



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2008-55
October 31, 2008

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From: John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: EA – Provision of “Do You Have A Disability” Information

Background DTA will now provide information regarding the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) to all families who are approved for EA, as well as TAFDC applicants and clients.

Case Manager Responsibilities Effective immediately, the *Do You Have A Disability* informational sheet (Attachment A) must be given to every EA family who has been approved for EA benefits prior to their placement in shelter. Prior to giving the information sheet, the case manager or homeless coordinator must enter the names of the TAO’s ADA Accommodation Team Members on the informational sheet.

Reminder The *Do You Have A Disability* informational sheet must also be given to the TAFDC grantee:

- at application,
- at eligibility reviews,
- when the individual requests a disability exemption,
- before the Employment Development Plan (EDP) is created or updated,
- when transition plans are developed, or
- when extension plans/agreements are developed.

Refer to Field Operations Memo 2005-58 for complete instructions.

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



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

DO YOU HAVE A DISABILITY?

We may be able to help. A law known as the Americans with Disabilities Act (**ADA**) guarantees that persons with disabilities get equal access to government services as those who are not disabled. If you are disabled, we can give you special help at application, with verification, in participating in the employment services and work programs, during the disability review process or whenever it is needed. One way DTA can do this is by making **reasonable accommodations**.

Who is disabled under the ADA? Generally, persons with a disability that “substantially impairs” a major life activity are covered by the ADA. Disabilities can be:

- **Physical** (such as blindness or paralysis of the legs)
- **Mental** (including depression and anxiety disorders); or
- **Learning** (for example, if you have difficulty learning or understanding what you read or hear)

What is a reasonable accommodation? If your disability prevents you from accessing Department programs, makes it hard for you to use Department programs or meet our requirements, you may be able to get special help from us or a Department service provider---a reasonable accommodation. For example, if you are in a wheelchair, we can find a work program that is accessible to you. Or if you have a learning disability, we can read your notices out loud to you. There are many types of accommodations available depending upon your personal situation.

How can I get a reasonable accommodation? If you are having trouble accessing our programs or meeting Department requirements, ask your case manager for help. Your case manager will work with you and the office ADA Accommodation Team to see if you are eligible for an ADA accommodation. Although you can ask for an ADA accommodation at any time, it is best to do it as soon as possible.

If the ADA Accommodation Team denies you a reasonable accommodation, you can ask us to reconsider through the Central Office ADA Accommodation Team. If that request is denied, you can appeal to the Division of Hearings or the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

ADA Accommodation Team Members: _____

IMPORTANT! FREE Learning Disability Screenings: All TAFDC applicants and clients are eligible for a free learning disability screening. If you have trouble reading, writing or understanding information, you may want to be screened. If your screening indicates a learning issue and you wish to participate in the Employment Services Program, we will set up and pay for an in-depth assessment. We will then be able to recommend ways to help you learn and improve your work opportunities. Ask your case manager about free screenings!

Note: If you have already been diagnosed with a learning disability, provide us with any information you have so we can help you right away.