



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


DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Secretary

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor

JULIA E. KEHOE
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2009-5
January 28, 2009

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: TAFDC, EA and SNAP- 2009 HHS Poverty Guidelines

Overview

The 2009 Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines were published in the Federal Register on 1/23/2009. The HHS Poverty Guidelines are used to calculate the eligibility standards in the following programs:

1. TAFDC: *Income from the Parent(s) of a Teen Parent Under Age 18* (200 percent of poverty guideline);
2. EA: *EA Eligibility Standard* (130 percent of poverty guideline); and
3. SNAP: *Gross Monthly Categorical Eligibility Income Standards* (200 percent of poverty guideline).

Standards Available on Internet

The updated eligibility charts and tables for TAFDC, EA and SNAP are posted at www.mass.gov/dta. To view the standards, select *Program Eligibility Charts and Tables* link under Key Resources. Click the appropriate program and select the appropriate chart or table.

State Letter 1346 issued the change that moved the income eligibility tables from the regulations onto the DTA website.

BEACON

BEACON will use the increased eligibility standards as of 2/1/2009. These standards are used in the calculation of income eligibility for a TAFDC teen parent under age 18 living with a parent, all EA income calculations, and the gross monthly income test for categorically eligible SNAP households.

E-Mail 2009-1

E-Mail 2009-1, Increased EA Eligibility Standard, was issued on 1/26/2009 alerting TAO staff to the following:

- an increase to the EA Eligibility Standard;
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**E-Mail 2009-1
(continued)**

- the BEACON EA eligibility table had not been updated with the increased EA Eligibility Standard;
- the need to manually compare the applicant's income to the increased EA Eligibility Standard to ensure that EA benefits are not denied based upon the old EA Eligibility Standard.
- how to process EA applications until the EA Eligibility Standard is increased in BEACON; and
- how to process an EA application dated on or after 1/23/2009 that had been denied based upon excess income.

**EA Six Months
Cases**

For EA, this means that as of 2/1/2009, the increased EA Eligibility Standard will be used in determining an applicant or a recipient's EA eligibility, including eligibility as an EA Six-Months case.

The increased EA Eligibility Standard **does not impact** an EA family whose eligibility as an EA Six-Months case was determined before the HHS poverty guidelines were issued on 1/23/2009. The EA family, who was determined eligible as an EA Six-Months case before 1/23/2009, was correctly converted to an EA Six-Months case and will remain an EA 6-Months case. The EA family's escrow amount is based on the EA Eligibility Standard in effect before 1/23/2009. No recalculation of eligibility or the escrow amount is necessary.

Example: On 1/16/2009, the total gross income of \$2317 was above the EA Eligibility Standard of \$2297 for a family of 4. The escrow amount is \$20 per month. Although the EA Eligibility Standard has been increased to \$2389, the EA family continues to be an EA Six-Months case and the escrow amount continues to be based on the pre-1/23/2009 EA Eligibility Standard amount of \$2297.

**Review Certain
EA Six Months
Cases**

Certain EA Six Months cases will require manual review. MIS will produce a report of the EA families who were determined eligible as an EA Six-Months case between 1/23/2009 and 2/1/2009 and whose income is less than the increased EA Eligibility Standard. The EA family should remain as an EA Regular case because the increased EA Eligibility Standard should have applied to the eligibility calculation. If an EA family is identified, the particular TAO will be notified via an email from Field Operations with the name of the EA family. The TAO staff must follow the procedures in Field Operations Memo 2004-39A for changing the EA family from an EA Six-Months case back to an EA Regular case.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.
