



Transitions

September 2018

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Online Guide Transmittals

Cross Programs: Central Re-Print

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-51-A

This Online Guide Transmittal obsoletes Online Guide Transmittal 2018-51.

In an effort to improve efficiency, the Department has added a new enhancement to BEACON which allows staff to request a re-print of any DTA-related notice and form, centrally. This Online Guide Transmittal is being updated with new information on functionality.

This Transmittal informs staff about the:

- new central re-print enhancement;
- addition and location of the Central Re-print button on the Document Preview page in BEACON;
- cancel re-print request button; and
- addition of the hard edit associated with the central re-print requests.

SNAP: Dependent Care Expense Clarifications

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-64

Households that verify these expenses as being necessary to search for, accept or continue employment, comply with a SNAP Employment & Training Program, or attend employment-related training or education can have those expenses included in their benefit calculation.

When a household includes a person who incurs dependent care costs or includes a disabled child or adult that incur costs that qualify under both the Medical Expense Deduction and the Dependent Care Expense Deduction, the cost may be deducted as either expense, but not both. To reinforce these concepts, the Online Guide has been revised and examples have been added to clarify common questions.

SNAP: Expenses and Deductions Procedural Updates

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-65

As part of an ongoing effort to enhance user experience, the Expenses and Deductions procedural Online Guide pages have been reviewed, consolidated, and updated to clarify common procedural questions.

Several OLG pages have been eliminated to consolidate information. Some content has been replaced with procedural screenshots.

Online Guide Transmittals

SNAP: Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) and Standard Utility Allowances Change

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-68

Every year, FNS adjusts maximum SNAP benefits, deductions, and income eligibility standards based on changes in the cost of living. This is known as the “cost of living adjustment,” or “COLA.” To coincide with the COLA, DTA adjusts the standard utility allowances (SUAs). These changes are expected to produce mostly small increases in SNAP benefits.

This year, these adjustments include increases in the gross and net income eligibility standards, maximum shelter deduction, standard deduction, and maximum benefit levels. All other elements remain unchanged. The Online Guide and DTA’s eligibility charts have been revised to include this information, and all affected SNAP households shall receive notification of any changes due to the COLA.

EAEDC and TAFDC: Excluded Income: Annuity payment under the BRAVE Act

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-70

In an effort to assist veterans and their families, an annuity payment paid pursuant to the BRAVE act (An Act Relative to Veterans Benefits, Rights, Appreciation, Validation and Enforcement) will not be countable for Commonwealth public assistance programs, including EAEDC and TAFDC.

SNAP: Housing Authority Medical Expense Verification Clarification

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-71

In response, self-paid Medicare clients who use Housing Authority documentation as verification of medical expenses will no longer have self-paid Medicare premiums subtracted from the total expense claimed in the Housing Authority documentation unless the expense is explicitly itemized. The same procedure applies for private health insurance premiums. Field staff have been instrumental in discussions about medical expenses verified by Housing Authorities.

Cross Programs: Greater Lawrence Disaster Efforts

Online Guide Transmittal 2018-74

On September 13, 2018 a series of gas related explosions and fires made approximately 60 homes unlivable and left 8,700 residents and businesses without heat, hot water, and/or cooking gas in Lawrence, Andover and North Andover. Governor Baker declared a state of emergency and relief efforts for those impacted were immediately underway.

From the Forms File

Revised Forms

09-160-0918-05 (English) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-161-0918-05 (Spanish) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-362-0918-05 (Khmer) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-363-0918-05 (Chinese) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-364-0918-05 (Haitian Creole) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-365-0918-05 (Russian) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-366-0918-05 (Vietnamese) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-367-0918-05 (French) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-368-0918-05 (Korean) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-369-0918-05 (Italian) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-370-0918-05 (Polish) (Rev. 9/2018)
09-371-0918-05 (Arabic) (Rev. 9/2018)

SNAP Application for Seniors

The *SNAP Application for Seniors* is now updated to include the *Holyoke Senior Assistance Office* phone number and is available from Document Production.

Revised Inserts

09-618-1018-05 (Arabic) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-617-1018-05 (Khmer) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-616-1018-05 (Chinese) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-610-1018-05 (English) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-611-1018-05 (Spanish) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-612-1018-05 (Portuguese) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-613-1018-05 (Haitian Creole) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-614-1018-05 (Vietnamese) (Rev. 10/2018)
09-615-1018-05 (Russian) (Rev. 10/2018)

SNAP-BB - SNAP Income Standards Inserts

The *How to Get SNAP Benefits (SNAP-BB) Income Standards Chart(s)* is now updated with the 2018 SNAP Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) income standards. Please discard old versions of these inserts and distribute the revised versions with the *How to Get SNAP Benefits (SNAP-BB)* brochure available from Document Production.

From the Forms File

Revised Inserts (cont.)

09-210-1018-05 (Arabic) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-211-1018-05 (Khmer) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-213-1018-05 (Chinese) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-078-1018-05 (English) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-077-1018-05 (Spanish) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-212-1018-05 (Portuguese) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-214-1018-05 (Haitian Creole) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-216-1018-05 (Vietnamese) (Rev. 10/2018)

09-215-1018-05 (Russian) (Rev. 10/2018)

What is SNAP? SNAP-BB Senior Inserts

The *What is SNAP? SNAP-BB Senior Insert* is now updated with the 2018 SNAP Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) income and asset standards. Please discard old versions of these inserts and distribute the revised versions with the *How to Get SNAP Benefits (SNAP-BB)* brochure available from Document Production.

Revised Flyer

26-430-0918-05

26-431-0918-05 (Spanish)

DTA Works Flyer (Rev. 9/2018)

The *DTA Works Flyer* has been updated. Please discard old versions of this flyer and use the revised version. Document Production will send out an initial shipment of this flyer to the TAOs.

Revised Poster

26-440-0918-05

26-441-0918-05 (Spanish)

DTA Works Poster (Rev. 9/2018)

The *DTA Works Poster* has been updated. Please discard old versions of this poster and display in TAO waiting areas. Document Production will send out an initial shipment of this poster to the TAOs.

FYI

Fuel Assistance 2018-2019

The Fuel Assistance Program begins accepting applications for fuel assistance on November 1, 2018. TAOs will receive a supply of Fuel Assistance brochures in October for clients who are interested in applying for fuel assistance which contains information on how the program works. Additional Fuel Assistance information is also available at www.mass.gov/hed/fuel.

Clients can obtain income verification letters to submit with their Fuel Assistance application in the following ways:

- Accessing the DTA Connect application, available on smartphones and tablets, or
- Accessing case information via The DTA Connect website at www.DTAConnect.com. For more information see the Online Guide:

Topic: DTA Connect

Book: DTA Connect

Accessing the DTA Assistance Line at 1-877-832-2363

Visiting a TAO

Note: The DTA Assistance Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Clients who access the Assistance Line will receive the income verification letter within five days at the mailing address identified in BEACON.

Clients who visit a TAO to request an income verification letter must be given the letter before leaving the TAO. Those who telephone their case manager to request an income verification letter should be directed to use the DTA Assistance Line or to access The DTA Connect website to print out their case information. Each TAO received a poster advertising the availability of income verification letters through the DTA Assistance Line and The DTA Connect website.

TAO Meeting Notes