



Transitions

May 2010

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Hotline	3
From the Forms File	4
Diversity Quote	4
Cultural Communication	4
Kelley Blue Book and Car Values	5
Spring 2010 SNAP Heat and Eat (H-EAT) Program Update	5
Eligibility for Haitians with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Following the Haiti Earthquake	5
Update on the ARRA \$25 Weekly Unemployment Compensation Benefit	6
FYI: Eligibility for Certain Haitian Orphans Following the Haiti Earthquake	6
FYI: Getting Ready for BEACON 3	7
FYI: CIES Enrollments	7

From the Commissioner

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to announce that we are conducting a four-day Supervisory Skills Training Program for all DTA supervisors in our Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs) and Central Office. This is an opportunity for supervisors at all levels – whether you are new to your role or a seasoned professional – to gather across the Commonwealth to hone existing expertise and develop new skills.

We retained an outside vendor, CRG Associates, to provide the training and our Training Unit will wrap-around additional courses to meet the unique needs of our Department. Topics will include:

- Supervising during challenging times
- Delegating for results
- Personalized time management
- Providing effective feedback
- Managing change confidently
- Performance appraisal process
- Customer service.

This training program is not affiliated with the Supervisor Certificate Program (SCP), although I encourage supervisors to enroll in SCP in the future.

Supervisory Skills Training Program classes are customized especially for our Department and will share best practices and identify concrete ways to bring out the best in all of our staff members. A full day of the program is dedicated to customer service, which will focus on the knowledge, skills, and attitude employees need to work effectively with each other, develop a positive work environment, and deliver top-quality services.

To ensure continued support for our supervisors and consistency across DTA, managers attended a training session about the Supervisory Skills Training Program. Once supervisors begin the program, managers will assist with implementing the resulting ideas and skills in the real-world office environment.

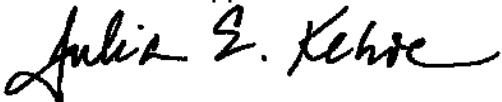
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From the Commissioner (Continued from page 1)

This program is an opportunity for team-building and collaboration across the Department. Sessions begin on Wednesday, May 5th, and will be offered until June 30th. Classes will take place in Boston at Central Office, at the Taunton TAO, at the Worcester TAO, and at the Springfield Liberty TAO. To register or review course descriptions for each session, please visit PACE.

I know that many of you are concerned about taking four full days from your already overwhelming work schedules. We believe these training sessions are well worth it, and the knowledge and skills you obtain will save you time in the long run. I look forward to hearing your feedback about the Supervisory Skills Training Program.

With much appreciation,



Julia E. Kehoe

Commissioner

From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the **Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478**.

- Q.** My TAFDC client reported receiving a lump sum payment. He was in a car accident and his insurance company reimbursed him for his totaled vehicle. Is this reimbursement amount considered lump sum income?
- A.** No. Lump sum amounts that are received as reimbursement for a specified item cannot be included or considered as part of the countable lump sum. Instead, these reimbursements are considered noncountable assets. See 106 CMR 204.240(A) for more information on what is considered lump sum income in the TAFDC Program. Also, see 106 CMR 321.240(A) for more information on what is considered lump sum income in the EAEDC Program.
- Q.** My TAFDC client who recently reported a lump sum payment for his damaged car also received a separate lump sum insurance payment of \$2,100 that is intended to cover expenses incurred while he was absent from work. Since the \$2,100 payment amount is not reimbursement for a specified item and is considered lump sum income, I need to perform a calculation to determine whether or not the client remains eligible for cash assistance. If the client is ineligible, I would need to determine the period of ineligibility. Before I completed the lump sum calculation, my client explained that he used a portion of the \$2,100 to cover his rent arrearage. Is this portion of the payment considered an exclusion?
- A.** No. According to the regulations, rental payments are not considered a day-to-day living expense and therefore do not qualify as an acceptable lump sum exclusion. See 106 CMR 204.240(B) for a complete listing of acceptable lump sum exclusions in the TAFDC Program and 106 CMR 321.240(B) for a complete listing of lump sum exclusions in the EAEDC Program.
- Q.** My EAEDC applicant had been in a car accident. Three months ago, she received an insurance check for almost \$11,000. The payment was intended to cover expenses during the applicant's absence and eventual lay off from work. She explained that during her period of unemployment, she accrued a large amount of debt and that the \$11,000 insurance payment was used to cover a portion of this debt. Can I count this applicant's lump sum income after applying any acceptable exclusions?
- A.** No. While ongoing EAEDC and TAFDC clients who report lump sum income must have a lump sum calculation performed on their payment, lump sum payments are not considered income for applicants in the EAEDC or TAFDC Programs.

(Continued on page 4)

From the Hotline (Continued from page 3)

However, if this client has retained or saved any portion of her lump sum payment, it may be considered a countable asset. For more information, see 106 CMR 204.120 on countable assets in the TAFDC Program and 106 CMR 321.120 on countable assets in the EAEDC Program.

NOTE: In the SNAP Program, nonrecurring lump sum payments are noncountable as income but considered assets in the month received. For categorically eligible households, lump sum payments are disregarded for income and asset purposes due to the asset exclusion that applies to these households. For non-categorically eligible households, when a lump sum payment exceeds the asset limit, the household must be given the opportunity to update its asset statement to determine the most current and accurate asset values. See 106 CMR 363.130(D), and 106 CMR 363.230(I) for more information on nonrecurring lump sum payments in SNAP.

From the Forms File

New Brochure

Community Information - How may we help you?

25-670-0310-05

25-671-0310-05 (S)

CI_DTA (3/2010)

The *Community Information - How may we help you?* brochure provides information about the Department of Transitional Assistance's programs and also list helpful telephone numbers. This brochure is available in English and Spanish and will soon also be available in other languages.

Diversity Quote

**"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stifled.
I want all the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.
But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."**

Mohandas K. Gandhi

Cultural Communication

Each month, the Diversity Council offers tips about communicating with people of different cultures.

This month's tip:

In Portuguese culture, it is considered rude to call someone over with the index finger.

Field Operations Memos

Kelley Blue Book and Car Values

TAFDC and EAEDC

Field Operations Memo 2010-22

Historically, the Department has utilized the Red Book when determining car valuation. However, the cost of purchasing these books has increased since the initial purchase order. To mitigate the continually rising cost of purchasing the Red Book, the Department has explored other more cost-effective means of determining car valuations.

This memo advises TAO staff about:

- accessing the Kelley Blue Book site; and
- determining car values on the Kelley Blue Book site.

Spring 2010 SNAP Heat and Eat (H-EAT) Program Update

SNAP

Field Operations Memo 2010-23

DTA, in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), provides H-EAT benefits to eligible SNAP households each year. Households newly eligible for HEAT benefits will receive a significant increase in SNAP benefit amount based on receipt of the H-EAT Fuel Assistance Program.

This memo reviews H-EAT Fuel Assistance Program criteria, explains the responsibilities of DTA and DHCD, provides instructions for restoring lost SNAP benefits to H-EAT households and describes the DHCD client brochure. There is minimal case manager impact since the H-EAT Fuel Assistance Program enrollment and SNAP recalculation processes are fully automated.

Eligibility for Haitians with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Following the Haiti Earthquake

EAEDC

Field Operations Memo 2010-24

In January 2010, Haiti was designated by the federal government for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), following the January 12, 2010 Haiti earthquake. TPS allows nationals of a designated country to remain in the U.S. and work for a limited time period because conditions in that country are preventing them from returning there. Haitian Nationals who were in the U.S. prior to the earthquake can apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and be granted TPS, if eligible. This Field Operations Memo:

- describes Haitian Nationals eligible for TPS;
- informs TAO staff about EAEDC eligibility for Haitians with TPS; and
- provides instructions for entering information in BEACON for Haitians with TPS.

Field Operations Memos

Update on the ARRA \$25 Weekly Unemployment Compensation Benefit

SNAP

Field Operations Memo 2010-25

In January, Field Operations Memo 2010-02 informed TAOs that the ARRA \$25 weekly unemployment compensation (UC) payment was to be excluded from the calculation of income and resources for SNAP. At that time, the Division of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) indicated that the ARRA \$25 weekly UC payment was scheduled to end on February 21, 2010. The ARRA \$25 weekly UC payment has been extended. This memo:

- informs staff of the restoration of the ARRA \$25 UC payment disregard in the SNAP benefit calculation and issues instructions for entering unemployment income going forward; and
- advises staff about the recalculation of impacted SNAP cases:
 - active cases;
 - categorically eligible cases, formerly active at zero benefits; and
 - closed cases.

FYIs

Eligibility for Certain Haitian Orphans Following the Haiti Earthquake

Following the January 12, 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State (DOS) are allowing a humanitarian parole status for orphaned children from Haiti to enter the U.S. and be united with prospective adoptive parents. The child will have an INS Form I-94 indicating he or she was “paroled” into the U.S. on or after January 12, 2010.

These Haitian orphans meet the definition of a Cuban/Haitian Entrant and may receive SNAP benefits as well as TAFDC, once the adoption is finalized, provided that they meet all other eligibility requirements.

While awaiting adoption, the child may be eligible for EAEDC as part of an EAEDC Caretaker Family, if all other eligibility requirements are met (See 106 CMR 320.400 Caretaker Family).

Some Haitian orphans will receive immigrant visas and will enter as aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence (LPRs). LPR children under 18 years old are eligible for SNAP benefits with no waiting period as well as EAEDC benefits, provided all other eligibility requirements are met.

FYIs

Getting Ready for BEACON 3

Development of BEACON 3.0 is nearing completion. This column may appear in future *Transitions* to keep you informed about project implementation.

BEACON 3.0 is scheduled to be deployed on June 28, 2010. User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is in the final stage and there are only a few open defects remaining. Thank you again to all who are taking part in the UAT process. The UAT process has involved much time and effort on your part and your help is much appreciated.

BEACON 3.0 training has begun and will continue through May 28, 2010. Remember to review the BEACON Flashes prior to attending training and review the five training documentation chapters. Also, practice exercises will be handed out at the training sessions and these must be completed prior to implementation.

Please note that based on this schedule, due to the time necessary to convert data into the new system, BEACON 2 will not be available on Friday, June 25, 2010.

Procedures for BEACON 3.0 deployment are being written and will be available prior to the BEACON 3.0 deployment.

CIES Enrollments

To ensure that as many clients are served as possible and all CIES funds are utilized, DTA is aggressively working with stakeholders to refer clients to CIES and is allowing CIES vendors to exceed their awarded enrollments until June 30, 2010.

If a provider is unable to meet the estimated number of clients to complete their CIES services, the provider may now shift funding around in order to enroll more clients. ESP contract managers will notify the TAOs which providers are accepting additional referrals. Case managers do NOT need to be limited by the referral or enrollment limits in BEACON for these providers until June 30, 2010 unless instructed otherwise.

Providers will notify the TAOs and their contract managers when they are unable to accept additional referrals. Case managers are encouraged to refer quickly to all CIES providers.

TAO Meeting Notes