



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

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2021-87
November 10, 2021**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: TAFDC: Good Cause from Cooperation with Child Support for Relative Caregivers

Overview

Children under the care of a relative that is not their natural or adoptive parent are eligible for TAFDC benefits. The caregivers of these children may choose to apply for TAFDC for both themselves and the child, or for just the child. These cases may be referred to in a variety of ways, such as relative caregiver grants or child-only grants.

Effective November 12, 2021, the definition of good cause for pursuing child support has been expanded for relative caregivers only. Relative caregivers may claim good cause when it is not in the best interest of the child to pursue child support.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff that the definition of good cause for pursuing child support has been expanded for relative caregivers. To support this policy change updates have been made to BEACON, the T-A34/36 form, now known as the Assignment of Support Rights, Cooperation with Child Support and Good Cause Claim form, and to corresponding Online guide pages

BEACON Changes

The following changes have been made to BEACON:

- the Absent Parent Affidavit checkbox on the Absence page in has been renamed Assignment/Cooperation/Good Cause; and
 - an additional notice titled Information about Support Assignment, Cooperation and Good Cause will be generated with all T-A34/36 forms.
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Revised Form

The Assignment of Support Rights, Cooperation with Child Support and Good Cause Claim (T-A34/36) form has been updated to simplify language and add the new good cause reason. (Please see Attachment A).

New Online Guide Page

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Page: Relative Caregivers

Updated Online Guide Pages

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Absent Parent Information at Application
Page: Completing the Assignment of Support Rights, Cooperation with Child Support, or Good Cause Claim Form

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Child Support Good Cause
Page: Introduction to Child Support Good Cause

**Updated Online
Guide Pages
(Continued)**

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Child Support Good Cause
Page: Child Support Good Cause Claimed

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Child Support Good Cause
Page: Child Support Good Cause Verification

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Child Support Good Cause
Page: Final Determination of Good Cause Claim

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Child Support Good Cause
Page: Child Support Good Cause Found

Topic: TAFDC
Book: Program Nonfinancial Requirements
Chapter: Child Support
SubChapter: Child Support Good Cause
Page: Child Support Good Cause Found but DOR--etc.

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.

Assignment of Support Rights, Cooperation with Child Support, or Good Cause Claim

Assignment of Support Rights for TAFDC and MassHealth

By signing below, I am assigning (giving) the rights to support for myself and my dependents getting TAFDC to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This means the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) will send any support payments that DOR collects to the Commonwealth.

Signature of Custodial Parent

Date

Cooperation with Child Support

ALERT: DV History

Unless DTA approves my good cause claim below, I understand that I must cooperate with efforts to get child support and medical support, including establishing paternity if necessary.

Signature of Custodial Parent

Date

Noncustodial Parent

Good Cause Claim

I believe I have good reasons for not cooperating with efforts to get child support and medical support. I am claiming Good Cause for not cooperating because:

- Cooperating would place me or my child at risk of physical or emotional harm (including domestic violence).
- My child was conceived as a result of having sex against my will.
- There is an adoption proceeding for my child pending in court.
- I am working with a public or licensed private social agency to decide the issue of adoption.
- I am a caregiver for a child who is not my biological or adopted child and cooperating is not in the best interest of this child.
- I need help in getting the required proof of my claim.

Name of Child(ren)

Name of Noncustodial Parent

Signature of Custodial Parent

Authorized Signature

Date

Printed Date:

Agency ID:

Information about Support Assignment, Cooperation and Good Cause

To get Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits and MassHealth, you must:

1. **Assign** (give) your right to financial and medical insurance support for you or your children to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. **Cooperate** with the Child Support Enforcement Division of the Department of Revenue (DOR) to help them get any support owed for you or your children. However, you do not have to cooperate if DTA approves your **good cause** claim.

What does it mean to assign support rights?

- Assigning financial support rights means you give Massachusetts the right to:
 - (a) get and keep support money paid for you or your children while you get TAFDC, and
 - (b) get and keep any support debts (arrears) that build up while you get TAFDC.

If Massachusetts gets support money, you will get the first \$50 each month. DTA will keep the rest, up to the amount you get in cash benefits. If Massachusetts gets more support than you get in cash benefits, DTA will close your TAFDC case, and the support will go directly to you.

- Assigning medical support means you give Massachusetts the right to:
 - (a) get the insurance company of a person who must provide medical support to cover you or your children and
 - (b) collect any money that another person or organization should have paid for your family's medical care while you were on MassHealth.

What does it mean to cooperate with DTA and DOR?

- Cooperating means helping DOR get support that is owed. DOR may ask you to:
 - give information about the noncustodial parent(s)
 - establish paternity through DNA testing
 - be a witness at court hearings

How do I claim good cause for not cooperating?

- You may have good cause if cooperating would be against your or your child's best interests. The specific reasons are listed in the "Good Cause Claim" section.
- Tell DTA if you have good cause. If DTA approves your good cause claim, you will not have to cooperate with efforts to get support and DOR will not pursue support.
- To prove good cause, you can use court documents, police records, medical records, documents from a social services agency, or a sworn statement from you and another person who knows the situation. Tell DTA if you need help to get proof of your good cause claim.
- For caregivers receiving TAFDC for a child who is not their biological or adopted child, proof of good cause is not required.
- If DTA makes a decision about good cause that you disagree with, you can appeal.