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Field Operations Memo 2007-27A
June 8, 2007

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: EA – S2H Toolbox Relocation Initiative Clarification

Purpose of Memo

In an effort to encourage families to participate in the *S2H (Shelter to Housing) Toolbox Relocation Initiative* without fear of jeopardizing the family's eligibility for future emergency shelter benefits or other housing subsidies through Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), certain statements contained in Field Operations Memo 2007-27 are being clarified.

1. Housing obtained through the *S2H Toolbox Relocation Initiative* is transitional housing in that it is an intermediary step that may lead to permanent housing at the end of the 12-month period. Acceptance of housing through the *S2H Toolbox Relocation Initiative* should have no impact on the family's priority status on waiting lists for subsidized housing as the family is in a transitional year.
2. To be accepted into the *S2H Toolbox Relocation Initiative* program, the family must:
 - volunteer for the program; and
 - be determined to be prepared for maintaining the housing.

During the 12-month period, if the family is unable to maintain the S2H housing or loses the housing through circumstances beyond their control and is unable to resolve the situation, the family may still be eligible for EA shelter benefits since the 12-month rule would not apply.

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The family is, however, responsible for maintaining its income after placement in the apartment. If they are having financial difficulties the family must notify the HAP provider, scattered site provider or transitional housing provider who is providing stabilization services to the family. The provider will work with the family to help restore their financial situation and intervene with the landlord.

The following are examples of circumstances of a family losing housing and the impact on EA eligibility:

- the building is sold and another apartment can not be found. The loss of housing was beyond their control and even with the help of the provider, the family was unable to secure other housing. The 12-month rule would not apply and the family may still be eligible for EA shelter benefits;
- the wage earner becomes terminally ill, can not work anymore and loses housing for nonpayment of rent. The loss of housing was beyond their control and the family was unable to resolve. The 12-month rule would not apply and the family may still be eligible for EA shelter benefits;
- the family just stops working and refuses to find another job or the family allows additional people, not on the lease, to live with them. The loss of housing was not beyond their control since the family was responsible for maintaining the family's income or following the conditions on their lease. This family is not eligible for EA shelter benefits.

If the family is at risk of becoming homeless or is reapplying for EA shelter benefits within 12 months after receiving the *S2H Toolbox Relocation Initiative*, the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator must immediately advise the TAO's HAP Toolbox Liaison of the family's current situation. The TAO's HAP Toolbox Liaison will then email Barbara Duffy (barbara.duffy2@state.ma.us) with information about the family's current situation.

NOTE: The email address for Barbara Duffy has been updated. Note that a number "2" appears after the last name to differentiate between the two Barbara Duffys who work for the state.

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3. The S2H payment made to the family for rent will not affect the family's food stamp benefits. For the Food Stamp Program, any *S2H Toolbox Relocation Initiative* or *Toolbox* payment must be excluded as income. In addition the AU Manager must consider the following when processing the family's shelter expenses:
- if the rent is fully paid, no shelter deduction is allowed for rent.
 - if the rent is partially paid, the shelter deduction must be based on the portion of the rent that the family is responsible to pay. The AU Manager must enter the **family's portion of the rent** in the shelter expenses window.

Questions

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