



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2005-17
March 23, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: DTA/Jewish Vocational Service Food Stamp Outreach Initiative

Background

Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) in Boston has received a USDA outreach grant to conduct food stamp outreach targeting the working poor. In partnership with certain contracted employers, JVS currently provides workplace education programs for entry-level employees. JVS has now added food stamp information to these workplace sessions and has begun to screen and assist individuals in applying for food stamp benefits. The project will take place over an 18-month period. The goal is to assist 2,000 eligible working people in applying for food stamp benefits.

As part of our continued effort to reduce barriers and to increase food stamp participation, the Department supported the JVS grant proposal and is partnering with JVS to increase participation. In February 2005, JVS began offering food stamp information, screening and application assistance at participating employer worksites. Currently, these are located in the Boston area; however, JVS plans to expand to several other worksites in Massachusetts. Since FS applications are submitted to the appropriate TAO based on client address, any TAO could be impacted by this initiative.

Purpose of Memo

This Field Operations Memo will provide details regarding the DTA/JVS FS outreach partnership. It will:

- identify the JVS client population;
- describe the DTA/JVS application package;
- define JVS staff responsibilities;
- list the responsibilities of the DTA AU Manager; and
- explain the DTA/JVS verification requirements and process.

**JVS Client
Population**

JVS works with entry-level employees onsite at participating employers. The JVS worker offers information about the Food Stamp Program, screens for potential eligibility and provides application assistance. Because JVS clients are employed, they:

- are allowed telephone interviews to apply/recertify for food stamp benefits, and
- are exempt from the work requirement, if working a minimum of 20 hours per week. (See 106 CMR 362.320.)

Note: *JVS clients who appear to qualify for expedited FS benefits must apply directly at the appropriate TAO.*

**DTA/JVS
Application
Package**

The DTA/JVS application package includes the following forms:

- the Food Stamp Application form (FSA-1);
- the Request for Authorized Representative form (Image 10); and
- the Agency Certification of Shelter/Utility Expenses form (FS-ACSE).

The DTA/JVS application package also includes the following brochures/informational materials:

- *Your Right to Know* brochure;
- *Food Stamp Benefits* brochure;
- *Electronic Benefit* brochure;
- *What Noncitizens Need to Know* brochure;
- *Noncitizen Resource* brochure;
- the *I Speak* card; and
- *Your Right to Interpreter Services* brochure.

**JVS Worker
Responsibilities**

The JVS worker will be responsible for:

- providing Food Stamp Program information sessions conducted at workplace education sessions to review all of the FS brochures included in the DTA/JVS application package;
- screening interested individuals for potential FS eligibility; and
- helping interested individuals fill out the simplified FS Application.

The JVS worker must:

- identify **JVS** as the source agency on page 1 of the FS Application;
 - have the client sign the FS Application;
 - enter his/her name in the *Assisting with the FS Application* section;
 - have the client complete the *I Speak* card; and
 - have the client sign either a JVS release form **or** Image 10, as needed.
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**JVS Worker
Responsibilities
(continued)**

The JVS worker will:

- if requested by the client, complete the Authorized Representative form (*Image 10*) for purposes of helping the JVS client apply and recertify for food stamp benefits;
- help the client gather required verifications;
- fax completed forms and verifications to the appropriate TAO with a cover letter provided by JVS; and
- contact the DTA liaison if there are any problems or concerns with a particular JVS client.

**DTA Staff
Responsibilities**

The AU Manager responsibilities for processing FS applications from JVS clients are as follows. The AU Manager must:

- review the JVS application package for completeness and required signatures;
- enter the FS application onto BEACON (**Note:** For tracking purposes, record **JVS** as the source agency on BEACON);
- if needed, speak with the JVS worker at 617- 428-0395 x182 to schedule the phone interview and to resolve concerns for a particular JVS client; (*Please note, however, that the JVS worker is temporarily on leave. She will return to work in late May. In her absence, her supervisor at JVS, Amy Jacobs, will be available to answer questions. Amy may be reached at (617) 428-0395 x 180.*)
- conduct the application interview with the JVS client only or the JVS client with the JVS authorized representative; and
- file the JVS cover letter in the AU record to show that the client is eligible for a phone interview. (*There is no need to annotate in the narrative that the face-to-face interview has been waived.*)

Note: The instructions contained in Field Operations Memo 2004-12, *Food Stamp Application Processing Guidelines*, apply to the DTA/JVS FS outreach initiative. Faxed applications, received from JVS must be processed in accordance with this memo and are subject to the normal 30-day processing timeframe. The instructions contained in Field Operations Memo 2004-34, *TAFDC and Food Stamp Processing Guidelines for Noncitizen Applications*, also apply to the DTA/JVS FS outreach initiative.

**Verification
Process**

JVS clients are subject to all normal verification requirements. **Note:** *The FS-ACSE form may be utilized by JVS staff if the JVS worker has documentation of current shelter and/or utility expenses.*

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.
