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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2006-53
November 17, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: **Eliminating the Rights and Responsibilities Penalty Warning Form (RR/FSP-1B) as a Separate Signature Page for Food Stamp Applications**

Overview

In March 2004, the Rights and Responsibilities Penalty Warning (RR/FSP-1B) language and signature line were removed from the food stamp application form and established as a separate document. The RR/FSP-1B form was mailed to applicants who were interviewed by telephone, and to recipients who were subject to Universal Semiannual Reporting (USR). For these applicants or recipients, failure to return a signed RR/FSP-1B form to the TAO would result in the denial of the FS application or the closing of the FS case.

The Department is eliminating the RR/FSP-1B form as a separate signature page for *most* FS applicants. The use of the RR/FSP-1B form as a signature page for the USR Prefilled Report is also being eliminated. These changes will bring the Department into compliance with recent state legislation prohibiting the request for more than one signature from a FS applicant.

The RR/FSP-1B form will remain a separate signature page to complete the application process when the source of application is SSA or the method of application is Internet and the applicant is subsequently interviewed by phone.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to inform TAO staff about: the impact on applicants, AU Manager responsibilities for processing FS applications/recertifications, changes made to the paper FS application, changes made to the BEACON-generated FS application and interim procedures for processing the old paper food stamp application.

Impact on Applicants

Eliminating the RR/FSP-1B as a separate signature page will be beneficial for most applicants:

- Applicants who complete a paper FS application form will no longer have to submit a separate RR/FSP-1B form if interviewed by phone or sign a BEACON-generated FS application if interviewed in the office.
- Applicants who file a one-page FS application at SSA will be required to either sign an RR/FSP-1B if they have a telephone interview or sign a BEACON-generated FS application if they have an in-office interview because the RR/FSP-1B language is not incorporated into the one-page SSA-1 form.
- Applicants who submit an Internet application will be required to either sign an RR/FSP-1B if they have a telephone interview or sign a BEACON-generated FS application if they have an in-office interview because there is no electronic signature capability for Internet applicants.

AU Manager Responsibilities

The elimination of the RR/FSP-1B form has minimal impact on AU Manager responsibilities. However, AU Managers must understand the following rules:

Applications

Applications

1. Once an adequate paper FS application (i.e. one that meets the minimal requirements of *name, address (if any), and signature*) is submitted, a second signature is not required on a BEACON-generated application, regardless of the type of application interview (in-office or telephone). These applicants would have signed the revised paper FS application form with signature line before submitting it to the TAO; and

Important: Some Internet applicants will receive and sign the RR/FSP-1B at the provider organization when completing their online application. In most instances, the provider organization will fax or mail the signed RR/FSP-1B to DTA. **Signed RR/FSP-1B forms received at any time during the 30-day application processing timeframe must be accepted to complete the application process. A second signed RR/FSP-1B must not be required.**

2. BEACON has been programmed to generate the appropriate FS application based on the source and method of application entered by the AU Manager.

Recertifications

Recertifications

1. Recipients who are subject to USR will no longer be mailed a separate RR/FSP-1B form (blue form) with the USR Prefilled Report. The RR/FSP-1B language has been added to the back of the USR Prefilled Report followed by a signature line. **Recipients must now sign the signature line on the USR Prefilled Report.**
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AU Manager Responsibilities (Continued)

Recertifications

2. Recipients not subject to USR (timely case closing AUs, TBA AUs) must use the revised paper FS application to recertify *unless* there is an in-office interview, where no paper FS application was completed because the BEACON-generated form was used.
3. Centralized SSI FS AUs (including Bay State CAP AUs) will continue to be mailed the appropriate recertification forms with no separate signature page required.

Changes to the Paper Food Stamp Application

Changes Related to the Elimination of the RR/FSP-1B

To facilitate the elimination of the RR/FSP-1B as a separate signature page for *most* FS applicants, the paper FS application has been revised as follows:

- Part 1 of the paper FS application, including the signature line originally used to set the start date, has been eliminated;
- The RR/FSP-1B language has been added to the back of the paper FS application, followed by a signature line.

Other Changes

- A note in the earnings section reminds the applicant to list self-employment income, if applicable to the AU; and
- Technical changes have been made throughout the document to improve the format, readability and overall ease of use of the application form.

Changes to the BEACON-Generated FS Application

Informational language on the BEACON-generated FS application has been revised based on whether or not the BEACON-generated FS application would appear with a signature line. Based on predetermined BEACON logic, the signature line is now produced by combining the source of application, the method of application and the print type selected by the AU Manager. *See the tables below for more details.*

Local Print

Locally Printed BEACON-Generated FS Applications		
Source of Application	Method of Application	Signature Line
Any source of application	Walk-in	Signature line will appear since application has not yet been signed
SSA (one-page Social Security application with signature line but without RR/FSP-1B language)	Drop-off, mail-in or fax	Signature line will appear since application has not yet been signed
Non-SSA	Drop-off, mail-in or fax	No signature line since applicant signed the paper FS application
Non-SSA	Internet	Signature line will appear since application has not yet been signed

**Changes to the
BEACON-
Generated FS
Application
(Continued)**

Local Print

The informational paragraph on locally printed BEACON-generated FS applications now reads: ***This is your FS application with the information you provided to us. If any of the information is incorrect, please tell your worker immediately. Keep this copy for your records.***

Note: The one-page SSA application form has a signature line, but the form does not contain the Rights and Responsibilities Penalty Warning language. **A signature on the SSA application only sets the FS start date.** The applicant must sign the locally printed BEACON-generated FS application. The AU Manager must make a copy for the applicant and keep the original for the AU record.

Central Print

Centrally Printed BEACON-Generated FS Applications		
Source of Application	Method of Application	Signature Line
Any source of application	Walk-in	Central Print functionality not allowed
SSA (one-page Social Security application with signature line but without RR/FSP-1B language)	Drop-off, mail-in or fax	If non-expedited, RR/FSP-1B form will be inserted at Schraffts
Non-SSA	Drop-off, mail-in or fax	No signature line since applicant signed the paper FS application
Non-SSA	Internet	If non-expedited, RR/FSP-1B form will be inserted at Schraffts

The informational paragraph on centrally printed BEACON-generated FS applications with a source of SSA and a method of application of drop-off, mail-in or fax or a method of application of Internet reads as follows: ***Please review the enclosed application form to ensure all the information you gave us is correct. Be sure to sign and date the enclosed blue Rights and Responsibilities/Penalty Warning Page. Mail the signed blue form along with any additional verification(s) requested to the DTA office listed on this notice to complete your food stamp application.*** This is the group of applicants from which a signed RR/FSP-1B continues to be required to complete the FS application process since a signature was not captured.

Note: The one-page SSA application form has a signature line, but the form does not contain the Rights and Responsibilities Penalty Warning language. **A signature on the SSA application only sets the FS start date.** The applicant must sign and return the RR/FSP-1B form that was mailed to the applicant.

**Changes to the
BEACON-
Generated FS
Application
(Continued)**

Central Print

The informational paragraph on centrally printed BEACON-generated FS applications with a source of non-SSA and a method of application of drop-off, mail-in or fax reads as follows: *This is your FS application with the information you provided to us. If any of the information is incorrect, please tell your worker immediately. Keep this copy for your records.* No signature line will be displayed since the applicant already signed a paper FS application.

Note: Central print functionality is still limited to applications that are not walk-in or expedited applications.

**Interim
Procedures for
Processing the
Old Paper FS
Application**

It is expected that TAOs will continue to receive old paper FS applications without the RR/FSP-1B language and signature line since community agencies and other outreach partners have remaining supplies of the old paper FS application. AU Managers must accept the old paper FS application forms. FS applicants must not be required to complete the new paper FS application if the minimal application requirements were met.

During this transition period, applicants submitting the old paper FS application without signature line will be required to sign the Rights, Responsibilities and Penalty Warning language on a BEACON-generated FS application form or a RR/FSP-1B form to complete the application process.

Walk-in Applicants

For walk -in applicants interviewed in-person, the AU Manager must:

- locally print the BEACON-generated FS application form; and
- ask the applicant to sign the BEACON-generated FS application form which includes the RR/FSP-1B language.

For walk -in applicants interviewed by telephone, the AU Manager must:

- locally print the BEACON-generated FS application form; and
- mail the BEACON-generated FS application form for the applicant to review along with instructions to sign and return the form which includes the RR/FSP-1B language.

For Other Applicants with Telephone Interview

For all applicants who are interviewed by telephone, the AU Manager must:

- locally print the BEACON-generated FS application form;
 - mail the BEACON-generated FS application form for the applicant to review; and
 - in the same envelope, enclose the RR/FSP-1B with instructions to sign and return the form to complete the application process.
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**Interim
Procedures for
Processing the
Old Paper FS
Application
(Continued)**

During the interim period, if a FS applicant using the old paper FS application fails to provide a signed RR/FSP-1B by Day-30, the AU Manager must:

- Approve the application on Day 30 if all other mandatory verifications have been received;
- Send a verification checklist and a RR/FSP-1B giving the *recipient* 10 days to return the RR/FSP-1B.

If the recipient fails to return a signed RR/FSP-1B within the 10-day timeframe, the AU Manager must close the FS AU for *failure to provide verification*.

Note: The procedures outlined above allowing the approval of a FS application without a signed RR/FSP-1B apply only to applicants who submit the old paper FS application form.

As soon as supplies of the new paper FS application are received from Schraffts, TAOs must discard current supplies of the old paper FS application form. In addition, TAO Directors are urged to send a supply of the new paper FS Application form to outreach partners and organizations in the TAO community that issue paper FS application forms. This will reduce the use of the old paper FS application form and ease the administrative burden associated with processing two different FS application forms during the interim period

Questions

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



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

FOOD STAMP SIGNATURE PAGE INSTRUCTIONS
IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ

Applicant Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Check only one:

- Please review the enclosed application form to ensure all the information you gave us is correct. Be sure to carefully read the Responsibilities/Penalty Warning Page. **Mail the signed application form along with any additional verification(s) requested to your DTA office to complete your food stamp application.***

- Please review the enclosed application form to ensure all the information you gave us is correct. Be sure to sign and date the enclosed blue Rights and Responsibilities/Penalty Warning Page. **Mail the signed blue form along with any additional verification(s) requested to your DTA office to complete your food stamp application.***

AU Manager: _____

Telephone Number: _____