Transitions

June 2015

Dear Colleagues,

As June comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of our ERIP retirees. You have done so much to assist those in need and been an integral part of DTA's successes. I hope that you will enjoy your retirement and revel in the ability to do what you want to do, when you went to do it. You have certainly earned it and you will be missed.

For those who will still be here on July 1, I know that we will face challenges as we move forward and adjust to the loss of many of our coworkers, but I am confident that we can meet them head on. I would like to issue you the challenge to work together to go the extra mile to ensure that we are offering the best possible service to our clients. I encourage all DTA staff to think outside the box; just because something has always been done one way does not necessarily make that the best way. We should be prepared to take calculated risks where they have the potential to help us improve upon the way we do business.

I deeply appreciate your commitment to our clients and I believe that the best solutions to the challenges that we will face in the post-ERIP world will come from you, our staff, because of your first hand experiences and knowledge. By working together to innovate and overcome obstacles, we can continue to build a better DTA.

Sincerely,

Jeff McCue
Commissioner

Quality Corner

This month we will review an NPA SNAP error.

Deleting a Wages When Entering a New Wages from the Same Employer

This household of two included the grantee and one child. The grantee was employed and reported rent of $300 per month and that she paid no utilities. At recertification in June 204, she reported being employed at Healthcare Cosmetology Services, Inc. and provided paystubs from that job. When the case manager attempted to process the recertification, she noticed that the job listed on BEACON was with Resident Salon Services. The case manager sent a Verification Checklist (VC-1) requesting additional paystubs from Healthcare Cosmetology Services Inc. and a termination letter from Resident Salon Services. The client responded with a letter from Healthcare Cosmetology stating that Resident Salon Services was doing business as Healthcare Cosmetology Services, Inc. and that the companies were actually one so there was no termination of income.

The case manager noted this on the BEACON narrative and added a new employment record under the name of Healthcare Cosmetology Services, Inc. and entered the client's current wages. However the case manager failed to end the prior employment record for Resident Salon Services. Entering a new employment record doubled the client's income and caused an underissuance of $122 for the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

The case manager was correct in requesting clarification of the pay information provided by the client. However, once the information was provided and it was determined that it was the same employer, only under a different company name; the wages should have been added to the existing record. The other option was to delete the existing record and create a new record for the new company under which the earnings should have been entered. In this instance, a new record was created but the case manager failed to end the previous record. When entering earned income, it is also important to enter the FEIN, when available.

From the DTA Mailbox

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your manager or supervisor contact the **DTA Mailbox.**

Q. 1. Does a TAFDC client need to request transportation payments in order for DTA to approve the benefit?

A. 1. It is important to make sure that clients are aware of this reimbursement. In fact, many clients may not think to ask for this ESP support service. Even when it may not be obvious, it's important to recognize that just as child care will be a challenge for ESP participants and employed TAFDC clients, so too are transportation costs. For example, a client may tell you that she owns a car, but that does not mean she can afford to maintain and operate it. You must explore with the client if they have transportation costs associated with participating in an eligible work activity. In most cases, TAFDC clients are eligible for the full $80 per month reimbursement amount and it should be authorized. See 106 CMR 701.220(A) for details.

Remember, TAFDC clients who receive the support services they're entitled to are more likely to be successful in finding and maintaining a job before the 24-month time limit expires. For more information on transportation payments, refer to 106 CMR 207.210(B) in the TAFDC regulations and for information on transportation payments in the Online Guide, go to [Home](#) > [TAFDC](#) > [Services](#) > [Transportation](#).

Q. 2. Which ESP activities qualify for transportation payments?

A. 2. In addition to approving transportation payments for clients who are meeting their work participation requirement solely through employment, other qualifying activities include:

- Basic Education, including High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) Certificate programs
- Post-Secondary Education: 2-year College, 4-year College, Advanced Degree
- Community College Programs
- Young Parent's Program
- Office for Refugees and Immigrants (MORI) Employment Ready
- CIES component activities
- Employment Ready (including those conducting self-directed job search)
- DTA Works

From the DTA Mailbox *(Continued from page 3)*

Q. 3. My TAFDC client does not own a car. Also, he lives in a remote part of Massachusetts and there is no public transportation available to him. Can this TAFDC client still receive transportation reimbursement?

A. 3. Yes, if the client has costs associated with participating in a work activity. TAFDC clients using fee-based transportation services, such as van pools and taxi services also qualify for transportation payments. Additionally, if a client's friend or family member is willing to drive a client to work, but is requesting reimbursement from our client for the expense, TAFDC transportation payments may be authorized.

Q. 4. My TAFDC client has a preschool child who must be transported to and from child care services. Can this be considered in the client's transportation costs?

A. 4. Yes. The transportation reimbursements may include the cost for transporting a child to and from child care, if such costs exist and are verified, in order to participate in a work activity. Verification of child care transportation costs is made by the client submitting receipts from the transportation provider, or a letter from the child care provider verifying that transportation is not provided as part of the child care service.

NOTE: The unreimbursed costs of transporting a child to and from child care are also a deductible dependent care expense in SNAP. Refer to 106 CMR 364.400(D) for more details.

Training Corner

How Are Your Listening Skills?

Ever ask yourself one of these questions: What is he trying to say? Will she ever get to the point?
Did I miss something, or did he forget to get where he was going with this?

Listening is much more than simply hearing. It is a communication skill that merits practice and refinements as much as any other. The effective listener is an active listener; he or she participates in the conversations. That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker.

While Selective Listening is the process of listening for "facts" only, **Active Listening** is the process of listening for "feelings" in addition.

The following are suggestions for using Active Listening:

Pay attention:
1. Listen for the person's key ideas and underlying feelings, in addition to facts and words.
2. Communicate your acceptance and attention through empathetic responses such as "yes," "I see" and "ok."
3. Ask the person to clarify words or statements if you aren't sure you understand the message.

Be patient:
1. Let the person know that he or she has the time needed to discuss the problem at hand.
2. Avoid interrupting the person, especially by trying to complete his or her sentences.
3. Don't express impatience if the person's thoughts and words come slowly.

Keep an open mind:
1. Suspend your judgment and decisions until the person has finished.
2. Do not interrupt to correct an error in the person's use of words, or if you disagree with one of his or her statements.
1. Ask for feedback to confirm your interpretations of the person's message.

As you listen, try to understand things from the person's point of view. Try to discover his or her desired outcome.

Online Guide Transmittals

Young Parents Program – Increasing the Maximum Enrollment Age to 23

OLGT 2015-18
TAFDC

Effective February 5, 2015, clients may **enroll** in the Young Parents Program (YPP) through age 23. Clients may complete **participation** in YPP through age 24. By increasing the age for enrollment and participation, more young parents will be able to receive supportive YPP services while working to obtain a high school diploma or equivalency, and become economically self-sufficient.

The following Online Guide pages have been updated:

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Teen Parents
Page: School Attendance Requirements

Topic: TAFDC
Book: ESP
Chapter: ESP – Non Competitive Employment Services
Page: Young Parents Program (YPP)

TAFDC – Employment Ready Activities and Job Quest

OLGT 2015-24
TAFDC

Clients who are participating in online job search for Employment Ready activities must register through JobQuest, a service offered through the One-Stop Career Centers.
The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to inform DTA staff about:
- clients participating in online job search for Employment Ready activities needing to register through JobQuest;
- changes to the ESP-16 (Referral and Response) form with language for Employment Ready clients to register through JobQuest; and
- changes to the ESP-7 (Participation and Attendance) form being divided into two separate forms: ESP Participation and Attendance Record (ESP-7 A) form and the Participation and Attendance Record for Employment Ready Activities (ESP-7 B) form.

Online Guide Transmittals

Voter Registration Procedures

OLGT 2015-28
All

As a result of the recent settlement of the Delgado lawsuit, voter registration procedures have been revised. This transmits the voter registration changes in the Online Guide that must be followed during all in-office applications, reevaluations, recertifications and client reported address changes.

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform DTA staff of the issuance of the voter registration procedures in the Online Guide.

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Overview and Administrative Responsibilities
Page: Voter Registration Overview

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Overview and Administrative Responsibilities
Page: TAO Staff Responsibilities

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Overview and Administrative Responsibilities
Page: Voter Registration Reporting Requirements

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Instructions for Assisting Clients in Voter Registration
Page: Informing Clients about Registering to Vote

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Instructions for Assisting Clients in Voter Registration
Page: Completing the Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form in the Office

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Instructions for Assisting Clients in Voter Registration
Page: Procedures for all Clients who are in the TAO to Apply, Recertify or Change their Address

Online Guide Transmittals

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Chapter: Instructions for Assisting Clients in Voter Registration
Page: Procedures for those Applying, Recertifying and Reevaluating by Web/Telephone

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Voter Registration
Page: Voter Registration Policy and Procedures

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations

Topic: EAEDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Applications
Chapter: TAFDC Application Interview
Page: Application Interview AU Composition Details/Results

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Applications
Chapter: EAEDC Application Interview
Page: Application Interview AU Composition Details/Results

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations Overview

Topic: EAEDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations Overview

Online Guide Transmittals

Topic: SNAP
Book: Reporting Requirements/Recertification
Page: Recertifying a Case in BEACON

Topic: SNAP
Book: Reporting Requirements/Recertification
Page: SNAP Reporting Requirements and Recertification

Topic: SNAP
Book: Application Processing
Chapter: SNAP Application Processing
Page: Processing a SNAP Application in BEACON

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations Face-to-Face Interview

Topic: EAEDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations Face-to-Face Interview

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations Telephone Interview

Topic: EAEDC
Book: Basic Case Activities & Maintenance
Chapter: Reevaluations
Page: Reevaluations Telephone Interview

Online Guide Transmittals

Newly Assigned System Generated Social Security Numbers will begin with 990

OLGT 2015-30
All

When a household member other than the grantee does not have a Social Security Number (SSN), a System Generated number is assigned to the SSN field beginning with 99X. System Generated SSNs beginning with 999 have been exhausted. Therefore, effective April 22, 2015, newly assigned SSNs of this type began generating numbers starting with 990. It is important to note that all System Generated SSNs that begin with 999 will remain valid for the purposes of case management.

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform staff of:
- the use of 990 for System Generated SSNs; and
- changes to the BEACON Online Guide.

Topic: TAFDC
Book: General Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: SSN
Page: Alternative Social Security Numbers – TAFDC

Topic: EAEDC
Book: General Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: SSN
Page: Alternative Social Security Numbers – EAEDC

Topic: SNAP
Book: Eligibility Requirements
Chapter: Social Security Numbers
Page: Alternative Social Security Numbers – SNAP

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Applications
Chapter: TAFDC Application Interview
Page: Application Interview: AU Composition

Topic: Cross Programs
Book: Applications
Chapter: EAEDC Application Interview
Page: Application Interview: AU Composition

Online Guide Transmittals

Topic: TAFDC
Book: General Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: SSN
Page: Alternative Social Security Numbers – TAFDC (original version)

Topic: EAEDC
Book: General Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: SSN
Page: Alternative Social Security Numbers – EAEDC (original version)

Topic: TAFDC
Book: General Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: SSN
Page: System Generated Numbers – TAFDC

Topic: EAEDC
Book: General Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: SSN
Page: System Generated Numbers – EAEDC

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Client Assistance Coordinators (CAC) Link

OLGT 2015-31
All

As part of the Accommodation Assessment Process, clients may be referred to Client Assistance Coordinators (CAC).

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to provide DTA staff with a link to a list of current CACs.

Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC – Automating Exemption/Nonexemption, Meets Compliance and Work Program Status

OLGT 2015-33
TAFDC

In an effort to ensure that clients are receiving correct benefits and are given every opportunity to meet their work program requirement in a timely fashion, the Department is automating changes to Exempt/Nonexempt status, Meets Compliance periods and Work Program requirement status.
These changes are effective with BEACON Build 47.5.

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to inform DTA staff about the following:

- changes to BEACON;
- how the automation process will work for exempt/nonexempt cases and those cases with Meets Compliance; and
- changes to the Online Guide.

From the Forms File

Revised Brochure
02-615-0615-05 (English)
02-650-0615-05 (Portuguese)
02-651-0615-05 (Russian)
02-652-0615-05 (Vietnamese)
02-654-0615-05 (Haitian Creole)
02-616-0615-05 (Spanish)
02-617-0615-05 (Arabic)

DVB Brochure (Rev. 6/2015)
Domestic Violence Unit – Everyone Deserves to be safe!! Are you?

The revision to the Domestic Violence brochure updated DV Specialists' contact phone numbers and added the DTA Assistance Line phone number.

FYI

Participation and Attendance Form Data Entry Online Guide

ESP-7 *Participation and Attendance* forms (both the *ESP Participation and Attendance Record* (ESP-7 A) form and the *Participation and Attendance Record for Employment Ready Activities* (ESP-7 B)) are sent to clients the first business day of the week (Monday unless Monday is a holiday) before the last Saturday of the month. These forms must be returned by the client no later than the 10th of the following month (or the first business day after the 10th of the month if the 10th is on a weekend or holiday). Case managers *must* enter the forms on the Monitor Participation page *no later than the 18th* of that month (or the first business day after the 18th of the month if the 18th is on a weekend or holiday) to prevent a participation sanction from being created. Case managers may enter the prior participation month's returned *Participation and Attendance* forms up until the Friday before the last Saturday of the current month.

A *Participation and Attendance* Form Data Entry Online Guide (listing the last day of the month that ESP-7 forms may be entered on the Monitor Participation page for the previous month's participation) can be found at http://dtaonline/refrence/curpol/guides/tafdc_attendance_guide/tafdc_participation_attendance_guide.pdf in late June.

Diversity Quote

The whole idea of a stereotype is to simplify. Instead of going through the problem of all this great diversity - that it's this or maybe that - you have just one large statement; it is this.

Chinua Achebe

The Commonwealth Management Certificate Program (CMCP)

Jenna Tait completed *The Commonwealth Management Certificate Program* (CMCP) and graduated on Friday, June 5, 2015 at the Statehouse. Jenna is an Assistant Director in the Worcester DTA office. Her final project for the program was titled: Successful Transitioning. This entailed developing a guide of best practices for offices to utilize to train new hires. Jenna's knowledge skills and abilities have been complimented by successfully completing this program.

TAO Meeting Notes