



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
 600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111


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Field Operations Memo 2006-10
February 9, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Food Stamp AUs Closed/Denied in Error

Overview

The Department has determined that there are 89 AUs whose FS benefits were closed or denied in error because of incorrect monthly net income limits in BEACON. These AUs were calculated using the old net income limits (i.e., standards in place before the last FS COLA, effective September 23, 2005). The error was identified among AU sizes 1 through 4. The monthly net income parameters have since been updated in BEACON.

This memo issues procedures for:

- Reopening affected AUs listed on the *Report of AUs Closed or Denied in Error*;
- Issuing Related Benefits for the period representing the erroneous closing or denial; and
- Sending out the *Notice to Households Closed or Denied in Error* (Attachment A) to AUs that were not reopened before the issuance of this memo or the *Notice to Ongoing Households Closed or Denied in Error* (Attachment B) to AUs that were reopened before the issuance of this memo. These are special notices that explain the reason the AU was inappropriately closed or denied.

AU Manager Procedures for AUs that Remain Closed

On Day 1, the AU Manager must:

- Review each AU to determine eligibility and ensure that there is no other information that could have caused the AU to be closed or denied at the time. The AU must remain closed if after review there is a financial or nonfinancial reason to justify the AU being closed or denied.

Day 1

- Reopen the AU with a *Benefit Effective Date* as of the AU's cyclical date in February, using existing information in the AU record;
Note: AUs determined eligible for (re)opening will not be required to submit new information.

**AU Manager
Procedures
For AUs that
Remain
Closed
(Continued)**

- Certify the AU through the AU's cyclical end date in May;
Example: An AU that was determined eligible to be (re)opened has an SSN ending in 6. This AU must be (re)opened with a *Benefit Effective Date* of February 10, 2006 and an end certification date of May 9, 2006.
All reopened AUs will receive a BEACON-generated approval notice with the FS benefit calculation and related regulatory cites.

Day 2

On Day 2, the AU Manager must:

- Check BEACON to confirm that the AU is (re)opened;
- Copy and complete the *Notice to Households Closed or Denied in Error* (Attachment A);
Note: Be sure to make a copy of the completed notice for the case record.
- Mail the *Notice to Households Closed or Denied in Error* to all AUs that were reopened on Day 1; and
- Calculate benefits owed as follows:

For Closed AUs:

- Identify the closing or denial date of the AU from the report;
- Beginning the day after the closing date, and ending the day before the AU's February's cyclical date, determine the number of months for which the AU lost benefits because the AU was erroneously closed;
- Multiply the number of months by the FS benefit amount the AU was approved for on Day 1; and
- Issue this amount as a Related Benefit on the Program Administration workflow selecting *FSP Supplemental/Immediate Issuance*.

or

For Denied AUs:

Step 1

- Determine the number of **full months** for which the AU lost benefits because the AU was erroneously denied; and
- Multiply the number of months by the FS benefit amount the AU was approved for on Day 1; **and**

Step 2

- Multiply the FS benefit amount the AU was approved for on Day 1 by 12 to get the yearly total; and
- Divide this amount by 365 to get the daily amount; and
- Multiply that amount by the number of days from the **date of application** through the day before the AU's first cyclical issuance date; **and**

Step 3

- Add the result of Step 1 to the result of Step 2;
- Issue this amount as a Related Benefit on the Program Administration workflow selecting *FSP Supplemental/Immediate Issuance*; and

**AU Manager
Procedures
for AUs that
Remain Closed
(Continued)**

Day 2

- Enter the following statement on the BEACON Narratives tab, *Case Denied due to Incorrect Net Income Standard; Case (re)opened and FS Supplement Issued*.

All AUs that were reopened will receive a BEACON-generated Related Benefit notice advising the AU of additional FS benefits deposited into their EBT account.

TAOs must email the annotated report with the results of the review to Julie Noble by February 24, 2006.

**AUs Reopened
Prior To this
Memo**

Some AUs listed on the *Report of AUs Closed or Denied in Error* have since reapplied and have been reopened. Since these AUs are already open, the AU Manager must now determine the amount of FS Benefits owed **for the period when** the AUs remained erroneously closed or denied. The AU Manager must:

- Identify the closing or denial date on the report;
- Calculate the benefits owed for the period of time between the closing or denial date on the report through the day before the (re)opening date by following the instructions on page 2 of this memo;
Exception: When performing the calculation, **remember to use the actual (re)open date for the AU.**
- Issue Related Benefits on the Program Administration workflow and select *FSP Supplemental/Immediate Issuance*;
- Enter the following statement on the BEACON Narratives tab, *Case Denied Due to Incorrect Net Income Standard; FS Supplement Issued*; and
- Copy and complete the ***Notice to Ongoing Households Closed or Denied in Error***;
- Mail the notice to AUs that were closed or denied in error but who were (re)opened before the issuance of this memo.
Note: Be sure to make a copy of the completed notice for the case record.

Questions

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

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Notice to Households Closed or Denied in Error

Important Notice – Read Carefully

TAO Name: _____

TAO Address: _____

Dear: _____

SSN: _____

The Department determined that your Food Stamp case was closed or denied due to a computer error.

Your Food Stamp case has now been approved. You will receive a separate notice telling you about your benefits. The Department will also issue you additional Food Stamp benefits for the period that you were incorrectly closed or denied. You will receive another notice when the additional Food Stamp benefits are deposited into your EBT account.

If you have any questions about this notice, call your worker at _____.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused your family.

AU Manager Signature

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Notice to Ongoing Households Closed or Denied in Error

Important Notice – Read Carefully

TAO Name: _____

TAO Address: _____

Dear: _____

SSN: _____

The Department determined that your Food Stamp case was closed or denied due to a computer error a few months ago. You have reapplied for benefits and have since been approved but the Department owes you additional Food Stamp benefits for the period that you were incorrectly closed or denied. You will receive another notice when the additional Food Stamp benefits are deposited into your EBT account.

If you have any questions about this notice, call your worker at _____.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused your family.

AU Manager Signature