

## From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the **Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478**.

**Q.** A father applied for TAFDC and SNAP benefits. He told me over the telephone that he has responsibility for the day-to-day care and control of his children because the mother of the children moved out of state. A few days later, he sent me a copy of his divorce papers and court-ordered custody arrangement. I noticed that the court had awarded the mother custody of the children, while the father was only allowed visitation on the weekends. If otherwise eligible, does this father qualify as a TAFDC grantee and a SNAP head of household?

**A.** Yes. If otherwise eligible, this father qualifies for both DTA programs. Remember, however, that when you get contradictory information, you may need to ask more questions or require further verification. The parents in this case may be dealing with pressures resulting from a job loss, special needs schooling demands or health and safety issues. While it may be necessary to review clients' relevant court documents, it is also necessary to pay close attention to their actual, current living arrangement. Remind your client that any change in his living arrangement or other circumstances relating to his eligibility must be reported. Also, parents who are not complying with their court-ordered custody arrangements should have their court order updated.

**Reminder:** When domestic violence is acknowledged or if a case manager feels that the safety of the client and/or child(ren) is in jeopardy, a referral to a DV Specialist should be made. For more information, refer to 106 CMR 203.110.

**Q.** A month later, the same father described in the question above reported that his ex-wife returned to the area and that the two have been sharing custody of their children. If otherwise eligible, can this father continue as the TAFDC grantee?

**A.** Yes, he is eligible as long as he is not the only parent exercising care and control, and the children are living with him as a result of a shared custody arrangement. For more information on shared custody and TAFDC living arrangements, refer to 106 CMR 203.595(A).

**Q.** If two parents with separate addresses are sharing custody of their children and both want to receive the TAFDC and SNAP benefits on behalf of their children, how do I decide which parent should receive the benefits?

**A.** Since these parents cannot both receive benefits on behalf of their children, explain to your clients that they need to select which parent will receive the benefit(s). If this proves to be unsuccessful, ask for more information concerning the time each parent spends with their children and which responsibilities each parent fulfills. If after consideration of this information the decision remains unclear, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

**Reminder:** Across Department Programs, BEACON will only attribute one address to each dependent child.