



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance

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Online Guide Transmittal 2020-46
June 25, 2020

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: Cross Program: Determining Prorated Benefit Amount

Overview

Based on a reexamination of federal and state regulations, the Department is clarifying the method of calculating prorated benefits for SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC.

A new Retro Benefit Calculation tool has been developed so staff do not have to manually calculate related benefits. This new standardized tool must be used by all DTA staff when calculating prorated benefits. The Retro Benefit Calculation tool will be located on the BEACON Home page under Useful links.

Massachusetts utilizes a standard 30-day cyclical benefit month to determine benefit amount, related benefits must not be calculated based on a 365-day year. The Retro Benefit Calculation Tool must be used to calculate prorated benefits.

This update obsoletes guidance previously found in the Related Benefits/ Supplemental Payments Standardization Webinar found in Policy Online.

Purpose

The purpose of this transmittal is to advise staff of new procedures and Online Guide updates to better ensure the accurate calculation of prorated benefits amount for SNAP, TAFDC and EAEDC.

Calculating a Prorated Benefit

When a household is owed a related benefit, staff are instructed to calculate the benefit using The Retro Benefit Calculation tool. To calculate the related benefit, the tool uses:

$$\text{full month's benefit} \times \frac{(31 - \text{date of application or date of change})}{30}$$

Note: Date of application or date of change means the number of days in the cyclical month before date of application/date of change.

The Retro Benefit Calculation Tool

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the case manager will either utilize the Proration or Benefit Change option of the calculation tool.

Important:

- A Proration calculation is used when the client is owed related benefits and has not received any benefits for that period.
- The Benefit Amount Change calculation is used when the client has received benefits, but a change occurred and as a result the client should have received a higher or lower benefit amount for a period.

If a household's benefit amount changed between benefit payment cycles due to changes in case circumstances, resulting in multiple benefit payment cycles over a time period, a case manager will need to complete multiple calculations to determine an accurate related benefit.

Note: In the SNAP calculation options, the prorated amount is always rounded down to the nearest whole dollar. The Retro Owed/Overpayment will always display a whole number. Example: client is owed \$166 in related benefits not \$166.99.

Note: In the TAFDC and EAEDC calculation options, the Retro Owed/Overpayment will always display the cents amount. The tool will only use standard round rules when determining the benefit amount if it is past the second decimal spot. Examples: if the calculation resulted in \$23.456 the tool will round the amount up to

\$23.46. If the calculation resulted in \$345.654 the tool will round the amount down to \$345.65.

Calculating a Prorated Benefit (Continued)

The calculation tool requires the case manager to know the monthly benefit amount. If the monthly benefit amount is not available in EBC results, the What If tool must be used. For the Proration calculation, the case manager needs to know the current monthly benefit amount. For the Benefit Change calculation, the case manager needs to know the prior monthly benefit amount and the current or new monthly benefit amount.

Note: If the result is a negative number, DTA does not owe the client a related benefit. A negative number will be displayed. Staff must review policy and procedures to determine if an overpayment needs to be created.

If an overpayment needs to be created, staff must attach the calculation of the overpayment to the narrative.

New Online Guide Pages

Topic: Cross Program
Book: Retro/Overpayment Benefit Calculation Tool
Page: Determining Prorated Benefit Amount

Topic: Cross Program
Book: Retro/Overpayment Benefit Calculation Tool
Page: Determining Prorated Benefit Amount Qs & As

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email the DTA Mailbox. Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
