

The Daily Blurb

'Blurb' 24: The Right to Apply

An important reminder

When it comes to DTA programs, there is a lot to remember. Every once in a while though, we need to be reminded that ensuring our client's rights is as important to our Department as knowing policy and procedure is to our day-to-day jobs. One of the most important client rights is the right to apply; to fill out an application and have it processed by DTA regardless of circumstances.

The maintaining of a client's right to access services at DTA is a paramount concern for us. Every person must be given the right to apply for benefits, even if that person appears to be ineligible.

106 CMR 702.115(A) states:

"Every person has the right, and must be afforded the opportunity, to apply for assistance without delay. Individuals who inquire about assistance must be provided with oral and written informational material about the benefits, conditions of eligibility, rights and responsibilities associated with the cash assistance programs."

If requested, an application must be taken even though an individual appears to be ineligible.

Every person who asks to apply must be given the opportunity to do so. This ensures that if found ineligible, applicants will receive a written notice with the denial reason. Applicants can then appeal the denial if they think the denial is incorrect.

To 'Screen out' a client is to prevent them from filling out the application and thus withholding both their right to apply and – potentially - access to our programs. In other words, it would be like telling the potential client that they do not have the right to apply.