



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


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-72
October 30, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: SNAP: Extending Certification Periods and Waiving Interim Reports

Overview

Last May, the Department extended certification periods and waived the Interim Report (IR) for SNAP households that had to recertify or complete an IR before July 13, 2020. This measure helped alleviate much of the workload that increased due to COVID-19.

Under the provisions of the Continuing Resolution Bill, the Department is once again extending certification periods and waiving the IR for SNAP.

However, whereas the previous waiver applied to all households with the applicable certification end dates and IR due dates, the Department will only apply parts of this waiver to households that meet additional criteria.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of:

- the extension of certification end dates for certain SNAP households;
 - the waiver of the SNAP IR requirement; and
 - notices to households whose certification periods will be extended or IRs will be waived.
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Extending Certification Periods

Clients who are on *Simplified Reporting – 12 Months* will have their certification periods extended by 6 months if they:

SIMP-12

- are due to recertify for a period beginning November 30, 2020 through January 13, 2021;
- have not already had their certification period extended;
- have no earned or unearned income on record; and
- have no associated cash case (with SNAP grantee as head of cash case).

SIMP-24

Clients who are on *Simplified Reporting – 24 Months* will have their certification end dates extended by 6 months if they:

- are due to recertify for a period beginning November 30 through December 13, 2020;
- have not already had their certification period extended; and
- have no associated cash case (with SNAP grantee as head of cash case).

Batch Extension and Narrative

The certification end dates will be updated automatically by BEACON. Upon completion, BEACON will enter the following batch narrative to confirm the extension:

“COVID-19 FNS Waiver – SNAP certification period extended by 6 months”

Waiving the Interim Report

The Department will waive the IR requirement for SNAP clients if they:

- are due to complete an IR between November 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021; and
- have no associated cash case.

Batch Narrative

For such cases, BEACON will enter the following batch narrative to confirm the waiver:

“COVID-19 FNS Waiver – SNAP IR waived”

Suppressed Recertifications and IRs

To prepare for the changes outlined in this Transmittal, the Department prevented BEACON from generating recertifications and IRs for December. As such, BEACON has not sent any recertifications or IRs since the end of September.

BEACON will resume sending these forms to clients whose certification period will not be extended or whose IR is not waived. Once the form is sent, the client will also be able to complete the form online at DTACconnect.com. The release is planned for the evening of Monday, November 2, 2020.

**Suppressed
Recertifications
and IRs
(continued)**

In some instances, case managers were able to initiate the recertification or IR even though the Department temporarily suspended the mailing of the forms. In these instances, BEACON will not generate the recertification or IR even after the processes resume. BEACON will only resume sending recertifications or IRs to clients whose recertification or IR was not already initiated.

Communication BEACON will automatically mail the applicable clients a notice advising them that the Department extended their certification end dates or waived their IR requirement.

Additionally, the Department will automatically send a text message and/or e-mail notification to active clients with a phone number and/or e-mail address on record whose SNAP certification end date was extended.

Note: The Department will not send any text messages or e-mails to clients with a heightened level of security or blocked online access, or whose IR was waived.

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 them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

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