



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance*

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2019-23
April 4, 2019**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Paul Sutliff, Assistant Commissioner for Programs and Field Operations

Re: Cross Program: New Interim Report and Recertification Paper Forms

Overview

Most SNAP clients with simplified reporting requirements must complete an Interim Report at a check-in point during their certification period. All SNAP clients, regardless of reporting type, must complete the Recertification process at the end of their certification period.

The Department is committed to making the Interim Report and Recertification forms easy and intuitive for clients and staff. After collaboration with field and Central office staff, clients, external stakeholders, and partners in other states, the Department is deploying new Interim Report and Recertification forms. The anticipated start date for these forms is April 16, 2019.

SNAP clients are required to inform the Department and provide verification of certain elements at predetermined timeframes, dependent upon the household's reporting requirements and certification type. Effective with these form updates, clients will only be asked to report and provide verification of changes that are mandated by the United States Department of Agriculture-Food and Nutrition Services (USDA-FNS).

What changed?
General Changes

The following changes reflect the general updates made to the Interim Report and Recertification forms.

- Clients are informed of an additional new method of submission using DTACconnect.com.
- Reading level was reduced.
- Formatting was modified to allow for more white space.
- Signature page was moved to the first page to decrease the number of forms received without a signature.
- Rights and Responsibilities language was expanded and modified for uniform use across all Department forms in the future.
- Language was standardized to ask questions and list verification examples in a similar manner across forms and notices.
- Only the information that is mandated by FNS is asked for. Staff will engage clients during the interview and/or verification process to get updated information about income.
- Pages include footers that advise the client to return or keep for their records, including the Rights and Responsibilities and list of client resources.

Interim Report

Most SNAP clients who are on Simplified Reporting are required to complete an Interim Report at a designated check-in during their certification period. (EDSAP is an exception). During this check-in, only certain elements are required to be updated and verification of updates are only needed for limited circumstances, dependent upon the amount and the type of change.

Changes that must be reported

- Earned income at the household level of more than \$100
 - Unearned income at the household level of more than \$100
 - Household composition
 - Address
 - If the household moved, shelter and utility expenses must be updated. Housing expense changes do not need to be reported if the client did not move.
 - Child support expenses
 - ABAWD participation/exemption reason
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Interim Report
(continued)

Changes that do not need to be reported (optional)

- shelter and utility expense changes (unless the household moved)
 - Dependent care expense changes
 - Medical expense changes
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Recertification

Most eligibility factors must be re-verified at recertification but clients are only asked to write information on the form if that written information is sufficient to verify that element, for example, shelter costs or household composition.

Clients are no longer asked to write in their income situation at recertification and the previous information is no longer prefilled. Those elements must always be verified. This change will prevent unnecessary data entry by clients and staff. A list of common verification elements, including income factors, is included on the form to encourage clients to submit verifications with the form.

All elements in BEACON must be reviewed, regardless of whether the information is captured on Department forms. These elements must be discussed during the interview, if one is required, verified via external databases, or prompt a Verification Checklist.

Who is impacted by these changes?

With the deployment of these updates, there will be one version of the Interim Report form.

Simplified Reporting (all types), Change Reporting, and Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) clients will receive the new Recertification form. Bay State CAP clients will continue to receive the existing Bay State CAP Recertification form.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide transmittal is to advise staff about the scheduled deployment of the new Interim Report and Recertification forms and the changes that were made.

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email the DTA Procedural Issues Mailbox.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
