

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. 1. My TAFDC applicant is a veteran of the Iraq War. Is she eligible for TAFDC?

A. 1. This applicant may be eligible for federal or state, non-federal Veterans' Services Benefits (VSB). If eligible for state VSB, the applicant may elect to participate in either the TAFDC or the VSB program, but cannot participate in both. Remember to advise individuals of their option to apply for either program. See 106 CMR 702.720(A) for more details.

Important: A TAFDC client receiving Federal Veterans' Benefits must have this income deducted from his or her cash assistance. See 106 CMR 204.210(B).

Q. 2. My EAEDC applicant is a veteran of the Iraq War and is currently in receipt of monthly VSB. Is this individual eligible for EAEDC?

A. 2. No. An EAEDC applicant eligible for state, non-federal VSB is ineligible for EAEDC. Also, remember that if your applicant is a Veteran who is not currently receiving VSB, he or she must be advised that he or she must apply for these benefits and provide written notification of ineligibility from the Veterans' Services office. This is a condition of continuing EAEDC eligibility. See 106 CMR 702.720(B) for more details.

Important: An EAEDC client receiving Federal Veterans' Benefits must have this income deducted from his or her cash assistance. See 106 CMR 321.210(B).

Q. 3. My SNAP client is receiving \$90 a month in VSB. If otherwise eligible, can this client still qualify for SNAP benefits?

A. 3. Yes. Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits are administered by local Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs) in cities and towns. Veterans' Services Benefits are countable unearned income in SNAP, but receipt of the income is not a disqualifying factor. See 106 CMR 363.220(B) for more details.

Q. 4. When determining SNAP eligibility, are there deductions and exclusions I could apply to reduce a veteran's VSB countable income amount?

A. 4. Yes. Aside from the usual SNAP deductions permitted per 106 CMR 364.400, certain portions of a client's VSB may be excluded. For example, if the VSO were to pay a portion of the income as a vendor payment directly to the veteran's landlord and/or utility company for the veteran's housing or heating/cooling costs, these vendor payments would be excluded from countable income for SNAP eligibility purposes, per 106 CMR 363.230(B). Also see Field Operations Memo 2009-13 for more details.

Note: In this situation, the case manager should remember to adjust the shelter expense amount on BEACON to reflect only the remaining shelter expenses the client is expected to pay, if any.

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- Q. 5.** Are education benefits issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs countable income in SNAP?
- A. 5.** Certain education benefits issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs may be excluded, but only when the grant or scholarship terms preclude their use for meeting current living costs. See 106 CMR 363.230(D) for additional exclusions.
- Q. 6.** My SNAP client was overpaid in VSB payments by the state. As a result, his monthly VSB payment has been reduced from \$85 per month to \$25 monthly. Do I count this client's gross or net VSB?
- A. 6.** If the overpayment was the result of fraud or a failure to comply with VSB program requirements, then the full \$85 monthly payment must be counted as unearned income. If, on the other hand, the overpayment was the result of a mistake or error, on the part of the VSO, then the income may be excluded. See 106 CMR 363.220(C) for more details.
- Q. 7.** My TAFDC client was overpaid by the Social Security Administration. Her dependent's monthly RSDI payment has been reduced from \$115 per month to \$35 monthly. Do I count this client's gross or net RSDI for cash purposes?
- A. 7.** Always use the gross amount for both TAFDC and EAEDC clients. See 106 CMR 204.210(B) and 106 CMR 204.260 in the TAFDC Program and 106 CMR 321.210(B) and 106 CMR 321.290(C) in the EAEDC Program for more details.

From the Forms File

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YRTK (Rev. 4/2013)

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