

Dear Fellow Employees,

"A wise woman once said, 'no one can help everybody, but everybody can help somebody' "

Unknown

Over the past few months, I have been updating you on the progress of our Central Office redesign. Most recently, I shared a list of several individuals who have assumed positions within the new Division of Policy and Program Management. Our Central Office reorganization is part of a comprehensive plan to better serve the needs of our clients as well as to support your need to do a good job. As you know, food, housing and job security remain the fundamental building blocks of long-term self-sufficiency for our families. By reshaping our program operations along these lines (Food Stamps; Housing and Homelessness; and Cash Assistance and Full Engagement), I am reinforcing priorities that many of you in local offices have understood all along.



By now, I have had time to work with all of the newly appointed staff: (Valorie Faretra, Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Program Operations; Claire Ghiloni, Director of Cash Assistance and Full Engagement; John Shirley, Director of Housing and Homeless Services; Phuoc Cao, Director of the Food Stamp Program; Catherine Fallon, Director of Policy, Administration and Program Support and David Dugan, Director of Training Support). For me, this roster represents more than a simple list of names. Together, the team is a blend of new talent along with more seasoned, knowledgeable Department employees. Collectively, we are committed to ensuring tangible results. By retooling the Central Office environment, I anticipate smoother pathways for communication between the local offices and Central Office. I also expect that issues originating from local offices will be resolved faster now that each program area contains experts better equipped to respond to inquiries for information and problem resolution.

This month in particular, each Central Office program area is teaming up with local offices on a variety of initiatives.

- The food stamp area is working to integrate a "virtual gateway" application. The initiative is designed to offer on-line services and benefits for seven EOHHS programs: Food Stamps, Child Care, MassHealth, Substance Abuse, WIC and Early Intervention. The "virtual gateway" promises to further increase food stamp participation by enhancing information and application availability. While Food Stamp Program eligibility will not be changed by this initiative, the "virtual gateway" alters the benefit landscape by creating a place where clients can access and apply for more than one benefit program at one time.
- The Housing and Homeless area is continuing its efforts to place families into permanent housing through the Shelter to Housing initiative.
- Cash Assistance and Full Engagement is pursuing a new Structured Job Search initiative as well as expanding the Work Program requirement. Our intention is to put more tools of empowerment into the hands of more TAFDC clients. Education and training activities are now an option for all who are Work Program required, and many clients are required to meet increased hours of work and work-related activities.

We have a lot to do, but together we also have a proven record of accomplishments. I take great pride in all that we have achieved so far this year and will continue to rely on your professionalism and skills as we continue helping the neediest in our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner

New Forms

18-865-0604-05
18-866-0604-05 (S)
EBT-14 (6/2004) Request for Mail Replacement Card/PIN

18-867-0504-05
EBT-15 (5/2004)
EBT Card Log

AU Managers must use the two new forms above with the new Card Issuance System (CIS) that has replaced the Image Identification System (IIS).

Obsolete Form/Brochure

The following form and brochure are obsolete now that the Card Issuance System (CIS) has replaced the Image Identification System (IIS):

16-015-0303-05
Image-1 (Rev. 3/2003)
Request for Mass EBT Card

18-825-0402-05
18-826-0402-05 (S)
EBT-TB
Electronic Benefit Transfer Brochure

Quick Links

Choose Area 

Q. My TAFDC recipient has one child. She has been receiving cash assistance for over two months but has not provided us with the name of her daughter's school, despite the fact that we have sent her a written request for the information. As a result, I am unable to determine whether her 12-year-old daughter is meeting the Learnfare requirement. Can I close this TAFDC AU?

A. No. This daughter *is* subject to the Learnfare requirement, but you should not close either the grantee or the entire AU. If your recipient does not provide the proper information on the school her daughter is attending, remove only the daughter from the AU. If the recipient verifies the school her child is attending within 30 days of the closing date, the daughter should be reinstated in the AU.

Refer to 106 CMR 203.900 for more information on the Learnfare requirement.

Q. I have a teen parent under the age of 18 who is living with her baby as well as her 10-year-old brother and their mother. The teen parent, her mother and her brother receive TAFDC as members of the mother's AU. The teen has asked us not to add her baby to the AU because the baby's father is regularly paying child support for his child. Does the teen parent have this option?

A. Yes. For TAFDC purposes, the teen parent's child is not required to be in this AU. Refer to 106 CMR 204.305 for more details on the composition of the TAFDC assistance unit.

Q. The teen parent described in the question above is also receiving food stamp benefits. Is the teen parent's child required to be a member of the food stamp AU?

A. Yes. The teen parent's child is required to be a member of the food stamp AU. Details on the composition of the food stamp assistance unit are located at 106 CMR 361.200.

Quick Links

Choose Area



This month we will discuss two errors, one involving shelter/Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) deductions and one, a problem with a Monthly Reporting change.

Shelter/SUA Deductions

An EAEDC recipient was living with his mother. At the last certification, the recipient's application listed no shelter or utility expenses. There was, however, a Shared Housing form which indicated that the recipient paid electric and telephone but the form has an unreadable dollar amount for each. There was no indication in the case record or on BEACON that the AU Manager requested further explanation or verification from the recipient. The case was certified with no shelter or utility expense.

Quality Control found that the recipient did in fact share the electric bill and that the house had an air conditioner which made him eligible for the heating SUA. The AU Manager should have resolved the inconsistencies between the application and the Shared Housing form.

What Can an AU Manager Do?

AU Managers should always clarify apparent discrepancies in different pieces of information. In this case, if more clarification or verification was needed, it should have been requested. Only when the recipient fails to supply the necessary verification (for example, a utility bill) could the case have been certified without the deduction. The Food Stamp Application informs applicants of their rights and responsibilities, including the fact that unverified expenses will not be allowed as deductions.

TAFDC Monthly Reporting

A woman who had lost her job applied for and was approved for TAFDC and FS. Because she had a recent history of earnings, she was put on Monthly Reporting (MR). She lived in subsidized housing at the time of the application and paid \$400 for rent. She subsequently failed to complete the MR, and her case was closed for failure to return a completed MR. When she returned the completed MR, she reported that her rent had decreased to \$44. The case was reopened with the old rent.

What Can an AU Manager Do?

If a rental change is reported on an MR, it must be acted upon by requesting verification and processing the change. As above, if there is discrepant information, contact the recipient or the person providing the verification to obtain the most accurate information.

Quick Links 

[BEACON Help Revisions](#)[Statewide Data Exchange for Automatic Enrollment in School Meals/Milk Programs](#)**BEACON Help Revisions**

The following is a list of Help windows that have been added or revised.

Added:

- EBT Card Detail
- EBT Card Request
- EBT Card Request – Picture Tab
- EBT Card Request – Signature Tab
- EBT Card Request – Transaction Detail Tab
- EBT Card Request Transaction History
- EBT Case Details
- EBT Client List
- Warnings, Edits & Messages: Program

Revised:

- Assisting Person
- Contact Type
- Program
- Security Role Definitions

[▲ Back to Top](#)

Statewide Data Exchange for Automatic Enrollment in School Meals/Milk Programs

For several years DTA, USDA, the Department of Education (DOE) and Project Bread have worked together as part of the Child Nutrition Access Project (CNAP). One of the CNAP goals has been to create an automated certification process for school meals/milk programs for children in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In July 2004, the first statewide data exchange with DOE took place to automatically enroll school children (ages 4 -18) who are recipients of TAFDC, FS or both for school meals/milk. DOE will use the data file provided by DTA to match students on its statewide student identification system.

DOE will send a letter to the families of matched students telling them that their child(ren) is eligible for free or reduced school meals/milk programs for the coming school year. **No additional application or verification is needed from the families of a child(ren) certified through this process.**

DOE will send back to DTA a data file of unmatched names. These children most likely attend private or charter schools and are not part of the DOE student identification system. In September 2004, DTA will send a mailing to these families. The September mailing will include a notice and system-generated verification of eligibility for TAFDC and/or FS so that the families can apply for the school meals/milk programs.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

Quick Links 

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

[Card Issuance System](#)

[Child-Care Authorization Windows and Authorization Form](#)

[Local Housing Authority \(LHA\) Placement Program - Identifying Families](#)

[TAFDC - Work Program BEACON Functionality Changes](#)

[TAFDC - Work Program Requirement Expansion \(Phase I\)](#)

[Violations, Hearings and Claims](#)

Card Issuance System

All

[State Letter 1280](#)

[Systems User's Guide Update 158](#)

State Letter 1280 explains that the Department is replacing the current stand-alone Image Identification System (IIS) with a new Card Issuance System (CIS) that is integrated into BEACON. The current IIS system communicates only with the Department's EBT contractor. It does not communicate with BEACON. This new card creation process within BEACON will improve the workflow process and service delivery to recipients. Applicants and recipients will no longer be issued a Facial Image Identification Card. They will use an identification card which does not have a photo. This new card is named the **Bay State Access Card**.

Systems User's Guide Update 158 eliminates Volume 5: Chapter 1: *Photo-ID Replacement System (PIRS)*.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

Child-Care Authorization Windows and Authorization Form

TAFDC

[Field Operations Memo 2004-28](#)

BEACON Release 2.1.10, deployed on July 19, 2004, issued significant changes to the child-care authorization window and the child-care referral and authorization form. This memo provides details about these two issues.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

Local Housing Authority (LHA) Placement Program - Identifying Families

EA

[Field Operations Memo 2004-26](#)

There is a new program called the *Local Housing Authority (LHA) Placement Program* that helps families move from a shelter into a housing unit at a local housing authority. Families can participate in this shelter program for up to six months. At the end of the program, each family will assume tenancy of their unit or another unit at the local housing authority site. At this time, only the Taunton and Worcester TAOs have a local housing authority ready to place families. In the future, the program will be offered to other TAOs.

In preparation for the *LHA Placement Program* becoming available statewide, TAOs should begin identifying families for referral to the program.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

TAFDC - Work Program BEACON Functionality Changes

TAFDC

[Field Operations Memo 2004-29](#)

The current release of BEACON (2.1.10) has two changes that impact the Work Program. This Field Operations Memo highlights these changes:

- New Family Cap Work Program required/nonexempt reasons have been added on the AU Exemption and TAFDC tabs of the Work Requirements window; and
- Only those community service referrals generated **after** the EDP mandating community service has been generated on day 61 will be considered an appropriate referral that allows the automatic Work Program sanction process to start.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

TAFDC - Work Program Requirement Expansion (Phase I)

TAFDC

[Field Operations Memo 2004-27](#)

This memo informs AU Managers:

- about an informational mailing to all nonexempt recipients; and
- about processing AUs who wish to meet the new Work Program requirements through education or training. A Field Operations Memo detailing how to process these AUs through BEACON will be issued by mid-September.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

Violations, Hearings and Claims

FS


[State Letter 1281](#)

This State Letter transmits changes in food stamp policy as it pertains to violations, hearings and claims.

- A technical correction was made to the policy to reflect the amount that may be recouped through automatic benefit reduction.
- Advance notice of an Administrative Disqualification Hearing (ADH) shall be sent by First Class Mail and not Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested.

[▲ Back to Top](#)

Quick Links

Choose Area 

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)


New Initiatives

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)

The following memos were added to the Policy Online New Initiatives option.

[Revised MBHP Tracking Form – New Initiative](#)

[TAFDC: Structured Job Search \(SJS\) – New Initiative](#)

Quick Links 

[Previous](#) | [Next](#)