



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


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Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2009-38
June 25, 2009

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: SNAP Elderly/Disabled Households and 24-Month Certification Period

Background

Field Operations Memo 2008-14 transmitted procedures for extending certification periods for many SNAP households, including assigning 24-month certification periods for all elderly/disabled households. However, due to current BEACON constraints, a 24-month certification period can be assigned only to households that contain only adult members that are:

- age 61 and older; or
- receiving or certified to receive SSI benefits.

To allow all eligible elderly/disabled households to have 24-month certification periods, the Department plans to:

- change BEACON functionality to allow case managers to assign a 24-month certification to all elderly/disabled households who meet the criteria of 106 CMR 361.210; and
- run a data-fix in BEACON to extend the certification period of elderly/disabled households that were certified for less than 24-months.

Purpose of Memo

This Field Operations Memo:

- discusses the BEACON actions that implement this change;
 - describes the related notice; and
 - transmits case manager procedures for assigning certification periods for elderly/disabled households.
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BEACON Changes BEACON Increment 2.1.25a will be released over the weekend of June 27-28, and as of Monday June 29th case managers will be able to assign a 24-month certification to all elder/disabled households who meet the requirements of 106 CMR 361.210.

BEACON has identified approximately 35,000 households that currently have less than a 24-month certification and all adult household members are elderly or disabled. Over the weekend of June 27-28 BEACON will extend the certification periods of these households to 24-months from the initial certification date. This will include households with:

- elderly individuals who are 60 years old; and
- disabled persons receiving or certified to receive any of the following:
 - MassHealth Disability Insurance;
 - Railroad Retirement;
 - Government disability retirement;
 - Aid to Blind benefits;
 - RSDI;
 - Totally disabled veteran benefits; or
 - Veterans' benefits for a disabled child or spouse of a deceased veteran.

A notice (see Attachment A) will be automatically sent to all the affected households that;

- tells the household that the certification period is being extended;
- provides the new certification ending date; and
- reminds the client of the need to report any changes to household circumstances.

For example, a household originally certified from 10/1/2008 through 9/30/2009 will receive a notice advising that the SNAP benefits will be extended through 9/30/2010.

An explanation of the extension will also automatically be entered into the BEACON Narratives tab stating, "12 months added to reevaluation period for elderly/disabled household."

**Case Manager
Responsibilities**

All elderly/disabled households that meet the requirement of 106 CMR 361.210 must be given a 24-month certification unless they meet an exception outlined in Field Operations Memo 2008-14: *Extending Food Stamp Certification Periods*. For example, consistent with current policy, elderly/disabled households that include employed individuals must be assigned the Universal Semi-Annual Reporting certification type. Households with self-employment income must be given a one year certification.

Note: Households with children are allowed a 24-month certification period, provided all adult members meet the elderly/disabled requirements.

**12-Month Interim
Contact**

All households with a 24-month certification period, including households that have been adjusted to a 24-month certification, will receive at the 12-month mark the interim notice for elderly/disabled households that was introduced in Field Operations Memo 2009-31: Interim Contact with Certain SNAP Households. Case managers must follow the procedures outlined in that memo.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

Attachment A

310 State Street CAN 710
Springfield, MA 01105

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante – Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Mary Jones
101 Main St.
Springfield, MA 01105

999-99-9999
Springfield State TAO - DTA

07/01/2009

Dear Mary Jones:

The Department is extending the certification period of your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) case (formerly food stamps) and will continue your SNAP benefits until 06/13/2010.

The regulation used in making this decision is 106 CMR 364.700.

During your certification period, if you have changes in your income or household to report or if you are not sure of what changes to report and you need help, please call 508-999-9999 and ask for your case manager Mary Smith.

You may contact Recipient Services at 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this letter.