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Governor

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

William D. O'Leary
Secretary

Claire McIntire
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 98-1
January 2, 1998

TO: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
FROM: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
RE: New Hampshire Registry Match

Introduction

The Department has instituted a match of the DTA Recipient Masterfile with the New Hampshire Registry of Motor Vehicles (Department of Safety Information) database. The purpose of this match is to identify active recipients who may have a motor vehicle(s) registered in New Hampshire and are receiving assistance in Massachusetts. This match will be run and distributed quarterly for Transitional Assistance Office review and response. (

This memo:

- describes the match process;
- identifies and explains the fields displayed on the match printout;
- discusses worker action to be taken when a match is received;
- defines current policy with respect to vehicles as assets, joint ownership of assets, inaccessibility of assets and transfer of assets; and
- addresses other eligibility issues which may come into question as a result of this match, i.e., residence, absence as a deprivation factor or employment.

**New Hampshire
Registry Matching
Process**

After the match data have been produced, Centralized Eligibility Operations Unit staff will review the match information to verify if the recipient is still active on PACES. If so, a copy of the computer match printout (Attachment A) with a New Hampshire Registry Match Log (Attachment B) will be sent to the appropriate Transitional Assistance Office. Match printouts are sorted by TAO and CAN and will be run and distributed quarterly for Transitional Assistance Office review and response.

The computer match printout includes the following information:

- an asterisk indicating that information has appeared on a previous New Hampshire Registry match report;
- the category of assistance;
- the case name, SSN and case address;
- the name, dependent number, SSN and date of birth of the matched recipient;
- the matched recipient's PA, FS and MassHealth status, action reasons and dates;
- the name, date of birth, license number, mailing address and legal address of the vehicle's owner(s); and
- a vehicle description, license plate number, model, make and year of the vehicle, and the date of the last update to the New Hampshire registry data.

Match information is current as of the run date of the computer match and reflects the information as of the last update of the New Hampshire Registry.

**Transitional
Assistance Office
Worker
Responsibilities**

Upon receipt of the match information the worker must review the case record and PACES to determine if the matched recipient is still receiving assistance. If so, the New Hampshire Registry Match Appointment Letter (Attachment C) must be sent to the grantee. The New Hampshire Registry Match Appointment Letter informs the grantee that:

- the match information has been received, showing that a household member has a motor vehicle registered in New Hampshire; and
- the grantee is being given an appointment to discuss the match information and review eligibility.

At the scheduled appointment, review the match information with the recipient. Ask questions and request verifications as necessary to determine continued eligibility for benefits. **It is important to remember that a number of eligibility issues may arise as a result of this match.** These issues include, but are not limited to:

- **Vehicles as assets** - If the recipient confirms ownership of the vehicle, determine the countable asset amount. Remember to give the recipient the opportunity to provide a written estimate of the vehicle's fair market value (TAFDC - 204.120(G), EAEDC - 321.120(G), Food Stamps - 363.130(F)).

***Note:** Ownership is verified by the title, purchase agreement, payment book / loan papers, or insurance papers for the vehicle, not by the match alone. Verify ownership of the vehicle before taking any case action.*

- **Joint ownership of a vehicle** - See TAFDC - 204.120, 204.130(B), EAEDC - 321.120(G)(2)(c), 321.130, Food Stamps - 363.120 for rules regarding joint ownership. For cash cases, assets owned jointly are considered to be owned in equal shares unless a different distribution of ownership is verified. Only that portion of the asset owned by the person(s) in the filing unit is countable.

**Transitional
Assistance Office
Worker
Responsibilities
(cont.)**

For food stamp cases, assets owned jointly by separate households shall be considered available in their entirety unless the recipient can demonstrate inaccessibility. Verify ownership by requesting the title, payment book or insurance papers for the vehicle.

- **Inaccessibility of an asset** - If an applicant or recipient demonstrates inaccessibility to an asset then the asset is not considered in the determination of eligibility (TAFDC - 204.125(A), EAEDC - 321.125(B), Food Stamps - 363.140(F)).
Example: A match reveals a vehicle jointly owned by a recipient and her ex-husband. If the recipient verifies the joint ownership and verifies further that the vehicle is in the ex-husband's possession and he refuses to sell the vehicle, the value of that vehicle cannot be counted in determining the recipient's eligibility.
- **Transfer of assets** - See TAFDC - 204.135, EAEDC - 321.135, Food Stamps - 363.150 for rules regarding the transfer of assets.
Example: A recipient acknowledges registration of a vehicle but states the vehicle is owned by a friend for whom he registered the vehicle. The worker must enter the fair market value of the vehicle on the worksheet and complete a BSI referral, if the case is over the asset limit. If the individual subsequently reapplies and provides verification that the vehicle has been "signed over" to the friend, the presumption must be made that the applicant transferred the asset to obtain Transitional Assistance benefits, and, if the presumption is not rebutted, a period of ineligibility must be determined.

Note: TAFDC and EAEDC policy regarding transfer of assets applies to applicants only. Food Stamp policy regarding transfer of assets applies to applicants and recipients at any time during the certification period.

**Transitional
Assistance Office
Worker
Responsibilities
(cont.)**

Other eligibility issues which may arise as a result of this match include:

- **Residence** - When reviewing the match information with the recipient, request verification of residence in accordance with TAFDC - 203.650, EAEDC - 320.530, 321.410, Food Stamps - 361.610(H). Inquire as to why a New Hampshire address appears on the match. Submit a Postal Verification Request (PV-1) for the Massachusetts address, if needed. Ask open-ended questions and follow up on any information which appears inconsistent with previously verified information.
- **Other Income/Assets** - Ownership of a vehicle may indicate that the recipient also has other source(s) of income or other unreported assets, such as bank accounts. Research the case for DOR or DET matches (CIPS) or PRISM II match alerts. Complete and send the Bank Account Verification Request (BANKS) as needed.
- **Absent Parent (TAFDC only)** - Joint ownership with the absent parent may indicate the absent parent is possibly in the home. See 203.520(B)(2) for acceptable verifications of continued absence. Additionally, up-to-date information on the absent parent obtained from the match may be forwarded to the Child Support Enforcement Division, **provided good cause has not been established.**

Reminder: Keep in mind that only *current* eligibility may be reviewed. If, in reviewing current eligibility, possible fraud is discovered resulting in an overpayment, a referral must be made to the Bureau of Special Investigations.

If the grantee fails to keep the scheduled appointment or fails to call to reschedule, close the case with action reason 41 for Categories 2 and 4 defined as: case closed due to failure to keep an eligibility review appointment or to return an eligibility review form: close the case with action reason 41 for Category 9 defined as; case closed due to failure to appear for an appointment to discuss computer match information.

**Transitional
Assistance Office
Management
Responsibilities**

The Transitional Assistance Office management is responsible for:

- distributing the New Hampshire Registry Match reports to each worker;
- ensuring that the worker has taken the appropriate actions; and
- compiling and faxing the annotated New Hampshire Registry Match Logs no later than the end of the month following the month of distribution to:

Susan Mathias
Centralized Eligibility Operations
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
Fax Number: (617) 348-5479

Note: The completed New Hampshire Registry Match Log must be signed by the director/designee prior to being faxed to Centralized Eligibility Operations.

**Future
Enhancements**

In the future, the New Hampshire Registry Match will be added to PRISM II.

Questions

If you have any policy- or procedure-related questions, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems-related questions should be referred to Customer Support Services at (617) 348-5290.

REPORT USER: DTA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE
N.H. DEPT. OF SAFETY MATCH FOR DTA CATEGORIES
SSN AND PERSON NAME MATCHED/OWNER1 OR OWNER2 (A MATCH)
OFFICE CAN

REPORT DATE: 06/25/97
PAGE NUMBER: 26

***** MASSACHUSETTS DTA INFORMATION *****		***** ***** NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY INFORMATION *****		*****	
C CASE NAME	PERSON NAME	PA STAT/AR/DT	OWNER 1 NAME	OWNER 2 NAME	VEH. DESC CD
A CASE SSN	DEP# SSN	FS STAT/AR/DT	OWNER 1 DOB	OWNER 2 DOB	VEH. PLATE NO
T CASE ADDRESS	DATE OF BIRTH	MA STAT/AR/DT	OWNER 1 LICENSE	OWNER 2 LICENSE	VEH. MODEL YR
			OWNER 1 MAIL ADDRESS	OWNER 2 MAIL ADDRESS	VEH. MODEL
			OWNER 1 LEGAL ADDRESS	OWNER 2 LEGAL ADDRESS	VEH. MAKE
					LAST UPDATE
2		2 06 10/16/96			PASSENGER
	00	2 06 11/10/96	05/14/58		1986
	05/14/58	2 06 10/16/96			TEMPO
LEOMINSTER	MA 01453			NH 03458	FORD
				NH 03458	19960412

