



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Operations Memo 2013-47
September 5, 2013

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Lydia Conley, Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: TAFDC and EAEDC – Verifications

Overview

In order to establish eligibility for assistance, applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as clients) must meet financial and nonfinancial eligibility requirements. Clients must submit verifications, as required by policy, to demonstrate that they meet these eligibility requirements.

Purpose of Memo

This Operations Memo:

- advises case managers about procedures for documenting efforts to obtain documentary and collateral verifications before accepting self-declarations;
 - reminds staff about client responsibilities in obtaining required verifications; and
 - reminds staff about the Department's obligations to assist clients in obtaining required verifications.
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Obsolete Memo

This Operations Memo obsoletes Operations Memo 2011-21.

**Client
Responsibilities**

The client is responsible for providing requested verification of financial and nonfinancial eligibility factors that have not previously been verified, as well as those that are subject to change. It is the client's responsibility to:

- provide the required verifications;
 - contact their case manager if there is a delay or difficulty in obtaining the verifications;
 - cooperate with the Department to obtain the verifications when case manager assistance is requested; and
 - sign collateral consent forms, if necessary.
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**Case Manager
Responsibilities**

The case manager is responsible for the following:

- identifying the eligibility factors that must be verified;
- identifying and providing written notice of the specific documents and the alternative documents, if applicable, that must be submitted to verify the eligibility factors;
- advising the client of the consequence of failing to provide verifications;
- explaining the reason verifications are needed when requested and offering suggestions of where and how to obtain the verification(s);
- assisting the client in obtaining required verifications when they are aware that the client is unable to obtain the verifications; and
- documenting details of the alternative type of verification if documentary verification is not available.

Important: Case managers are reminded that they must assist clients in obtaining verifications if requested.

Note: Case managers **must** determine whether electronic data matches available to the Department satisfy the proof required before requesting verification from the client.

**Preferred
Verification
Format**

Staff are reminded of the Department's preference for documentary verifications.

Only if documentary evidence is unavailable, should the alternative methods of verification be explored. Collateral contact or case manager observation **must** be explored before a self-declaration may be accepted.

**Non-
documentary
Verification:
Collateral contact**

In instances when documentary evidence cannot be obtained, case managers should explore with the client alternative forms of verification such as collateral contact, or self-declaration. If collateral contact is the means of verification, the case manager **must** obtain written consent from the client, unless otherwise covered by 106 CMR 702.340(B).

Important: Case managers must note in the Narrative tab the date on which the collateral contact was made, the relevant information obtained, the identity and position of the person making the statement, and the means of contacting that person.

If the client refuses to allow the Department to verify information by contacting a third party, assistance **must** be denied, terminated, or reduced, unless the client provides alternative verification per 106 CMR 702.340(B).

Self-declaration

Only if after all reasonable attempts by the client and the case manager have been made and documentary or collateral contact information cannot be obtained, a self-declaration may be accepted for certain eligibility factors. See regulations found at 106 CMR 702.340(C) as well as Operations Memo 2010-55. The self-declaration **must** be filed in the case record.

Important: Case managers must note in the Narrative tab the actions taken to secure documentary and collateral contact proof, including any relevant information such as the identity, position and means of any person or entity contacted for help securing verifications.

Note: The Department requires verification, including additional verification of documentation already submitted, when the information available to the Department is contradictory, inconsistent, incomplete, or the Department determines that verification is necessary to ensure the efficient administration of its programs.

**Policy
References**

TCAP - 106 CMR 702.300-702.340.

Questions

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