



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Quality Corner: SNAP	2
Quality Corner: Cash	3
Cross Programs: Voicemail Messages for Case Managers	4
Cross Programs: Replacement of Annual Reporting References with Simplified	4
Cross Programs: Management of Original Documents Outside of the DTA Business Process	4
Cross Program: Verifying Unearned Income	4
TAFDC: Completing the Family Cap Calculation Sheet.	5
Cross Program: Narratives	5
Cross Programs: MBTA Youth Pass Program	5
SNAP Path to Work Program Website	6
TAFDC: Education, Training and Vocational Education Lifetime Limits	6
SNAP: Heat and Eat (H-EAT) Frequency	7
Cross Programs: Social Security Administration (SSA) Confidentiality	7
Cross Programs: SSP Amounts on BEACON	7
Cross Programs: Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)	8
SNAP: Self-Employment	8
FYI: Interview Page Selection for Interim Reports	9
FYI: Reevaluation Appointments	9
FYI: Child Care Parent Co-pay Fee Refunds Noncountable for DTA Programs	9
FYI: DTA Connect: Document Submission	10

Quality Corner

SNAP

This month we will review two errors that occurred in Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP cases.

Inadequate review of Interim Report

An Elderly /Disabled household of one returned an Interim Report (IR) on August 10, 2016. The client reported No Change on her IR but under the Shelter Expense section of the IR, the client wrote in new amounts of \$706 monthly for mortgage, \$1,800 annually for taxes and \$583 annually for home insurance. The client had originally reported that she had two mortgages and BEACON prepopulated the IR with those amounts showing a mortgage of \$553 and \$153.56 monthly. The case manager kept the mortgage amount of \$153.56 monthly, ended the mortgage record for \$553 monthly, and added the newly reported amounts for the mortgage, taxes and home insurance. The case was processed with a shelter cost of \$905 and the client was approved for \$155 in SNAP benefits.

During the October 2016 Quality Control (QC) review, it was determined that the client's originally reported \$553 mortgage amount included the principal, interest, taxes and insurance in escrow. After recalculation of SNAP benefits with the correct shelter expense deduction, the reviewer found the client eligible for \$45 in SNAP benefits and an overpayment of \$110.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

When a case manager processes an IR or recertification, it is important to review the entire document and look for any inconsistencies. In this case, the case manager acknowledged the shelter expense changes reported, even though the client checked No Changes, but the new amounts should have generated additional questions about the client's shelter expenses as they appeared to indicate the client had three separate mortgage amounts. The case manager would not have known if the existing mortgages had changed or if the client, had an additional mortgage. Adding the two original mortgage principal amounts of \$553 and \$153.56 equals the newly reported mortgage amount of \$706. The case manager should have contacted the client to verify the information before adding the new amounts into BEACON and taking action on the originally reported amounts to ensure the appropriate shelter deduction was applied. When a client claims separate taxes and insurance in addition to a mortgage payment, case managers must review the client's mortgage statement(s) to determine if taxes and insurance are included in the mortgage. This must be done before the case manager enters the client's shelter expenses.



Quality Corner

Cash (EAEDC)

Recently LOQC performed a review of the EAEDC cases. In that review, the number one financial error problem was missing AP-SSI-IAR forms. This represented 56% of all financial errors discovered.

Results:

As part of the EAEDC application/recertification an AP-SSI-IAR form must:

be completed on all clients claiming a disability

- be signed / dated and valid for one year
- be updated at each reevaluation period
- give the Department authorization to receive the SSI retroactive payment, by deducting any EAEDC benefits, forwarding any balance to client

Why?

- Every year thousands of dollars are unable to be collected because the AP-SSI-IAR forms not located.
- For the State Fiscal Year 2016, over \$80,000 dollars went uncollected
- SSA internal control procedures require that for reimbursement purposes, three years' worth of the AP-SSI-IAR forms be available; for auditing purposes, availability is up to seven years

What's a case manager to do?

- Make sure that the AP-SSI-IAR document is completed at every application and recertification (signed & dated by client).
- Ensure that each signed AP-SSI-IAR document is scanned and sent to the DPC

Making this a priority will guarantee that clients receive the maximum allowable benefits and the state receives the maximum reimbursement for which it is entitled.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Program: Voicemail Messages for Case Managers

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-20

To provide our clients with clear communication and good customer service, effective immediately, any case manager who will be out of the office for one day or more must also update their outgoing voicemail message to include the name and phone number of their supervisor. This will ensure that if clients cannot reach their case manager, another option is available to speak to a person.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of an updated Online Guide page detailing the procedures for cash case managers regarding their voicemail message.

Cross Programs: Replacement of Annual Reporting References with Simplified Reporting

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-21

To ensure accuracy and consistency, this transmittal replaces all Annual Reporting references with Simplified Reporting. Language was simplified and technical corrections were made in the Online Guide pages with Simplified Reporting updates.

SNAP: Non-countable Income

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-23

This Online Guide Transmittal adds a new page to the SNAP book in the Online Guide to provide staff with a list of the most common sources of non-countable income for SNAP.

Cross Program: Verifying Unearned Income

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-24

This Online Guide Transmittal reminds staff that electronic databases must be utilized as the first method to verify unearned income for clients, when applicable.

Case managers must utilize databases such as DUA, BENDEX, SDX, and ViewDirect before requesting verification of unearned income from clients. The Department may ask clients to provide proof of an item that is verifiable through a database if there is discrepant information.

Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC: Completing the Family Cap Calculation Sheet

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-27

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of a new Online Guide page detailing how to use a new tool entitled the Family Cap Calculation Sheet to calculate if a child born after the Family Cap date is a Family Cap exception.

Cross Program: Narratives

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-30

Narratives are a crucial component of every case. A detailed narrative must be written following all case action and all client contact. While the details most relevant to a narrative vary by scenario, there are essential components for every narrative. For all programs, it is important that any staff person, who subsequently works on or researches a case, understands the case history with minimal effort.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of the essential components for every narrative.

Cross Programs: MBTA Youth Pass Program

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-31

On February 1, 2017, 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:

- the MBTA Youth Pass Program for SNAP and Cash programs;
- a flyer that has been developed; and
- a future mailing that will occur to certain households who have members who might benefit from this program

Online Guide Transmittals

SNAP Path to Work Program Website

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-32

DTA's SNAP Employment and Training Program, now known as the SNAP Path to Work program, provides SNAP clients with the skills, training, experience, education and employment supports needed to find and keep good paying jobs.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff that all SNAP-only clients must be offered the opportunity to participate in the SNAP Path to Work program on a voluntary basis. Information about the SNAP Path to Work Program can be found in a new Online Guide Chapter, entitled SNAP Path to Work Program. Detailed information about the program can also be accessed by potential participants, providers and DTA staff by visiting snappathtowork.org. SNAP Path to Work activity, including potential ABAWD volunteer opportunities, can be located using the Find a Provider feature on the website.

TAFDC: Education, Training and Vocational Education Lifetime Limits

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-33

Participation in an education or training activity may satisfy the work requirement for a lifetime limit of 24 months.

Participation in a vocational education program may satisfy the work requirement for a lifetime limit of 12 months.

If a client is making substantial progress towards the completion of an education, training or vocational education program, but the respective limit has expired or is about to expire, the Department may determine that the client can continue to satisfy the work requirement with the current activity.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises DTA staff about:

- a new Online Guide page which updates the lifetime limits for education, training and vocational education activities meeting the Work Program requirements; and
- revisions made to pages in the Online Guide relative to the limits

Online Guide Transmittals

SNAP: Heat and Eat (H-EAT) Frequency

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-35

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) exchange data to determine which households are eligible for the H-EAT benefit based on various criteria, as outlined in the Online Guide.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff that the frequency of the data exchange between DTA and DHCD has increased from one time per month to two times per month.

Cross Programs: Social Security Administration (SSA) Confidentiality

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-36

Confidentiality is essential in maintaining the trust of data providers. The Department receives various data exchanges from SSA including the State Verification and Exchange System (SVES) and Enumeration Verification System (EVS) batches. So that we may receive this information from SSA, strict security measures and privacy laws must be adhered to.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of Social Security Administration (SSA) confidentiality restrictions.

Cross Programs: SSP Amounts on BEACON

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-37

DTA administers a program of state-funded supplemental payments known as the State Supplement Program (SSP) to aged, disabled and blind residents who are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of new Online Guide pages providing a layout of SSP amounts on BEACON.

Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs: Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-39

Effective April 1, 2017, SNAP households, including SNAP/Cash combination households, will be automatically enrolled in HIP. SNAP households in receipt of Disaster SNAP benefits-only are not eligible for HIP.

Note: Although SNAP households will be automatically enrolled in HIP effective April 1, 2017, the state-wide welcome notice will not be mailed to households until June 2017.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises staff of:

- the new view-only HIP BEACON pages
- the new SNAP HIP notices; and
- the new HIP batch narrative

SNAP: Self-Employment

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-40

SNAP Regulations have been revised to incorporate payments on the principal of the purchase price of income-producing real estate and capital assets, equipment, machinery, and other durable goods as allowable costs of doing business. For households who incur this expense, it must be included in the SNAP benefits calculation, once verified. This Online Guide Transmittal update advises staff of the revisions to the SNAP regulations relating to these costs of doing business and other general updates to the self-employment book.

FYIs

Interview Page Selection for Interim Reports

When an Interim Report is submitted with Changes, case managers must leave the “No Change” box in the Reevaluation page or Reinstatement page unmarked when initiating or reinstating an Interim Report. Previously, when this “No Change” box was left unmarked, the Interview page in BEACON would only allow case managers to select Denied-No Interview or Missed Interview to the No reason for the Interview. Interviews are not required for Interim Reports, unless there is questionable information that must be reviewed with the household prior to processing the Interim Report. For Interim Reports with Changes, case managers can now select Interim Report-Not Required as the No reason for the Interview.

Reevaluation Appointments

When an appointment is scheduled for a household, case managers must select the type of appointment that corresponds to the status of the case. The type of appointment is populated on the notice to inform the household of the type of appointment that has been scheduled.

Previously, when a recertification was reinstated, BEACON would not allow the Reevaluation appointment to be scheduled for pending households. Instead, case managers were required to schedule Application appointments to ensure households were notified of their scheduled appointment. This has been corrected and Reevaluation appointments can now be selected for pending recertifications.

Child Care Parent Co-pay Fee Refunds Noncountable for DTA Programs

Some current and former DTA families were incorrectly charged co-pay fees for Transitional Child Care and Post-transitional child care services provided through the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). EEC is refunding money to families that were incorrectly charged.

DTA staff are advised that the parent co-pay fee refunds are noncountable for TAFDC per 106 CMR 204.250 (I) and for EAEDC per 106 CMR 321.250 (I).

For SNAP purposes, the parent co-pay fee refunds are excluded when determining a household's eligibility and benefit level according to 106 CMR 363.230 (I) Nonrecurring Lump Sum Payments.

FYIs

DTA Connect: Document Submission

DTA Connect allows clients to take pictures of documents and upload them directly to their Electronic Case Folder (ECF). With this enhanced functionality, staff are reminded that clients are advised not to submit Applications, Interim Reports, Recertifications, or documents for the Burial, Fraud, Overpayment, Quality Control or Hearing units through DTA Connect.

Applications, IRs, and Recertifications

If a client does submit a completed and signed Application, Interim Report, or Recertification through DTA Connect, staff must process these documents according to established procedures. If the Application, Interim Report, or Recertification is unsigned, staff must disposition the documentation as Inadequate and issue the *Returned Document Notice*. If the Interim Report or Recertification is signed but incomplete, staff must initiate the reevaluation and issue a VC-I requesting the missing information.

Documents for the Burial, Fraud, Overpayment, Quality Control or Hearing Units

If a client does submit documents for the Burial, Fraud, Overpayment, Quality Control or Hearing units through DTA Connect, staff must disposition these documents as Not Entered, print the documentation along with the document cover sheet for the corresponding unit and scan the prepared packet to the Document Processing Center (DPC). Scanning the documentation to DPC with the document cover sheet for the corresponding unit ensures that the documentation will be addressed by the appropriate unit.

Unit	Document Cover Sheet
Burial	Application for Payment of Funeral
Fraud	FIDMU
Hearings	Hearings and Appeals
Overpayment	Overpayments and Hearings Documents
Quality Control	Quality Control

TAO Meeting Notes