



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

Argeo Paul Cellucci
Governor

Jane Swift
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William D. O'Leary
Secretary

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Field Operations Memo 99-13
July 6, 1999

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: Procedures for Families in Shelters

Background

The number of families seeking temporary emergency shelter placements and the length of stay for families in the shelters have been increasing. This memo transmits new procedures affecting families applying for or receiving temporary emergency shelter benefits, the Housing Search Worker, the representative of the shelter and the Transitional Assistance Worker or the Homeless Coordinator. These procedures are designed to ensure that all appropriate efforts are being made to obtain safe, permanent housing for temporarily homeless families. These procedures are effective on July 6, 1999.

New Procedures

The new procedures include two new EA forms and case conferences as described below:

- Completion of the new *Acknowledgment of Recipient Responsibilities While in a Temporary Emergency Shelter* (TESR-3) form (Attachment A) by the Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator and EA shelter applicant or current EA shelter recipient;
- Completion of the new *Housing Search Activities* (EA-5) form (Attachment B) by the Housing Search Worker and the EA shelter recipient; and
- Case conferences to discuss housing search activities will be held regularly with the Housing Search Worker, Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator, shelter representative and when appropriate, the EA shelter recipient.

**Worker
Responsibilities**

- 1) The Transitional Assistance Worker or the Homeless Coordinator:
- ensures the applicant or recipient and each adult member in the household, read and understand the activities identified on the ***Recipient Responsibilities While in a Temporary Emergency Shelter*** (TESR-1) form;
 - has the applicant or recipient and each adult member in the household sign the new ***Acknowledgment of Recipient Responsibilities While in a Temporary Emergency Shelter*** (TESR-3) form acknowledging the responsibilities for finding safe, permanent housing while in a shelter.
 - for applications for EA shelter benefits filed on or after 7/6/99, the TESA-3 form is signed when the EA-6, ***Emergency Assistance Application***, is completed. An EA application is not considered complete if this form is not signed by the applicant and each adult member in the household;
 - for applications for EA shelter benefits filed before 7/6/99, the TESA-3 form should be signed as soon as possible. The Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator should, if possible, schedule an appointment with the recipient to coincide with another appointment in the Transitional Assistance Office;
 - signs the TESA-3 after the applicant or recipient and each adult member in the household have signed; and
 - makes three copies of the TESA-3:
 - one for the applicant or recipient, and
 - the remaining two for the Housing Search Worker and the shelter where the EA family was or will be placed.

File the original TESA-3 in the case record as the Housing Search Worker or the shelter may not be known when the TESA-3 is completed.

Each applicant for temporary emergency shelter benefits must receive a copy of the TESA-1 and TESA-3 forms when the EA application is filed. Current recipients of temporary emergency shelter benefits were given the TESA-1 when their EA applications were filed; therefore, only the TESA-3 needs to be given to the recipient.

EA-5 Form

- 2) The EA recipient and the Housing Search Worker complete the *Housing Search Activities* (EA-5) form after the recipient has been in the shelter for 30 days and monthly thereafter.
- The EA-5 captures specific information about the EA recipient's housing search activities for the past 30 days;
 - The EA-5 must be signed by the recipient, each adult member in the household, the Housing Search Worker and the Shelter Director verifying its accuracy;
 - The completed EA-5 form provides documentation to the Department of the recipient's efforts to obtain safe, permanent housing;
 - Refusal of the recipient or each adult member in the household to sign the EA-5 form is an instance of noncompliance;
 - The Housing Search Worker faxes/sends the completed EA-5 to the Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator for review. The information collected on the EA-5 will be discussed at the case conference between the Housing Search Worker and the Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator; and
 - The Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator is responsible for following up with the Housing Search Worker when an EA-5 is not received by the last day of the month.

Completing the EA-5 does not eliminate the EA shelter requirement that the recipient meet at least weekly with the Housing Search Worker. If it is determined during one of these weekly meetings that the recipient is not meeting his or her housing search requirements, the Housing Search Worker or shelter must report this as noncompliance to the appropriate Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator.

The Housing Search Worker should use the recipient-signed TESR-3 form as a reminder to the recipient of his or her responsibilities in doing housing search.

All Housing Search Workers and shelter providers have been informed of the new procedures for documenting the housing search activities on the EA-5 form.

**Case
Conferences**

3) The Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator will schedule the following case conferences in the Transitional Assistance Office, the shelter or in a mutually agreed to location with the case conference participants:

- A case conference should occur on a regular basis between the Housing Search Worker, the Transitional Assistance Worker/ Homeless Coordinator and the shelter's representative, if appropriate, to review and discuss the housing search progress of particular recipients who are having difficulty in finding permanent housing. The results of this case conference may prompt another case conference that includes the recipient.
- A case conference with the EA recipient should occur on a regular basis when either the Housing Search Worker or the Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator believes that a joint conference is necessary for everyone to discuss the recipient's housing search activities and his or her progress toward finding safe, permanent housing, barriers and ways to overcome the barriers.

This joint case conference is especially important for an EA recipient who has been in shelter for at least six months. Prior to this case conference, the Housing Search Worker must provide previously gathered documentation of the recipient's housing search activities to the Transitional Assistance Worker /Homeless Coordinator.

Case conferences will continue until the EA recipient secures safe, permanent housing. If subsequent meetings are required, the documentation previously submitted to the Transitional Assistance Worker/Homeless Coordinator does not have to be reproduced. A recipient failing to attend or reschedule the case conference meeting will be in noncompliance with the temporary emergency shelter requirements in 106 CMR 309.040(B)(7)(d) and must be referred to the Noncompliance Committee.

All shelter providers have been sent a letter (Attachment C) informing the shelter's Director and the Housing Search Worker that the Department will schedule case conferences to discuss the housing plans of the homeless families.

Questions

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



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Acknowledgement of Recipient Responsibilities While in Temporary Emergency Shelter

I (we) agree to meet the responsibilities and continue to meet the responsibilities listed on the *Recipient Responsibilities While in a Temporary Emergency Shelter* (TESR-1) form. I have received a copy of the *Recipient Responsibilities While in a Temporary Emergency Shelter* form.

Applicant/Recipient Signature

Date

Other Adult Household Member Signature

Date

TAO Worker or Homeless Coordinator Signature

Date

Original to Case Record Copy to Applicant/Recipient, Housing Search Worker, Shelter



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Reconocimiento de las responsabilidades del Beneficiario mientras está en albergue de emergencia temporal

Estoy (estamos) de acuerdo en cumplir con las responsabilidades y en continuar cumpliendo con las responsabilidades listadas en el formulario *Responsabilidades del Beneficiario mientras está en un albergue de emergencia temporal* (TESR-1). He recibido una copia del formulario *Responsabilidades del Beneficiario mientras está en un albergue de emergencia temporal*.

Firma del Solicitante/Beneficiario

Fecha

Firma de otro adulto miembro de la familia

Fecha

Firma del Trabajador Social De Asistencia Transicional o
Firma del Coordinador de la Gente sin Hogar

Fecha



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Housing Search Activities

(To be completed by the Housing Search Worker and EA adult household members)

Month/Year _____

Name of Family (first, last) _____

Social Security Number _____

TAO _____

Shelter Name _____

Family Size _____

Shelter Start Date _____

- Each adult household member and the Housing Search Worker must complete this form every month indicating the housing search activities you did during the past 30 days.
- Each adult household member, the Housing Search Worker and the Shelter Director must sign the form certifying that the information provided is accurate.
- Use the reverse side of this page or attach another sheet of paper if additional space is needed.

Were housing search activities completed four days each week?

yes no during the week(s) of _____, reason _____

* Failing to do housing search activities is a reason for noncompliance and must be reported.

Comments about housing search activities _____

Did meetings with the Housing Search Worker happen at least once per week?

yes no during the week(s) of _____, reason _____

* Failing to attend the meeting is a reason for noncompliance and must be reported.

Comments about housing search progress _____

Other housing search activities completed within the past 30 days include: _____

Unsubsidized Housing Write the landlord's name or realtor, the housing unit's address and the reason the housing unit was not accepted.

Landlord/Realtor	Telephone Number	Unit Address	Rent	Reason Not Taken
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	

Public Housing

Application completed at _____ on _____. Wait-listed until _____
(Name of Housing Authority) (Date)

Application completed at _____ on _____. Wait-listed until _____
(Name of Housing Authority) (Date)

Application completed at _____ on _____. Wait-listed until _____
(Name of Housing Authority) (Date)

Is additional information or proof needed to process the application? yes no

What information/proof is outstanding? _____

Subsidized Housing

Application was completed at _____ on _____.
(Name of Housing Agency/Authority) (Date)

Is additional information or proof needed to process the application? yes no

What information/proof is outstanding? _____

Issue date of certificate is _____. Expiration date of certificate is _____.

Why has permanent housing not been found? List barriers to securing permanent housing and ways to overcome the barriers.

Use this space for additional comments, follow-up to the prior month's activities, and to report any changes in income, assets, household size, child(ren)'s school, etc.

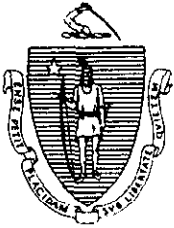
I certify that the information provided on this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Recipient Signature Date

Other Adult Household Member Signature(s) Date

Housing Search Worker Signature Date

Shelter Director Signature Date



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June 9, 1999

Dear Provider,

I am asking you to meet with DTA staff each month to conduct case conferences on the homeless EA families you have in your facility(ies). These meetings provide an opportunity to determine that adequate plans are being developed to identify and eliminate barriers that may prevent families from securing permanent housing and to provide documentation of the weekly housing search efforts of the families. These case conferences should also be used to discuss any programmatic or behavioral issues such as non-compliance which can be mutually addressed with the families.

Initially, we will be conferencing on those families who have been homeless for six months or longer. Over the next few months we plan to have reviewed the entire caseload and then continue to meet on a monthly basis on all cases. The sooner there is a comprehensive housing development plan in place for a family, the sooner these families can transition not only into permanent housing but also into self sufficiency. Your cooperation in this effort is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Claire McIntire".

Claire McIntire
Commissioner