



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2003-6
February 5, 2003

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  **Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**

Re: Employment Services Program (ESP) Shutdown

Overview

Due to a \$10 million reduction in funding the Employment Services Program (ESP) is shutting down for the remainder of FY 03. This memo provides initial information on the impact of this \$10 million reduction. Additional information will be issued as soon as possible regarding TAO responsibilities and BEACON procedures.

**ESP
Shutdown**

Due to the budget reduction, the Department has lost its funding for ESP for the remainder of the fiscal year. Vendors have been notified that they will receive no reimbursement from DTA for service provided after February 4, 2003.

The shutdown of ESP also eliminates transportation payments to a TAFDC recipient.

Programs impacted by this lack of funding include:

- Basic and Structured Job Search including Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants (MORI) job search;
 - Community Colleges Skills Program (Holyoke, Lowell, Springfield and Westfield);
 - Education, Skills Training and Post-Employment Services (SDAs),
 - Payments for GED Testing;
 - Supported Work;
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**ESP
Shutdown
(continued)**

- Vocational Evaluations;
- Young Parents Program (YPP);
- Franklin Hampshire Regional Transit Authority;
- Access to Jobs program as of February 7, 2003; and
- Transportation payments including a BEACON “Related Benefit.”

Note: Transportation costs incurred through January 31, 2003 but claimed in February may be authorized.

If a TAO Director is unsure whether a particular program is ESP funded, he or she should contact the appropriate Contract Manager in the Central Office ESP Unit.

Child-care requests may continue to be authorized if the vendor continues the program (*as it may have other funding sources*) and the recipient continues to attend or the recipient is participating in a non-ESP funded program. If the vendor discontinues the program, the child-care authorization must be terminated.

Community Service placements continue to be available.

**Impact Of ESP
Shutdown for
Current
TAFDC
Recipients**

The following describes the impact of the ESP shutdown for current TAFDC recipients:

- Current TAFDC recipients enrolled in Department-funded ESP programs:

Note: The Department anticipates that vendors will terminate their programs when they receive notification that funding has ended.

- ♦ *If a vendor terminates its program, the AU Manager must:*
 - terminate any child care which has been authorized;
 - insure that no transportation payments for costs incurred after January 31, 2003 are authorized on BEACON; and
 - inform the recipient of the availability of services through Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers.
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**Impact Of ESP
Shutdown for
Current
TAFDC
Recipients
(continued)**

- ◆ *If a vendor continues its program, the AU Manager must:*
 - take no action to terminate child-care service until the program actually ends; but
 - inform the recipient that no transportation payments will be authorized for costs incurred after January 31, 2003.
 - Current TAFDC recipients enrolled in non-ESP funded programs, such as a Community College:
 - ◆ participation in the program is not impacted by this funding issue;
 - ◆ child care should continue to be authorized; but
 - ◆ inform the recipient that no transportation payments will be authorized for costs incurred after January 31, 2003.
 - Current TAFDC recipients in the last three months of time-limited benefits or in an Extension and who are participating in Structured Job Search should be referred to:
 - ◆ a Community Service placement, if available; and
 - ◆ Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers; but
 - ◆ be informed that no transportation payments will be authorized for costs incurred after January 31, 2003.
 - Current TAFDC recipients who are employed:
 - ◆ may continue to have child care authorized; but
 - ◆ if they have been utilizing Access to Jobs for transportation to work, this service will not be available after February 7, 2003.
 - Current Work Program required TAFDC recipients at the end of their 60-day job search period who have not found employment should be referred to a Community Service placement, if available. If meeting their Work Program requirement through Community Service, they may also volunteer to participate in a non-ESP funded program. They should also be referred to Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers.
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Impact Of ESP Shutdown For TAFDC Applicants

The following describes the impact of ESP Shutdown for TAFDC applicants.

TAFDC applicants who are Work Program required:

- Applicants continue to receive an initial 60-day job search period in which to look for work.
- Applicants who have used their 60-day job search period should be referred to a Community Service placement, if available. If meeting their Work Program requirement through Community Service, they may also volunteer to participate in a non-ESP funded program. They should also be referred to Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers.

TAFDC applicants who are not Work Program required:

- Explain to the applicant that ESP-funded programs are not available but that non-ESP funded programs continue to be available.
- If they wish to participate in a non-ESP funded program make the appropriate referral. If child care is needed, authorize child care in the usual manner. Explain that no transportation payments are available.

Failure To Participate For Work Program Required Recipients

Work Program required recipients who are no longer able to meet the requirement because of lack of transportation services or lack of a Community Service site, should not be sanctioned for failure to meet the Work Program requirement until further notice.

These recipients should be referred to Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers.

Young Parents Program (YPP)

Teens Parents participating in a YPP who are no longer able to participate because the vendor terminates the program, should not be sanctioned until further notice. The Teen Parent Specialist should assist the teen parent in finding an alternative program. Until an alternative program is located the teen parent is temporarily excused from meeting the education requirement.

If the vendor discontinues the YPP, the child-care authorization must be terminated. If the vendor continues the YPP, child-care requests must continue to be authorized.

Food Stamp Program

The ESP shutdown does not impact the FS/WP and FS/ET.

**Additional
Instructions**

TAOs will receive additional instructions for material covered in this memo and other procedures relating to the ESP shutdown.

Questions

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