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

Field Operations Memo 2005-37
August 15, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: TAFDC – Child Support Sanction Change

Background

Beginning in October of 2005, the Department will change the child support sanction rule for AUs who fail to cooperate with child support. In most cases, this sanction rule change will result in a larger decrease of the recipient's TAFDC benefits. Detailed information about this change will be issued in a separate Field Operations Memo in the near future.

Mailing for the Week of August 15

Effective the week of August 15, recipients who are not cooperating with the child support requirements and are currently sanctioned will be sent a notice (Attachment A).

The notice informs these recipients of the change in the child support sanction rule. The notice also encourages these recipients to begin cooperating with child support before the change is in place.

Note: This notice will also be sent out in September to those recipients who were sanctioned for failing to cooperate with child support after the first mailing and before the sanction rule change.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

Attachment A

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

{RECIPIENT NAME} {RECIPIENT SSN}
{RECIPIENT MAILING ADDRESS} {BEACON USER OFFICE NAME}
{RECIPIENT CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP} {MM/DD/YYYY}

Dear {GRANTEE}:

This notice tells you about a change the Department will make in October regarding child support cooperation rules. Our records show that, because you have not cooperated with the child support rules, your TAFDC benefits have been decreased.

Due to a change in Federal law, starting in October 2005 the Department will change its child support sanction rule. In most cases, this sanction rule change will result in a larger decrease of your TAFDC benefits, unless you cooperate with the child support rules. We encourage you to cooperate with child support rules in order to increase your TAFDC benefits and to help you get support for your child.

If you continue not cooperating with the child support rules when the Department makes this sanction rule change, your TAFDC benefits will be recalculated. You will receive a separate notice at that time, if your TAFDC benefits are going to be changed.

There are two ways for you to become eligible for TAFDC benefits and have your benefits increased:

- 1) **Cooperating with the child support rules** which include providing information about the absent parent, cooperating with DOR by keeping appointments, appearing in court, or being a witness in court. **If you want to cooperate, please contact your DTA worker to get more information about what you need to do;** or
- 2) **Verifying that you have one of the good cause reasons for not cooperating.** The good cause reasons are:
 - You believe that you or your child would be at risk of physical or emotional harm if you cooperate; or
 - Your child was conceived as a result of incest or rape; or
 - Your child's adoption is pending before a court; or
 - You are being helped by an agency to decide if your child should be placed for adoption.**If you believe any of these good cause reasons apply to you, please contact your DTA worker to find out what verifications are needed.**

If you want to cooperate with the child support rules or if you want more information about proving a good cause reason or if you have any questions about this notice please call {WORKER_PHONE_NUMBER} and ask for your worker {WORKER_NAME}.