

like finding a client the job that allows her to close her case or maintain her housing. But sometimes it means small steps, such as getting a client accustomed to the routine of waking up in the morning and participating in a community service placement or vocational rehabilitation routine. It can involve helping a teen parent stay in school so that she can improve her skills. Or, in many cases, it involves providing the supports that allow a client to work her way off the caseload while knowing that her family's nutritional needs will be met, even after her cash case closes. These small steps have a large and lasting impact on families.

Finally, fulfilling the commitment we have to our clients means delivering programs and services efficiently, especially to those who are employed. In part, this means looking for new ways to deliver benefits, such as taking applications through the Internet or doing telephone interviews. Instead of delaying the application process by waiting for a face-to-face meeting, time-saving measures such as these expedite food stamp benefit delivery. The data collection potential through HMIS is also improving our Department's efficiency by providing us with a more complete picture of who our homeless clients are so that we can reduce the number of individuals and families who are faced with this problem. In the CAFE Program, screening those who may have learning disabilities or require special referrals also leads to greater efficiency by directly connecting our clients to the right training and services in a timely fashion.

Continuing to improve our programs requires all of us to work together. All of us who are in local TAOs working directly with clients, as well as those who develop policy, craft programs, implement procedures or maintain our computers play a key role in supporting our Department's efforts. I want to thank you for continuing to build an organization that all of us can be proud of.

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner

From the Hotline

- Q.** A man came into our office to apply for help with the payment of funeral and burial expenses for his wife. He has reported that he has \$1,600.00 in his savings account. Is he eligible for this benefit?
- A.** No. To be eligible for the funeral and burial payment, the assets of the decedent and any financially responsible relatives, such as a spouse, must be less than \$1,500.00. This individual is therefore ineligible for the funeral and burial payment. Refer to 106 CMR 705.710 and *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, pages IV-D-1 through IV-D-5 for more information.
- Q.** A woman came into our office today to apply for the funeral and burial payment. When I asked if she owned any assets, she verified that she has \$700.00 in a savings account. How do I treat this asset?
- A.** In this case, the assets available to this woman or her husband must be deducted from the

maximum allowable cost of the funeral and burial. While the funeral and burial costs may not exceed \$1,500.00, the Department will pay the balance after any available assets have been deducted, up to \$1,100.00. In this case, the Department would pay \$400.00 in a funeral and burial benefit to this woman. For more information on how to treat countable assets when paying funeral and burial expenses, refer to additional examples given in *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, pages IV-D-2 and IV-D-3.

- Q.** A food stamp applicant has reported owning a burial lot along with a prepaid funeral arrangement. She has verified that this asset is valued at \$1,500.00. How do I consider this asset in the Food Stamp Program?
- A.** In the Food Stamp Program, a burial lot with a prepaid funeral arrangement is considered a noncountable asset, as long as the value of the asset does not exceed \$1,500.00.

- Q.** What if a food stamp applicant reported that the value of her prepaid funeral arrangement was actually \$1,600.00? Do I count the entire asset or just a portion of this asset?
- A.** In the Food Stamp Program, \$100.00 of the \$1,600.00 prepaid funeral arrangement would be considered a countable asset. For more information on noncountable assets in the Food Stamp Program, refer to 106 CMR 363.140. Please note that a prepaid funeral arrangement that is inaccessible is noncountable.

From the Forms File

Revised Forms

15-205-0306-05

15-206-0306-05

LDSC (Rev. 3/2006)

Learning Disability Screening Consent/Declination Form

Language was added to the form telling the applicant or recipient that he or she may withdraw the waiver of the screening or assessment at any time. Space has also been added to document additional screening offers. Please refer to Field Operations Memo 2006-14A for more information.

04-080-0306-05

F&B-1 (Rev. 3/2006)

Application for Payment of Funeral and Burial Expenses

This form has been revised to reflect a procedural change in the payment of benefits when the decedent has expressed a preference for cremation or the decedent's spouse/next of kin knows of the decedent's preference for cremation. Please refer to BEACON User's Guide Update 068 for more information.

The following form is now available in Spanish.

13-251-0306-05(S)

APP St (Rev. 3/2006)

Applicant's Statement for Emergency Assistance Shelter

Obsolete Form

16-016-0496-05

Image 2 (4/96)

Request for Image