



# Transitions

October 2018

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

EAEDC: Equalization of Benefits for Homeless Clients	2
SNAP: New Child Support Income Pages	2
TAFDC: Increase in the TAFDC Non-Exempt Grant Level	2
SNAP: Child Support Expenses Clarifications	3
SNAP: SAVE No Longer Required at Interim Report	3
TAFDC: Increase in Asset Limit	3
TAFDC: 100% Earned Income Disregard	3
Cross Programs: Statewide Resource Guide	4
SNAP: Direct Certification for School Meals	4
Cross Programs: Collateral Contact Initiative	4
Cross Program: Identifying Changes to Online Guide Text	4
From the Forms File	5
FYI	6

## Online Guide Transmittals

### EAEDC: Equalization of Benefits for Homeless Clients

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-66

Beginning with the November 2018 benefit cycle, the benefit amount for EAEDC clients in Living Arrangement D (those who are homeless) will be increased to \$303.70 for a single individual and higher amounts for assistance units with multiple clients.

In December, current EAEDC clients will receive retroactive benefits going back to their eligibility date or to July 1, 2018, whichever is later. Retroactive benefits will be given for the time between July 1, 2018 and present. Also in December, closed EAEDC clients will receive a retroactive amount for the time they received EAEDC, starting July 1 and thereafter.

The retroactive benefits will be considered noncountable lump sum income for SNAP purposes. Going forward, EAEDC clients who receive SNAP benefits will see a decrease in their SNAP because of the increase in EAEDC.

### SNAP: New Child Support Income Pages

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-67

Child Support is a way for parents to share the financial responsibility for their child(ren), even when they do not live together. The Department of Revenue (DOR) is responsible for administering court-ordered child support income in Massachusetts. Support payments are made directly to the household from non-household members when child support is not administered through the Department of Revenue.

Regardless if the child support income is received through the Department of Revenue or directly from the noncustodial parent, for SNAP it must be entered into BEACON as Support in order for the income to be calculated correctly. A new Online Guide Page has been added to explain procedures and examples provided to address common questions.

### TAFDC: Increase in the TAFDC Non-Exempt Grant Level

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-69

Currently there are two TAFDC financial need and payment standards used to determine eligibility: one for assistance units exempt from the 24-month Time Limit and the Work Program requirement, and another for Non-Exempt assistance units. The need and payment standards for nonexempt assistance units are 2.75% lower than the need and payment standards for exempt assistance units. As part of DTA's ongoing effort to provide our clients with economic opportunities, beginning with the November 2018 benefit cycle, the grant amount for TAFDC Non-Exempt Assistance units will be increased 2.75%, equalizing the grants for Non-Exempt and Exempt clients. This means grant amounts will not change when a client's exemption status changes.

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform staff of the increase in benefits for TAFDC Non-Exempt Assistance units by 2.75% and updates to relevant Online Guide pages reflecting this change.



## Online Guide Transmittals

### SNAP: Child Support Expenses Clarifications

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-72

Legally obligated child support payments paid to or for a non-household member are allowed as a deduction. Child support payments paid by a household member to a third party (for example, a landlord or utility company) as part of a support order must be included as part of the child support deduction. Payments that are made by the household for health insurance for a child must also be included as part of the child support deduction. If the SNAP client is making legally obligated child support payments and it includes arrearage amounts, it is a deductible expense, even if the arrearage is not specified in the court order. For clients who are paying legally obligated child support payments to or for a child that resides in the same household, child support payments are not considered an allowable expense.

In order to verify legally obligated child support expenses, a court order and proof of payment must be provided. To reinforce these concepts, the Online Guide has been revised and examples have been added to clarify common questions.

### SNAP: SAVE No Longer Required at Interim Report

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-73

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program is maintained and operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Verification Division. The SAVE program provides government agencies with a tool to verify the immigration status of noncitizens and certain U.S. citizen applicants seeking benefits. The information provided by SAVE is used to determine eligibility for state and federal benefits.

Effective immediately, staff are no longer required to run SAVE for noncitizen clients at the time of Interim Report unless there is a new status or the information is questionable.

SAVE must still be run at every application and recertification if there are noncitizens in the household. The Online Guide has been revised to remove all requirements to run SAVE at IR.

### TAFDC: Increase in Asset Limit

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-75

To assist families in achieving economic stability, the TAFDC asset limit has increased to \$5,000. The increase will allow clients to work and retain more of their income as assets. Beginning November 5, 2018, the TAFDC asset limit will be raised from \$2,500 to \$5,000 in all eligibility and benefit calculations, including EBC notices. The Cash EBT High Balance view has been modified to consider the new asset limit and will display as such.

The Cash Warning Notice has also been updated to reflect the new asset limit parameters.

### TAFDC: 100% Earned Income Disregard

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-76

To incentivize work and help clients increase their economic mobility before leaving TAFDC, clients are eligible to receive a 100% Earned Income Disregard as long as the total household countable income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for up to 12 cyclical payments.

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform staff of the 12 payment 100% Earned Income Disregard and updates to relevant Online Guide pages reflecting this change.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs: Statewide Resource Guide

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-77

The purpose of this Transmittal is to advise staff of a recent joint MasSP project that developed a Statewide Resource Guide that will now be available to all staff.

Clients often come to DTA because they have a variety of service needs. These needs may be for resources that DTA does not directly provide. In particular, clients who call the Assistance Line may be speaking with someone not familiar with the resources in a client's particular area.

This Statewide Resource Guide is meant to serve as a quick reference so that information about potential resources can be provided to clients regardless of where they live. The Statewide Resource Guide is not meant to capture every resource, but reflect those most commonly requested by clients such as housing and fuel assistance.

### SNAP: Direct Certification for School Meals

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-78

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and DTA exchange data to identify and enroll children in school meal subsidy programs. Through Direct Certification, this process is automated so that SNAP and/or TAFDC recipients who have eligible children don't have to file an application to verify eligibility for these programs.

DTA automatically sends a notice to eligible households. The notice includes information about the School Breakfast Program, which is part of the National School Nutrition Program. Per DTA's agreement with DESE, this notice is automatically generated during the fall and includes a USDA flyer that provides nutrition advice.

### Cross Programs: Collateral Contact Initiative

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-79

Collateral contact is a verbal or written confirmation of a household's circumstances by a third party who has firsthand knowledge of the client's circumstances and can be used to verify certain types of information.

The Department has developed a new initiative to explore collateral contact for in person clients in limited circumstances, as outline in the Online Guide.

### Cross Program: Identifying Changes to Online Guide Text

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-80

The Online Guide houses all information to enable DTA staff to complete their day to day tasks from a single location. Overtime, the Department has attempted to enhance the Guide to improve navigation so that it is an effective tool for all to utilize.

The Policy unit at Central Office has received suggestions for improving readability to the Guide.

Effective with the October 26, 2018 Guide deployment, when a change is made to information on a page, the change will be marked with a line next to the sentence/paragraph that contains the change. These change markings will be for substantive changes only.



## From the Forms File

### Revised Forms

25-105-0918-05 (English)

CCA (Rev. 9/2018)

*Child Care Referral Form*

In accordance with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) new interim policy changes, the Department has changed the way child care referrals are issued. BEACON generated child care referrals are temporarily suspended and replaced by a new paper referral available in Online Forms as a fillable PDF. Please discard old versions of the child care referral form and use the PDF version.

25-642-1018-05

25-643-1018-05(S)

CCFS

*Child Care Fact Sheet*

In accordance with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) new interim policy changes, the Department has updated the Child Care Fact Sheet to reflect these changes. Please discard old versions of the Child Care Fact Sheet and use the revised version. Document Production will send out an initial shipment of the CCFS to the TAO's.

### Revised Brochure

04-040-1018-05

04-041-1018-05(S)

EAEDC-PB (Rev. 10/2018)

*Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program*

The *Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program* brochure has been updated as of 11.1.18 to improve usability for clients. Please discard old versions of this brochure. Document Production will send out an initial shipment of the *Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program* brochure to the TAOs. Staff may order additional brochures through Document Production.

### Obsolete Brochure

17-150-0716-05 (Rev. 7/2016)

17-151-0816-05 (S) (Rev. 8/2016)

*TAFDC Work Program: Your Pathway to Self-Sufficiency*

## **FYI**

There are no FYIs for this month.

## TAO Meeting Notes