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Field Operations Memo 2006-25
May 18, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: Lowell Contingency Plan

**Purpose of
Memo**

The Lowell Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) has been closed as a result of a flooding situation. The office will be closed until further notice. AUs needing immediate attention (e.g., AU pending to close, Food Stamp Certification period ending, etc.) need to be handled on an interim basis.

This memo provides interim procedures to process these AUs.

**Interim
Procedures**

A notice has been posted at the Lowell TAO directing recipients who need services to contact Recipient Services at 1-800-445-6604. If a recipient from the Lowell TAO contacts Recipient Services and states his or her AU is impacted for the following reasons:

- ✓ Monthly Reporting AU Diverting/Closing; and
- ✓ EAEDC/TAFDC Medical period expiring;

and the recipient states that appropriate verification has been provided, Recipient Services will compile a list of AUs who have called and forward it to Lowell staff who have been temporarily placed in Lawrence or another TAO with the instruction to:

- Remove the closing, following procedures detailed in *A User's Guide*, Chapter XVII, Interview Wrap-Up; and
- Note the action on the BEACON Narratives tab.

**Interim
Procedures
(continued)**

The list will be forwarded to the Lowell Managers who will do the following:

- *If the AU was impacted due to a Monthly Reporting Diversion/Closing:*
 - ✓ go to the Monthly Reporting window and enter the current date in the Return Date field;
 - ✓ on the Monitor Types field, select “Earned Income Reported” and click on Select:
 - ✓ click on Update and click on Finish;
 - ✓ go to the Employment Status window;
 - ✓ enter the wages received and hours worked from last month; and
 - ✓ authorize the change on the Interview Wrap-Up window.

- *If the AU was impacted due to the EAEDC/TAFDC medical period expiring:*
 - ✓ go to the Disability window;
 - ✓ highlight and select the most recent Disability record;
 - ✓ on the End Date field of the Report Results Tab, enter a date that is two months from the current date; and
 - ✓ authorize the change on the Interview Wrap-Up window.

If the recipient from the Lowell TAO does not contact Recipient Services with this information, the AU closing will occur as scheduled.

**Pending
Applications:
Expedited Food
Stamp Benefits**

If a recipient from the Lowell TAO contacts Recipient Services and states that appropriate verification has been provided for expedited Food Stamps, but to date, no Food Stamp Benefits have been provided, Recipient Services will forward the list to the Lowell TAO Supervisors who will issue expedited Food Stamp benefits following standard procedures.

Remember: AU Managers must note all actions taken on the BEACON Narratives tab.

**Pending
Applications:
Non-expedited
Food Stamps
and/or Cash
Benefits**

All pending applications from the Lowell TAO that are non-expedited Food Stamp Benefits and/or TAFDC or EAEDC benefits will be processed once the Lowell TAO reopens, following standard procedures.

**Food Stamp
Recertifications**

If the Lowell TAO remains closed beyond Monday, May 22nd, Food Stamp AUs from the Lowell TAO whose recertification period is ending between May 31 and June 13 will have their recertification period end date automatically extended for two months by MIS. Additionally, the following will be added to the BEACON Narratives tab: “Reevaluation End Date extended by 2 months because the Lowell TAO was closed due to the flooding situation at the Lowell TAO.”

This means that the recertification period of an AU which ended on:

- ✓ May 31 will now end on July 31,
- ✓ June 1 will now end on August 1,
- ✓ June 3 will now end on August 3, and so on.

No additional AU Manager action is needed.

**Final
Procedures**

Once the Lowell TAO reopens, AU Managers must review the affected AUs to insure that the appropriate follow-up activity is taken:

- ✓ Process pending applications that provided all verifications; and
 - ✓ Ensure that all interim actions taken have been documented on the BEACON Narratives tab.
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**Additional
Information**

At this time, the Red Cross in the Merrimack Valley is running the emergency shelter at the Senior Center and they will be there as long as needed. They are providing no other financial assistance at this time – once flood waters recede and families can get into homes to assess damage, there may be further assistance. We will keep you updated.

Questions

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