



Transitions

July 2013

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Dear Colleagues,

I hope that you are enjoying your summer and are able to spend some quality time with family and friends. As you know, we have a busy agenda this summer and in late July, we were able to make a [major announcement](#) to enhance our mission to provide vital assistance for our most vulnerable resident's and protect those benefits for clients who truly need them by announcing the official signing of the State Law Enforcement Bureau (SLEB) agreement with USDA.

The SLEB agreement enables the Commonwealth to utilize state and local law enforcement agencies to investigate and pursue SNAP EBT fraud and abuse, including SNAP trafficking. Under the agreement, DTA has the authority to conduct investigations into possible SNAP fraud and Massachusetts law enforcement will be able to obtain EBT benefits from USDA-FNS for purposes of undercover investigations.

Formerly, the DTA only had the ability to conduct administrative investigations of suspected recipient trafficking cases. The agreement allows DTA to pursue, through local law enforcement, investigations of vendor trafficking and work with district attorney's and the attorney general's office to prosecute these cases and shut down these criminal enterprises.

The agreement is part of our 100-day action plan to enhance program integrity and improve client services. The announcement also builds off of our previously announced partnership with state wide law enforcement associations to increase data sharing, while giving local police the tools they need to ensure that clients and retailers are abiding by the law.

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Commissioner's Corner *(Continued from Page 1)*

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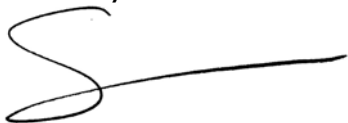
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Health and Human Services Secretary John Polanowicz and I were excited to have Everett Police Chief and President of the Massachusetts Major Cities Chiefs Association joined us for the announcement on July 29 to speak about the importance to his city and his organization members. Everett was one of the first sub-SLEB agreements the Department has signed, joining Taunton, Pittsfield, Attleboro, and Haverhill.

While this is an important step in the right direction, we still have a lot of work to do and with your continued hard work and dedication, we will accomplish our goals.

Thank you for all you do every day – I appreciate all your efforts.

Sincerely,



Stacey Monahan
Commissioner

If you have any comments or feedback, please feel free to contact me at Stacey.Monahan@state.ma.us.

Quality Corner

This month we will review an error that occurred as a result of unresolved match information.

Failure to Follow-up on Match Information

An NPA SNAP household included the client and one child, five months of age. At reapplication, the case was certified as Change Reporting from December 2, 2011 through December 1, 2012. The client reported no income for herself or the child but verified that she paid weekly rent of \$50 and paid for a monthly telephone bill. Since the household had no income, the client received the maximum benefit amount of \$367 for a household size of two.

Quality Control determined through a BEACON match that the client had become employed in June 2012. Since the household was certified as a Change Reporting case, the client should have reported the new job and the earnings. Since the new earnings were not used in the SNAP benefit calculation, there was an overissuance of \$177 for the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Although the client failed to report that she was employed, the error could have been prevented if the New Hire Match that appeared in BEACON had been acted on promptly. The match was available in BEACON on July 25, 2012, several months prior to the review month. Case managers are reminded of the importance of checking the Match History tab. Following up on match information is critical prior to authorizing a case at application, reapplication or recertification. If this practice is consistently applied, it will help to prevent payment errors.

Finally, now that the case has been determined to be in error, the case manager must ensure that a fraud referral is completed on BEACON to cover the period of overpayment.

Training Corner

Did you know?



DIAL THE FAST, SECURE AND COST-EFFECTIVE WAY

For better service, dial only the 7 digits of **any DTA telephone number anywhere in the state.**

EXAMPLES

Springfield TAO	→	Central Office
Central Office	→	Springfield Liberty TAO
Pittsfield TAO	→	Greenfield TAO
New Bedford TAO	→	New Bedford TAO

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.** A woman and her same-sex spouse applied for SNAP benefits. The woman recently requested that we add her newborn to the SNAP household. The baby's hospital record shows our client as the mother and her spouse as the other parent. Are both parents and their child eligible for SNAP benefits?
- A. 1.** Yes. If otherwise eligible, the two parents and their child are eligible for SNAP benefits.
- Q. 2.** Are the three individuals in Question #1 above required to receive benefits in the same SNAP household?
- A. 2.** Yes. A child living with his or her parents must be in the same SNAP household as the parents. Also, remember that even if both parents' names were not included in the hospital record, a child under the parental control of adult household members must be in the same household as these adults. See 106 CMR 361.200(A) for details.
- Q. 3.** Even though one of the women in Question #1 above is not biologically-related to her child, are both parents still eligible for TAFDC?
- A. 3.** Yes. In the TAFDC Program, parents meet the relationship requirement and the hospital record is an acceptable verification of the relationship requirement, when the birth certificate has not yet been issued or is otherwise unavailable. See 106 CMR 203.585 and 106 CMR 203.570(B) for more information.
- Q. 4.** When the names of a same-sex married couple appear on their dependent's birth certificate, are TAFDC child support forms required for information on the other biological parent?
- A. 4.** No. Same-sex marriage is legal in Massachusetts, and a child born to a legally married couple in the Commonwealth is presumed to be the child of both individuals in the marriage. These individuals remain the child's legal parents, even if there is a separation or divorce.
- Q. 5.** A same-sex married couple applied for TAFDC with their son. The parents reported that the biological mother of their child is not living with them, but is sending the married couple \$100 weekly to help them keep up with general household expenses. Do I count this income?
- A. 5.** Yes. This financial contribution from the biological mother is treated like any other financial contribution from a non-legally liable relative. If the money is sent directly to the household for general, day-to-day expenses, then the funds are countable unearned income. See 106 CMR 204.210 (B) for more information.
- Note:** For SNAP purposes, this income is also countable. See 106 CMR 363.220(B) for more details.



From the Forms File

Revised Brochure

Requesting TAFDC Beyond the 24-Month Limit on Benefits

02-740-0713-05

02-741-0713-05(S)

TAFDC-EXTB (Rev. 7/2013)

The *Requesting TAFDC Beyond the 24-Month Limit on Benefits (TAFDC-EXTB)* brochure is now revised. Please discard all copies of the old version. (Rev. 11/2006) .

Obsolete Forms

TAFDC Update (TP-TAFDC-TER);

Extension Approval Letter;

Extension Denial Letter;

Extension Decision Cover Sheet;

Extension Request and Agreement (24-EXR/A);

Final Transition Plan (TAFDC-FTP);

Month 22 Clock Review and Month 24 Adjustment Sheet (TAFDC-12);

Recommendation for an Extension/Director's Decision Summary (24-RFE)

Diversity Quote

"I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself."

Maya Angelou

Operations Memos

SNAP – Voter Registration Page Change

SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-26

This Operations Memo advises TAO staff that, effective with BEACON Build 45.6, scheduled for July 1, 2013, the Voter Registration page is a mandatory page to be completed for Elderly/Disabled households without earnings. This page will become mandatory when the Interview page is completed and the case manager has indicated that the Elderly/Disabled household has been interviewed either telephonically or face-to-face.

Note: If the Voter Registration page is updated *after* the Reevaluation initiate date, then the Voter Registration page will not be set to reedit.

TAFDC, EAEDC, SNAP – Unemployment Insurance Online (UI Online) for DTA Staff

All

Operations Memo 2013-29

Effective July 1, 2013, UI Online, a new web-based system developed by the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to administer unemployment insurance benefits and programs is available to existing claimants, new claimants, and to other authorized users. This Operations Memo:

- introduces UI Online to DTA staff;
- provides instructions to obtain DUA information about a client;
- transmits a Job Aid prepared by DTA's Training Unit;
- provides guidance for using the three attached glossaries; and
- discusses the temporary DUA Hotline.



Operations Memos

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – DOR Bank Match

All

Operations Memo 2013-31

The current DOR Bank Match is run quarterly: January, April, July and October. Effective with BEACON Build 45.7, the DOR Bank Match will be run monthly. This Operations Memo advised DTA staff about:

- the changes to the Bank Match; and
- the Fraud Investigation Data Match (FIDM) Unit's processing of these matches.

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – EBT Card Balances

All

Operations Memo 2013-32

The cash balance held on an EBT card, retained beyond the cyclical month of issuance, is a countable asset for TAFDC and EAEDC purposes. SNAP balances are not a countable asset for any DTA program. The purpose of this Operations Memo is to inform staff of new Central Office procedures for clients who have high cash and/or SNAP balances on their EBT card.

TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: Statewide Implementation of the Work Number Employment Verification Service

All

Operations Memo 2013-33

This Operations Memo announces the statewide implementation of the Work Number subscription Employment Service as of July 22, 2013. The Work Number is a subscription employment verification service that provides employment verifications to social service agencies, other verifiers, and employees of businesses. The Operations Memo:

- explains the types of services provided by the Work Number;
- explains how case managers, supervisors and office managers can access and receive information from the Work Number;
- explains case manager responsibilities in processing the employment information obtained;
- introduces the External Agency-Earned Income page;
- introduces a Work Number job aid; and
- obsoletes Operations Memo 2013-22 –TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: The Work Number Test project.

Operations Memos

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Residency Requirements

All
Operations Memo 2013-34
Massachusetts residency is an eligibility requirement for applicants and clients for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP. Continuous usage of benefits outside of Massachusetts may indicate that a client is no longer a resident. This Operations Memo:

- advises TAO staff of the new automated process for determining whether certain active clients have abandoned Massachusetts residency and actions that will result if residency has been abandoned;
- reminds staff of residency requirements; and
- outlines case manager responsibilities.

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: Changes to the Immediate Needs and Expedited Screening Processes

All
Operations Memo 2013-35

This Operations Memo:

- outlines procedural changes to the screening process and BEACON changes to the RFA workflow and the Program Change page;
- details changes to the Pending Application view;
- introduces a new Expedited Screening Report for all programs; and
- addresses related considerations.

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Department of Youth Services Match

All
Operations Memo 2013-36

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to:

- advise staff of the DYS match now available to the Department;
- provide details regarding the DYS match; and
- inform staff of the availability of an Actuate report.

Operations Memos

TAFDC and SNAP – Parole Violator Match

TAFDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-37

In an effort to enhance program integrity, the Department has obtained an interface match from the Criminal History Systems Board. This match will enable the Department to obtain information about clients who are parole violators.

The Parole Violator Match is not considered verified upon receipt. DTA staff in the Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) unit will follow-up on cases identified through the match process. The purpose of this memo is to:

- inform staff of the Parole Violators Match now available to the Department;
- explain the responsibilities of the FIDM unit in the match process; and
- advise staff of the availability of the new Actuate Reports.

TAFDC – Extension Process and BEACON Changes

TAFDC

Operations Memo 2013-38

Any client who has exhausted 22 months of time-limited benefits must be given the opportunity to request an extension. The Department has developed a process for clients to request an extension of TAFDC benefits beyond the 24-month period. To date, the extension process has been largely completed outside of BEACON. The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise DTA staff about:

- changes to BEACON to incorporate the extension process;
- notices attached to the BEACON changes; and
- processing extensions through BEACON.

Operations Memos

External Data Match: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS)

SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-39

In a continuing effort to improve program integrity and reduce the possibility of payment error, the Department will begin using the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS). eDRS is a national internet-based system developed and administered by FNS that contains records of SNAP clients who have been disqualified in each state for Intentional Program Violations (IPV's).

The purpose of the Operations Memo is to;

- inform TAO staff of the use of the eDRS database;
- explain case manager responsibilities when processing cases containing disqualified individuals; and
- explain the role of the Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) unit in the processing of these cases.

External Agency Data: Registry of Motor Vehicles

All

Operations Memo 2013-40

In an ongoing effort to enhance the Department's program integrity, DTA continues to expand data verification by interfacing with real time online services provided by external sources. This Operations Memo provides DTA staff with information about the enhanced data verification interfacing capabilities between DTA and the RMV.

Effective with BEACON Build 45.7, DTA has expanded access to the MassDOT Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). This access includes information about state issued driver's licenses, identification cards (Massachusetts IDs and Massachusetts Liquor IDs) and vehicle registration information for applicants and clients for all DTA programs.

Operations Memos

Annual Reporting and Transitional Benefit Alternative Case Processing Modifications

SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-41

This Operations Memo advises staff about BEACON and case processing changes for Annual Reporting (AR) and Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) cases. These changes are required to better align DTA case processing with federal rules. The memo describes which verified information will trigger a benefit recalculation and possible decrease for AR cases and instructions to prevent dual participation in TBA cases. Case manager and Central Office processing responsibilities are included.

TAO Meeting Notes