



William F. Weld  
Governor  
Argeo Paul Cellucci  
Lieutenant Governor

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111

Joseph Gallant  
Secretary  
Claire McIntire  
Commissioner

**Field Operations Memo 96-37**  
**October 3, 1996**

**TO:** Local Office Directors  
**FROM:** Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**RE:** Notice Corrections to Certain TAFDC Cases

**BACKGROUND**

Certain TAFDC recipients with program code changes data-entered between 8/29/96 and 9/6/96 were sent incorrect notices. These notices erroneously indicated that the cash grant and food stamps were increasing or decreasing due to vendor payments or recoupment.

Fax 96-104, which was E-mailed on 9/20/96, alerted the local offices to the problem and instructed local office staff to take no action on these cases while Systems staff made corrections.

This memo

- identifies the cases which received the incorrect notices and provides lists of these cases for each local office;
- describes the systems corrections which are being made;
- includes the notices mailed to the recipients in each of four affected groups;
- is for informational purposes only. *No local office worker action is needed.*

**SYSTEMS CORRECTIONS**

The programming problem which resulted in these erroneous notices has been corrected. Central Office staff have identified approximately 470 affected cases and have taken the following steps to rectify the situation.

For all cases pending a grant *decrease* due to a program code change, the pending transactions were pulled on 9/17/96. Recipients will be mailed notices today instructing them to disregard the prior decrease notice (see Attachment A).

The program code changes will be reentered onto PACES on 10/7/96, with the correct notices issued. Included in this group are a small number of cases which were correctly notified, but were not readily identifiable within this group; however, they are being treated in the same way.

Note: In most situations the decrease will not take effect until the next check date. These cases *are not* to be considered overpaid.

A number of cases **released** the grant decrease transaction prior to 9/17/96. For these cases, PACES will reinstate benefits retroactive to the date of the decrease. Recipients will be mailed notices informing them that their cases were reinstated due to the notice error, and they will be properly notified of any further action on their cases (see Attachment B). The original transactions will then be resubmitted on 10/7/96, with the correct notices generated.

For cases involving a grant **increase** due to a program code change (immediate release), recipients will be mailed a notice today advising them that they may have received a prior incorrect notice. Two versions of the notice are necessary to address two possible reasons for the grant increase. The new notice further indicates that the grant and food stamp calculations are correct and states the *correct* reason for the benefit changes (see Attachments C and D).

## LOCAL OFFICES

Local office workers may receive calls from recipients confused by these notices. We regret any inconvenience this may cause local office staff. **No worker action is necessary** as all corrections are being handled by Central Office staff. These corrections have no effect on any actions which may have been made by workers in the interim. Workers may resume taking case actions on this group when all corrections are completed on 10/7/96.

## REPORTS

For informational purposes, included in this memo is a list of cases affected by this problem. The following offices will receive no list as they have no such cases: Athol, Davis Square, Nantucket, Oak Bluffs and Newmarket Square Homeless Unit. The reports list the office, CAN, name and SSN of the recipient, and the notice type (A, B, C, or D) that was mailed.

## QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about this memo, have your Hotline Designee contact Systems Customer Support Services at (617) 348-5290 or the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478.

**NOTICE TO TAFDC RECIPIENTS**

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) recently sent you a notice telling you that your Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits were being decreased. Please ignore that notice -- it was sent by mistake. Your grant amount (your check) was not changed. DTA apologizes for any confusion this matter may cause you.

Soon you will receive another notice from DTA telling you that your benefits will be decreased. Please pay attention to that new notice and read it carefully.

Please call your worker at the phone number listed above if you have any questions about your case.

**NOTICE TO TAFDC RECIPIENTS**

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) recently sent you a notice telling you that your Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits were being decreased. Please ignore that notice -- it was sent by mistake. As a result of that mistake, DTA decreased your cash benefits. DTA will send you a check to return you to your previous level of benefits. After you are returned to your previous level of TAFDC benefits, your food stamps will decrease to their original level. DTA apologizes for any confusion this matter may cause you.

Soon, however, you will receive another notice from DTA telling you that your TAFDC cash benefits will be decreased. Please pay attention to that new notice and read it carefully.

Please call your worker at the phone number listed above if you have any questions about your case.

If you disagree with the amount of back benefits that you receive or whether you were correctly returned to your previous level of benefits, you have the right to appeal to the Department's Division of Hearings. An appeal form is available at any local DTA office.

To ask about free legal services, please call your local legal services office.

**NOTICE TO TAFDC RECIPIENTS**

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) recently sent you a notice telling you that your Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits were being increased and that your food stamps, if you receive food stamps, were being decreased. The notice may have stated that the reason for the increase in your benefits concerned "vendor payments" or "recoupment." This was not the correct reason.

Your grant amount (your check) should have increased after you received the notice. The real reason for the increase in your check (and decrease in your food stamps, if you receive them) was because of a change in your circumstances. You are not subject to the work requirement and/or the lower benefit amount.

DTA apologizes for any confusion this matter may cause you.

Please call your worker at the phone number listed above if you have any questions about your case.

If you disagree with this notice or the prior notice, you have the right to appeal to the Department's Division of Hearings. An appeal form is available at any local DTA office.

To ask about free legal services, please call your local legal services office.

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Your grant amount (your check) should have increased after you received the notice. The real reason for the increase in your check (and decrease in your food stamps, if you receive them) was because of a change in your countable income.

DTA apologizes for any confusion this matter may cause you.

Please call your worker at the phone number listed above if you have any questions about your case.

If you disagree with this notice or the prior notice, you have the right to appeal to the Department's Division of Hearings. An appeal form is available at any local DTA office.

To ask about free legal services, please call your local legal services office.