



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor


TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Secretary

JULIA E. KEHOE
Commissioner

Operations Memo 2011-51
October 24, 2011

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: SNAP-Virtual Gateway Minimal Data Applications

Overview

In December 2010 the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) informed the Department that its Virtual Gateway (VG) SNAP applications were not in compliance with federal regulations due to the following:

- the inability of the client to bypass the VG screening tool and go directly to the application;
- the exclusion of SNAP expedited issuance questions;
- the exclusion of language regarding SSN privacy text that informs noncitizen applicants about the option of not being included in the household; and
- the inability to accept an SNAP application with the minimal application data of name, address and signature.

In May 2011 three of the four issues were addressed and the VG application was modified to allow applicants to bypass the screening tool and go directly to the application, request expedited issuance, and inform applicants about Social Security numbers and the ability for noncitizens to opt out of the assistance unit has been added.

The final item, the ability of the VG to accept a SNAP minimal application data, will be programmed into the VG application during the weekend of October 22, 2011.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to advise Department staff about the VG Minimal Data application process.

Minimal Data Application Process

Currently a SNAP minimal data application cannot be accepted into BEACON because the Name Clearance page requires the applicant's date of birth and gender to complete a Request for Assistance (RFA). Effective October 24, 2011, if a SNAP VG application has only minimal data (name, address and signature) it will be assigned to the Centralized Web Eligibility Unit (CWEU), located at Central Office, 600 Washington St Boston.

Case managers from the CWEU will be responsible for processing all SNAP minimal data applications that come via the VG. They will send an appointment letter to the applicant to obtain the missing information and complete the web application following established procedures which includes issuing a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI), if necessary. Once the application has been approved it will be transferred to the appropriate TAO based on the applicant's zip code.

Accessing the Web Applications - Minimal Data View in BEACON

To track these applications a new view, the Web Applications-Minimal Data view has been added to the Daily Priority Actions list. This view will only be available to liaisons in the CWEU who have a desktop role of AU Mass Assignment.

TAO staff can access this view, to respond to client inquiries by phone or in person, and/or resolve issues regarding these applications, by refreshing as another user and selecting the name of one of the CWEU liaisons.

Important: Before accessing the Web Application-Minimal Data view case managers should first perform a client search in BEACON to determine if there is a pending web application on file with the CWEU.

The list of current CWEU liaisons can be found on the [DTA.Online](#) Intranet site by:

- selecting the field operations listing at the top of the page; and
- selecting Minimal Data SNAP Application Liaisons under the heading Field Operations Organizational Chart/Phone Numbers and Faxes and noting a liaisons name (each liaisons Web Application-Minimal Data view will have a complete list of all minimal data applications received by the CWEU).

Once a liaison's name has been noted, users can enter BEACON and

- select View Tools under the heading My Office;
 - select Refresh as Another User;
 - click the Search pop-up radio button next to the Worker Last Name field;
 - enter the noted liaison's last name in the Last field of the search window and click go;
 - select the appropriate name from the drop down list and the user will be sent to the User Alert List for that liaison;
-

**Minimal Data
Application
Process
(continued)**

- click on the Daily Priority Actions radio button; and
- Select Web Application-Minimal Data from the drop down list.

If the client is still listed on this view and the case manager is contacted by the applicant the case manager should request the missing data (date of birth and gender of applicant) from the client, contact the CWEU web liaison to relay the missing information.

Important: If a duplicate application is taken in error it is important that, if approved, the client receive benefits retroactive to the earliest application (filing) date.

If an application remains on the Web Applications –Minimal Data view 30 days after the application date (the filing date), a batch job will automatically send a denial notice for failure to complete the SNAP application process. Once this occurs, the application will no longer appear on the Web Application–Minimal Data view. An Actuate report entitled Web Applications –Minimal Data Denials has been created to track all minimal data applications that have been denied for failure to complete the SNAP application process. Applicants denied for this reason must file a new application.

Clients appearing in a local TAO with a letter for a web application denied by the CWEU for failure to provide verification(s) are to be referred back to the CWEU for processing.

Note: New language has also been added to the VG homeless question which informs homeless applicants that it is essential to provide an address or P.O. box where they may be contacted by mail.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.
