



Transitions

March 2016

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Quality Corner

This month we will review an error caused by the incorrect amount of unearned income used in the SNAP benefit calculation.

Net Unemployment Compensation Used

A household of one applied for SNAP benefits on July 10, 2015. The client had recently become unemployed and had received his last paycheck on July 13, 2015. The case manager used terminated income of \$494.96 that was countable in the cyclical period and issued expedited benefits. Subsequent to the expedited issuance, the client began receiving Unemployment Compensation (UC) of \$266 weekly, with \$39.00 being deducted for taxes. The case manager entered UC income of \$226 weekly on the Other Income page. The use of the net UC income caused an overpayment of \$76 for the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

When entering a client's UC income, case managers must always enter the gross amount. In certain instances, the client may be eligible for an expense deduction for child support paid. This is allowed only when the child support paid is verified to be legally obligated and the client shows proof of payment such as from UC benefits or through cancelled checks, etc. However, even in such instances, case managers are required to enter the gross UC income. In the case discussed above, the deduction was for taxes which are not an allowable deduction for SNAP. For more information on countable income, see 106 CMR 363.220 (B).

Diversity Quote

Ultimately, America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired.

Robert F. Kennedy



From the DTA Policy Procedure Mailbox

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

- Q. 1.** I am a TAFDC case manager and recently a client in my caseload had her cash benefits stopped because she found a job with gross earnings in excess of her TAFDC Eligibility Standard. Although this client's TAFDC case is closed for excess earnings, she needs to maintain her child care services and SNAP benefits, in order to keep her job. Yesterday, I noticed this same client had submitted her SNAP recertification form and the document continues to appear on my Available/Reviewed Scanned Documents view. Since this client is no longer an open TAFDC case, what should I do with this document?
- A. 1.** In this case and similar former TAFDC cases that are within 30 days of the client's TAFDC closing, contact your supervisor or manager. Your supervisor or manager will, in turn, create a manual action so that a SNAP FAW within your TAO can appropriately disposition the document. To avoid SNAP benefit issues, cash case managers must not disposition these SNAP documents. For more information on dispositioning scanned documents as a TAFDC case manager, refer to the Online Guide, Business Process (BP) topic, Procedures (BP) book, Cash Procedures chapter and Dispositioning Scanned Documents page.
- Q. 2.** My client's TAFDC case closed for excess earnings and he needs Transitional Child Care (TCC) to continue working. Must I first close his ESP child care, in order to create a TCC referral?
- A. 2.** Yes. Remember to first terminate his ESP child care and create a TCC referral, as soon as possible, following the closing. An *Employment Services Program-Terminating, Reducing or Denying Support Services Notification* (ESP-30) will be sent to the client, with 10 days advance notice. (The notice will appear on the Document History tab.) Remember to Fax a copy of the *Employment Services Program-Terminating, Reducing or Denying Support Services Notification* (ESP-30) to the client's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) office.

(Continued on Page 4)

From the DTA Policy Procedure Mailbox *(Continued from Page 3)*

Q. 3. To ensure a smooth job transition for former TAFDC clients, are there follow up activities that must be performed after the TCC referral is created?

A. 3. Yes. To receive TCC services, the former client must bring the TCC referral form to a reassessment interview at their CCR&R office. As part of the reassessment, the CCR&R counselor will determine whether the former client is required to pay a parent co-payment fee to the child care provider. A parent co-payment fee is based on the family's current income and family size. If a parent co-payment fee is required, the CCR&R counselor will explain to the former client how the co-payment fee is determined and inform him/her of the fee amount.

Note: In situations where ESP child care is not terminated soon after the TAFDC case is closed and the former client later requests TCC, the CCR&R may determine that the former client should have paid a parent co-payment fee after the TAFDC case closed. The former TAFDC client will then be required to repay all retroactively assessed fees, in addition to paying their current fee. The CCR&R will not provide child care services to the family, unless the former client makes an agreement to repay these past fees. For this reason, it is important that the TCC referral is created in a timely fashion.



Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC: Automating Dependents' Graduation Status Update

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-14
TAFDC

In an effort to better track compliance with TAFDC school attendance requirements the Department is automating the functionality of the Education page in the Assessed Person Nonfinancials workflow.

Effective with BEACON Build 48.3, April 4, 2016, a new notice entitled, *Graduation Information Update*, will automatically be sent to TAFDC applicants and clients with a child active or pending in the TAFDC case who is turning 18 years old within 60 days of the notice date. The notice will ask clients to provide proof of graduation date for that dependent.

TAFDC - Changing the TAFDC Work Program Sanction Process

Online Guide Transmittal Update 2016-15
TAFDC

Certain work program required clients who are at a Level 3 or Level 4 sanction, receive good cause, have a meets compliance reason or an exemption that suspends the automatic work program sanction process for them. Currently, when any of these reasons expire, if a client is not enrolled in an activity, s/he is automatically sanctioned.

Effective with BEACON Build 48.3 scheduled for April 4, 2016, the automatic sanction process will be held for 10 days, starting on the day the good cause, meets compliance or exemption reason period ends. The client will be automatically mailed a community service referral to allow him/her time to enroll in community service or another activity to meet his/her work program requirement. The automatic sanction will occur if the client does not enroll in an activity that meets the work program requirement within the 10-day period.

Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: Automating Clients' Pregnancy Status Update

Online Guide Transmittal Update 2016-16
Cross Programs

The Department is automating the functionality of the Pregnancy page in the AU Composition Details workflow to better track the pregnancy status of TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP household members.

Effective with BEACON Build 48.3, April 4, 2016, if the due date on the Pregnancy page for a TAFDC, EAEDC or SNAP household member becomes 30 days past due, the household member will automatically be sent a *Pregnancy Information Update* notice. The household member must verify the status of the pregnancy and household composition. Sending a notice to the household member versus the grantee is a new concept for the Department currently all notices are sent directly to the grantee.

BEACON Enhancements for Accommodation Request Processing under the Settlement of *Harper, et al. vs. Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance*

Online Guide Transmittal Update 2016-17
Cross Program

Enhancements have been made to BEACON to ensure the continued timely processing of accommodation requests under the Harper settlement. These enhancements are effective with BEACON Build 48.3, effective April 4, 2016 and will assist Client Assistance Coordinators (CAC) and other DTA staff.

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform staff of the following changes to BEACON:

- Scheduling of appointments (including automated appointments) that conflict with an accommodation involving times, days or locations are prohibited by BEACON. This includes appointments for visits or appointments for telephone calls;
- Case managers may no longer delete accommodation difficulties or remedies without the agreement of a CAC and their TAO Accommodation team;
- A blue circle with a “+” sign has been created for clients with an ADA accommodation who have an authorized representative;
- Three new Accommodations views have been created to assist the CACs in monitoring accommodations:
 - √ Track Appointments;
 - √ Track Communication;
 - √ Track Notices;
- The Adverse Actions view has been changed to further assist CACs in monitoring accommodations; and
- A new Actuate report entitled “Authorized Rep/Payee Report” has been created to list all authorized representatives and payees for every client, disabled or not.

Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC – Voluntary Withdrawals

Online Guide Transmittal Update 2016-20
TAFDC

Clients have the right to request their case be closed. However, before taking action on the request, case managers are reminded that they should ask the client why s/he wants the case closed.

The Online Guide update advises DTA staff about:

- processing a client's request to close his or her case;
- various benefits clients are eligible for if their case is closed appropriately; and
- exploring why a client wants his or her case closed.

From the Forms File

New Forms

09-330-0316-05

09-331-0316-05(S)

ABAWD-TPIR

ABAWD Training Program Information Request

The *ABAWD Training Program Information Request* allows clients to request and authorize the release of their training/education program information to DTA.

Revised Form

02-008-0316-05

DORL-1 (Rev. 3/2016)

Request for Employment Information

Based on suggestions from the Forms and Notices workgroup, the above form has been revised. Please destroy existing supplies of this form and use the revised version.

TAO Meeting Notes