



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Operations Memo 2014-22
March 13, 2014

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

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

Re: TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Limitations on Program Eligibility

Overview

In response to a recent United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service review of the Department’s SNAP application, new questions are being added to BEACON regarding certain unlawful activities restrict the eligibility of SNAP. Related questions are also being added for TAFDC and EAEDC clients in accordance with Department regulations. In order to correctly determine eligibility, a series of questions must be asked of applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as clients):

- at application and reapplication;
- at redetermination and recertification; and
- when a new member is added to the household.

If a client answers Yes, or fails to answer any of the questions, additional pages will be required to capture further information about the client. Effective with BEACON Build 46.2, scheduled for March 17, 2014, the new Eligibility Limitations questions must be asked, for all household members age 16 or older.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise staff about the Eligibility Limitations functionality changes in BEACON.

Obsolete Memo

This Operations Memo obsoletes Operations Memo 2012-30.

**BEACON
Changes**

A new Eligibility Limitations Q and A Navigator page has been added after the Non Financial Q and A Navigator. The existing Fleeing felon question will no longer be asked in the Non Financial Q and A Navigator. Only the questions applicable to the client's program type will require response; those that are not required will be greyed out. The root questions, which depending upon the client response and program type may be followed by additional questions. The root questions are as follows:

Question	Program
Have you, or any member of your household, been found by a state agency to have committed an Intentional Program Violation, either through an Administrative Disqualification Hearing or convicted by a federal, state or local court of fraudulently receiving duplicate benefits in any state?	TAFDC EAEDC SNAP
Are you, or any member of your household, violating a condition of probation or parole?	TAFDC EAEDC SNAP
Are you, or any member of your household, hiding or running from the law to avoid prosecution, being taken into custody or going to jail for a felony crime or attempt to commit a felony crime?	TAFDC EAEDC SNAP
Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of a felony under Federal or State law for the possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance (felony drug conviction) on or after August 22, 1996?	TAFDC
Do you, or any member of your household, have an outstanding arrest or default warrant issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?	TAFDC EAEDC
Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted by a court, of felony fraud against the Department?	TAFDC EAEDC
Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of trading SNAP benefits for drugs after 9/22/96 by a federal, state or local court?	SNAP
Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of selling or trading SNAP benefits for guns, ammunition or explosives after 9/22/96 by a federal, state or local court?	SNAP
Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of buying or selling SNAP benefits over \$500 after 9/22/96 by a federal, state or local court?	SNAP

**BEACON
Changes**
(continued)

Case managers must ask the applicable questions:

- at application and reapplication;
- at redetermination and recertification; and
- when a new member is added to the household.

Case Manager
Responsibilities

If a client answers Yes to any of the questions, a Client Selection pop-up box will appear. The case manager must click the checkbox(es) next to the household member(s) who was identified and click the Select button.

In addition, the Felony, Conviction and Violation page has been replaced by nine new Eligibility Limitations pages:

- Fraudulently Receiving Duplicate Benefits;
- Parole or Probation Violation;
- Fleeing Felon;
- Drug Felon;
- Outstanding Warrant;
- Fraud Court Conviction;
- Trading FS for Drugs;
- Trading FS For Weapons-Ammunition; and
- Trading More Than \$500 In FS

These pages will be made available for all pending and active clients age 16 and over. The information associated with the Felony, Conviction and Violation page will be converted to these new pages

Note: The specific Eligibility Limitations page associated with the Eligibility Limitations Q and A Navigator will be required to be completed. Based on the question, additional questions are asked and updated on the workflow page.

Once this is collected, the data will be displayed on a new Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) Unit Eligibility Limitations in Review view. This information is to aid the Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) Unit in the determination of eligibility. FIDM Unit staff will also use this information to advise and assist clients in obtaining verification if information is not readily available or if the ineligibility reason is no longer applicable.

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, *“Have you, or any member of your household, been found by a state agency to have committed an Intentional Program Violation, either through an Administrative Disqualification Hearing or convicted by a federal, state or local court of fraudulently receiving duplicate benefits in any state?”* the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client’s ability.

**BEACON
Changes
Case Manager
Responsibilities
(continued)**

Each question has an associated drop-down box. Based on the client's response, click the drop down box and choose the client's response:

- What program(s)? (drop down with multiple programs able to be selected. Options will be SNAP, TANF, EAEDC, General Relief, SSI, SSP, and Veterans Service Benefits);
- When were you convicted? (select month and year);
- When did the fraud occur? (select month and year);
- Where did conviction occur? (select appropriate state); and
- Type of finding? (select either Court conviction or ADH)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, "*Are you, or any member of your household, violating a condition of probation or parole?*" the following questions must be asked and answered to the best of the client's ability:

- Where was the probation/parole order established? (select the appropriate state); and
- When was the probation/parole imposed? (select month and year)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, "*Are you, or any member of your household, hiding or running from the law to avoid prosecution, being taken into custody or going to jail for a felony crime or attempt to commit a felony crime?*" the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client's ability:

- When was the alleged crime or attempted crime committed? (select month and year); and
- Where was alleged crime or attempted crime committed? (select appropriate state)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, "*Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of a felony under Federal or State law for the possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance (felony drug conviction) on or after August 22, 1996?*" the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client's ability:

- Did you serve a period of incarceration? (select Yes or No);
- Where were you incarcerated? (select appropriate state); and
- When were you released? (select month and year)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, "*Do you, or any member of your household, have an outstanding arrest or default warrant issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?*" the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client's ability:

BEACON
Changes
Case Manager
Responsibilities
(continued)

- When was the warrant issued? (select month and year); and
- Where was it issued from? (select appropriate state)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, *“Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted, by a court, of felony fraud against the Department?”* the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client’s ability:

- Was the amount \$1,000 or more? (select Yes or No); and
- When was the fraud committed? (select month and year)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, *“Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of trading SNAP benefits for drugs after 9/22/96 by a federal, state or local court?”* the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client’s ability:

- When were you convicted? (select month and year); and
- Where did conviction occur? (select appropriate state)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, *“Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of trading SNAP benefits for guns, ammunition or explosives after 9/22/96 by a federal, state or local court?”* the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client’s ability:

- When were you convicted? (select month and year); and
- Where did conviction occur? (select appropriate state)

If Yes is answered for any household members regarding the question, *“Have you, or any member of your household, been convicted of buying or selling SNAP benefits over \$500 after 9/22/96 by a federal, state or local court?”* the following questions must be asked and answered, to the best of the client’s ability:

- When were you convicted? (select month and year);
- Where did conviction occur? (select appropriate state); and
- What was the value of SNAP benefits? (select from list of options: \$0-\$249, \$250-\$499, \$500-\$999, or \$1000+.

The answers to these questions will appear on the BEACON-generated application and reevaluation forms, and are available on the ECF/Summary/Circumstances tab.

**BEACON
Changes**

FIDM Unit
Responsibilities

Once the page has been completed and saved, the case will be listed on the new Eligibility Limitations In Review view for FIDM Unit staff to process. The view is located under the new Eligibility Limitations view on My Office. This view will display the client's Name (last, first); SSN (or temporary identification number); Type (of Eligibility Limitation); State (if location is identified by client); Date (when the question and data was asked and entered).

If the client is determined to be ineligible, FIDM staff must:

- select the appropriate ineligibility reason for the individual on the AU Composition Results page. This will create a Pending Sanction on the Sanction page. Note: only FIDM Unit will be able to access these ineligibility reasons;
- mark the Disposition field on the appropriate Eligibility Limitations page as Sanctioned. This action will remove the case from the view. Note: Only FIDM Unit staff will be able to access the Disposition fields on the Eligibility Limitations pages;
- perform an Interview Wrapup.

The Narrative tab **must** be annotated by the FIDM Unit staff with the action taken, and the FIDM Unit contact information. An EBC notice will be generated.

Clients who have had their case closed, denied or reduced due to one of these ineligibility reasons, should be directed to contact the FIDM Unit.

If a client has provided the FIDM Unit verification that the Eligibility Limitation is no longer applicable, FIDM Unit staff will remove the ineligibility reason by:

- removing the ineligibility reason for the individual on the Sanction page by entering Cooperating in the Removal reason field. This action will delete the ineligibility reason on the AU Composition Results page;
 - marking the Disposition field on the appropriate ineligibility page as Cooperating;
 - deleting the ineligibility reason on the AU Composition Results page; and
 - performing an Interview Wrapup:
 - if the Pending Request has not yet released, delete the Pending Release request, and wrapup a new request, by first selecting the removed items on the Interview Wrapup Selection page
 - if the Request has released, and the AU remains open, wrapup a new request.
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FIDM Unit
Responsibilities
(continued)

- if the Pending Request has released, and the AU has closed, advise the client to contact their case manager to reapply for benefits.

The Narrative tab must be annotated by the FIDM Unit with the action taken, the verification received and the FIDM Unit contact information. An EBC notice will be generated.

**Policy
References**

TCAP - 106 CMR 701.110(B); 701.110(B)(2); 701.110(C); 701.110(D);
706.305(B)(1); and 706.305(B)(2).

SNAP - 367.800(B); 367.800(C); and 367.800(D).

Questions

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