



William F. Weld
Governor
Argeo Paul Cellucci
Lieutenant Governor

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111

Joseph Gallant
Secretary
Claire McIntire
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 96-43
November 27, 1996

To: Local Office Staff
From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: State Letter 1104 - TAFDC Policy Changes

Background

State Letter 1104, effective December 1, 1996, makes the following changes to TAFDC:

- ◆ benefits will be limited to a maximum of a cumulative 24-months in a continuous 60-month period for a nonexempt grantee, including each grantee in a two-parent family, and all members of his or her assistance unit, unless an exception or waiver is granted;
 - ◆ the elimination of the requirement that a recipient must have received TAFDC in three out of the last six months to be eligible for Transitional Medical Assistance and Transitional Child Care;
 - ◆ a clarification stating that for the child born after the Family Cap date the assignment of rights is only for medical insurance benefits; and
 - ◆ a grantee(s) age 60 or older is exempt from the time-limited benefits and reduced Need and Payment Standards.
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Recipient Mailings

During the week of November 25, 1996 recipients received a specific notice on time-limited benefits. These notices

- ◆ each contained information on time-limited benefits;
- ◆ specified whether the time-limited benefits apply to them at this time; and
- ◆ included a card with the exemption reasons.

See Attachment A for a copy of the notice sent to recipients who are currently **exempt** from the time-limited benefits.

See Attachment B for a copy of the notice sent to recipients who are currently **subject** to the time-limited benefits.

See Attachment C for a copy of the card with the exemption reasons. This card was sent with both notices.

Importance of Codes

The two different notices mentioned above were sent based on the case's Program Code (PACES TD Block 44). **Workers are once again reminded of the importance of the accuracy of Program Codes.** They indicate to the system when to apply the exempt and nonexempt requirements of TAFDC and to generate the correct recipient notices.

Tracking Time-Limited Benefits

Program Codes will be used by PRISM II in the future to calculate and track the nonexempt grantee's cumulative 24-month period. *Local office workers are not required to make any special systems transactions for the tracking of time-limited benefits.*

**Worker
Responsibilities**

Workers must:

- ◆ discuss time-limited benefits with applicants and recipients and the importance of taking steps now to plan for the time when the benefits will end;
 - ◆ offer and encourage referrals to EAS, ESP services and child care;
 - ◆ ensure that recipients know that child care is available for help with training and employment and that transitional child care is available for a year after their benefits stop due to earnings;
 - ◆ record recipient and Department efforts to help the recipient to find employment and/or training by including a summary of the conversations with the recipient in the case record; and
 - ◆ review data on PACES and ESP MIS and correct and update as necessary.
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***TAFDC
Program
Brochure***

The *TAFDC Program Brochure* has been revised to include language about time-limited benefits. Workers must be certain that applicants and recipients receive the revised version dated 12/96.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478.

11/29/96

Name
Address
City, ZIP

The new welfare reform rule limits the number of months that certain adults and their households may receive cash assistance. This new rule says that all adults and members of their TAFDC household are limited to receiving cash assistance for a total of 24 months within a continuous 5-year period (60 months) unless there is an exemption reason.

At this time, the 24-month time limit for receiving cash assistance does not apply to you and the members of your TAFDC household because the Department's records show that you have an exemption reason.

If your circumstances change and you no longer have an exemption reason, then you and members of your TAFDC household will become subject to the 24-month time limit for receiving cash assistance. A separate notice would be sent to you at that time. Look at the enclosed card for a list of the exemption reasons.

Under the 24-month time limit rule, each month that your household receives cash assistance will count towards the 24-month time limit if you do not have an exemption reason. Any month when your cash assistance is provided as vendor payments, or you are in the Full Employment Program (FEP) or in supported work also counts towards the 24-month limit when you do not have an exemption reason. During these 24 months, you will be expected to find a job. The Department can help you find a job, including help with job search, education and training services.

Once cash assistance has been received for 24 months, your cash assistance stops. After your cash assistance is stopped, if one of the exemption reasons describes your circumstances, you may reapply for benefits. Under certain circumstances, the Department can waive the 24-month time limit. This new rule does not apply to certain relatives, such as a grandparent or aunt who receives cash assistance for a child but not for themselves. At the end of the 5-year period (60 months), you may reapply for benefits and the 24-month time limit begins again.

Please call your worker at the phone number listed above if you have any questions about your case. For free legal services, call the Legal Services Office nearest you.

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY

11/29/96

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At this time, the 24-month time limit for receiving cash assistance applies to you and the members of your TAFDC household because the Department's records show that you do not have an exemption reason.

Your 24-month time limit starts December 1996.

Look at the enclosed card for a list of the exemption reasons. If one of the exemption reasons describes your circumstances, you should call your worker right away to set up an appointment for an eligibility review. In a two-parent household, each parent must have a specific exemption reason for the 24-month time limit not to apply to the household.

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EXEMPTION REASONS

1. You are disabled.
2. You must take care of a disabled family member who lives with you. This disabled member could be your child, spouse, parent, grandparent or the parent of the child.
3. You are in your last four months of pregnancy.
4. Your youngest child receiving TAFDC or SSI benefits is under two years of age.
5. Your youngest child not receiving TAFDC benefits is under three months of age.
6. You are a teen parent under 20 years of age and attending school full-time (school may not be beyond high school level); or participating in a full-time GED program and a training program for 20 hours per week; or meeting special rules for teen structured living requirements.
7. You are not included in the TAFDC assistance unit and you do not have a legal obligation to support the child for whom you are receiving benefits or you cannot work because of your alien status.
8. You are 60 years of age or older.

In two-parent households, each parent must have a specific exemption reason.

ER (11/96)