



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

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

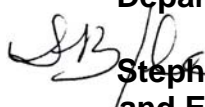
JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Secretary

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor

DANIEL J. CURLEY
Commissioner

Operations Memo 2012-50
October 16, 2012

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

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

Re: TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: Multiple Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Replacement Notice

Overview

In October, the Department will send notices to any cash and/or SNAP household who has requested more than four replacement EBT cards within the past year.

The notice will inform clients that DTA records show they have received more than four replacement cards within the past year and explains that EBT cards can be used continuously. The notice advises the client to call their case manager if they feel a reasonable accommodation is needed, if they feel the card is being used inappropriately, or to request guidance in the use of EBT cards.

The notice also explains that if the client continues to request an excessive number of replacement cards their case will be referred for investigation. It also informs clients that the Department will investigate and refer for possible prosecution all claims of fraudulent or prohibited use of EBT cards

Purpose of Memo

This memo serves to introduce TAO staff to :

- the new notice; and
 - the process that must be followed when a client makes contact with the Department about receiving one or both notices.
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New Notice Process

Beginning the weekend of October 13th, a notice (Attachment A) will be sent to cash-only households, and a notice (Attachment B) to SNAP/cash and SNAP-only households that have received four or more replacement EBT cards within the last 12 months. The notice will inform grantees that the household has received an excessive number of EBT cards and that continued questionable requests may result in an investigation.

The notice also informs the client how to report suspected fraud and advises of the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations.

For households receiving SNAP, the notice reminds them that the trading or selling of SNAP benefits can result in program disqualification.

If a client who received the Multiple EBT card notice contacts or calls asking about the notice, the case manager or other interviewer should ask the client to provide an explanation for the replacement and a narrative entry made in BEACON.

The case manager or other interviewer must:

- explain the EBT card process and that the card can be used multiple times without needing replacement;
- determine if the reason behind the replacement is due to domestic violence, age and/or disability or if a special accommodation is needed such as appointing an authorized representative;
- ask and note where the card was last used;
- remind the client that benefits are to be used only for the purchase of particular items; and
- explain the penalties associated with improper use of the EBT card and that the continued request for replacement cards will expose the client to a fraud investigation.

Important: No request for a replacement card can be denied even if the explanation is unsatisfactory or indicates that fraud has taken place.

Questions

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

2201 Washington Street CAN 710
Roxbury, MA 02119

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante – Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Mary Jones
101 Main Street
Roxbury, MA 02119

Agency ID: 9999999
Dudley Square TAO - DTA

10/19/2012

Dear Mary Jones,

Our records show that you have requested and received a high number of replacement EBT cards. Specifically, you have requested and received a total of **4** cards in the past twelve months. Please be aware that your EBT card will last for years. You can use the same EBT card every month, as long as you receive benefits, and you are entitled to receive the full value of the benefits on your card.

If the number of cards you request continues to be questionable, the Department may conduct an investigation to ensure that no fraudulent activities have occurred.

If you need a reasonable accommodation, you should tell your case manager. If you think someone else is using your EBT card illegally, you should call the Fraud Hotline at 1-800-FRAUD-99.

We will investigate and refer for possible prosecution all claims of fraudulent use of EBT benefits and prohibited purchases made with direct cash assistance that we receive.

If you have any questions about this letter, please call your local DTA office or Recipient Services at 1-800-445-6604.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

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Roxbury, MA 02119

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Mary Jones
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If the number of cards you request continues to be questionable, the Department may conduct an investigation to ensure that no fraudulent activities have occurred.

If you need a reasonable accommodation, you should tell your case manager. If you think someone else is using your EBT card illegally, you should call the Fraud Hotline at 1-800-FRAUD-99.

As a reminder, selling or trading your SNAP benefits is an abuse of this program. If we determine that you or any member of your household has traded or sold your SNAP benefits, you will not be allowed to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, either temporarily or permanently. **We will investigate and refer for possible prosecution all claims of SNAP trafficking that we receive.**

If you have any questions about this letter, please call your local DTA office or Recipient Services at 1-800-445-6604.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Your SNAP benefits are intended to help you eat better. They are only to be used for food items. If anyone offers you non-food items in exchange for your SNAP benefits, they are breaking the law. Please call 1-800-FRAUD-99 to report their offer.