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Field Operations Memo 2006-51
November 27, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: TAFDC – ESP Component/Activity: Job Search/Job Readiness and A New BEACON Counter

Overview

The Department has made changes to the TAFDC program to meet revised TANF guidelines. As part of these changes, Basic Job Search and Structured Job Search activities were combined into one activity: Job Search/Job Readiness (described in Field Operations Memo 2006-39). The Job Search/Job Readiness activity can only count towards the Federal work participation rate for six weeks (of which only four of those weeks may be consecutive) in any Federal Fiscal Year beginning on October 1, 2006 and every year thereafter. The recipient who has already used the six weeks of participation within the Federal Fiscal Year still meets the state work program requirement if fully participating in Job Search/Job Readiness beyond the six weeks limit.

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.21, a counter was added to the Monitor Participation and Work Requirements windows on BEACON to track the recipient’s six weeks of participation in the activity of “Job Search/Job Readiness.” The counter will monitor the six weeks used per Federal Fiscal Year.

Purpose of Memo

This Field Operations Memo gives an overview of BEACON functionality changes and AU Manager responsibilities as it relates to the Job Search/Job Readiness counter.

**BEACON
Functionality
Changes**

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.21, the following functionality change occurred:

A counter which tracks weeks used in Job Search/Job Readiness activity within a Federal Fiscal Year (reset each October 1) is displayed on the Participation tab (below the Education and Training Counter) of the Monitor Participation window and on the TAFDC Tab (next to the Education and Training Counter) of the Work Requirements windows on BEACON.

IMPORTANT: Even though the four week/six week participation is measured once within a Federal Fiscal Year, a “job ready” applicant or recipient *may* remain in Job Search/Job Readiness longer than six weeks or re-enroll in Job Search/Job Readiness, as needed, to reach self-sufficiency.

**AU Manager
Responsibilities:
Warning
Messages**

As stated in Field Operations Memo 2006-39, to ensure an applicant’s or recipient’s success in the activity the AU Manager should only refer an applicant or recipient who meets the “job ready” criteria.

To help AU Managers keep track of the applicant’s or recipient’s progress in completing the Job Search/Job Readiness activity during the six-week period, pop-up warning messages on the Monitor Participation window will remind the AU Manager when the applicant’s or recipient’s participation in the activity reaches the 4th week and again when the applicant’s or recipient’s Job Search/Job Readiness activity participation has reached the six-week total.

Warning Message When the applicant or recipient has used the 4th week and that week is entered on the Monitor Participation window, a warning message will display the following message – ***“Recipient has used 4 weeks of Job Search.”***

Note: This message will only display if the last countable week entered on the Monitor Participation window is the 4th week.

**AU Manager
Action**

At this point, the applicant or recipient should be successfully nearing completion of the “Job Search/Job Readiness” activity. If the applicant or recipient still needs time to complete the activity beyond the 6 week time-limit, he or she may remain enrolled in the activity. No AU Manager action is needed unless DCS/ORI has referred the applicant or recipient back to the TAO or the applicant or recipient states uncertainty in completing the activity.

If the applicant or recipient states an uncertainty in completing the activity, the AU Manager should discuss with him or her whether or not he or she would like to remain in the activity or enroll in another activity.

**AU Manager
Responsibilities:
Warning
Messages
(continued)**

If the applicant or recipient has been referred back or wishes to enroll in another activity, the AU Manager must terminate the “Job Search/Job Readiness” activity and schedule an appointment with the applicant or recipient *within 10 days*. At the scheduled appointment, the AU Manager must then determine with the applicant or recipient what activity is most appropriate for him or her and refer him or her to that activity following established procedures.

Warning Message

When the applicant or recipient has used a total of six weeks within the same federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) and that week is entered on the Monitor Participation window, the warning message will display the following message – **“Recipient has used 6 weeks of Job Search.”**

Note: If the week entered is both the 4th week and the 6th week of job search/ job readiness (for example, 2 weeks /break/ 4 weeks) then only the six-week message will be displayed.

*AU Manager
Action*

At this point, the applicant or recipient will either be ready to be employed, need some extra time in Job Search/Job Readiness or will have been referred back to the AU Manager by DCS/ORI.

If the applicant or recipient is ready to be employed, DCS/ORI will notify the AU Manager about the job and the start date. The applicant or recipient must still provide the AU Manager with his or her job information. The AU Manager would then enter the employment information on the Employment Status window on BEACON and ensure the recipient is on Monthly Reporting following established procedures.

If the applicant or recipient has been referred back, the AU Manager must terminate the “Job Search/Job Readiness” activity and schedule an appointment with him or her *within 10 days*. At the scheduled appointment, the AU Manager must then determine with the applicant or recipient what activity is most appropriate for him or her and refer him or her to that activity following established procedures.

**AU Manager
Responsibilities:
Warning
Messages
(continued)**

While the four week/six week participation is measured once within a Federal Fiscal Year, a “job ready” applicant or recipient may be re-enrolled in or remain beyond the six-week period in Job Search/Job Readiness, as needed, to successfully reenter the workforce.

No “job ready” applicant or recipient should be refused enrollment or continued participation in Job Search/Job Readiness simply because he or she has used the six weeks of participation within the Federal Fiscal Year.

**Job Search/Job
Readiness
Counter**

The Job Search/Job Readiness activity can only count towards the Federal work participation rate for six weeks (of which only four of those weeks may be consecutive). Currently, the Job Search/Job Readiness counter counts **any** week (consecutive or not) of participation up to six weeks within a Federal Fiscal Year. A future increment of BEACON will modify the functionality to ensure that the Job Search/Job Readiness counter keeps track of and counts four *consecutive* weeks to help AU Managers keep track of that period.

The Job Search/Job Readiness activity remains a four weeks/six weeks of participation model to meet the Federal participation rate rules.

Questions

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