



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance**

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2023-82
November 22, 2023**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
KP for SS

**Re: TAFDC – Full Engagement Worker and Self Sufficiency Specialist
Communication and Engagement Strategies**

Overview

Accessibility to local office Full Engagement Workers (FEWs) and Self-Sufficiency Specialists (SSSs) is key in supporting client engagement in TAFDC Pathways to Work employment and training options and increasing opportunities for families.

As the Department continues to refine how we interact with providers and clients, updated guidance is being issued to ensure local office staff are aware of changes in communication and service delivery strategies. These updates are effective for the work week beginning December 4, 2023.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of:

- expectations for FEWs and SSSs using state-issued cell phones to text message hyperlinks and Orientation reminders to active TAFDC clients;
 - activities and best practices for in-person tasks for FEWs and SSSs as part of their hybrid work schedule;
 - co-location expectations for FEWs and SSSs in collaboration with MassHire Career Centers, TAFDC Pathways to Work providers, and other community-based programs.
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Limited Use of Text Messaging

FEWs and SSSs are authorized to use their state-issued work cell phones to send specific types of text messages to TAFDC clients who have opted into text communication.

The use of text messaging from engagement staff is to share specific TAFDC Pathways to Work related information. These text messages include:

- a hyperlink for MassHire JobQuest registration;
- a meeting link for a scheduled Zoom appointment, including virtual TAFDC Orientation or a one-on-one virtual appointment;
- a hyperlink to a TAFDC Pathways to Work program or support service;
- a text reminder to clients who are scheduled for TAFDC Orientation sessions with the following language: *“This is a reminder that you are scheduled to attend a virtual TAFDC Pathways to Work Orientation on MM/DD/YY at HH:MM. Please call me if you have questions.”*

To ensure that personally identifiable information (PII) is not exchanged, engagement staff must not have free-form text conversations with clients.

**In-Person
Scheduling**

The Department continues to work closely with TAFDC Pathways to Work providers and MassHire Career Centers to ensure that in-person meetings benefit both engagement staff and shared clients. In addition to time at program sites, FEW and SSS staff will supplement any additional hours for their in-person day at their local office.

A FEW and SSS are expected to spend time on-site at all funded/contracted programs once a month at a minimum. FEWs and SSSs will continue to collaborate with providers to find a schedule that works to best support co-case management and client access. FEWs and SSSs must communicate with their supervisor and manager regarding this schedule. Multiple factors may be considered such as how each program is delivering services and how many providers the TAO works with.

FEWs and SSSs will split their time between providers, in a way that ensures all programs have monthly time with DTA staff and to provide an in-person option for on-site participants. On-site time does not require all FEWs or SSSs from that local office to be in attendance for every visit, nor is every individual FEW or SSS required to visit each of the providers monthly. Equity of monthly in-person time must be considered when scheduling time at the provider locations. Any relevant information discussed during the in-person time regarding all shared clients should be coordinated between all engagement and provider staff, as appropriate. This time may look different across offices based on the number of providers, program space, and staffing. For example, the FEW/SSS may spend an entire day at one provider, or a morning at one provider, and an afternoon at another. If working from multiple community sites in one workday, reasonable travel time between the community sites is allowed as part of the FEW/SSS work hours. Commute time to and from staff's starting or ending location is not considered part of their work hours. If the time at community sites does not cover a FEW/SSS's scheduled work hours, they will complete the beginning or remainder of their day at their local office.

**Engagement
Staff
Responsibilities**

FEWs and SSSs play the lead role in connecting families to education and career pathways that align with their goals through available programs and employment supports. They are responsible for collaborating with case managers, contract managers, and workforce and education partners to build a local system that supports strong referrals and co-case management. FEWs and SSSs must include the appropriate Central Office contract manager in the Outlook calendar meeting invitation to support the consistency of these regular touchpoints.

FEWs shall coordinate with their managers, supervisors, and the providers in their area including MassHire Career Centers and TAFDC Pathways to Work providers to ensure each site has at least one day of scheduled in-person time each month with a FEW. SSSs are expected to schedule their weekly in-person time with local Young Parent Programs (YPP) and Young Parent Living Programs (YPLP) to ensure each provider has one in-person meeting each month with DTA. They may also meet with other community-based programs that support young parents. Each FEW and SSS must have one in-person day each week, where work can be completed from a provider site or in their local office.

While working in-person, FEWs and SSSs may use their time to:

- complete co-case management and collaboration with providers to support successful program enrollment and continued progress for current participants;
- meet with on-site participants and schedule in-person appointments for goal setting and coaching conversations;
- support benefit processing and case maintenance activities, when needed;
- facilitate group in-person Orientation sessions with interested TAFDC individuals and Pathways to Work providers;
- be a resource around support services available such as childcare, transportation, Learning Disability Assessments, high school equivalency test options, and transitional supports to site staff or clients;
- reconcile referrals, monthly participation, and identify clients who need to be reengaged;
- strategize with program staff and contract managers to complete targeted outreach and increase enrollment.

In addition to the activities above, FEWs and SSSs will complete all other job expectations through their state-issued equipment if remaining at a community site for their scheduled work hours, if program space allows.

**Obsolete Online
Guide
Transmittal**

OLGT 2021-81: Full Engagement Worker and Self Sufficiency Specialist
Return to In-Person Services

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to [DTA.Procedural Issues](#).

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
