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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2005-13
March 24, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Processing DTA/DMH Food Stamp Applications

Overview

Throughout the past year, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in partnership with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) has tested a simplified application process for DMH clients. Beginning in March 2004, the Fitchburg TAO began receiving and processing FS applications from DMH clients in Western Massachusetts. Given the success of this initiative, DTA is now expanding this streamlined process to FS applications from DMH clients statewide.

This memo details the FS application process for DMH clients and incorporates changes that have been made as a result of the input from both DTA and DMH staff.

Purpose of Memo

This memo provides information about the statewide implementation of the DTA/DMH Food Stamp Program outreach initiative. It will:

- identify the DMH client population;
 - describe the DTA/DMH application package;
 - define DMH staff responsibilities;
 - list DTA AU Manager responsibilities; and
 - explain DTA/DMH verification requirements and process.
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The DMH Client
Population

DMH clients who receive SSI or SSI in combination with RSDI and who are living independently:

- are automatically asset eligible;
- are known to SDX;
- are allowed phone interviews due to a disability hardship;
- do not qualify for expedited FS benefits;
- are exempt from the work requirement due to disability;
- are subject to a special Bay State Access Card process; and
- are allowed up to 24 month certification periods due to disability.

DMH clients who receive RSDI only and who are living independently:

- may be known to BENDEX;
- are allowed phone interviews due to a disability hardship;
- do not qualify for expedited FS benefits;
- are exempt from the work requirements due to disability;
- are subject to a special Bay State Access Card process; and
- are allowed up to 24 month certification periods due to disability.

Note: RSDI-only individuals must verify RSDI amount, assets, and noncitizen status, if questionable, to be eligible for FS benefits. The streamlined verification processes described in this memo should be used for this population.

The following DMH clients will not be covered by the simplified application process.

- Clients who have not yet applied for or are not yet receiving SSI benefits must apply directly at the appropriate TAO for both EAEDC and FS benefits, if they choose to apply for these benefits.
 - Clients who reside in group homes for the blind/disabled may not qualify for FS benefits unless eligible as one-person AUs. (See Field Operations Memo 2004-41 for instructions on handling group home applications.)
 - Clients who wish to receive ***expedited FS benefits*** must apply directly (*in person*) at the appropriate TAO.
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**The DTA/DMH
Application
Package**

The DTA/DMH Application Package includes the following forms:

- the Food Stamp Application Form (FSA-1);
- the Rights and Responsibilities/Penalty Warning Form (RR-FSP-1B);
- the Request for Authorized Representative (Image 10); and
- the Agency Certification of Shelter/Utility Expenses Form (FS-ACSE).

The Application Package will also include the following brochures:

- *Your Right to Know*;
- *Food Stamp Program*;
- *Electronic Benefit Transfer*;
- *What Noncitizens Need to Know*; and
- *Noncitizen Resource Brochure*.

**DMH Staff
Responsibilities**

The DMH worker (case manager or vendor staff) will be responsible for providing the FS Outreach activities described below.

Food Stamp Benefits Information Session:

- The DMH worker will tell the client about the Food Stamp Program. During this information session, the DMH worker will give the client the FSP informational brochures and discuss what FS benefits can be used for and how to access benefits through EBT.
- The DMH worker will review the informational brochures with the client and answer any questions.
- The DMH worker will have a copy of the CD-ROM *Using Your EBT Card for Food Stamp Benefits* to review with the client, if necessary.

Food Stamp Application Assistance:

- The DMH worker will help the client fill out the FS application. The DMH worker will be trained how to answer the FS application questions.
 - The DMH worker must:
 - identify **DMH** as the source agency on page 1 of the FS Application;
 - have the client sign the FS Application;
 - enter his/her name in the *Assisting with the FS Application* section; and
 - have the client sign a Release Form or Image 10, as needed.
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**DMH Staff
Responsibilities
(continued)**

Food Stamp Verification Assistance:

The DMH worker will, if requested by the client, help the client gather required verifications. See the **Streamlined Verification Process** section of this memo for more information.

Act as Authorized Representative:

The DMH worker will, if requested by the client, assist the client in completing the Authorized Representative form (Image 10) for purposes of helping the DMH client apply and recertify for food stamp benefits.

Forward Completed Applications:

The DMH worker will forward completed forms and verifications to the TAO daily.

Problem Resolution:

Contact the appropriate AU Manager if there are issues with a particular DMH client. If the issues cannot be resolved, the DMH worker must collaborate with the appropriate DMH designated DTA liaison.

**AU Manager
Responsibilities**

The AU Manager responsibilities for processing FS applications from DMH clients are as follows:

- Review the DMH application package for completeness and required signatures;
- Enter the FS application onto BEACON and for tracking purposes record **DMH** as the source agency on BEACON;
- Process DMH client information in accordance with the **Streamlined Verification Process** section of this memo;
- Speak with the DMH worker to resolve concerns for a particular DMH client or to schedule a phone interview if the DMH client has not responded;
- Conduct the application interview with the DMH client only or the DMH client with the DMH authorized representative;

Note: Be sure to enter in the BEACON Narratives Tab that the client is eligible for a waiver of the face-to-face interview due to disability.

**AU Manager
Responsibilities
(continued)**

- Certify the DMH client for 24 months; and
Exception: The DMH client has earnings or other circumstances that make the AU unstable.
- Contact the appropriate DMH worker if there are issues with a particular DMH client. If the issues cannot be resolved, the AU Manager must collaborate with the appropriate DTA designated DMH liaison.

The instructions contained in the Standardized Food Stamp Application Processing Memo (2004-12) will not apply to the DTA/DMH FS Outreach Initiative. Applications received from DMH must be processed in accordance with this memo and are subject to the normal 30-day processing timeframe.

**Streamlined
Verification
Process**

Many of the DMH FS AUs are very simple. Necessary verifications will include: identity; unearned income; earnings; shelter expenses; and utility costs.

Identity: If the DMH client provides a social security number, once validated, the SSN may serve to verify identity.

The DMH client may choose to provide a driver's license, voter registration card, birth certificate or other proof of identity.

Earned Income: Pay stubs or a written letter from the employer showing gross income received in the past four weeks.

Unearned Income: SSI and RSDI income amounts entered on the application will be verified by the DTA AU Manager through SDX/BENDEX.

- The DMH worker will enter the most recent SSI and RSDI amounts known to DMH, if any. (DMH does not have access to SDX/BENDEX, so the income amounts may not be current.)
- Once the FS AU is pending, the AU Manager must:
 - Access the BA option on the mainframe; and
 - Go to the SDX *E Screen* to verify the current SSI and RSDI, income amount, if any.

Note: If the income on file is not current, the AU Manager must initiate an overnight SVES inquiry.

**Streamlined
Verification
Process
(continued)**

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- If the DMH client receives RSDI only, and it cannot be verified on BENDEX, the AU Manager must request a verification of the current RSDI amount, including the most recent copy of a Social Security check, direct deposit slip, or award letter.

Noncitizen Status:

- For all non-U.S. citizens receiving SSI and RSDI, the DMH client's noncitizen status can be verified through SDX.
- If the DMH client receives RSDI only, the AU Manager must request verification of noncitizen status such as alien registration card or other immigration document.

Assets: If the DMH client receives RSDI only, the AU Manager must request verification of assets, including checking account statement, savings passbook, and evidence of any other assets.

Shelter Expenses:

- Shelter expense information entered on the application for DMH staffed housing will be verified by the FS-ACSE form.
- Shelter expenses entered on the application for non-DMH staffed housing will be verified by the current rent receipt or lease, deed, mortgage or form prescribed by DTA.

Utility Costs:

- Utility cost information entered on the application for DMH staffed housing will be verified by the FS-ACSE form.
- Utility cost information entered on the application for non-DMH staffed housing will be verified current utility bills, lease, mortgage or form prescribed by DTA.

**Role of DMH
and DTA
Designated
Liaisons**

The attachment identifies the DMH and DTA staff designated as liaisons for the application process for DMH clients. DMH workers and AU Managers must work together with the appropriate liaison for resolution of particular client or application process issues. If necessary, the liaison will forward issues to Central Office staff.

Questions

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

Department of Transitional Assistance		DMH/DMR Liaisons		
TAO	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Boston Family Housing	Phillip Arula	phillip_arula@state.ma.us	617-989-6174	617-989-6005
Brockton	Ema Nunes	ema_nunes@state.ma.us	508-895-7033	617-727-3569
Centralized TAFDC	Kathy Shahvari	kathleen_shahvari@state.ma.us	508-646-6312	508-646-6305
Davis Square	John O'Neil	john_o'neil@state.ma.us	617-629-1472	617-727-7697
Dorchester	Ken Collins	kenneth_collins@state.ma.us	617-989-6029	617-727-4722
Fall River	Alan Perkins	alan_perkins@state.ma.us	508-646-6272	508-675-3441
Falmouth	Patricia Mosca	patricia_mosca@state.ma.us	508-862-6617	508-790-4685
Fitchburg	Barbara Solomito	barbara_solomito@state.ma.us	978-665-8779	978-345-0935
Framingham	Gale Scott	gale_scott@state.ma.us	508-661-6659	617-727-4718
Greenfield	Marvin Davenport	marvin_davenport@state.ma.us	413-772-3419	413-774-5266
Holyoke	Betty Kelley	elizabeth_kelley@state.ma.us	413-552-5448	413-784-1050
Hyannis	Patricia Mosca	patricia_mosca@state.ma.us	508-862-6617	508-790-4685
Lawrence	Frank O'Connor	frank_o'connor@state.ma.us	978-725-7164	978-681-6216
Lowell	Marge Cusack	marge_cusack@state.ma.us	978-446-2435	978-458-7563
Malden	Anne Louise Glynn	anne_louise_glynn@state.ma.us	781-388-7305	617-727-7493
Milford	Drina Filor	drina_filor@state.ma.us	508-634-7116	508-792-7267
New Bedford	Rose Tomczewski	rose_tomczewski@state.ma.us	508-961-2096	508-961-2100
Newmarket Square	Mary Flanigan	mary_flanigan@state.ma.us	617-989-2331	617-472-7507
North Adams	Margaret Brown	margaret_brown@state.ma.us	413-663-1107	413-448-2466
North Shore	Brian Mulholland	brian_mulholland@state.ma.us	978-825-7467	978-741-4869
Pittsfield	Pat Wojcik	patricia_wojcik@state.ma.us	413-236-2044	413-664-9274
Plymouth	Jim Tubia	james_trubia@state.ma.us	508-732-3144	508-830-9433
Revere	Elizabeth Bouras	elizabeth_bouras@state.ma.us	781-286-7807	617-727-4567
Southbridge	John Wrona	john_wrona@state.ma.us	617-765-2449	617-765-0740
Springfield Liberty	Pat Boyd	patricia_boyd@state.ma.us	413-858-1175	413-784-1044
Springfield State	Alvina Brevard	alvina_brevard@state.ma.us	413-858-1382	413-784-1049
Taunton	Edward Burns	edward_burns@state.ma.us	508-884-5373	508-884-5301
Worcester	John Brown	john_brown@state.ma.us	508-767-3122	508-792-7259
Centralized Eligibility	Vasco Cunha	vasco.cunha@state.ma.us	617-348-5708	617-348-5479

Department of Mental Health			DTA Liaisons	
Central Region				
Office	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Fitchburg	Brian Minchoff	brian.minchoff@state.ma.us	978-353-4455	978-348-1275
Worcester	Gerald Kokernak	gerald.kokernak@state.ma.us	508-363-2121	508-363-1521
Grafton	Pamela Druzbecki	pamela.druzbecki@state.ma.us	508-887-1100	508-887-8604
Metro Boston Region				
Office	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Mass Mental Health Center Family Housing	Brook Doyle	brook.doyle@state.ma.us	617-626-9527	617-626-9531
Eric Lindemann Mental Health Center	Dianne Kenney	dianne.kenney@state.ma.us	617-626-8573	617-626-8515
Cambridge/Somerville	Trish Cahill	patricia.cahill@state.ma.us	617-626-4814	617-497-6128
Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center	Lois Cazeau	lois.cazeau@state.ma.us	617-626-8730	617-626-8929
Bay Covechester	Stephen Sylvia	stephen.sylvia@state.ma.us	617-305-9911	617-305-9912
Mass Mental Health Center Family Housing	Brook Doyle	brook.doyle@state.ma.us	617-626-9527	617-626-9531
Metro Suburban Region				
Office	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Arlington	Allen Bachrach	allen.bachrach@state.ma.us	781-641-8116	781-641-8106
Westborough	Barry Siciliano	barry.siciliano@state.ma.us	508-616-2814	508-616-2864
Quincy	Sharon Cole	sharon.cole@state.ma.us	617-626-9023	617-626-9150
Canton	Peter Angelos	peter.angelos@state.ma.us	781-401-9702	781-401-9721

Northeast Region

Office	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Beverly	Louise Baribeau	louise.baribeau@state.ma.us	978-232-7302	978-927-4469
Haverhill	Deidre Brothers	deidre.brothers@state.ma.us	978-556-2010	978-556-2090
Lowell	Eva Toscano	eva.toscano@state.ma.us	978-322-5059	978-322-5077
Lynn	Ted Jones	ted.jones@state.ma.us	781-477-8214-	781-593-7326
Wakefield	Helene Sylvetsky	helene.sylvetsky@state.ma.us	781-224-7926	781-224-7937

Southeastern Region

Office	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Brockton	Michael Harrington	michael.harrington@state.ma.us	508-586-8274	508-583-2013
Cape	Bob Lambroschino	robert.lambroschino@state.ma.us	508-957-0931	508-790-1024
Fall River	Greg Cowan	greg.cowan@state.ma.us	508-235-7250	508-235-7345
New Bedford	Bruce Frazer	bruce.frazer@state.ma.us	508-996-7925	508-999-1331
Plymouth	Loretta Lyonais	loretta.lyonnais@state.ma.us	508-732-3014	508-746-3224
Taunton/Attleboro	Dana Holmberg	dana.holmberg@state.ma.us	508-977-3295	508-9773752

Western Region

Office	Liaison	Email	Phone Number	Fax Number
Greenfield	Tom Moriarty	thomas.moriarty@state.ma.us	413-772-5621	413-772-5638
Holyoke	Rose Chagnon	rose.chagnon@state.ma.us	413-493-8010	413-493-8003
Northampton	Mark Liebowitz	mark.leibowitz@state.ma.us	413-587-5305	413-587-5333
Pittsfield	Nancy Brenner	nancy.brenner@state.ma.us	413-395-2014	413-395-2018
Springfield	Monique Loizzo	monique.loizzo@state.ma.us	413-452-2320	413-452-2306
Westfield	Mark Goodwin	mark.goodwin@state.ma.us	413-564-2202	413-568-8003