

denials is timeliness. This happens when the application is denied *before* the 30th day for failure to provide verifications or failure to complete the application process. While an application can be denied before the 30th day because of a financial (e.g., over income) or non-financial (e.g., ineligible student) reason, no application should ever be denied before day 30 for failure to provide verifications or failure to complete the application process.

### **What's an AU Manager to Do?**

AU Managers must continue to follow the procedures outlined in Field Operations Memo 2006-38 for processing FS applications. Remember that a combined cash/FS application must be processed with two timeliness standards in mind. Do not confuse cash program time frames with FS Program time frames. AU Managers must give the applicant a BEACON-generated verification checklist and assist the applicant if there is difficulty obtaining a particular verification. AU Managers must be mindful of which verifications are required for food stamps and which are optional. Finally, all verifications received should be promptly entered in BEACON so that an accurate electronic record of the AU is maintained.

## **Closings**

Recently an AU was inappropriately closed because the recipient was using her EBT card out of state.

### **What's an AU Manager to Do?**

When a recipient uses his or her EBT card out of state for an extended period of time, the AU Manager, before taking action on the AU, must follow up to determine if a change in address or change in Massachusetts residency has occurred. The recipient may have a legitimate reason for accessing FS benefits out of state for extended periods of time. In this particular AU, the recipient was seeking employment out of state and caring for an ill relative. However, the recipient maintained Massachusetts residency and was still eligible for FS benefits in this state.

## **From the Hotline**

The questions and answers below concern the Relocation Benefit. More details on this topic can be found in the Transitional Cash Assistance Program regulations at 106 CMR 705.350.

- Q.** If a TAFDC mother requests a Relocation Benefit, is she allowed to use a portion of the benefit to purchase a bed, crib or refrigerator?
- A.** Yes, any of these items could be purchased with the Relocation Benefit, but only when and if the lack of these items prevents the mother from relocating to permanent housing.

For example, a nine-month-old baby may have never received the crib payment available through our Department. (Refer to 106 CMR 705.600.) This piece of furniture/equipment is a safety imperative and fills a fundamental need. Therefore, using the Relocation Benefit for this purpose is appropriate.

- Q.** Does this mean that any piece of furniture can be purchased with the Relocation Benefit?
- A.** No. Certain items of furniture would likely never prevent a family from moving into a permanent location under any circumstances. However, the only specifications in the regulations are related to an assistance unit's inability to secure permanent housing. Since there may be many contingencies

that need to be addressed before a family can move into permanent housing, the regulations do not rule out any one specific item or service.

- Q.** I have a TAFDC family currently staying at a non-EA-funded shelter. Is this family eligible for the Relocation Benefit?
- A.** Yes, as long as the family has been homeless, in shelter for at least 60 days and meets the other requirements at 106 CMR 705.350. Remember, the Relocation Benefit is not an EA benefit.
- Q.** I have a TAFDC family currently staying at a domestic violence shelter. Is this family eligible for the Relocation Benefit?
- A.** Yes, as long as the family has been homeless, in shelter for at least 60 days and meets the other requirements at 106 CMR 705.350. The same applies to a TAFDC homeless family staying at a substance abuse shelter as well as a teen parent, 18 or 19 years of age, in a teen structured living program for 60 days or more who meets the conditions for living independently, as specified in 106 CMR 203.640.
- Q.** I have a TAFDC family that is moving into transitional housing. Is this family eligible for a Relocation Benefit?
- A.** No. Transitional housing is not considered permanent housing. However, if the family leaves the transitional housing for a permanent location and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria, then a Relocation Benefit may be issued once the more permanent location is found.

Note: For Food Stamp Program purposes, the Relocation Benefit is considered an excluded vendor payment, per 106 CMR 363.230(B).

The second question and answer in “*From the Hotline*” (December 2006) has been removed from the on-line version. The corrected version is below.

- Q.** A father with over five years of Legal Permanent Resident status has been receiving food stamp benefits and TAFDC. He lives with his two children. One of his children has an eligible noncitizen status but was recently taken out of the TAFDC AU because she is 18 years old. The other child is only ten years of age, but he doesn't have an eligible noncitizen status for either

TAFDC or the Food Stamp Program. Can I leave the father on TAFDC as an open AU consisting of one individual?

- A.** No. Although a parent with an only child on SSI may continue receiving TAFDC benefits as an AU of one person, there is no regulation that allows for this arrangement when the only otherwise eligible child in the home does not meet our noncitizen requirements. Refer to 106 CMR 204.305(E).

If otherwise eligible, the father and the 18-year-old eligible noncitizen child may continue receiving food stamp benefits as an AU of two individuals.

## **From the Forms File**

### **New Poster**

26-406-0107-05

26-407-0107-05 (S)

OCR Poster 2 (1/2007)

*Notice of Resolution Agreement*

This poster must be displayed in TAO waiting areas as part of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and DTA Agreement regarding the Learning Disabled. Please refer to Field Operations Memo 2007-1 for more information.