



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

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Lieutenant Governor

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Secretary

JULIA E. KEHOE
Commissioner

Operations Memo 2011-54
November 17, 2011

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

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

Re: SNAP – Reinstatement of Benefit Offset for SNAP Overpayments

Overview

Beginning November 21, 2011, the Department is reinstating the benefit offset process for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households that have received an overpayment and have an established overpayment claim. The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise staff about the benefit offset process.

**BEACON
Automation of
Benefit Offset
Process**

A benefit offset is automatically established by BEACON when a SNAP household has:

- received an overpayment; and
- an established overpayment claim.

BEACON automates the calculation and notification process of the benefit offset when a client is owed certain types of SNAP supplemental benefits, and also owes money to the Department as a result of an overpayment. In these situations, BEACON sends a notice to the client saying that the amount owed to the Department will be deducted from the amount of lost benefits owed by the Department.

**BEACON
Automation of
Benefit Offset
Process
(continued)**

If the amount owed to the client is **less** than the amount of the overpayment owed to the Department, BEACON will not issue a SNAP supplemental benefit. If the amount owed to the client is **more** than the amount of the overpayment owed to the Department, BEACON will issue the balance of the SNAP supplemental benefit to the client.

A benefit offset is automatically established by BEACON whenever a case manager enters any of the following types of payment for lost benefits on the Related Benefits page for a SNAP household that has an overpayment claim:

- **FSP Retroactive / Next Cycle Benefit;**
- **FSP Supplement / Next Cyclical Benefit;** and
- **FSP Supplementary Benefit.**

Important: A benefit offset must not be made when a SNAP household is certified to receive an initial benefit, even if the initial benefit is issued retroactively. (See 106 CMR 366.550.) To issue lost benefits when reopening a SNAP case, the case manager must enter the lost benefit payment by selecting: **FSP Supplement / Immediate Issuance.**

BEACON Notice

BEACON will automatically send the client the appropriate version of the Offset of Lost Benefits notice (Attachment A) to explain the payment. BEACON will also automatically suppress the generic notice for Related Benefits when the client is sent an Offset of Lost Benefits notice.

If the client has a question, the notice includes a telephone number for the client to call to speak with a Recoveries Specialist.

Questions

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

Attachment A

Recoveries Unit 600 Washington St
Boston, MA 02111

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente
Offset Lost Benefit Notice

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Mary Jones
101 Main Street
Somerville, Ma 02148

Agency ID: 999999

11/21/2011

Dear Mary Jones:

The Department determined you were underpaid \$80.00 in SNAP benefits. However, you currently owe the Department \$100.00 because of an overpayment about which you were previously notified, but you have not paid. Because of this, you now owe the Department \$20.00.

If any benefits are owed to you and you disagree with the amount, you have the right to an appeal. The other side of this notice contains important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the other side of this notice.

If you have any questions about this notice, please call 1-800-462-2607 to speak to a Recoveries Specialist.

If you have trouble reading or understanding this notice, call Recipient Services at 1-800-445-6604. We can help explain it to you.

You may ask for help from your local legal services office by calling: Greater Boston Legal Services at 617-371-1234 or 800-323-3205.

The regulations used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 367.490, 367.510.