

TAFDC – Practical Tips

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Greater Boston Legal Services

Overview

- Practical info about TAFDC – how to apply, get information, etc.
- Protections for certain populations
- Problem solving & advocacy tips



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Practical information: How to
apply, submit documents, etc.

DTA Offices

- DTA Offices are open!
- Hybrid work schedule
 - Limited in person staffing
 - Services for clients who go to an office:
 - Get EBT card
 - Use DTA Connect on an iPad kiosk
 - Use scanner to scan documents
 - Hands on help when needed
- Should have needs addressed while in the office

EBT Cards

How to get an EBT card:

- DTA Connect mobile app
- DTACConnect.com
- Call TAFDC worker
- Call Assistance Line at # 877-382-2363 and follow prompts for EBT cards
- In person at [DTA offices](#) (anyone who asks for a card should get one)



Application process

- Apply online, by phone or in person
- Phone interview – telephonic signature
- Client must submit:
 - Verifications – DTA sends Verification Checklist (VC1)
 - Signed child support assignment form
- Within 30 days DTA approves or denies

Applying for TAFDC

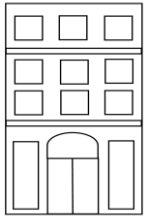


DTAConnect.com (online or smartphone)

- Can complete application in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, & Haitian Creole
- No need to make an account
- Tell DTA during interview if also want SNAP application



Call [local DTA office](#) and leave a message asking for callback to apply



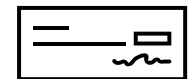
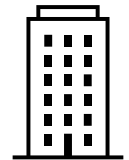
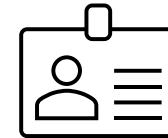
Go to local DTA office

Verifications

Verifications required at application (TAFDC):

- Identity
- Give Social Security Number(s)
- Relationship to children
- Immigration status (unless opting out)
- Citizenship - *only if questionable*
- Income
- Living situation*
- Type of housing* (private/subsidized)
- Immunization (given 60 days to provide)

* Can be self-declared



Verifications

Verification issues & reminders:

- Over-verification
- DTA should check information available in data sources
- Some flexibility remains since COVID – **self-declarations**
- Collateral contacts

Email from Lynda

From: lynda@example.com

Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2023, 7:36 PM

To: welfare-help@gbls.org

Subject: Lynda & Verifications

Hey, I just got temporary custody of my niece, Ruby, because my sister can't take care of her. I applied for TAFDC but I really don't want DTA going after my sister for child support. My sister is pretty angry and not in a good place. She might get worse if forced to pay child support. How can I stop the state from pursuing child support?

Also, DTA needs proof that I'm not working at the Burger Joint anymore. That job is old. Boss won't write a letter, says he's not allowed. I really need help.

Thx, Lynda

Responding to Lynda

☐ Child Support

- ✓ As a **relative caretaker**, Lynda can claim good cause for not cooperating with child support since it's not in Ruby's best interest. (Must still sign the child support form.)
- ✓ She can self-declare good cause (no proof needed)

☐ Proof that job ended

- ✓ **Active Work Number match**: submit a signed [DORL1](#) form for DTA for collateral contact
- ✓ **No active Work Number match**: give a verbal self-declaration that job ended

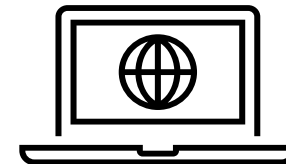
Check TAFDC Case Info

DTA Connect App & DTACConnect.com online portal

- Set up account with email, Agency ID or EBT card #

Use DTA Connect to:

- See case status
- See notices for last 12 months
- Upload documents
- Update contact info
- Request new EBT card
- See history of benefits



Submitting documents to DTA

- Upload via **DTA Connect** app or online account (fastest option – goes right into client’s DTA case record)
- In-person at DTA office
- Fax to 617-887-8765
- Mail to:

DTA Processing Center
PO Box 4406
Taunton, MA 02780



Put DTA Agency ID or last 4 of SSN on the top of each page if faxing or mailing documents.

Reporting changes to DTA

- Report changes within 10 days – best to report changes **in writing**
- What changes matter for TAFDC?
 - New income or change in income
 - Earnings
 - Unemployment, SSI, child support, etc.
 - Someone moves into or out of household
 - Birth of baby
 - Change in address or phone number

Reevaluation

- Every 6-12 months
- May or may not be at same time as SNAP recertification
- Process:
 - Notice of appointment for phone interview
 - Phone interview:
 - Can verify some information verbally
 - Can sign application telephonically
 - DTA sends Verification Checklist for any remaining verifications
 - DTA sends notice approving reevaluation or stopping TAFDC if reevaluation isn't completed or if review shows no longer eligible



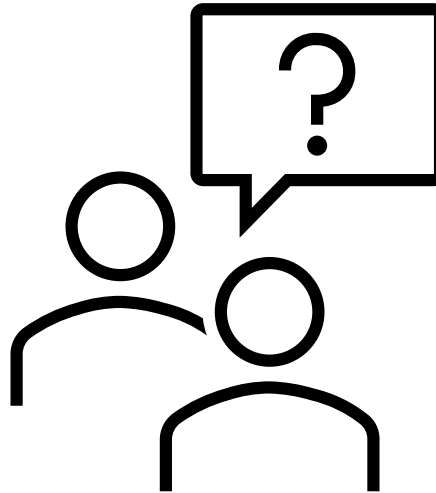
Reevaluation

Reevaluation issues & reminders

- DTA automatically sends TAFDC closing notice if:
 - Case worker doesn't call at appointment time
 - Client misses DTA's call
- To resolve:
 - Contact local office managers and/or Ombuds Unit
 - Contact Legal Services

Protections for specific populations

Questions?

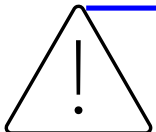


Disability Access & Accommodations

- DTA Client Assistance Coordinators (CACs)
 - [CAC contact info](#)
- Common accommodations
 - Help with forms, verifications, understanding notices
 - Reminder calls
 - Sign language interpreter
 - Large print notices
- See DTA's [Disability Access Info](#)

Domestic Violence Protections

- Block online & automated phone services – can request verbally
- Heightened Level of Security (HLS)
 - Request in writing. Can use HLS form ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)) but not required
 - No phone communication with DTA – must go to DTA office
 - But advocates can communicate by phone if client signs release & adds advocate on HLS form
 - Also blocks online and automated phone services
- [DV Specialist](#) in each DTA office



If issues with DTA rules because of DV - contact DV specialist and/or legal services.

Language Access

- **Right to interpreter!**
- DTA notices only available in English & Spanish
- DTACConnect.com in 6 languages
- Some DTA brochures available in additional languages
- DTA texts/emails
 - Case specific in English and Spanish
 - General alerts in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified) and Vietnamese.



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Problem Solving & Advocacy Tips

TAFDC Advocacy Resources

- Check the TAFDC regulations & DTA's Online Guide
 - DTA [Regulations](#)
 - DTA [Online Guide](#) (policies & procedures)
- [TAFDC Advocacy Guide](#)

Problem Solving – Advocacy Tips

- Contact Assistant Director or Director of local DTA office (use Assistance Line for automated info only)
- Contact DTA Ombuds Unit: 617-348-5354 or email sara.craven@state.ma.us
- Will need a release giving DTA permission to talk to you (sample [English](#) & [Spanish](#))

Appealing a DTA Decision

- How to [file appeal](#)
 - Call DTA Division of Hearings at 617-348-5321 & leave message
 - Fax appeal form or written request for hearing to 617-348-5311
 - Will be by phone unless request in-person or on Zoom
- When to appeal
 - Within 90 days of date on notice under appeal
 - For **continued benefits while appeal is pending** (aid pending), **appeal before the date the change takes effect**
- Contact [Legal Services](#) for possible representation

Resolving Appeals

- Gather DTA Documents
 - Notices, Narratives, Scanned Documents, etc.
 - Get info from DTA Connect, DTA supervisors & management, Ombuds Unit
- Review Rules
 - DTA [Regulations](#)
 - DTA [Online Guide](#) (policies & procedures)
 - DTA [Fair Hearing Regulations](#)
- Help get missing evidence

Resolving Appeals

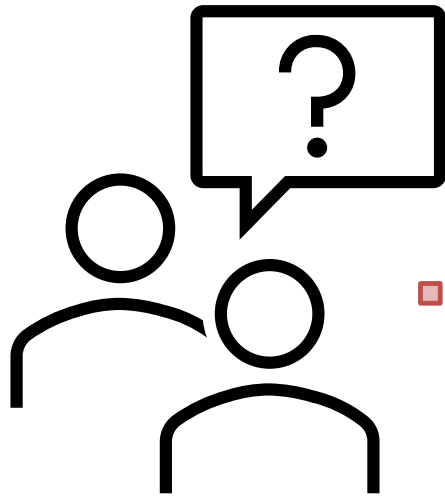
- Negotiate with DTA Management
 - Assistant Directors, Directors, Central DTA
 - Submit Required Proof
 - Request Prehearing Adjustment 106 CMR 343.350(B)
 - Assert De Novo Rule 106 CMR 343.500(A)
- Right to Postpone Hearing if good cause

Problem solving – advocacy tips

Referring cases to GBLS Welfare Law Unit:

- If client lives in Greater Boston area (check [service area](#))
 - 617-603-1806, or welfare-help@gbls.org
 - We will use interpreter, provide disability accommodations as needed
- Other areas: Find [Legal Services](#) in other parts of Massachusetts

Questions?



... and thank you!