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Department of Transitional Assistance Report on Paperless Documentation

January 4, 2016

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance



**REPORT ON PAPERLESS DOCUMENTATION
DECEMBER 2015**

Description of the Report

Chapter 158 of the Acts of 2014 Section 32, requires the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to develop, implement, and maintain a plan to reduce the use of paper records and documentation and to eliminate the sole reliance on paper records for its operations. The plan must progressively eliminate the need to use hard copies of forms. The following report provides information to the clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate on DTA's progress in meeting these requirements.

DTA's MISSION

The mission of the Department of Transitional Assistance is to assist low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life. DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports to help individuals and families achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, including food and nutritional assistance, cash assistance, and employment supports.

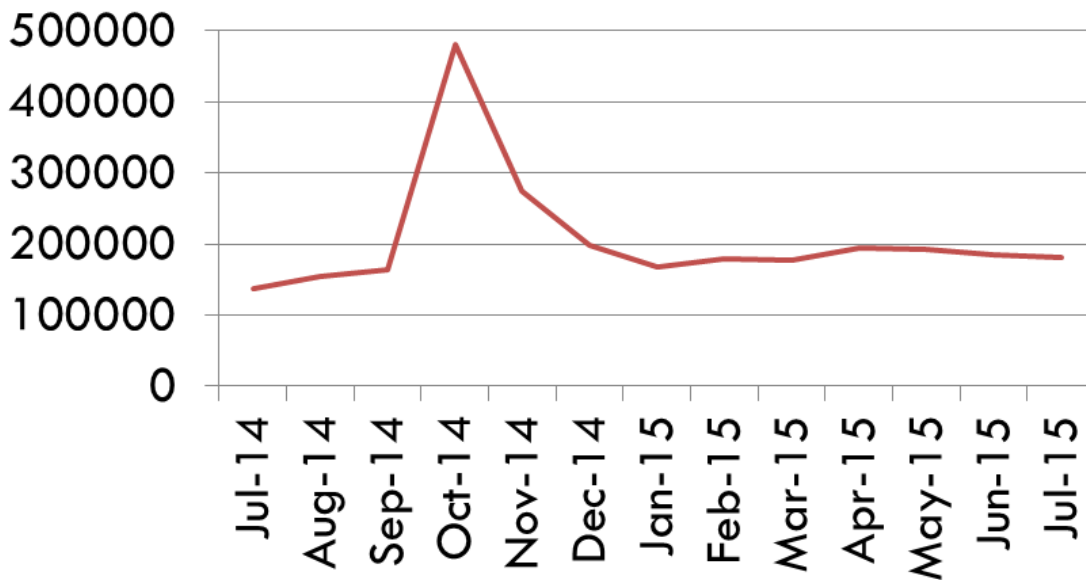
DTA serves one out of every nine people in the Commonwealth including working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities.

History of the Electronic Document Management Center

DTA partnered with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and MassHealth to implement an Electronic Document Management Center (EDMC) for managing applicant and client eligibility documents, as well as documents used by the Hearings and Program Integrity units. This project, known as Scanning and Future Automation is to ensure documents are indexed accurately and timely, ultimately improving the processing of cases for DTA clients. Since January 31, 2014, all Transitional Area Offices (TAOs) postal mail has been routed to the EDMC in Taunton for digital scanning and indexing. Throughout 2015, approximately 185,000 documents monthly (or 46,250 weekly) were processed. Documents included in that figure are: mail, electronic faxes, and documents scanned from Multi-Functional Devices. The following chart and graph show the number of documents processed at EDMC for the period from July 2014 through July 2015:

Total Documents Count	
Month	Total
Jul-2014	136,833
Aug-2014	154,855
Sep-2014	163,494
Oct-2014	479,648
Nov-2014	273,687
Dec-2014	198,616
Jan-2015	167,906
Feb-2015	178,336
Mar-2015	176,592
Apr-2015	194,433
May-2015	191,956
Jun-2015	184,533
Jul-2015	180,931
Grand Total	2,681,820

Total "Document Counts" per month for all DTA documents



EDMC has documented that for the period from July 2014 to July 2015:

- 89% of documents were processed within 24 hours,
- 95% of documents were processed within 48 hours,
- It is estimated there was an error rate during this period of 2% due to human and mechanical errors.

How EDMC Works

My Workspace: A new task management software product called DTA myWorkspace is used by EDMC staff and was customized for DTA based on staff input. With myWorkspace, scanned and indexed documents are electronically routed to the appropriate TAO or Central Office Business Unit.

Reducing Paper Strategy – DTA/EDMC

The goal of scanning and future automation is to ensure documents are indexed accurately and timely, ultimately improving the processing of cases for DTA clients. All TAOs will be able to scan all TAO processed and urgent documents directly to EDMC. This capability provides significant improvement in time spent, document quality and cost compared to shipping or faxing documents to EDMC. To enable this functionality, IT staff are working collaboratively with DTA staff, including several managers who have spent significant time configuring equipment and performing thorough testing to ensure a high-level of quality and efficiency and implemented Phase 1 and Phase 2.

- Phase 1-The goal of Phase 1 was to ensure that all offices scan processed documents to EDMC. This phase has been completed successfully.
- Phase 2-The goal of Phase 2 was to ensure that all SNAP Applications/Urgent Documents are scanned. This phase has been completed successfully.

To ensure success of the EDMC, DTA needed to be confident that all documents processed by the EDMC would properly appear in BEACON, DTA's eligibility system, as being processed and available for caseworker review. Future enhancements will allow for high volume scanning thereby reducing even further the amount of TAO staff time spent scanning documents to EDMC. Phase 3 and Phase 4, described below, will be implemented in 2016.

- Phase 3 objective is to successfully scan all documents presented at the TAO (i.e., dropped off documents). All offices will be able to scan unprocessed documents, with the new multi-functional devices to be installed in all local offices. The target timeframe: January 2016.

- Phase 4 objective is to provide waiting room scanning function for clients. Target timeframe Mid- 2016.

Through this process, DTA and the EDMC have continued to collaborate on business process improvements. This collaboration allows for any issues to be quickly identified, addressed, and resolved.

To ensure quality transmission of scanned documents DTA has provided staff with standard instructions which must be followed.

Document Management Improvements

The EDMC has made consistent improvements since its launch. These improvements include:

- All DTA offices are now able to scan documents received locally, such as SNAP Applications/Urgent Documents, to the EDMC for indexing.
- DTA uses a document error report to identify and resolve current and new found issues.
- Daily communication between EDMC and DTA works well, as it strengthens and maintains a positive working relationship and limits potential gaps in communication regarding policy, process, notice and volume changes.
- A video was developed as an effective, practical way to educate and train DTA staff on processes at EDMC. TAO staff are also welcome to make an in-person visit to the EDMC.
- An additional resource tool was added to aid EDMC staff in accurately indexing documents to the correct individual when insufficient information is provided on a document. The most frequent use of the tool is when EDMC indexers encounter common names and additional details such as household information is needed to index the document to the correct individual.

Summary

The centralized Electronic Document Management Center (EDMC) for scanning and downloading all mailed and faxed documents into DTA's eligibility system, BEACON, has resulted in significant reduction in the amount of paper used and stored as part of DTA business. DTA continues to pursue system enhancements that will result in additional reduction in the use of paper, thereby resulting in a sustainable paperless system.