



# Transitions

April 2018

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## Quality Corner for SNAP

This month we will review a negative error that occurred in a Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP case.

### **Inaccurate Notice of Denial**

On September 11, 2017, a household of two submitted an online SNAP Application. An interview was conducted on September 20, 2017. A verification checklist (VC-1) was sent to the household requesting verification of grantee's earned income, job termination, spouse's Workers Compensation and physical or mental incapacity. On September 29, 2017 the household submitted the grantee's paystubs and inadequate self-declarations for the grantee's verification of job termination and spouse's Workers Compensation income. The household was denied on October 11, 2017 for Fail to Submit the Required Verifications.

During the October 2017 Quality Control (QC) review, it was determined that the household was sent an inaccurate Notice of Denial. The case manager failed to mark the paystubs as verified when they were received, resulting in that verification item being listed on the notice of denial inappropriately.

### **What's a Case Manager to do?**

The case manager must carefully review submitted documents for adequacy and update the case record accordingly. This includes marking items that have been verified to prevent an inaccurate notice from being sent to the client.



## Online Guide Transmittals

### **Cross Programs: Review of the Waiver of Recertification Interviews for Elderly and/or Disabled Households and Updates to Certification Chapters**

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-20

The SNAP interview requirement at recertification may be waived for households where all adult members are elderly and/or federally certified as disabled with no earned income. This may be applied to households with minor children as long as the previous condition is met. The waiver of the recertification interview is not exclusively reserved for cases of a particular certification type or timeframe and may be applied broadly.

Additionally, interviews are not allowed at Interim Report and must not be scheduled or held. Additional updates to the certification chapters were made to bring the department into compliance with regulatory changes via the finalized rules of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.

### **Cross Programs: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)**

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-21

This Online Guide Transmittal advised staff that clients may use SNAP benefits at CSA programs through 2020. Additionally, the CSA pages were updated to reflect the appropriate points of contact for questions related to CSA programs.

Staff must continue to remind clients of voluntary participation in the CSA Program. This program is separate from the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), which was suspended on April 15, 2018.

### **Cross Programs: Suspension of the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)**

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-22

This Online Guide Transmittal advised staff that due to its overwhelming success and associated, unanticipated funding demands, HIP was suspended in April 2018 until further notice.



## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs: DTA Connect Expansion

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-24

DTA Connect was expanded to make content accessible via a new website at: [www.DTAConnect.com](http://www.DTAConnect.com).

The first phase of the web-based DTA Connect platform includes:

- a simplified SNAP eligibility screener tool;
- an interactive online SNAP application;
- a client portal to access case information; and
- a provider portal for contracted SNAP providers.

These services were previously available on the Virtual Gateway and My Account Page platforms. Clients who have used these platforms were notified of the transition to DTA Connect via email. Services offered on those platforms by other agencies are not impacted.

### TAFDC and EAEDC: In-Kind Income

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-26

In-kind income is a benefit received in any form other than money for a specific expense such as free rent, free utilities, clothing or food, but is not necessarily limited to those. For TAFDC and EAEDC grant calculations, shelter and food shall be deducted as income in-kind based on pre-determined standard values (see 106 CMR 704.510).

In-kind income must not be presumed solely based on non-payment of shelter expenses. Any obligation, incurred obligation or partial payment towards an allocated shelter expense must be considered when making a determination.

### Cross Programs: MBTA Youth Pass Program and Flyer

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-27

The MBTA Youth Pass Program provides affordable access to public transportation for low-income youth and young adults. The youth/young adult must live in a participating city/town. Periodically, additional cities/towns enroll as city partners of the Youth Pass program.

Most recently, the cities/towns added as partners include: Cambridge, North Shore (19 cities/towns) and Revere.

An updated flyer was developed and a future mailing will occur to certain SNAP and cash households residing in the newly added cities/towns to advise them of this benefit.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### TAFDC: Employment Services Practice Models

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-28

The Department continually explores research-informed approaches to engage clients in opportunities for meaningful employment-related activities. To that end, beginning April 2 and lasting for one year, the Department will test multiple employment services practice models for TAFDC staff in the New Bedford, Lowell, Worcester and Springfield TAOs.

### Cross Program: TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP Certification Alignment

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-29

Due to conflicting TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP reevaluation criteria, benefit reevaluation/recertification end dates can often become misaligned. These misalignments result in combo cases being reevaluated separately, which ultimately creates an increased workload for both the Department and the client. Scheduled for production in May, 2018, several BEACON modifications will be made to reduce these misalignments.

### SNAP: ABAWD Work Program Updates

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-30

The purpose of this Transmittal is to advise staff of:

- updated Online Guide content related to screening for out of state ABAWD Work Program noncompliance; and
- the creation of the ABAWD Q & A Online Guide page.

### Cross Programs: SAVE Procedural Clarifications

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-31

Effective May 1, 2018 the SAVE system will no longer process mailed submissions of Form G-845 requesting third level verification of a noncitizen's immigration status. All third level verification requests must be made electronically through SAVE's Verification Information System (VIS). The SAVE pages in the SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC books will be obsoleted. Updated guidance will be issued through a new SAVE page to be located under the Cross Program section of the Online Guide.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### **TAFDC: DTA/MRC Interagency Initiative (Phase One)**

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-32

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) have formed a collaboration to assist TAFDC clients with disabilities in obtaining necessary support services that will lead to sustainable employment. The goal of this collaboration is to help clients develop and enhance skills so they can compete in the employment market and attain economic stability.

This initiative will be implemented in the Brockton, Lawrence and Quincy TAOs. Planning and training began in April 2018. Full implementation will occur July 1, 2108.

### **Cross Program: Central Case Management Office**

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-33

DTA is committed to ensuring program integrity and access to benefits for all eligible Commonwealth residents. At times there may be new or current employees of the Department who are eligible, or designated as a payee, for DTA benefits. In an added effort to provide employees with increased confidentiality, ensure no perceived conflict of interest, and promote the public's trust, such cases will be managed centrally.

This Online Guide Transmittal serves to advise staff of a dedicated Central Case Management Office scheduled to begin May 7, 2018.

## From the Forms File

### New Form

02-071-0318-05(S)

VW-1(S) (3/2018)

*Request to Stop Benefits or Withdraw Application*

The Spanish version of the *Request to Stop Benefits or Withdraw Application* (VW-1) is now available in Spanish. Document Production will send out an initial shipment of this form to the TAOs.

### New Poster

02-674-0418-05 (Arabic)

02-675-0418-05 (Haitian Creole)

02-676-0418-05 (Khmer)

02-677-0418-05 (Portuguese)

02-678-0418-05 (Vietnamese)

DV-Poster (4/2018)

*You Deserve to be Safe*

The *You Deserve to be Safe* Domestic Violence Poster is now available in 5 additional languages.

## TAO Meeting Notes