



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111


DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Secretary

JULIA E. KEHOE
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2009-66
November 20, 2009

To:  **Transitional Assistance Office Staff**
From: **John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**
Re: **TAFDC – Countable SSI Informational Mailing**

Overview Due to the current fiscal crisis, certain individuals who are ineligible for TAFDC due to receipt of SSI who have a legal obligation to support their dependent children or spouse will have their income (excluding the first \$100 of income) count in determining eligibility. This change is effective January 1, 2010.

Purpose of Memo This memo informs case managers about an informational mailing to all clients affected by this change.

Client Mailing Attachment A will be sent to families receiving SSI *whose case may be reduced*, advising them of the change.
Attachment B will be sent to families receiving SSI *whose case may be closing*, advising them of the change.
All families will also receive an insert with “Frequently Asked Questions” and a “Where to Go For Help” Resource Guide (Attachment C).
This mailing will occur on **November 27, 2009**. These documents will not be available on the Document History tab on BEACON.
Clients who have questions about the mailing are being advised to call 1-888-483-0255.

Questions If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

{BEACON USER STREET_ADDRESS}
{BEACON USER CITY, STATE, ZIP}

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
Change to Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) Counting SSI Notice R

{CLIENT NAME}
{CLIENT ADDRESS}
{CLIENT CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP}

{CLIENT SSN}
{BEACON USER OFFICE NAME}

November 2009

Important Notice Regarding Your Benefits Please Read

Dear {Client}:

Our records show that you or another adult in your household is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Based on the information we have about your case, your TAFDC benefits will be substantially lowered beginning in January 2010. This is happening because, due to a budget reduction, the Department is changing the way SSI is counted toward your TAFDC grant. You did not do anything to cause this change.

We currently do not count any of the SSI income received by you or other people in your household when deciding what your TAFDC grant will be. Beginning January 1, 2010, we are going to count the income of certain adult SSI household members, except for \$100. This means that most of your income will be used to decide your TAFDC benefit amount. We will **not** count any assets of anyone receiving SSI.

You will receive another notice in late December or early January telling you what your new TAFDC benefit amount will be. In most cases, your SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) benefits will increase. You do not have to do anything to update your SNAP benefits. Your new monthly SNAP amount will be included with your TAFDC notice.

We know you and your family need to prepare for this loss of income. Here are some things you can do:

- If your rent is based on your income, the change in TAFDC benefits may make you eligible for a lower rent. When you receive the notice in late December or early January with your new TAFDC benefit amount, contact the housing worker who re-certifies your rent.
- If you do not get help with paying your rent, please refer to the housing resources on the enclosed list of where to get help.
- The enclosed list of where to get help includes several agencies that may be able to help you with other services. Call these places to see if you qualify.
- If you do not understand this notice, or you have questions about this change, call 1-888-483-0255.

{BEACON USER STREET_ADDRESS}
{BEACON USER CITY, STATE, ZIP}

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
Change to Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) Counting SSI Notice C

{CLIENT NAME}
{CLIENT ADDRESS}
{CLIENT CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP}

{CLIENT SSN}
{BEACON USER OFFICE NAME}

November 2009

Important Notice Regarding Your Benefits Please Read

Dear {Client}:

Our records show that you or another adult in your household is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Based on the information we have about your case, your TAFDC benefits are likely to stop in January 2010. This is happening because, due to a budget reduction, the Department is changing the way SSI is counted toward your TAFDC grant. You did not do anything to cause this change.

We currently do not count any of the SSI income received by you or other people in your household when deciding what your TAFDC grant will be. Beginning January 1, 2010, we are going to count the income of certain adult SSI household members, except for \$100. This means that most of your income will be used to decide your TAFDC benefit amount. We will **not** count any assets of anyone receiving SSI.

You will receive another notice in late December or early January telling you what your new TAFDC benefit amount will be. In most cases, your SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) benefits will increase. You do not have to do anything to update your SNAP benefits. Your new monthly SNAP amount will be included with your TAFDC notice.

We know you and your family need to prepare for this loss of income. Here are some things you can do:

- If your rent is based on your income, the change in TAFDC benefits may make you eligible for a lower rent. When you receive the notice in late December or early January with your new TAFDC benefit amount, contact the housing worker who re-certifies your rent.
- If you do not get help with paying your rent, please refer to the housing resources on the enclosed list of where to get help.
- The enclosed list of where to get help includes several agencies that may be able to help you with other services. Call these places to see if you qualify.
- If you do not understand this notice, or you have questions about this change, call 1-888-483-0255.

What is TAFDC?

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) is a state- and federally-funded program which provides cash assistance to families with children and pregnant women in the last 120 days of pregnancy, with little or no assets or income.

What is SSI?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a cash assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration for elders (over age 65) and people with disabilities.

How does the SSI income received by certain adults in my household affect my TAFDC benefits?

Right now, clients who receive SSI are not counted as part of your TAFDC household, and their income is not counted toward your total household income when calculating TAFDC benefits.

Beginning January 1, 2010, we are going to count the income of certain adult SSI household members, except for \$100. This means that most of your income will be used to decide your TAFDC benefit amount. If your total household income is more than the income limits for your household size, *you may no longer be eligible to receive TAFDC*. In some cases, you may still be eligible for TAFDC, but your benefits will be much less.

When will I find out for sure?

You will receive another notice from us in late December or early January that will tell you if your TAFDC benefits are stopping or what your new benefit amount will be. That notice will also tell you about your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) benefits, which will increase in most cases.

Why is this happening?

You did not do anything to cause this change. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in a financial crisis. On October 29, 2009, \$352 million in budget cuts were made across all programs and services. The change to count the income of SSI recipients toward TAFDC eligibility was one of many very hard choices we had to make. Counting SSI income for the adults receiving SSI in your household will start in January and continue every month after that.

Can I appeal this change?

If you think we made a mistake in calculating your benefits, you have the right to request a Fair Hearing. You cannot appeal the change in our decision to count SSI income. In the notice you will receive in late December or early January, we will explain how you can appeal.

Can I get other help to make up for this change?

If your TAFDC benefits stop or your monthly amount is less, you will probably receive more Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) benefits automatically. If you live in public or subsidized housing, you will need to tell your housing authority that your income has changed so they can reduce your rent share. For other resources that can help you, please read the chart titled *Where to Go for Help*, on the other side of this page.

The organizations on the chart below may be able to help you with food, fuel assistance, housing, legal issues, and more.

TYPE OF HELP	ORGANIZATION	WHAT THEY DO	PHONE NUMBER AND WEBSITE
Food, cash, and employment supports	Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)	DTA administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), TAFDC, EAEDC, and the Employment Services Program.	Phone: 1-800-445-6604 (Recipient Services Hotline) www.mass.gov/dta
All health and human services	Mass 2-1-1	Free, confidential information about health and human services. 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	Phone: dial 2-1-1 www.mass211.org
Benefits Planning	Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)	Benefits specialists can help you figure out how employment and other changes will affect your benefits.	Phone: 1-800-245-6543 TTY: 617-204-3868 www.mass.gov/mrc
Food and Nutrition	Project Bread FoodSource Hotline	Information about where to get food in your community. Counselors are available Monday through Friday, 8am – 5pm	Phone: 1-800-645-8333 TTY: 1-800-377-1292 www.projectbread.org
Housing, emergency shelter, and fuel assistance	Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	DHCD now administers emergency shelter through their Division of Housing Stabilization. DHCD also oversees 10 Regional Networks which help connect families to the housing and shelter resources in their community. To find the closest Regional Network, visit DHCD's website and click on "Housing Stabilization."	Division of Housing Stabilization phone: 1-877-418-3308 Fuel Assistance Phone: 1-800-632-8175 www.mass.gov/dhcd
Housing and homelessness prevention	Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs)	HCECs offer answers to a wide range of questions about all types of housing problems and assist individuals with finding and retaining decent affordable housing. Call the 800 number or visit the website to find the HCEC near you.	Phone: 1-800-224-5124 www.masshousinginfo.org
Child Support	Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement	For assistance with child support orders.	Phone: 1-800-332-2733 www.mass.gov/cse
Veterans	Department of Veterans Services	Benefits and resources for veterans and their families. To find the Veterans Service Officer near you, visit the website and click on "Quick Links."	Phone: 1-888-844-2838 www.mass.gov/veterans
Elder Services	Executive Office of Elder Affairs	Senior Centers, home care, nutrition assistance, prescription insurance, and more.	Phone: 1-800-AGE-INFO www.800ageinfo.com www.mass.gov/elders
Legal issues	Legal Advocacy and Resource Center (LARC)	A free legal hotline to help low-income Massachusetts residents with legal problems by providing quality legal information and advice, and by making referrals to legal and social service agencies.	Phone: 1-800-342-5297 www.larcma.org