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Field Operations Memo 2006-14
March 10, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From: *CD/WWK* Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: TAFDC – Learning Disability Screening and Assessment Clarifications and Revised Form

Background

Questions have been raised about the connection between the Disability Exemption process and the Learning Disability Screening/Assessment process. It is important to remember that they are two completely separate processes with completely different goals.

The Disability Exemption process is intended to **exempt** persons from the Work Program requirement and the Time Limit.

The Learning Disability Screening/Assessment process is intended to **help** applicants and recipients gain the tools needed to better participate in the Employment Services Program and ultimately, gain self-sufficiency.

Purpose of Memo

Field Operations Memo 2005-58: “TAFDC – OCR/DTA Agreement Regarding the Learning Disabled: Screening and Assessing Learning Disabilities” gave TAO staff instructions for processing requests for Learning Disability Screenings. This Field Operations Memo clarifies when a Learning Disability Screening should be offered as well as who should be referred to DES for an Assessment and MRC for services.

This Field Operations Memo also transmits changes to the Learning Disability Screening/Assessment Consent/Declination form (*LDSC – 3/2006*).

**Physical/Mental
Disability vs.
Learning
Disability
Screening**

Learning disability screenings must be offered to TAFDC applicants or recipients by the AU Manager asking them if they would like to be screened and/or giving the recipient Attachment A (“Do You Have a Disability?”) of Field Operations Memo 2005-58.

The screenings must be offered to applicants and recipients who:

- ✓ are participating in ESP,
 - ✓ are mandated to participate in ESP,
 - ✓ are employed, and
 - ✓ volunteer for an ESP activity,
- and when:
- ✓ eligibility reviews are conducted,
 - ✓ transition plans developed,
 - ✓ when initial extension plans/agreements are developed, or
 - ✓ when EDPs are created or revised (**unless** the revision is related to support services such as child care in which case, the AU Manager can click on “No” when the question is asked in the ESP workflow on BEACON).

Applicants/Recipients who are claiming a *disability exemption* do not need to be verbally offered a learning disability screening *unless* they have requested to voluntarily participate in ESP or the disability claim is a second or subsequent request and they are mandated to participate in the Work Program. Therefore, unless these two situations apply, the Learning Disability question on the Nonfinancials Q&A Navigator should be answered “No.”

However, recipients seeking an initial disability exemption who learn about the screening (e.g., through the TAO poster or ADA handout) may request one and, if found to have a potential LD, will be referred to MRC for services.

Note: The Nonfinancials Q&A Navigator Learning Disability question will be grayed out in a future Increment of BEACON. The question will still appear in the *ESP workflow* as documented in Field Operations Memo 2005-58.

If an applicant or recipient scores 12 or more on the Learning Disability Screening and agrees to an assessment but then decides not to participate in the assessment on the day of the screening, the AU Manager must return to the Learning Disability window, highlight and select the “Yes” record and change the Requested radio button on the Summary tab from “Yes” to “No.”

**Physical/Mental
Disability vs.
Learning
Disability
Screening
(continued)**

If an applicant decides not to participate in the assessment once the referral has been generated (or the AU has been closed for more than 30 days), the AU Manager must inform the DES Liaison who will tell DES **not** to process the request for an assessment. The AU Manager must highlight and select the “Yes” record and change the Requested radio button on the Summary tab from “Yes” to “No.” The AU Manager must mail the Learning Disability Screening/Assessment Consent/Declination form (*LDSC – 3/2006*) to the applicant or recipient who must sign it and return it within ten days. If the form is not returned within ten days, the AU Manager must note this on the BEACON Narratives tab. No other action is needed.

DES vs. MRC

Before the Learning Disability Screening referral is given to the DES Liaison, the AU Manager must ensure that the referral to DES is an appropriate referral.

Reminder: An applicant or recipient with documentation that establishes a learning disability but does *not* give enough information to determine a reasonable accommodation must be screened for a Learning Disability.

DES is the sole vendor for these assessments. When clicking on the pop-up box next to the “Vendor” field the General Services drop-down list will default to “Learning Disability – DES.” AU Managers should only select this vendor if the applicant or recipient:

- scored 12 or higher on the Learning Disability Screening; and
- is nonexempt (and does not have another Good Cause reason for not meeting the Work Program); or
- is exempt but participating in an ESP activity (including employment).

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) should be selected on the General Services drop-down list (scroll from “Learning Disability – DES” to “Learning Disability –MRC”) if the applicant or recipient:

- scored 12 or higher on the Learning Disability Screening; and
- is exempt and not participating in an ESP activity; or
- is seeking an initial disability exemption and wants a Learning Disability Assessment done at the same time; or
- is nonexempt and failed *without good cause* to keep the initial assessment appointment with DES.

MRC will determine what services to provide the applicant or recipient.

**Change to
Learning
Disability
Screening/
Assessment
form**

The Office for Civil Rights has reviewed the Learning Disability Screening/Assessment Consent/Declination form (*LDSC – 3/2006*). Changes to the form have been incorporated and are included with this Field Operations Memo (Attachment A).

The form has a separate section for the LD Screening consent and waiver and the LD Assessment consent and waiver. Additionally, the form also contains a section for documenting second and subsequent offers of Screenings after the initial offer. A supply of these forms will be sent to TAOs. Additionally, the forms may be ordered online.

Questions

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

Learning Disability Screening Consent Declination form

SCREENING:

Consent for Screening

I agree to have a Learning Disability Screening done to determine any barriers I may have to learning, participating in the Employment Services Program or finding work.

The results of the Assessment will only be shared with the Department staff working with me and Employment Services vendors to help provide services to me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Waiver for Screening

My worker told me about the Learning Disability Screening. I do not wish to be screened at this time.

I understand that I can withdraw my waiver at any time. I can also request a Screening at anytime, even if I don't want one now.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Documentation of additional offers:

Date	AU Manager Name & Phone #	Participant's Initials
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

ASSESSMENT:

Consent for Assessment

I have had a screening done and have a score of _____

I agreed to have a Learning Disability Screening done to determine any barriers I may have to learning, participating in the Employment Services Program or finding work.

The results of the Assessment will only be shared with the Department staff working with me and Employment Services vendors to help provide services to me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Waiver for Assessment

I agree to have a Learning Disability Assessment done to determine any barriers I may have to learning, participating in the Employment Services Program or finding work. I do not wish to have an Assessment done at this time.

I understand that I can withdraw my waiver at any time. I can also request a Screening at anytime, even if I don't want one now.

Signed: _____ Date: _____