



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 99-14
June 1, 1999

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: Elimination of Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff Date

Background

Before Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) issuance, food stamp benefits were issued in the form of a monthly Authorization to Participate (ATP). ATPs expired at the end of the calendar month. ATPs were color coded (red in odd months; green in even months). To allow for the mailing and transaction of ATPs before the end of the calendar month, PACES would not issue an ATP after the Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff Date. The Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff Date also reduced the needless replacement of expired ATPs.

Elimination of Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff Date

Unlike ATPs, EBT food stamp benefits do not expire at the end of each calendar month. As a result, the Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff date is no longer necessary. **The Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff Date will be eliminated effective July 1999.** This means that food stamp benefits will be issued daily like cash benefits and will be available at 6:00 a.m. the morning after data-entry.

Exception: Day 7 expedited food stamp benefits or Day 30 initial food stamp benefits that are data-entered by 5:00 p.m. will be available at 7:00 p.m. the same day.

Workers will no longer need to worry that initial, expedited or supplemental food stamp benefits will be delayed by the system.

The FS Benefit Cutoff Date has been removed from the Case Processing --- Second Quarter: PACES Case Closing and Reduction Schedule. See *Systems User's Guide*, Volume I: PACES, Appendix E, Page 6.

Reminder

During the month of June 1999, be sure to use the correct Action Reason when issuing expedited or initial food stamp benefits after the Food Stamp Benefit Cutoff Date. See *Electronic Benefit Transfer Guide*, Pages VII-2 and VIII-1.

Questions

Policy questions should be referred to the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems questions should be referred to the Customer Service Center at (617) 348-5290.
