



# Transitions

April 2017

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## Quality Corner

### SNAP

This month we will review two negative errors that occurred in Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP cases.

#### **Inadequate review of External Databases**

On September 6, 2016, the SNAP application for a household of five was denied for failure to submit the required verifications due to an outstanding EDUC-I. The case was subsequently reinstated on September 14, 2016 when the EDUC-I was provided; however, there was employment information listed for one of the grantee's daughters via an external data match from the Work Number. The case manager issued a VC-I requesting a termination letter for the daughter from the employer, Walmart. On October 6, 2016 the case was denied again for: "you did not submit required verifications for an application after reinstatement when the verification was not provided."

During the Quality Control (QC) review, it was determined that the information requested by the case manager was unnecessary. The Work Number external data match indicated that the daughter's employment with Walmart was terminated.

#### **What's a Case Manager to Do?**

When an external data match appears for a household member, it is important to first adequately review the match to determine if there is sufficient information that can be acted upon prior to issuing a VC-I. In this case, the external data match clearly indicated the employment was terminated and thus the match could be dispositioned without any further information from the household. This resulted in an invalid denial as the issuance of the VC-I was unnecessary and caused the final case denial.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Quality Corner

### **Incorrect calculation of Earned Income**

*(continued from page 2)*

On October 27, 2016 a household of one submitted paystubs from a new employer to the Document Processing Center (DPC). The client was already working part-time with two other employers. The case manager updated the Earned Income page in BEACON with the new employment which resulted in a total gross earned income of \$2079.19. When the benefits were recalculated, the household was denied for countable earned income in excess of grant. The grantee was issued an EBC Notice with SNAP Calc, which informed her of the change in eligibility and outlined the calculation including the gross earned income amount that was used.

During the QC review, it was determined that the case manager had entered the earned income information from the new employment incorrectly. The actual total gross earned income for the household was \$2002.93.

### **What's a Case Manager to Do?**

When entering numbers into BEACON, it is important to ensure it reflects the exact information listed on the verification source. This is particularly important for income and expenses as this has direct impact on households' eligibility and benefit amount. While this client was still over the gross income limit for her household size based on the correct total gross earned income amount, she was denied for an incorrect earned income amount and noticed of the incorrect amount which resulted in the invalid closing.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### **TAFDC and EAEDC: Back-Scanning Permanent Documents for Active TAFDC and EAEDC Cases**

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-26

In 2014, the Department moved to Electronic Document Management (EDM) to organize filing, expedite processing and allow case managers the ability to retrieve documents expeditiously. This initiative was described in Operations Memo 2014-58: TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Back-Scanning of Permanent Verification and Indexing of All Documents by Household Member.

This transmittal is being issued to convey instructions to complete the permanent document back-scanning process for all active cash paper case files.

### **EAEDC: Proper Scanning of AP-SSI-IAR Forms**

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-34

The Authorization for Reimbursement of Interim Assistance (AP-SSI-IAR) form must be completed by applicants for EAEDC. The form is used to authorize DTA reimbursement for initial SSI claims and SSI post-eligibility cases. This Online Guide Transmittal reminds staff that the AP-SSI-IAR form must be completed and scanned properly for every EAEDC application.

This includes ensuring:

- that the correct box is checked on the first page,
- the form is signed by the client, and
- all four pages of the form are scanned.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs: Special Services Payment System (SSPS) - Protective Payments Updates and Clarifications.

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-43

Based on field input as well as resolutions to tickets, the Special Services Payment System (SSPS) has been modified. Procedures for vendor payments require revisions and clarifications. Additionally, a new form for vendor payments to landlords has been created.

The purpose of this transmittal is to advise DTA staff of clarifications to vendor payment procedures.

### TAFDC and EAEDC: Random Moment Time Sampling (RMTS)

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-44

Federal regulations mandate the Department to determine administrative expenses for federal and state programs allowing the Department to receive federal reimbursement for a portion of those expenses. The vehicle to comply with this mandate is the Random Moment Time Sampling (RMTS) process.

RMTS is a web-based survey designed to scientifically determine the amount of effort spent by a group of employees on various activities.

The RMTS survey system randomly assigns survey moments by e-mail to individual cash case managers. The case manager must respond to the survey moment within a 72-hour time frame.

**Important:** During sampling moments, case managers should no longer include client specific information such as, Social Security numbers or names. Non-identifiable information must be utilized, such as an AP ID or first initial and last name of client.

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Program: Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Reminders

#### Online Guide Transmittal 2017-45

- This Online Guide Transmittal reminds staff that when issuing an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, an EBT brochure must always be given to applicants and clients along with a review of the information in the brochure. This must be done whether issuing a new or replacement card.
- Items prohibited from purchase with cash assistance benefits, limitations on where cash assistance benefits may be used and food items eligible with your SNAP EBT card are reviewed.
- Staff is reminded that for expedited SNAP benefits, clients must have the opportunity to participate within seven calendar days. Those who do not qualify for expedited benefits must have the opportunity to participate within 30 calendar days. An “opportunity to participate” means that the client has an EBT card, PIN and the benefits deposited within these time frames.
- Staff must review the Photo EBT requirement with their clients, the reasons for Photo EBT exemptions and client rights when using the card with retailers.
- Although the head of household may have their photo on the EBT card, other members of the household are authorized and entitled to use the card for SNAP purposes.
- The required EBT materials must be available to staff responsible for EBT activities.



## Online Guide Transmittals

### **Cross Programs: Redesign of Permanent Resident Card and Employment Authorization Document**

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-46

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the federal agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. As an antifraud measure, USCIS has redesigned the Permanent Resident Card (also known as a Green Card) and the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and will begin issuing the new cards on May 1, 2017.

The purpose of this Transmittal is to advise staff that some noncitizen clients who are Lawful Permanent Residents or otherwise authorized to work may present a newly designed card. The Online Guide has been updated with images of the new Green Card.

### **Cross Program: Termination of Temporary Protected Status for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone**

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-47

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is an immigration designation granted by the Secretary of Homeland Security. TPS may be granted due to conditions in a country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely. Currently there are 13 countries that have been designated for TPS: El Salvador, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Effective May 21, 2017, the designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will be terminated.

The purpose of this Transmittal is to advise staff that the TPS designation for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will be terminated on May 21, 2017. Although clients from these counties will no longer have TPS, they will maintain any other immigration status that they have acquired while registered for TPS.

### **Cross Program: Standard Public Hours**

Online Guide Transmittal 2017-48

- Although many clients can now apply for benefits or access case information by mail, fax, phone or the DTA Connect mobile app, some clients still visit our local Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs). DTA operates 22 local TAOs throughout Massachusetts that serve in-person clients.
- DTA will be moving to standardized public hours in all TAOs.
- Effective Monday, June 5, 2017 all TAOs will be open to the public from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. on all business days.



## From the Forms File

### New Form

02-910-0417-05

02-911-0417-05(S)

VPA-L (4/2017)

*Vendor Payment Agreement Form*

All landlords must complete and sign the *Vendor Payment Agreement* form (VPA-L) for rental housing if they agree to accept vendor rent payments from TAFDC and EAEDC clients.

### Revised Forms

18-029-0795-05

18-029-0795-05(S)

FCB-1 (4/2017)

*Request for a Replacement Check*

The *Request for a Replacement Check* (FCB-1) has been revised to clarify its use. Please destroy existing supplies of this form and use the revised version.

### Revised Brochure

02-615-0417-05

02-616-0417-05(S)

DVB Brochure (Rev. 4/2017)

*Domestic Violence Unit Everyone Deserves to be safe!! Are you?*

The *Domestic Violence Unit Everyone Deserves to be safe!! Are you?* (DVB) brochure has been revised. The other language versions will soon be available.



## TAO Meeting Notes