

FYI

Reminder: Helping Applicants and Recipients Verify Eligibility

When establishing eligibility or continued eligibility for Department programs, AU Managers must remember to help applicants and recipients obtain required verifications if they are unable to obtain verifications for reasons beyond their control. Also, if a verification is unavailable to an applicant or recipient, the AU Manager should notify the person of alternative methods of verifications, including self-declaration and collateral contacts. Refer to 106 CMR 702.310 and 106 CMR 702.311 for more details on verifying eligibility in Transitional Cash Assistance Programs (TAFDC and EAEDC).

The Food Stamp Program requirements similarly state that if a household has difficulty presenting sufficient documentation, the AU Manager should help the household obtain the verification(s). Collateral contacts are also an acceptable method of verification. Refer to 106 CMR 361.650 for more information on verification responsibilities in the Food Stamp Program.

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taken, including the desk review of food stamp cases conducted last summer, will help us to achieve our accuracy goals.

The EA program and the families it serves continue to be a major concern. In October the Housing Assistance Program (HAP) began providing prevention services to families at risk of losing their housing. In January, HAP will expand and provide more services to families in shelters. Contracts with shelters are also being redone. The goal of these activities is to provide more direct and appropriate services to these families in crisis.

Collaborating with other agencies to provide work opportunities for recipients is something we have done successfully for a number of years. This year we are expanding that collaboration to focus on employment opportunities for recipients with significant barriers. A recent agreement with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will develop a special program to assist disabled recipients who want to work. I am very excited about this program and will share more details about it with you in the near future.

Increasing efficiency and the delivery of services through the use of technology is very important. This new century will see technological changes not yet dreamed about. For some of us this technological change is overwhelming, for some, exciting. However, technology is here and we must use it to our advantage. We have made progress—our Department web site has been well received and is visited frequently, the Department intranet is being piloted, offices are now able to order forms online from Document Production, Policy Online continues to be expanded to offer easy access to information, e-mail is a quick way to communicate the same information to a large number of people. This is progress but we need to do more—and we will.

Together we have worked hard and have achieved a great deal. But the “to-do” list has no end. Through hard work we will continue to do our best for those we serve. Thank you for that continued hard work during this past year. I also wish you and your families the happiest of holiday seasons.

Sincerely,



Claire McIntire
Commissioner