Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance

Online Guide Transmittal 2015-53
September 18, 2015

To: **Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**

From: **Anne O'Sullivan, Assistant Commissioner for Change Management**

Re: **SNAP: Upcoming ABAWD Work Program Requirements**

Overview

Due to high unemployment rates and a depressed labor market, Massachusetts has qualified for and operated under a waiver of the ABAWD time-limited benefit requirement since June of 2008. This waiver will expire on December 31, 2015.

Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) are limited to 3 months of eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits during a 36 month period, unless the client is meeting the ABAWD Work Program (WP) Requirement.

In anticipation of the reinstatement of this requirement the Department is collaborating with stakeholders to develop a multifaceted plan to address the needs of ABAWDs.

To ensure that exempt clients are not incorrectly subject to ABAWD WP requirements, BEACON must accurately reflect each client's situation at all times. Whenever an electronic case folder is accessed, workers must review and update the Work Requirements-FS page to reflect current information about work program requirement status.

Popup Message on Work Requirements Page

As part of BEACON Build 47.6, effective August 31, 2015, the following popup message appears whenever the Work Requirement- FS page is accessed:

You must review the Work Program and SNAP E&T requirements status of all household members and update the Start date to today's date.

Please review the exemption reasons from the dropdown lists and select the appropriate exemption if one applies.

If more than one exemption reason applies, select the exemption reason that is expected to last the longest.

You must update the Work Requirements-FS page to reflect current information about work program requirement status.

When updating the Work Requirements page, always select the most permanent exemption reason that applies. For example, if a client is both collecting Unemployment Compensation (UC) and age 60, s/he should be exempted from all work requirements due to age rather than receipt of UC benefits which are received on a temporary basis.

Only when clients do not qualify for another exemption reason, should ABAWD Waiver be selected.

Additionally, to support future automation that will aid in the identification of exempt and non-exempt WP requirements statuses, workers must ensure that:

- the School Status and Education pages accurately reflect each client's school enrollment status and anticipated graduation date;

- the Pregnancy page accurately reflects each client's pregnancy status and due date;

- the true household composition is reflected on the Household page, even when one or more household members are ineligible for SNAP benefits;

- the Caretakers page accurately reflects when a client is responsible for the care of a child or incapacitated person;

- the Residential Facility page correctly identifies residential drug and alcohol treatment center residents; and

- all employment is noted on the Earned Income page, whether or not the income is counted.

Online Guide Updates

The following Online Guide pages have been updated to reflect this instruction:

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: Work Program Requirement
Page: SNAP Work Program Requirements

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: Work Program Requirement
Page: SNAP Work Program Exemptions

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: Work Program Requirement
Page: SNAP Work Program Data

Topic: SNAP
Book: Work Requirements
Chapter: Work Program Requirement
Page: SNAP Work Program Sanctions

These pages will be further enhanced at a later date.

Questions

If you have any questions, please email the DTA Mailbox.
Systems questions should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.