



Transitions

June 2012

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Dear Colleagues,

Recently we have been privileged to host members of Congress and Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, for media events at two of our local offices. The purpose of these events was to highlight the importance of our programs to assist clients with moving toward self-sufficiency. By collaborating with our clients, we can assist them to gain new skills to ultimately move their families forward.

On May 23rd, Congressman Jim McGovern and Secretary Bigby joined us at the Worcester TAO to hear the stories of seven current and former participants in Employment Services Programs (ESP) through DTA Works, Workforce Central, and New England Business Associates.

Here is the press release: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/press-releases/eohhs/life-changing-success-stories-from-clients-heard.html>

And here is a wonderful article from the Worcester Telegram & Gazette: <http://www.telegram.com/article/20120525/COLUMN44/105259588>



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Commissioner’s Corner (Continued from page 1)

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On June 12th, we held a similar event in the Lowell TAO featuring Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, Secretary Bigby, and seven current and former ESP participants through DTA Works and the Lowell Career Center.

Here is the press release: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/newsroom/press-releases/eohhs/success-stories-from-transitional-assistance-clients.html>

And here is an Univision story about the event: <http://www.wunitv.com/noticia/2012/06/12/381140-welfare-beneficiarios.html>



I wanted to thank everyone for their work to make these events possible, and to commend our current and former clients for their courage and their remarkable achievements. Stories like theirs can stem the tide of negative media attention regarding fraud and the perceived misuse of our benefits.

We hope to have additional events throughout the summer!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Curley
Daniel J. Curley

Commissioner

Quality Corner

This month we will review an error caused by incorrect shelter expenses.

Shelter Expense

This case was a household of one. The case was certified to receive SNAP benefits of \$200 per month. The client received unearned income of \$1524 per month, had mortgage expenses of \$1840 per month, heating expenses and was eligible for the standard medical deduction. The QC reviewer determined that the mortgage amount had changed because the client had refinanced his mortgage but had not reported the change at that time. The shelter expense change was reported and verified at recertification, 6 months later. The reported change was not acted on and caused an overissuance error of \$113 for the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

The purpose of recertification is to redetermine eligibility for a subsequent certification period. The case manager must appropriately explore situations in which the household appears to be living above its means by having a discussion with the client about how he or she manages to pay for shelter expenses that exceed the total household income. See *From the Hotline in May 2012 Transitions* for more information.

Eligibility factors such as income, expenses, household members, and disability status, must be reviewed and compared to what is currently used to determine eligibility and calculate the client's SNAP benefits. Changes must be made, as necessary, to reflect the current circumstances of the household. Neglecting to process a change will cause either an overissuance or an underissuance error. A referral to recover SNAP benefits for the period of overpayment must be entered on this case.

For more information on Department Responsibility to Take Timely Action, see 106 CMR 366.120.

From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

Q. 1. What questions should I ask before approving a TAFDC client's Employment Development Plan (EDP)?

A. 1. Before approving your client's EDP, ask:

1. Is the EDP consistent with the rules set forth in the Employment Services Program requirements found in 106 CMR 207.000 through 106 CMR 207.180 and Work Program requirements found in and 106 CMR 203.400?
2. Are the specified activities consistent with the client's job goal?
3. Is the EDP consistent with the results of the client's initial assessment or reassessment; and
4. Are there component activities and support services available?

For more information on completing an EDP, see 106 CMR 207.110.

Q. 2. My TAFDC client has an eight-month-old child. She wants to volunteer 20 hours each week at a community service site. Can I approve this client's EDP?

A. 2. It depends. To approve this EDP, the limits of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), along with the more general EDP rules, must be followed. For more information on the FLSA, refer to 106 CMR 207.170. For more information on the EDP rules, see **Q. 1.** and **A. 1.** above.

Note: Since this client's child is not yet of school age, a referral for child care should be completed after her EDP is approved. For more information on child care services, refer to 106 CMR 207.210(A).

Q. 3. If my client had one child who is eight years old and she wanted to participate 20 hours each week at a community service site, could I approve this activity?

A. 3. It depends. Since this client has an eight-year-old child, her work program requirement calls for 30 hours of participation per week. Assuming the community service activity your client selected is consistent with her assessment and job goal, her other EDP activity(ies) would still need to meet additional TAFDC requirements. Since this client has chosen to participate in a community service activity, these other requirements include:

1. compliance with the limits of the FLSA; and
2. an additional activity, such as employment.

The activity in combination with the community service must total 30 hours each week.

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From the Hotline (Continued from page 4)

Q. 4. My client has one child who is eight years old and because of FLSA requirements, she is planning to perform 20 hours of community service and ten hours of ESL classes, each month. Is she eligible for a child care referral now that her EDP has been approved?

A.4 Yes. Since this client has complied with FLSA rules and has an already approved EDP, a child care referral should be completed. Remember that in addition to FLSA restrictions, ESP regulations require community service participation hours to correspond with the client's dependent's school hours. However, this is not always possible and a child care referral should still be made. For more information on child care referrals for community service, see 106 CMR 207.170(A).

Note: If this client wanted to do 30 hours of community service and was unwilling to choose an additional activity to conform with the FLSA requirements, then her EDP would not be approved and the child care referral could not be completed.

Q. 5. When referring a TAFDC client for child care, how many months should the *Child Care Referral Notice* cover?

A. 5. A child care referral for an ESP activity may cover up to six months or continue until the of the activity, whichever is sooner. If the EDP includes employment, the child care referral should be generated for twelve months.

- If the ESP activity continues beyond six months and the client continues to meet the participation requirements for the activity, a new *Child Care Referral Notice* should be given to the client prior to the beginning of the seventh month to avoid any interruption in care and/or activity attendance.
- If the client is participating in overlapping activities, use the activity with the earliest activity end date when completing the *Child Care Referral Notice*. At the end of that activity, revise the *Child Care Referral Notice* for the duration of any remaining activity(ies), or for six months, whichever is sooner.

Diversity Quote

“Ultimately, America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired.”

Robert F. Kennedy



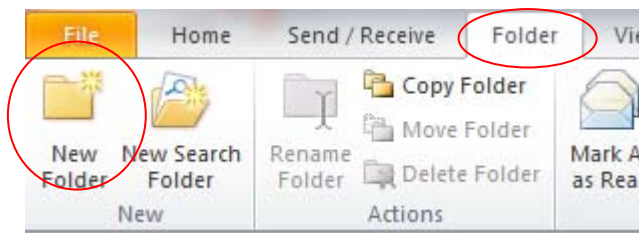
Training Corner

Organizing Your Outlook Folders

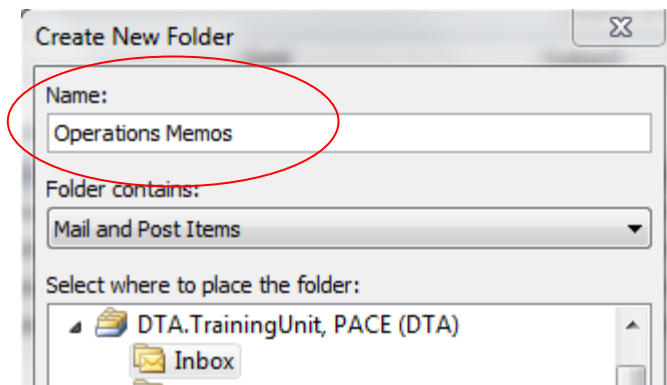
An important part of keeping your Outlook account organized is using Folders to store your emails. There are specific emails you need to keep as outlined in the Administrative memo [Email Retention Policy and Procedures \(6/3/2011\)](#). Much like you use a dresser to keep your clothes organized in different drawers, Outlook email Folders allow you to store your emails by type, topic or subject, so that it is much easier to retrieve them when needed.

Creating a New Folder

1. Click *Folder*
2. Click *New Folder*



3. Name the Folder (Operations Memos, for example)
4. Click OK



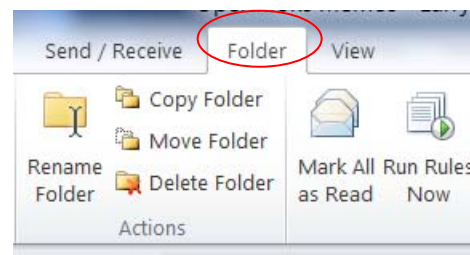
(Tip: You can now drag and drop any email from the Inbox into your new Folder, using your mouse.)

Editing the Folder

If there comes a time that you want to copy, move, rename, or delete a Folder then simply click on the Folder you want to edit and then:

1. Click *Folder*
2. Click on the desired action (keep in mind that if you delete a Folder you will also delete all of the Folder's emails!).

(Note: keep in mind that if you delete a folder you will also delete all of the folder's emails!).



From the Forms File

Revised Forms

The following forms have been revised at the request of UMASS/Disability Evaluation Services (DES). Clients who complete a Disability Supplement and who check the Yes box on the supplement that indicates he or she has applied for Social Security or SSI/SSDI benefits will be asked at the same time to complete and sign an SSA *Consent for Release of Information* form, Form SSA-3288. The SSA-3288 form is now attached to the Disability Supplement.

This revision will help expedite the receipt of information from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) when DES is making a disability determination for DTA clients. TAOs will soon receive a supply of the revised Disability Supplements. Please discard old versions and use the revised versions of these forms. Refer to Operations Memo 2012-24 for more information.

Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Disability Supplement

04-200-0612-05

04-201-0612-05(S)

EAEDC-DS (Rev. 6/2012)

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Disability Supplement

02-710-0612-05

02-711-0612-05(S)

TAFDC-DS (Rev. 6/2012)

Obsolete Forms

The following forms are now obsolete. Refer to Operations Memo 2012-27 for more information and discard all copies of these forms.

Child Care Referral Notice for Homeless Families

13-320-1207-05

EA-CCRN (12/2007)

Child Care Assistance for Families Living in Shelter

EEC_CC Fact Sheet (12/2007)(E & S)



Operations Memos

EAEDC and TAFDC: Enhanced Disability Supplement and Updated DTA/DES Medical Records Release Form

EAEDC and TAFDC

Operations Memo 2012-24

If an EAEDC or TAFDC client indicates on the Disability Supplement that he or she has applied for Social Security or SSI/SSDI benefits, the Disability Evaluation Services (DES) sends a Social Security Administration (SSA) Form SSA-3288 *Consent for Release of Information* to the client for his or her signature. The client must return the form to DES. Form SSA-3288 *Consent for Release of Information* allows DES to obtain from SSA and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) any medical reports provided to those agencies for the client's Social Security or SSI/SSDI applications.

In an effort to expedite the DTA disability determination process, DTA has attached Form SSA-3288 *Consent for Release of Information* to the Disability Supplement for clients to sign as part of the Disability Supplement, when appropriate. This Operations Memo:

- advises staff about the Form SSA-3288 *Consent for Release of Information* attached to the Disability Supplement;
- provides guidance for helping clients complete Form SSA-3288 *Consent for Release of Information*; and
- advises staff about an update made to the Disability Supplement DTA/DES Medical Records Release Form.

EAEDC – Extension and Redesignation of Somalia for Temporary Protected Status

EAEDC

Operations Memo 2012-25

The country of Somalia was originally designated for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on September 16, 1991 due to ongoing armed conflict. Since that date, DHS has both extended and redesignated Somalia for TPS several times.

On May 1, 2012, DHS extended and redesignated TPS for Somalia for an additional 18 months, beginning September 18, 2012 through March 17, 2014 because of worsening armed conflict and severe drought, famine and seasonal flooding that have disrupted living conditions. This Operations Memo:

- explains EAEDC eligibility for foreign nationals who are approved for TPS;
- advises staff about the extension of TPS for Somalia and how it affects current Somali TPS beneficiaries;
- advises staff about the redesignation of Somalia for TPS and how certain Somali nationals currently without TPS may now apply for TPS;
- provides information on USCIS filing fees and fee waiver requests that will benefit clients when filing USCIS applications; and
- provides instructions for entering information in BEACON for individuals with TPS.



Operations Memos

EOHHS/Department Voice Mail and Auto-Attendant Upgrade

All

Operations Memo 2012-26

This Operations Memo informs Department staff about an upgrade to the Department's voice mail system implemented on June 9, 2012. The upgrade will eliminate problems experienced by Department staff when call volume is high, and provides redundancy that allows the system to remain available during maintenance. The memo also instructs staff to review and disposition any outstanding voicemails currently in the system as these voicemails will not migrate to the new voice mail system.

Note: The change was implemented June 23, 2012, after a delay.

Homeless Child Care Obsolete Field Operations Memos, Other Obsolete Homeless Child Care Documents and Homeless Child Care Services Available through DHCD

All

Operations Memo 2012-27

On July 1, 2009, the Emergency Assistance (EA) Program transitioned from DTA to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). This Operations Memo informs TAO staff of obsolete Field Operations Memos and other obsolete documents related to the homeless child care services that were formerly provided through DTA.

The memo also serves to communicate information about the homeless child care services available to DTA homeless families through DHCD and how families access the services.

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Income Verification for SSI State Supplement Program (SSP)

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2012-28

The current Income Verification notice to a client lists the benefits the client is receiving (TAFDC, EAEDC and/or SNAP as well as Child Support DEFRA payments, if any). Effective April 1, 2012, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), in partnership with University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS), assumed the administration of the state portion of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. Effective with BEACON Build 44.8, these SSI State Supplement Program (SSP) payments are being added to the Income Verification letter. This Operations Memo advises TAO staff about:

- procedures for generating an Income Verification; and
- the changes to the Income Verification notice.

Operations Memos

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Voter Registration BEACON Changes

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2012-29

The National Voter Registration Act requires the Department to provide general voter registration services to all applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as clients). All states must comply with this law. Clients may register either at the TAO or by using a mail-in form.

Effective with BEACON Build 44.8, the Voter Registration question has been eliminated from the Nonfinancial Q & A Navigator. Changes have been made on the Voter Registration page as well as where the Voter Registration page is located in the Case Maintenance workflow. These changes will enhance the Department's efforts to ensure that all clients are given the opportunity to register to vote.

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise TAO staff about the voter registration functionality changes in BEACON.

TAFDC and EAEDC – Fleeing Felon BEACON Changes

TAFDC, EAEDC

Operations Memo 2012-30

A fleeing felon, conviction and probation violation question is being added to BEACON 3. The question will be located in the Nonfinancials Q & A Navigator page. If a client answers Yes to the question, additional pages will open to capture information about the client. Effective with BEACON Build 44.8 for clients age 16 or older, the new felony, convictions and violations questions will be asked.

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise TAO staff about the fleeing felon, conviction and probation functionality changes in BEACON.

School Verification, Certificate of Immunization Status and the SNAP Change Report Forms Generated from BEACON

All

Operations Memo 2012-31

In response to TAO requests for practical system enhancements that will assist case managers to process cases, the following forms will be added to BEACON:

- *SNAP Change Report (SNAP-5)*;
- *School Verification (SV-1)*; and
- *Certification of Immunization Status (TAFDC-2)*.

The new functionality will allow these three forms to be generated from BEACON, printed centrally and mailed from Schraffts or printed locally and given to the client.

FYIs

Case Transfer Functionality Change

Currently when cases are transferred from intake to ongoing, all cases both pending and active within the alphabetical split being transferred are transferred at the same time. This creates additional work for TAO staff who must transfer back any pending cases that were transferred incorrectly. Effective with BEACON build 44.8, TAO staff will be able to transfer only those cases within the alphabetical split they wish to transfer to appropriate staff, leaving pending cases with the appropriate intake case manager.

MBTA Fare Increases

MBTA fares are increasing effective July 1, 2012. The MBTA fare values and passes in BEACON are being adjusted to reflect that change. Some clients may think they will receive an increase in the amount of their transportation payments due to the fare increases. Case managers are reminded that the maximum limit for transportation payments remains \$40 monthly. If contacted by clients regarding the fare increases, case managers should explain that even though the MBTA fares have increased, the ESP transportation benefit has not changed.

Participation and Attendance Form Data Entry Online Guide

Participation and Attendance forms are sent to clients the first business day of the week (Monday unless Monday is a holiday) before the last Saturday of the month. These forms must be returned by the client no later than the 10th of the following month (or the first business day after the 10th of the month if the 10th is a weekend or holiday). Case managers *must* enter the forms on the Monitor Participation page *no later than the 18th of that month* (or the first business day after the 18th of the month if the 18th is a weekend or holiday) to prevent a participation sanction from being created. Case managers may enter the prior participation month's returned *Participation and Attendance* forms up until the Friday before the last Saturday of the current month.

A *Participation and Attendance* Form (listing the last day of the month that *Participation and Attendance* forms may be entered on the Monitor Participation page for the previous month's participation) will be added to Policy Online in the Online Guides option in late June.

TAO Meeting Notes