



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Quality Corner	2
Voter Pre-Registration and Other Revisions to Voter Registration Pages	4
The 2017 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Child Care Assistance Mailing	4
Cross Programs: Change to Massachusetts Minimum Wage	5
TAFDC: Domestic Violence (DV) Specialist Recommendations Forms; and BEACON Narratives Involving DV Issues	5
Cross Programs: Online Guide Book for Hearings	6
Cross Programs: DTA Connect Phase 2	6
Cross Programs: EBT Card Replacement Pilot	7
SNAP: Transitional Support Services Stipend not Countable in SNAP	8
Cross Program: Fair Hearings Regulations	8
From the Forms File	9
Diversity Quote	9

## Quality Corner

This month we will review an active error and negative error that occurred in Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP cases due to inadequate reviews of information in BEACON.

### **Inadequate review of the Reevaluation workflow**

A SNAP Interim Report (IR) was submitted to the Document Processing Center (DPC) on March 3, 2016. The only change reported on the IR was a decrease in earned income. The household marked No Changes for the Shelter Expenses section of the IR as they were still paying \$135 weekly in rent. The case manager that processed the IR on March 14, 2016 initiated the reevaluation and processed the case authorizing a SNAP benefit amount of \$342.

During the July 2016 Quality Control (QC) review, it was determined that the shelter expense deduction was not included in the benefit calculation. While the correct rent amount was reflected in the Shelter Expenses page of BEACON, No was marked for Allowable FS which resulted in the household receiving no credit for their rent amount. Reviewing the history for the Shelter Expenses page in BEACON revealed that the radio button was adjusted from Yes to No on April 4, 2014 and was not corrected prior to the QC review. This error resulted in an underissuance of \$89.

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

When processing any type of reevaluation, case managers must thoroughly review both the documentation itself AND the corresponding pages in BEACON. While the household reported no changes to their rent amount, the case manager should have reviewed the Shelter Expenses page to ensure the information was correctly inputted. Upon authorization of the reevaluation, case managers are also encouraged to review the Financial tab in the Interview Wrap-up EBC Results page to confirm that all income and deductions are included in the benefit calculation prior to authorization. Had these reviews been done, the household would have received the correct shelter expense deduction and the active error would have been prevented.

*(Continued on Page 3)*



## Quality Corner *(Continued from Page 2)*

### **Inadequate review of Scanned Document History**

A SNAP Interim Report was dropped-off at a local TAO on June 28, 2016. On the reevaluation documentation, the client reported that her 18 year old daughter was no longer working for McDonald's. The case manager processing the IR on June 30, 2016 issued a VC-I requesting verification of termination of employment. The case automatically closed for *Failure to complete Interim Report process*.

During the July 2016 QC review, it was determined that verification of the termination of employment was submitted to DPC on January 22, 2016. The case manager that initially processed this scanned document on January 22, 2016 dispositioned it as Entered but failed to update this information in BEACON by removing the employer from the Earned Income page. Additionally, the case manager that processed the IR on June 30, 2016 failed to adequately review the Scanned Document History prior to issuing the VC-I which resulted in the invalid denial.

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

When a client provides documentation, the information must be correctly entered in BEACON. Had the case manager correctly updated the information in BEACON when the verification of termination of employment was initially provided to DTA, the invalid denial would have been prevented. However, the case manager that processed the IR on June 30, 2016 should have also correctly reviewed the Scanned Document History prior to issuing the VC-I.

**Important:** Case managers must also check the Scanned Document History for each household member as documentation may be indexed under someone other than the Grantee. In this case, the verification was indexed under the Grantee's daughter, which may have contributed to why this information was overlooked.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### **Voter Pre-Registration and Other Revisions to Voter Registration Pages**

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-60

Cross Programs

Due to a recent change in state law, Massachusetts citizens who are between the ages of 16 and 18 may pre-register to vote. When these citizens pre-register, their voter registration will be held by their municipality until the individual turns 18. At that point, s/he will be automatically registered to vote.

This transmittal advises staff of the new pre-registration option and informs staff about updates to the text in the BEACON Voter Registration pages.

### **The 2017 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Child Care Assistance Mailing**

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-61

TAFDC and SNAP

In January 2017, the Department will issue the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Massachusetts Earned Income Credit (EIC), and child care assistance informational mailing.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises DTA staff about:

- the scheduled EITC/CTC/EIC and child care assistance mailing;
- the Massachusetts percentage of the federal EITC increase from 15% to 23% for the 2017 tax filing season (2016 Tax Year); and
- an update to the Online Guide.

For complete information about this annual mailing, see the Online Guide:

Topic: Scheduled Mailings/Projects

Book: EITC/CTC/EIC & Child Care Mailing

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs: Change to Massachusetts Minimum Wage

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-62

Cross Programs

Effective January 1, 2017, the Massachusetts minimum wage will increase from \$10.00 an hour to \$11.00 an hour.

This change impacts all wage information and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) calculation for TAFDC or SNAP clients participating in a community service activity.

As a result of this increase in the minimum wage, TAFDC clients who are working will not be able to use as many community service hours to meet their work program requirement. The number of hours required for the SNAP ABAWD Work Program requirement is also affected.

### TAFDC: Domestic Violence (DV) Specialist Recommendations Forms; and BEACON Narratives Involving DV Issues

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-63

TAFDC

The Domestic Violence (DV) Unit has developed two new forms entitled: *Domestic Violence Good Cause Claim or Child Support Cooperation Domestic Violence Specialist Recommendation* form and the *Domestic Violence Family Cap Exception/Waiver Request Domestic Violence Specialist Recommendation* form. These forms are designed to standardize the way in which DV Specialists will communicate and document certain recommendations involving clients' DV issues.

This Online Guide Transmittal advises DTA staff about:

- two new DV Specialist recommendation forms;
- a new Online Guide page which explains when and how DV Specialists will use the recommendation forms;
- a new Online Guide page with guidelines for DV Specialists and DV Coordinators writing narratives on the Narrative tab in a client's ECF, ensuring clear communication to case managers, supervisors and the TAO DV Liaison; and
- updates to existing Online Guide pages.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs: Online Guide Book for Hearings

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-64  
Cross Programs

This Online Guide Transmittal advises DTA staff of a new Online Guide book and pages associated with the Hearings and Appeal process.

The purpose of the new Online Guide book and Pages is to inform DTA staff about the current policies and procedures associated with the Hearings/Appeals process, as well as existing pages and views in BEACON by which to access and review DOH related materials.

### Cross Programs: DTA Connect Phase 2

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-66  
Cross Programs

Phase 2 of **DTA Connect** is scheduled for implementation December 17, 2016. This phase will provide the following functionalities for clients:

Once implemented, grantees will be able to:

- submit pictures of required documents which will be directly linked to the case record
- request income verification letters
- request to update mailing and/or residential addresses
- update primary phone number
- update primary e-mail address
- opt-in/opt-out of eNotification
- opt-in/opt-out of Voicemail Messaging
- opt-in/opt-out of Text Messaging

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs: EBT Card Replacement Pilot

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-67

Cross Programs

The Department is committed to making sure that clients receive the appropriate supports to access benefits as intended. In an effort to ensure clients are served efficiently and appropriately, the Department will pilot new procedures regarding Replacement EBT Cards.

The goals of the pilot are:

- 1) identifying the reason for high number of replacement EBT cards;
- 2) offering supports to clients in overcoming obstacles to proper EBT Card usage; and
- 3) reducing fraudulent use of EBT Cards.

This Online Guide Transmittal outlines:

- Non-Pilot TAO Staff Responsibilities;
- Clerical Responsibilities for the Pilot;
- Reception Area Coordinator Responsibilities for Pilot;
- Case Manager Responsibilities for the Pilot;
- Client Assistance Coordinator and Domestic Violence Specialist Responsibilities for the Pilot;
- Domestic Violence Liaison Responsibilities for the Pilot;
- Fraud Investigator Responsibilities for the Pilot;
- Supervisor/Designee Responsibilities for the Pilot; and
- New forms for use by offices participating in the Pilot.



## Online Guide Transmittals

### **SNAP: Transitional Support Services Stipend not Countable in SNAP**

Online Guide Transmittal 2016-69  
SNAP

On October 24, 2016, DTA implemented Transitional Support Services stipends. TAFDC grantees whose case closes due to countable earned income in excess of their grant will be able to receive up to 4 months of Transitional Support Services (TSS). Transitional Support Services (TSS) are not TAFDC benefits, but rather stipends provided to assist former TAFDC grantees as they move to employment and economic self-sufficiency. Former grantees are only eligible for TSS stipends if their TAFDC case remains closed. The stipends do not count for SNAP as the household will receive Transitional Benefits Alternative (TBA) SNAP benefits.

Based on the systems design of TBA, currently, only Public Assistance SNAP households can be reclassified as TBA in BEACON. This Online Guide update explains that:

A Non Public Assistance SNAP case with an associated TAFDC case that is eligible to receive a Transitional Support Services stipend (TSS) will be treated as TBA. For TBA purposes, the TSS benefit will not be counted in the SNAP calculation. These NPA households will not be identified on BEACON as TBA and will not receive TBA notices at this time.

Topic: SNAP  
Book: Reporting Requirements/Recertification  
Page: Transitional Benefits Alternative

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## State Letter

### **Cross Program: Fair Hearings Regulations**

State Letter 1373  
TAFDC, EAEDC, SNAP

This State Letter transmits the following changes to the Fair Hearing Rules regulations:

This regulation change involves technical corrections and language simplifications that do not change DTA's current policies or procedures, but will make the regulations easier to read and understand for clients, applicants, and the general public.





## From the Forms File

### Revised Brochures

25-672-1116-05 (Haitian Creole)

25-675-1116-05 (Portuguese)

CI-DTA (Rev. 7/2016)

*How may we help you?*

09-200-1116-05 (Haitian Creole)

09-196-1116-05 (Portuguese)

SNAP-PB-E (Rev. 7/2016)

*The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*

18-127-1116-05 (Haitian Creole)

18-129-1116-05 (Portuguese)

YRTK-E (Rev. 7/2016)

*Your Right to Know*

Some of the other language versions of the above brochures are now available and can be ordered from Document Production. Other language versions will be posted as soon as they become available. Please discard old versions of these brochures and use the revised versions.

### Obsolete Form

18-071-1014-05

18-072-1014-05 (S)

IPV-1 (Rev. 10/2014)

*Intentional Program Violations and Disqualification Penalties*

This form is now obsolete because the language is now included in the Rights and Responsibilities Signature page for cash cases. Please discard this form.

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## Diversity Quote

**We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.**

**Maya Angelou**

## TAO Meeting Notes