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Claire McIntire
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FAX 98-83
Field Operations Memo 98-26
June 18, 1998

TO: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
FROM: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
RE: Assignment of Support Rights and Support Payments on ViewDirect

Background

Federal law requires that a custodial parent applying for or receiving TAFDC must assign his or her rights to child support from the noncustodial parent to the Commonwealth. When the custodial parent assigns rights to child support, it means he or she transfers to the Commonwealth the right to collect and keep the child support. The TAFDC custodial parent assigns these rights by signing an *Assignment of Rights form, the T-A34/36 form.*

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Transitional Assistance Worker with:

- an understanding of the new meaning of assigning support rights to the Commonwealth;
- an overview description of the child support disbursement process used by the Child Support Enforcement Division of the Department of Revenue (DOR) in calculating what portion of the collected child support is due a custodial parent whose rights to support have been assigned; and
- a description of the support payment information found on the revised ViewDirect screens.

**Background
(continued)**

This memo also introduces the terms “custodial parent and noncustodial parent.”

- Custodial parent (CP) is the parent or individual who provides the information for the CA/CS form and assigns his or her support rights to the Commonwealth and lives with the dependent child;
- Noncustodial parent (NCP) is the parent who is obligated to support the dependent child and is absent from the home.

This memo does not change the procedures for issuing the “up to \$50 child support monthly payment” a custodial parent receives when a current child support payment is made by a noncustodial parent.

**Revised
Meaning to
Assignment
of Rights**

Based on federal regulations, “assignment of rights” means that TAFDC applicants and recipients assign all child support to the Commonwealth, **including any arrears due the assistance unit at the time of the TAFDC application and any unpaid child support that accrues while the family receives TAFDC.** The Transitional Assistance Worker is responsible for making sure that custodial parents are aware of what it means to assign their rights to past and future child support.

Example #1: When Mrs. Wyatt, the custodial parent, applies for TAFDC, she is owed \$3000 in child support arrears. By signing the T-A34/36 form, she assigns the **\$3000** child support arrears to the Commonwealth. If the assistance unit receives TAFDC for 12 months and the nonpayment of child support continues to accrue at \$50/week, an additional **\$2600** is added to the \$3000, making **\$5600** the total amount in child support arrears assigned to the Commonwealth.

**URPA:
Unreimbursed
Public
Assistance**

If DOR collects on the child support arrears while the TAFDC case is active, this collection is used to reduce the “unreimbursed public assistance” (*URPA*) balance for the Commonwealth. Even after the TAFDC case is closed, certain child support collections may be retained by the Commonwealth to reduce the URPA. **Unreimbursed public assistance (*URPA*) describes the cumulative amount of assistance received by a custodial parent, minus any child support collections paid by the noncustodial parent while the TAFDC case was active.**

Example #2: Mrs. Wyatt’s assistance unit received only TAFDC at \$579 per month for 12 months, totaling \$6948. If the child support paid by the noncustodial parent during the 12 months was only \$300, then the unreimbursed public assistance is **\$6648**.

(DOR notified the Department when the child support payments were received from the noncustodial parent. Mrs. Wyatt was issued the “up to \$50 maximum child support monthly payment” as appropriate.)

If DOR collects on the child support arrears and the TAFDC case is active, the entire amount of the collected arrears is used to reduce the \$6648 URPA balance. If the *URPA* balance is greater than the collected arrears, Mrs. Wyatt receives \$0 from the collected arrears.

Although the child support arrears are assigned to the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth may not retain more than the amount issued to the assistance unit in TAFDC benefits (*URPA*) which were not repaid by assigned support collection.

DOR is responsible for calculating and disbursing the child support payments to the custodial parent and/or to DTA/Commonwealth.

**Questions
about DOR
Accounts**

For the custodial parent to make informed decisions, the Transitional Assistance Worker should advise custodial parents requesting information about the status of their child support account to call DOR. DOR has mailed instructions on how to contact DOR Customer Service (1-800-332-2733) to all custodial parents known to their computer system. DOR is prepared to answer questions and discuss concerns that the custodial parent may have about the money that would be due him or her when the child support is collected. Specific questions about the calculation and/or the disbursement of the support payments must be directed to DOR.

ViewDirect

Child support payment information is sent weekly from DOR to DTA. Information will be updated every Wednesday to display the most current child support information available. ViewDirect displays information about the amount and to whom the payment was distributed. See Attachments A and B for the revised ViewDirect screens.

To access the ViewDirect screens on the Gateway main menu complete the following:

- on the ViewDirect "Online Report Viewing" System screen, enter 01 for the ViewDirect system; press Enter;
- on the ViewDirect News Facility screen; press Enter;
- on the Viewing Menu screen to view a report (R); press Enter;
- on the Reports screen, put an "X" under Option for DOR/CSE Child Support Data as of : XX date; press Enter;
- on the Report Versions screen, put an "X" under Option for the run date of the report for viewing; press Enter;
- on the Report Section Index screen, move cursor to Command and enter the custodial parent's SSN using dashes between the third and fourth and the fifth and sixth digits of the SSN as, "L space xxx-xx-xxxx"; press Enter; or
on the Report Section Index screen, move through the Section until the custodial parent's SSN appears, put an "X" under Option; press Enter;
- view the Child Support Data - move the cursor back to Command to view the support payment for another custodial parent by entering the SSN.

Fax 98-9 issued instructions and copies of the ViewDirect screens.

Phase One of revising the ViewDirect screens has been completed. Phase Two requires a significant redesign of the existing Child Support System, so it will be available at a later date.

**ViewDirect
(continued)**

The first screen (Attachment A) displays the following information:

- **DOR/CSE Child Support Data as of: mm/dd/ccyy Page: 1**
 - mm/dd/ccyy (century and year: 1998) indicates the date of DOR's child support data
 - Demographic information, including:
 - DTA case SSN DOR NCP SSN
 - DTA case name DOR NCP name**
 - DTA office number NCP residential address
 - DTA office name
 - DOR CP(custodial parent) SSN DOR CP name*
 - DTA Category: the CP receives: TAFDC, EAEDC and/or Food Stamps
 - DTA Status: status of each category: active or closed
 - DTA Open/Close Date: the case start date or the case close date for each category if within 90 days of the report date; or if the CP is a dependent, the dependent start or close date will appear; and if the CP is a CAT 9 dependent, the food stamp start or close date will appear.

* CP (Custodial Parent) is the individual who provides the information for the CA/CS form and assigns support rights to the Commonwealth. The CP may be a dependent in the case, such as a teen parent and his or her own dependent included in his or her mother's TAFDC case. This TAFDC case would have two CPs.

**NCP (Noncustodial Parent) - Only one NCP is listed per screen. Press Enter to move to the next screen if there is more than one NCP associated with the CP.

- **DOR Child Support Information** (information according to DOR's files) includes:
 - **Current Arrears:** the amount of the child support arrears as of the date on screen
 - **Obligation Amt:** the amount that the noncustodial parent is under a court order to pay to the custodial parent
 - **Obligation Freq:** how often the obligation is due, i.e., weekly, monthly
 - **Court Order Date:** the date of the current child support court order
- **DOR Dependent Information** (information according to DOR's files) includes:
 - DEP SSN: SSN of the dependent
 - Dependent Name: name(s) of the dependent(s) for the NCP

**ViewDirect
(continued)**

At the end of the first screen, press F8 to move to additional screens for particular child support details. Press F7 to return to a prior screen.

The second screen (Attachment B) displays the following information:

- **Header information**, identical information as on the previous screen, except page designation is **Page: 2**
- **DOR Distribution Information** (information according to DOR's files)
 - **Receipt Date**: the date DOR received the support payment, by a direct payment or wage assignment. All support payments made during the past 120 days will be listed. If no support payment has been made within the past 120 days, then "No Payments" will be displayed
 - **Distributed Date**: the date the payment was distributed to the custodial parent or agency
 - **Payment Amount**: the amount of the child support payment that was distributed to the CP or agency
 - **Payment Distributed to**: DOR distributes the payments to the CP (custodial parent) or agency (DTA or DSS)
 - When the support payments are on behalf of a child not on TAFDC, such as an SSI child, a child born after the family cap, or a sanctioned TAFDC dependent, then the payments are distributed to the custodial parent because the child is not listed as active on TAFDC.
 - When the support payments are on behalf of a child active on TAFDC, then the payment is distributed to DTA.
 - **Aid Category**: either PA or non-PA
 - PA means the dependent is receiving TAFDC or state or federal foster care benefits.
 - non-PA means the dependent is receiving SSI, EAEDC or Food Stamp benefits, or is not receiving any public assistance.

If a discrepancy in the information from DOR is found in viewing the child support data of ViewDirect, the Transitional Assistance Worker must contact a DOR Child Support Enforcement liaison for his or her Transitional Assistance Office to discuss the issue.

Questions

If you have any questions. Please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems questions should be directed to Customer Service Center at (617) 348-5290.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE
DOR/CSE CHILD SUPPORT DATA AS OF: 05/28/1998

PAGE: 1

DTA CASE SSN : 04- [REDACTED] DOR NCP SSN : [REDACTED]
DTA CASE NAME : [REDACTED] DOR NCP NAME : [REDACTED]
DTA OFF NUM : 352 NCP RES ADDR : [REDACTED] ST [REDACTED]
DTA OFF NAME : WORCESTER WORCESTER MA 016 [REDACTED]
DOR CP SSN : [REDACTED]
DOR CP NAME : [REDACTED]

DTA CATEGORY : TAFDC FS
DTA STATUS : ACTIVE ACTIVE
DTA OPEN/CLOSE DT: 05/12/1998 05/12/1998

----- DOR CHILD SUPPORT INFORMATION -----

CURRENT ARREARS : \$651.58
OBLIGATION AMT : \$40.00
OBLIGATION FREQ : WEEKLY
COURT ORDER DATE: 10/05/1994

----- DOR DEPENDENT INFORMATION -----

DEP SSN DEPENDENT NAME

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE
DOR/CSE CHILD SUPPORT DATA AS OF: 05/28/1998

PAGE: 2

DTA CASE SSN : 04-
DTA CASE NAME :
DTA OFF NUM : 352
DTA OFF NAME : WORCESTER
DOR CP SSN :
DOR CP NAME :
DOR NCP SSN :
DOR NCP NAME :
NCP RES ADDR :
WORCESTER ST
MA 0160

----- DOR DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION -----

RECEIPT DATE	DISTRIBUTION DATE	PAYMENT AMOUNT	PAYMENT DISTRIBUTED TO	AID CATEGORY
05/07/1998	05/14/1998	\$100.00	CP	NON-PA
05/07/1998	05/07/1998	\$100.00	CP	NON-PA
04/28/1998	05/14/1998	\$100.00	CP	NON-PA
04/28/1998	04/28/1998	\$100.00	CP	NON-PA
04/11/1998	04/11/1998	\$186.95	AGENCY	PA
03/30/1998	03/30/1998	\$50.00	AGENCY	PA
03/21/1998	03/21/1998	\$50.00	AGENCY	PA
03/16/1998	03/16/1998	\$50.00	AGENCY	PA
03/07/1998	03/07/1998	\$50.00	AGENCY	PA