Transitions

October 2014

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Quality Corner

This month we will review an NPA SNAP error case and an invalid closing or negative error.

Incorrect Shelter Expense Amount

This Public Assistance SNAP household included the client and her two daughters. The client received $751.40 in SSI benefits for herself and $428 in TAFDC benefits for her daughters. At recertification in July 2013, the client reported that her monthly rent was $1040 and she paid for gas heat. The case manager erroneously entered $1240 in shelter expenses. The household was appropriately credited with the heating/cooling Standard Utility Allowance. The SNAP case was recertified from September 8, 2103 through September 7, 2014.

Quality Control (QC) determined that the actual shelter expense at the time of review was incorrect. The client had a Section Eight subsidy and was only responsible to pay a portion of the contract rent. At the time of recertification, she was responsible for $583 per month in rent. At the time of the QC review, she was responsible for $639 per month in rent. The application of the incorrect rental amount caused an overissuance error of $89 for the review month of June 2014.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

It is the client's responsibility to report correct shelter expenses. However, whenever a client reports expenses that exceed income, the case manager must have a discussion with the client about how he or she manages to pay for expenses that exceed the total household income. In this situation, the error could have been avoided.

Case Denied for Verification Available in myWorkspace

On March 28, 2014, a Department of Revenue (DOR) Employment Verification notice requesting proof income was issued. The due date for returning the verification was April 7, 2014. On April 28, 2014, the case was automatically closed through the Batch process for failure to provide verifications. Quality Control (QC) determined that this was an invalid closing because verification of the client's wages was received at Electronic Document Management Center on April 7, 2014.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Business Process redesign has incorporated EDM functionality into BEACON. Newly received documents will create an Action to be processed. This will help to ensure that verifications received timely are processed accordingly. Since the batch job did not close the case until April 28, if the verification had been processed timely, the error would have been avoided. If a client reports that they have submitted verification, but upon review it has not been linked to the ECF, the case manager must search for the document and re-index if appropriate. For additional information regarding the incorporation of EDM into BEACON see Operations Memo 2014-66.

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. I have an EAEDC client who is a noncitizen with Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) status. I understand that generally a LPR has a five-year wait before becoming eligible for SNAP benefits. Which noncitizens with LPR status are not subject to the five-year wait?

A. **1.** LPRs applying for SNAP are not subject to the five-year waiting period if they are/were:

- Disabled, at the federal level (e.g., as determined by the University of Massachusetts Disability Evaluation Services (DES) or by the Social Security Administration). See 106 CMR 361.210 for more info.
- Children under age 18;
- Certain Iraqi and Afghan families with the "Special Immigrant Visa" (SIV) designation;
- Adjusted to LPR status from a certain qualified noncitizen status (e.g., Refugee or Asylee);
- Born on or before 8/22/31 and lawfully resided in the U.S. on 8/22/96;
- Worked a minimum of 40 qualifying quarters or can be credited with a minimum of 40 qualifying quarters;
- Veterans or active duty personnel, as defined in 106 CMR 362.240(F).

Q. 2. I have an elderly EAEDC noncitizen applicant who has been granted Parolee status for longer than one year but has only resided in the U.S. for two years. Is he eligible for SNAP?

A. 2. Possibly. Generally, a noncitizen with Parolee status (paroled for at least one year) must hold a qualified noncitizen status for five years (however, Cuban and Haitian entrants are eligible from the time they arrive in the U.S.). As with LPRs, exceptions apply. See 106 CMR 362.220(B)(9). For example, if the applicant is disabled, he or she may submit a completed SNAP Disability Verification for Elderly Noncitizens form, SNAP-DVEN (6/2008) signed by a licensed medical practitioner and may receive SNAP benefits, if otherwise eligible.

Remember that exceptions to the five-year bar for SNAP may also apply to those noncitizens who meet the battered noncitizen requirements. It is important to explore with all noncitizen clients generally subject to the five-year bar whether an exception applies.

Training Corner

eNotification

Clients can choose to see DTA notices and forms online. It is faster and more efficient than having paper documents sent by mail. It's important to make clients aware that they have the option of eNotification.

To participate in eNotification a client must:
- Be a head of household
- Be registered for MAP (My Account Page)
- Have an active EBT card
- Have a valid email address

How do you enroll clients in eNotification?
- In BEACON, enter the client's email address and check Primary on the Email page.
- Click the Test Undeliverable Status button, to make sure their email address is valid.
- Print the *eNotification Opt-in/Opt-out* form for the client to sign.
- Once the form is signed, select the Opt-in indicator and check the Signed Form Received box.

What stops eNotification enrollment?
- An email alert to the client bounces back as undeliverable; or
- The client submits a signed eNotification Opt-in/Opt-out Voluntary Participation Form indicating he or she no longer wants to participate.

*See **Operations Memo 2014-41** for detailed information on eNotification.

Operations Memos

TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: BEACON Identity Match

All
Operations Memo 2014-11A

This Operations Memo is a reissuance of Operations Memo 2014-11 to promote revised procedures and new BEACON functionality related to the implementation of the Program Integrity (PI) Checklist. It provides common Identity Match examples, includes procedures for accepting or ignoring the Identity Match examples, clarifies that the Identity Match is not limited solely to Photo EBT card issuance, and explains when to make a Referral to the Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) Unit.

Operations Memo 2014-11: *TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: BEACON Identity Match* is now obsolete.

TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: Failure to Verify Social Security Administration (SSA) Data

All
Operations Memo 2014-12A

To comply with program rules, a Social Security Number (SSN) must be provided either orally or in writing for each applicant or client applying for or receiving TAFDC, EAEDC and/or SNAP, unless good cause exists. An overnight batch process using the State Verification Exchange System (SVES) with the Social Security Administration (SSA) is used to validate the SSN.

Operations Memo 2014-12, now obsolete, described procedures and DTA staff responsibility for closing a case when a client fails to provide or verify SSA-matched data. This Operations Memo has been revised and reissued because, as a result of the implementation of the Program Integrity (PI) checklist in Build 46.3, this process has become largely automated.

Operations Memo is 2014-12: *TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: Failure to Verify Social Security Administration (SSA) Data* is now obsolete

TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: New York State Match

All
Operations Memo 2014-21A

This Operations Memo is a reissuance of Operations Memo 2014-21 to advise staff of changes to the NY State Match process as a result of implementation of the PI checklist functionality in BEACON. It describes the New York State Match interface capabilities available to the Department, explains how match data is accessible to Department staff, explains the automated match interfacing process for active cases, and provides instructions for processing the New York State Match for pending cases.

Operations Memo 2014-21: *TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: New York State Match* is now obsolete.

Operations Memos

TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP – DOR Bank Match

All
Operations Memo 2014-57

This Operations Memo has been issued to advise staff of changes to the DOR Bank Match process as a result of implementation of the Program Integrity (PI) checklist functionality in BEACON. It describes the data garnered by the Bank Match, Fraud Investigation Data Match (FIDM) Unit's and caseworker responsibilities processing of these matches.

Operations Memo 2013-31: *TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – DOR Bank Match* is now obsolete.

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Notice Simplification

All
Operations Memo 2014-64

In an effort to improve services through better communication with our clients, the Department has simplified notices. These changes go into effect with BEACON Build 46.5 scheduled for October 27, 2014.

This Operations Memo:
- provides examples of simplified notice language;
- shows the language added to many notices as a result of the Harper settlement; and
- provides changes as a result of Business Process Redesign (BPR).

Operations Memos

TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: Business Process Redesign Overview

All
Operations Memo 2014-66

Taking into account national best practices documented by the USDA, and positive outcomes reported by states that have implemented similar changes, DTA will move from a case ownership model to a First Available Worker (FAW) model for SNAP-only eligibility determination and case maintenance effective 10/27/14. Rather than operating under an individual caseload model, all SNAP-only activities will be distributed on a statewide basis and received by SNAP case managers as specific actions.

While the policies that govern eligibility for the programs administered by DTA have not changed, the adoption of the FAW model for SNAP-only cases, other procedural changes and BEACON enhancements that will be implemented as part of Business Process Redesign are intended to optimize staff time. They will also improve timeliness and accuracy for all DTA programs and enrich both client and case manager experiences.

This Operations Memo introduces DTA's statewide Assistance Line with enhanced Interactive Voice Response capabilities, the First Available Worker Model for SNAP-only cases, and changes to how cash and combination casework is managed. It also describes changes to how in-office business is conducted, the decommissioning of the eLog and myWorkspace systems, and BEACON enhancements and announces the dissolution of the Centralized SNAP/SSI Office.

Diversity Quote

Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

TAO Meeting Notes