requirements by failing to cooperate in developing the self-sufficiency plan. (106 CMR 309.040(E)(1)(c))

Applicants

- Before an EA AU applicant may be placed in a Department-approved temporary emergency shelter (congregate, scattered site or hotel/motel), the adult members of the EA AU must read, agree to and sign the *EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement - Phase I* (EA-15). This form is in addition to the recipient responsibilities notice forms: the TESR-1 and TESR-3 or the HM-NT.

The AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator must make sure the adult member(s) understand what activities must be done while in the shelter or hotel/motel.

After the EA-15 is signed, the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator:

- puts two copies of the form in the shelter referral packet: one copy for the AU and one copy for the shelter (not the hotel/motel). If the EA AU is unable to take the shelter packet, the EA-15 is faxed to the shelter;
- faxes a copy to the HAP provider; and
- files the original in the AU record.

The EA applicant refusing to sign the EA-15 is given an NFL-9 terminating the EA shelter benefits (106 CMR 309.040(D)(1)).

**Current
Recipients**

- For EA AUs currently placed in a Department-approved temporary emergency shelter (congregate, scattered site or hotel/motel), the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator will begin to schedule appointments with the adult member(s) of the EA AU. See below for a list of priority AUs for the scheduling of appointments.

Note: If an EA AU from one of the TAOs piloting the new EA Self-Sufficiency Plan (EA-Plan) has signed and completed the EA-Plan, the EA-15 is not required.

EA Self-Sufficiency Plan/Agreement - Phase I continued)

Current Recipients (cont.)

The AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator must make sure the adult member(s) of the EA AU understands what activities must be done while in the shelter or hotel/motel.

After the EA-15 is signed, the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator:

- gives a copy of the form to the EA AU;
- faxes a copy to the shelter (not the hotel/motel) and the HAP provider; and
- files the original in the AU record.

If an adult member of the EA AU fails or refuses to sign the *EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement -Phase I* (EA-15), the EA AU will be considered noncompliant with the shelter requirements (106 CMR 309.040(E)(1)(c)). This information must be forwarded to the Noncompliance Committee.

Priority AUs

The following AUs should be considered as priority when scheduling an appointment for an EA AU currently placed in a temporary emergency shelter (congregate, scattered site or hotel/motel) to complete the EA-15.

1. An EA AU currently placed in a hotel/motel;
2. An EA AU currently placed in a scattered site;
3. A two-parent EA AU;
4. An EA AU having used 18 or more months of TAFDC time-limited benefits;
5. EA AUs that have been homeless and residing in shelter(s) for the longest length of time; or
6. As determined by the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator and Supervisor.

All EA AUs should have signed the EA-15 by May 31, 2001. Additional time beyond the May 31 date may be granted by your Regional Director.

Note: Until the *EA Self-Sufficiency Plan / Agreement* is signed, the EA AU must continue to cooperate with housing search.

EA Self-Sufficiency Plan

Step two is the completion of the comprehensive three-part *EA Self-Sufficiency Plan* (EA-Plan) with the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator, HAP provider and the shelter case manager. This form is being piloted in certain TAOs. It will be revised based on comments received and then issued for statewide use along with an update to the *EA Reference Guide* with the procedures for completing the *EA Self-Sufficiency Plan*.

**TAO Time/Staff
Limitations**

Each TAO is unique in its number of homeless families in shelter and the number of staff assigned to the EA AUs. Therefore, the priority AUs mentioned in this memo are guidelines for the TAO Director or designee to use for ensuring timely completion of the self-sufficiency plan/agreement.

The Director or designee, Supervisor and AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator should discuss the most practical approach to completing the self-sufficiency plan/agreement within the allowed timeframe. Some TAOs may find it practical for one or more AU Managers or Homeless Coordinators to go to the shelters to obtain the signature(s) on the EA-15, while others may prefer group discussions of the plans.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.



EA Self-Sufficiency Plan/Agreement - Phase 1

GOAL: To Obtain Permanent Housing

TAO _____

Recipient Name _____

SSN _____

Other Adult Member Name _____

SSN _____

Other Adult Name _____

SSN _____

As a condition of eligibility for temporary emergency shelter benefits, each family placed in a family shelter or hotel will have an EA Self-Sufficiency Plan/Agreement. This Agreement lists activities that you must do until the EA Self-Sufficiency Plan is completed. At a later date, a more comprehensive EA Self-Sufficiency Plan will be developed with you.

By accepting this placement, I (we) agree to the following:

- The members of my family will follow all rules of the shelter or hotel/motel for as long as we stay in the shelter or hotel/motel;
- I (we) will cooperate with the shelter staff or a representative from a Department-contracted agency to permit a review of my family's situation and to learn about the resources near and around the shelter, such as schools, medical facilities, access to transportation;
- I (we) will cooperate with the Housing Assistance Program provider by following the plans for housing search, attending meetings, doing housing search activities, completing housing applications, getting the required verifications, etc.;
- I (we) will cooperate with the shelter case manager or a representative from a Department-contracted agency by making appointments or doing activities that will help my family while in the shelter or hotel/motel;
- I (we) will follow all of the rules and responsibilities listed on the *Recipient Responsibilities While in a Temporary Emergency Shelter* form, the *Acknowledgment of Recipient Responsibilities While in Temporary Emergency Shelter* form or the *Notice To Recipients of Emergency Assistance (EA) Staying in Hotels/Motels* form;
- I (we) will report changes in income, assets, household composition to DTA within 10 days;
- I (we) will _____
- I (we) will _____

I understand that if I (we) refuse to sign this form my (our) family will not be placed in temporary emergency shelter or if currently in shelter, it will be in noncompliance with the EA shelter rules.

I (we) understand that if I (we) fail to do these activities without good cause my (our) family will be in noncompliance with the EA shelter rules.

Shelter or Hotel/Motel _____

Address _____

Recipient Signature

Date

Other Adult Member(s) Signature

Date

TAO Worker Signature

Date