



Transitions

July 2017

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Quality Corner for SNAP

This month we will review an active error that occurred in a Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP case.

Incorrect Legal FS Disqualified Coding

On December 5, 2016, the Department received an Interim Report for a grantee and two children. The grantee was a noncitizen with an Undetermined status and her two children were U.S. citizens. The household had income of \$1188.20 per month and was responsible for \$500 rent plus heating and cooling expenses.

During the January 2017 Quality Control (QC) review, it was determined that the case manager had selected Yes to the Legal FS Disqualified question for the grantee with Undetermined status. As a result, SNAP benefits were incorrectly calculated for a household of two with zero income, and caused the eligible household members to receive the maximum SNAP benefit of \$357 per month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Clients with a noncitizen status of Undetermined must be excluded from the household size but have their income and assets counted in their entirety toward the remaining household members. Therefore, for a client with an Undetermined status, the case manager must select No to the Legal FS Disqualified question so BEACON will calculate SNAP benefits correctly.

The Legal FS Disqualified field poses the question: "Is this person a Legal Noncitizen who is ineligible to participate in the Federal Food Stamp Program?" There is a Yes and No radio button to capture the answer to this question. Unless the answer to **both** parts of the question is Yes, the radio button must be toggled to No.

The answer to the Legal FS Disqualified question determines the way SNAP benefits are calculated. When Yes is selected, BEACON performs the two-part calculation outlined at 106 CMR 364.600 (C). When No is selected, the client is excluded from the household but their income and assets are counted toward the remaining household members.

Please refer to the table below for Legal FS Disqualified coding for certain noncitizen statuses.

INS Designation	Legal FS Disqualified
Amerasian, Cuban/Haitian, Asylee, Refugee, Deportation Withheld Noncitizen	No
Nonimmigrant (Diplomats, Students, Visitors) Example: Individuals with a VISA	No
Undetermined or Undocumented	No
LPR > 5 years or LPR = 5 years	No
18+ LPR < 5 years	Yes
Child < 18 w/LPR status	No
PRUCOL (Employment Authorized, Temporary Protective Status)	Yes

Quality Corner for TAFDC

Finding:

During the most recent LOQC TAFDC review, the following procedural error was found:

A client who had legal status in this country was coded as undetermined. In this case, the client had been in the country for less than 5 years so there was no cash error attached to the finding.

However, when LOQC reviewed this case, it was noted that an employment authorization card was sent to the Document Processing Center (DPC). On 2 separate occasions, 9-15 (reinstatement) and 3-9 (review) no mention was made of client's INS status in the narrative. On both occasions actions were completed without the INS Designation page being updated.

What's a case Manager to do?

In any case action but, most importantly applications and reinstatements, the INS Designation page should be reviewed for accuracy. In this case the last update was made to the page in 2007.

For example, if a client is coded as undetermined you would not be looking at date of entry since it is not relevant to that status. However, if a client is legally disqualified you would look at date of entry for possible updating.

When a client is coded as undetermined there is an inclination not to review the INS Designation page. This could lead to a payment error. It is extremely important to review all documents submitted to the DPC and ensure that all BEACON pages (in this case the INS page) accurately reflect the information received by the Department. Lastly, a detailed Narrative should be written to support all documentation related to the Electronic Case Folder (ECF) and DPC.



Online Guide Transmittals

SNAP and TAFDC: Transportation Costs as Dependent Care and Medical Expenses

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-51

Medical and dependent care expenses can significantly impact SNAP benefit amounts. DTA staff must explore all expenses related to dependent care and medical costs with clients, including transportation-related costs. Clients may say they do not have dependent care or medical expenses because they are unaware that transportation costs may be considered part of those expenses.

The purpose of this transmittal is to remind staff that they must explore all transportation costs related to medical care and dependent care with clients.

TAFDC and EAEDC: New Bank for Issuance of DTA Checks

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-60

Effective June 27, 2017, People's United Bank assumed the banking responsibilities for DTA. As of this date, the contract with Santander Bank expired.

All checks issued to clients and vendors by People's United Bank have the same validity as checks formerly issued by Santander Bank.

Although the checks will have a different issuer, there is no difference in client benefits, benefit dates or anything else relating to payments made by check by DTA.

TAFDC: Eligibility for Transitional Child Care Up to 24 Months From Closing

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-61

DTA currently has the authority to provide Transitional Child Care (TCC) to any former TAFDC client who is currently employed or has a job offer and whose TAFDC case closed within the prior 24 months. This expanded timeframe is currently in the process of being formally incorporated into policy, procedures and BEACON. Guidance will be issued once policy and system changes have been revised.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff about the interim procedures.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs: MBTA Youth Pass Flyer

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-62

In February the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) introduced the MBTA Youth Pass Program. This program provides affordable access to public transportation for low-income youth and young adults.

The Online Guide changes advise staff about updates to the MBTA Youth Pass flyer:

- SNAP, TAFDC and/or EAEDC clients that are 25 years old or younger, may be eligible for the Youth Pass program;
- Dates of birth have been eliminated from program requirements; and
- MassHealth has been added as an eligible state/federal income based program.

Cross Programs: Fast Track Assistance Pilot Expansion

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-63

Effective July 17, 2017 the Brockton TAO began participating in the Fast Track Assistance pilot, joining the Springfield Liberty office.

This Online Guide Transmittal:

- updates the TAOs participating in the Fast Track Assistance Pilot;
 - advises staff in the Pilot TAOs of their responsibilities; and
- obsoletes Online Guide Transmittal 2017-59.

TAFDC: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Service Area Changes

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-64

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) recently entered into new contracts with the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agencies that provide child care vouchers to current and former TAFDC clients. Under the new contracts, CCRRs assigned to provide services in 25 towns are changing. CCRRs have notified all clients in these towns of the change and what to expect during this transition. DTA has updated BEACON to include the CCRR changes by TAO to ensure that all TAFDC case managers can select the correct CCRR.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff how this change will impact clients.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs: Overview of Verifications Overhaul Project

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-65

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of upcoming changes related to verifications that will improve accuracy and access.

From the Forms File

Revised Form

VARI-OI (7/2017)

Voluntary Consent to Release Information

The *Voluntary Consent to Release Information* (VARI-OI) has been revised.

FYIs

DTA Core Values Poster and Flyer

The Diversity Council has created a poster that represents DTA's Core Values for both clients and staff. The Posters (which are laminated) can be ordered from Schraffts in both English and Spanish. They should be displayed in the TAO lobby and staff lunch room/break room.

Additionally, a flyer version of the poster is available at:

http://dtaonline.es.govt.state.ma.us/refrence/curpol/form/17/dta_values_flyer_english.pdf

or:

http://dtaonline.es.govt.state.ma.us/refrence/curpol/form/17/dta_values_flyer_spanish.pdf

and should be displayed at a worker's desk.

TAO Meeting Notes