

pictures taken, and a press release announcing the award of \$1.1 million to the Massachusetts Food Stamp Program.

A link entitled *2006 Performance Recognition Award Winners* displays the memo from Commissioner Wagner announcing this year's winners of the Commonwealth Citation for Outstanding Performance.

Training - Job Aids

Two links entitled *Welfare Reform II* and *Welfare Reform Student Handout* have been added to the list of available options.

Welfare Reform Q/A's

The list of options includes a new option entitled *Welfare Reform Q/A's*. When selected, a list of Welfare Reform questions and finalized answers, sorted by topic, will be displayed. These questions include those called in to the Policy Hotline and those received at the training sessions.

FYI

Changes to the EOHHS mass.gov DTA Homepage

This month you will see the following changes to the EOHHS mass.gov DTA Homepage:

Programs and Services - Employment Services Program (ESP)

Descriptions of the various components of the ESP Program have been updated to reflect Welfare Reform.

News and Updates

The list of options includes a link to the press release entitled *USDA Awards \$1.1 Million to Massachusetts Food Stamp Program*.

When selected, the press release and pictures taken at the presentation of the award to Commissioner Wagner will be displayed.

Research and Statistics

The TAFDC, EAEDC, SSI and Homeless Individual and Family caseload reports have been updated with FY07 information.

FYI

Changes to Policy Online

This month you will see the following changes to Policy Online:

Policy Online Main Menu

The Policy Online Main Menu includes a new option entitled *BEACON Online Help Updates*. When selected, the list displays the updates to BEACON online help.

Online Guides

The list of online guides includes a new online guide entitled *Work Program Sanction Process Deskguide*.

FYI

Expiring IPV Disqualifications

Individuals nearing the end of an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) disqualification period are listed in the BEACON view "Assessed Person Potential Changes" under the dropdown menu heading "Clients in Active AUs with Expiring IPV End Dates." Households containing disqualified individuals receive a notice before the disqualification period ends telling them to contact their worker to schedule an appointment for a reevaluation of benefits. However, AU Managers must follow up on the view to determine if reinstatement is appropriate or if any changes occurred during the disqualification period that may affect continued eligibility.

AU Managers must conduct a reevaluation for TAFDC or EAEDC AUs with an expiring disqualification period, so that TAFDC or EAEDC and PA food stamp benefits for disqualified individuals may be reinstated, if appropriate. NPA food stamp AUs must be reviewed before reinstatement. If appropriate, conduct a reevaluation and recertify the NPA food stamp AU.

FYI

Fuel Assistance 2006

The fuel assistance mailing took place in September. TAFDC, EAEDC and FS recipients received a brochure about the Fuel Assistance Program. This brochure includes an overview of the program and explains how to apply for fuel assistance. It also includes a list of agencies statewide where applications can be filed. The Fuel Assistance brochure tells food stamp benefit recipients that if: 1) they receive food stamps and 2) they receive fuel assistance and 3) their heat is included in their rent, they may be entitled to more food stamp benefits.

TAFDC and EAEDC recipients also received a system-generated notice with verification of their grant amount. Food stamp benefit recipients will receive a system-generated notice confirming the food stamp benefits AU size.

During fuel assistance season (November through April), AU Managers are reminded to ask recipients at every contact, if they receive fuel assistance.

If they receive fuel assistance and food stamp benefits, make sure they are given the heating Standard Utility Allowance, *even if they are not paying heat separately from their rent.*

FYI

New "Benefit Type" for Certain AUs and Display of ESP and Employment Participation Hours Clarification

Two FYIs in September's *Transitions* are being clarified:

New "Benefit Type" for Certain AUs:

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.20, for former State Food Stamp benefits and the Solely State Funded benefits from April through September 2006, the type will be "State Only."

As of October 1, 2006, the solely state benefits will be displayed as "Solely State" not "State Only" as mentioned in the September FYI.

No AU Manager action is needed.

Display of ESP and Employment Participation Hours:

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.20, an Hours field has been added to the Work Requirements window. The FYI in September's *Transitions* stated that the Hours field would appear on the Monitor Participation window. Please see "What's New in BEACON 2.1.20" for the new functionality description.

We apologize for any confusion this inaccurate information may have caused.

FYI

Update to the DTA EOHHS Homepage - ESP Component/Activity Descriptions

The DTA Website describing ESP components/activities has been updated to reflect current services offered to applicants and recipients. Also, the activities of "Basic Job Search" and "Structured Job Search" have been replaced with the activity of "Job Search/Job Readiness."