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**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
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**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
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Field Operations Memo 2002-8  
April 9, 2002

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff  
**From:**  Cescia Derderian, Acting Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**Re:** No Funds in the Rental Arrearage Account

**Background**

Field Operations Memos 2002-5 and 2002-6 stated that the money in the rental arrearage account was expected to last until 4/12/2002. The funds, however, in the rental arrearage account have been expended. This memo advises TAO staff that there are no funds in the EA account to continue the current EA rental arrearage and disaster benefits.

Therefore, as of 4/9/2002

- as of 12:00 noon, no SSPS invoices may be issued for rent arrearages or disaster benefits (excluding shelter) until further notice; and
- a paper EA request for assistance (RFA-1) will be completed in lieu of the full EA application for rental arrearage requests or disaster benefits requests (excluding shelter which requires the full EA application).

**Invoices and Applications for Rental Arrearage or Disaster Benefits as of 4/9/2002**

**SSPS Invoices**

With no money in the rental arrearage account, **no payments for rental arrearages or disaster benefits may be issued as of Noon on 4/9/2002.** It is expected funds will be completely exhausted at that time. If funds remain in the account, TAOs will be notified how to process invoices. This change does not affect temporary emergency shelter benefits, including shelter benefits related to a disaster, which may be requested on or after 4/9/2002.

**Invoices and  
Applications for  
Rental  
Arrearage or  
Disaster  
Benefits as of  
4/9/2002  
(continued)**

**EA Applications before 4/9**

If an application was made before 4/9, the applicant was given a notice advising him or her that benefits would be available until 4/12/2002. As the funds in the account are gone, the applicant must be notified of the current fiscal situation. Regardless of the date of the EA application, with no funds in the account, no invoices may be issued. The AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator must:

- immediately call the applicant and send him or her the notice (Attachment 1- dated 4/9/2002) that explains the lack of funding and that no invoices may be issued for rental arrearage payments and disaster benefits;
  - refer the applicant to a Housing Assistance Provider for housing assistance counseling using the *Referral for Housing Assistance Provider Services* (RHAPS) form. The HAP provider can offer housing assistance for keeping the current housing or finding other housing. Make sure the applicant understands that failure to cooperate with HAP will affect future requests for temporary emergency shelter benefits;
  - refer the applicant to the American Red Cross or other community agencies for help with disaster benefits;
  - complete an NFL-9, notifying the applicant that the request for rental arrearage payments or disaster benefits is being denied because "there is an insufficient appropriation for the EA benefit you requested, that is, funds are not available for the benefit you requested." Use manual citation 106 CMR 309.030;
  - go to AU Composition Results, select AU, Admin-TAO and Special Projects for the reason of ineligibility. Suppress the system-generated notice at the Interview Wrap-up;
  - keep a record of all denials due to insufficient funds for review at a later time if funds become available; and
  - file a copy of the NFL-9 in a secure place in the TAO Director/designee's office. These NFL-9s will be reviewed once funds become available.
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**Invoices and Applications For Rental Arrearage or Disaster Benefits as of 4/9/2002 (continued)**

**EA Applications as of 4/9**

As of 4/9/2002, if an applicant requests a rental arrearage payment or a disaster benefit, the AU Manager or Homeless Coordinator will:

- talk with the applicant about the current lack of funding for rental arrearage payments and/or disaster benefits;
- explore the possibility of voluntary protective payments to help the applicant keep the current housing;
- give the applicant the notice (Attachment 1- dated 4/9/2002) that explains the lack of funding for rental arrearage payments and disaster benefits;
- complete the front page of the paper Request for Assistance form (RFA-1 (7/2001)) and have the applicant sign page 3;
- immediately refer the applicant to a Housing Assistance Provider for housing assistance counseling using the *Referral for Housing Assistance Provider Services (RHAPS)* form. The HAP provider can offer housing assistance for keeping the current housing or finding other housing. Make sure the applicant understands that failure to cooperate with HAP will affect future requests for temporary emergency shelter benefits;
- refer the applicant to the American Red Cross or other community agencies for help with disaster benefits;
- complete an NFL-9, notifying the applicant that the request for rental arrearage payments or disaster benefits is being denied because “there is an insufficient appropriation for the EA benefit you requested, that is, funds are not available for the benefit you requested.” Use manual citation 106 CMR 309.030;
- keep a record of all denials due to insufficient funds for review at a later time if funds become available; and
- file all RFA-1s and corresponding NFL-9s in a secure place in the TAO Director/designee’s office. These RFA-1s will be reviewed once funds become available.

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**Obsolete**

This memo obsoletes Field Operations Memo 2002-5 and 2002-6.

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**Questions**

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

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*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Department Of Transitional Assistance*

4/9/2002

**APPLICATIONS for RENTAL ARREARAGE or DISASTER BENEFITS**

**¡IMPORTANTE!** Este aviso que afecta sus beneficios requiere atención inmediata. Si necesita ayuda para traducir este aviso, póngase en contacto con la Oficina de Asistencia Transicional (Transitional Assistance Office).

The Department can pay for EA rental arrearages or disaster benefits only when there is enough money in the rental arrearage account to pay the landlords or the vendors. Due to the current budget problems, the money in this account is gone.

You may have received an earlier notice telling you money would be available until 4/12/02. Unfortunately, the money is gone as of 4/9/02.

**Therefore, EA rental arrearage payments or a disaster benefit payment (except for shelter) may not be made on or after 4/9/2002.** The Department will keep your application and if funds become available you will be contacted.

It is very important that you talk with a Housing Assistance Program (HAP) worker who can offer you housing assistance during this critical time. The HAP worker can talk with your landlord about keeping your current housing, explaining the current budget situation, and/or helping you find other housing.

Talk with your worker if you have any questions.