

## From the Hotline

Below are questions and answers related to the TAFDC work program requirement. TAFDC regulations concerning this topic are found at 106 CMR 203.400. Good cause regulations are located at 106 CMR 701.380.

- Q.** A woman is claiming good cause for not meeting the work program requirement after she received her first community service site referral. She has not yet shown proof of her good cause. Should she be given a “Meets Compliance” on BEACON right away?
- A.** Yes. If the recipient claims good cause or returns the Warning Notice with the good cause reason(s) circled but no verifications are returned, then the AU Manager must perform the following steps in BEACON:
- set the “Meets Compliance” radio button on the TAFDC tab to “Yes,”
  - select the appropriate Compliance Reason (other than “Participation”) from the drop-down box, and
  - enter the expected date the situation will be resolved in the Compliance End Date field.

**AU Managers must make this a priority in their daily workload to prevent an erroneous sanction from occurring.**

The AU Manager must then generate a Verification Checklist (VC-1) and mail or give the form to the recipient allowing her 10 days to provide proof of a good cause reason.

- Q.** A TAFDC father wants to perform community service at a site where a referral was made by an AU Manager during the previous week. At that time, the site had 20 openings. Is a telephone call by the AU Manager to this community service site necessary?
- A.** Yes. Even though the community service site had 20 openings last week, that count could change. Calls to community service sites are **always** required before the AU Manager makes a referral. ESP has updated the listing of community service sites to prevent referrals to unavailable sites. If the site is no longer available, the AU Manager should continue assisting the father

in locating an appropriate and available community service site.

- Q.** A parent in my caseload is homeless and living in a shelter. She is work program required and meeting the requirement by doing housing search. Can she be approved for an extension and if so, what activities must she perform during the extension?
- A.** This parent’s EA Self-Sufficiency Plan should include work-related as well as housing search activities. If the parent is cooperating with these work-related activities, a TAFDC extension is appropriate. **If, for some reason, the plan lacks work-related activities, the parent must show that she is cooperating in work-related activities to get an extension.** (For example, the AU Manager should refer the parent to Structured Job Search (SJS) while the extension is pending and monitor her participation.) Unless good cause exists, the TAFDC Extension Plan should focus on the parent increasing her work-related activities that lead to full-time employment while

continuing to meet EA housing search requirements.

**Q.** When both parents in a two-parent AU are work program required, living in an EA shelter and meeting the Self-Sufficiency Plan (including doing housing search), must both parents also meet the work program requirement?

**A.** Yes. Each parent must sign the one Self-Sufficiency Plan for the AU and agree to meet all activities listed on the Plan. Unless good cause exists, failure by one parent to meet the activities listed in the Self-Sufficiency Plan will result in a finding of EA Noncompliance for the entire AU, even if the other parent is meeting the work program requirement.

*“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

While we’re excited about the gains that will result from Bay State CAP, we also plan to continue gains made by earlier food stamp outreach initiatives. Our collaborations with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) will continue. The DMR group home initiative has been extended to residents of group homes licensed by other agencies in the Commonwealth, and the DMH initiative will be expanded statewide in the coming months. Likewise, given the link between a child’s nutritional demands and educational achievement, the continued need to enroll families in the Food Stamp Program through the Child Nutrition Access Project (CNAP) is clear. In addition, our promotional materials remain available to the Greater Boston Food Bank and other food pantries. Mutual Aid Associations (MAAs) across the state remain committed to the distribution of our outreach materials to eligible noncitizens. Finally, a sustained effort to provide easy access to our food stamp application through the web-based Virtual Gateway will also continue producing participation gains.

The proof of your ongoing commitment is evident in the success of these past outreach efforts. Thank you in advance for your continued support and your efforts to add Bay State CAP to the list of successful food stamp outreach ventures.

On a different note, I’d like to close with a mention of our state’s tsunami relief efforts. Most of what we do each day is designed to help people within our borders. Now more than ever, it is clear that other parts of the world are in need of our assistance. For those of you who have reached out independently or online through COMECC, your contributions are appreciated. If you haven’t had an opportunity, you can still give by accessing COMECC.net or contributing to a charity of your choice. As always, I am proud of the combined power of DTA’s generosity and dedication to those in need.

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner