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*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
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**Field Operations Memo 2008-8**  
**February 8, 2008**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff  
**From:**  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**Re:** TAFDC, EA and Food Stamps- 2008 HHS Poverty Guidelines

**Overview**

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The 2008 Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines were published in the Federal Register on 1/23/2008. The HHS Poverty Guideline is used to calculate the eligibility standards in the following programs:

1. TAFDC: *Income from the Parent(s) of a Teen Parent Under Age 18* (200 percent of poverty guideline);
2. EA: *EA Eligibility Standard* (130 percent of poverty guideline); and
3. Food Stamps: *Gross Monthly Categorical Eligibility Income Standards* (200 percent of poverty guideline).

**E-Mail 2008-1**

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*E-Mail 2008-1, Increased EA Eligibility Standard*, was issued on 1/29/2008 alerting TAO staff to the following:

- an increase to the EA Eligibility Standard;
  - the BEACON EA eligibility table had not been updated with the increased EA Eligibility Standard;
  - the need to manually compare the applicant's income to the increased EA Eligibility Standard to ensure that EA benefits are not denied based upon the old EA Eligibility Standard.
  - how to process EA applications until the EA Eligibility Standard table increase in BEACON; and
  - how to process an EA application dated on or after 1/23/2008 that had been denied based upon excess income.
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**BEACON**

Effective 2/1/2008, BEACON was updated with the increased eligibility standards. These standards are now used in the calculation of income eligibility for TAFDC teen parents, all EA income calculations, and the gross monthly income test for categorically eligible FS households.

For EA, this means that as of 2/1/2008, BEACON uses the increased EA Eligibility Standard in determining an applicant or a recipient's EA eligibility, including eligibility as an EA Six-Months AU. AU Managers or Homeless Coordinators no longer need to perform a manual comparison of the applicant's income to the increased EA Eligibility Standard.

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**EA Six Months Subtype AUs**

The increased EA Eligibility Standard **does not impact** an EA family whose eligibility as an EA Six-Months AU was determined before the HHS poverty guidelines were issued (1/23/2008). The EA family, who was determined eligible as an EA Six-Months AU before 1/23/2008, was correctly converted to an EA Six-Months AU and will remain an EA 6-Months AU. The EA family's escrow amount is based on the EA Eligibility Standard in effect before 1/23/2008.

Example: On 1/16/2008, the total gross income of \$2264 was above the EA Eligibility Standard of \$2238 for a family of 4. The escrow amount is \$26 per month. Although the EA Eligibility Standard has been increased to \$2297, the EA family continues to be an EA Six-Months AU and the escrow amount continues to be based on the pre-1/23/2008 EA Eligibility Standard amount of \$2238.

No recalculation of eligibility or the escrow amount is necessary.

MIS will produce a report of any EA family who was determined eligible as an EA Six-Months AU between 1/23/08 and 2/1/08 and whose income is less than the increased EA Eligibility Standard. This EA family should remain as an EA Regular AU because the increased EA Eligibility Standard should have applied to the eligibility calculation. If MIS identifies an EA family, the particular TAO will be notified via an email from Field Operations with the name of the EA family. The TAO staff must follow the procedures in Field Operations Memo 2004-39A for changing the EA family from an EA Six-Months AU back to an EA Regular AU.

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**Regulations**

The State Letter with the revised TAFDC, Food Stamp and EA regulations will be issued to DTA staff in the near future. The Department is awaiting official approval to proceed with the changes to the regulations.

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**Questions**

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

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