

From the Hotline

- Q. I have a recipient subject to the 24-month time limit whose benefits are scheduled to end in January 1999. She is not subject to the work program requirements and wishes to enroll in a community college program which will not be completed until January 2000. Can I approve her EDP for this program? Can she receive child care and transportation?
- A. Yes, her EDP is approvable and she may receive child care and transportation while a recipient attending the community college program. It is very important that you make sure she understands the time-limited benefits rules and that she knows that her benefits may end before she completes the program. This should be documented on the Transition Plan each time you meet with this recipient.
- Q. I had a two-parent household but the father has now left the home. The mother has been and continues to be exempt from the 24-month clock because she has a dependent child under age two. When he was in the home, the father was nonexempt. He had used 10 months of his 24-month clock when he left the home. When the child turns age two and the mother becomes nonexempt, does she get a full 24-month clock of her own or only the balance from the time the father was in the home?
- A. The mother gets a full 24-month clock. Each parent has his or her own clock.
- Note: In a two-parent household, each parent has a clock. They do not share a clock. However, when one parent has received 24 months of nonexempt benefits the entire case will close.
- See 106 CMR 203.200.
- Q. I have a recipient who has requested that her case be closed because she is moving to another state. Will she be able to get her remaining cash and food stamp benefits with her EBT card?
- A. Advise the recipient that her cash assistance may be accessed with her EBT card at an out-of-state ATM that displays the NYCE logo. However, since not all states have NYCE, the recipient should access all cash assistance before leaving Massachusetts. Advise the recipient to access her food stamp benefits, if possible, before leaving Massachusetts, or complete the EBT-3

form, *EBT Food Stamp Benefits Conversion Request* to request a conversion from federal food stamp benefits to food stamp coupons or conversion from state supplemental food stamp benefits to a check. See *Electronic Benefit Transfer* guide, pages XIII-1 and XIII-2.

- Q. Which programs are means-tested for purposes of determining if a quarter can be credited to a noncitizen for food stamp eligibility?
- A. The following programs are means-tested, i.e., income is a factor in determining eligibility: FS, SSFSP, TAFDC, STAFDC, EAEDC, EA, SSI and Veterans' Service Benefits.
- Q. I have a pregnant woman with a family cap date earlier than her due date, but she currently has no children living with her. Is she eligible for TAFDC as a pregnant woman?
- A. Yes. After her child is born, she continues to be eligible for herself only, provided the child lives with her and would be eligible for TAFDC except for the family cap rule. She may, of course, request a waiver of the family cap rule.

Q. I have a grantee who claims to be exempt due to a disability. She is receiving assistance as an exempt unit pending a decision by the Disability Evaluation Services (DES). If DES finds her not disabled, do I count the time she was exempt toward her 24-month clock?

A. Yes. If the disability exemption was requested on or after February 1, 1998 and was subsequently denied, any full month in which the recipient received benefits is countable toward the 24-month time limit. Since the recipient was coded exempt, the month(s) must be manually added to the clock. For details on clock adjustments, see *PRISM II User's Guide*, Chapter V: 24-Month Time-Limited Benefits.

Q. When a recipient receives an exception or a waiver to the family cap for a child under age two, is she exempt?

A. Yes. The recipient is exempt because her youngest child living in the home is under age two and is in the assistance unit. See 106 CMR 203.100(A)(1)(d).

and many people are realizing that they and their families have a better future if they are depending on a paycheck rather than on a welfare grant.

Fifty-six months is a long time and many of you have worked throughout that time to help people make their stay on assistance as short a one as their individual circumstances will permit. I recognize that much is being asked of you right now and much will continue to be asked. But I think this is one of those moments when we need to step back and acknowledge that all the hard work is paying off. I am happy that the caseload continues to decline, but I am proud of what that decline means. It means that families are self-supporting and independent and that all the work you have done has had results. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Claire McIntire
Commissioner



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GOAL
OF
TAFDC!**
