

From the Hotline

Q. I have a TAFDC AU with a 17-year-old child who has recently graduated from high school. The dependent child will be entering a local community college in September. He intends to work full-time throughout the summer months before attending college in the fall. He is earning almost \$8.00 per hour at a small business in the neighborhood. How do his wages affect the AU's grant amount?

A. Despite the fact that this employment is occurring over the summer break, this 17-year-old is an eligible dependent child and is considered a full-time student. He may have his earnings disregarded for a period not to exceed six months in the calendar year. The six-month period starts with the first month in a calendar year in which the dependent child has earned income. Once this dependent child reaches 18 years of age, he must be closed. Procedures for using the six-month Dependent Earnings Counter in BEACON can be accessed through BEACON Help. Regulations concerning full-time student earnings can be found at 106 CMR 204.260.

Q. How are these earnings treated in the Food Stamp Program?

A. In this situation, the earnings are countable. However, if the earnings were from a 17-year-old student attending secondary (or lower-level) school or a GED program at least half-time, then the income would be excluded. Refer to 106 CMR 363.230 (H) for more details on excluded income.

Q. During a recent recertification interview, a food stamp AU member reported to me that he had recently purchased an air conditioning unit. He was pleased that the landlord did not charge him additional rent for using the unit. He currently incurs only a monthly rent and telephone bill. Is this person entitled to the heating/cooling SUA because he uses an air conditioning unit?

A. No. Since this individual does not incur any extra charge for using the air conditioner, he is not entitled to the heating/cooling SUA. For more information on the SUA, refer to 106 CMR 364.400 (G) (2).

Q. A food stamp recipient lives in a subsidized housing unit. Currently, all of her expenses are included in the rent, and she has not had an SUA

deduction. However, her local housing authority recently began billing her an additional \$17.00 per month for use of the air conditioner. Is she eligible for the heating/cooling SUA during the summer months because she incurs an extra charge for the use of her air conditioner?

A. She is eligible for the heating/cooling SUA *not only* during the summer months, but throughout the year. SUAs are yearly amounts. Although this individual will not be paying cooling costs later in the year, it is appropriate to use the heating/cooling SUA as long as the cooling is a regular, recurring expense.

FYI

Changes to Policy Online

The Westfield TAO has closed. AUs that were serviced by the Westfield TAO have been reassigned to one of the following TAOs: Holyoke, Pittsfield or Springfield Liberty.

The following options listed on the Reference Documentation window have been updated to reflect these changes:

- Region Number/TAO Number/TAO Name Listing,
- Service Area Listing – City/Town, and
- Service Area Listing - TAO.