



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111


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Commissioner

February 22, 2008

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: New Initiative: TAFDC/ESP Southbridge Transportation Initiative

Overview

Transportation is an important support service to help all our clients reach self-sufficiency. Many TAFDC clients live in areas lacking public transportation. These clients can be given good cause/meets compliance for not participating in their ESP activities if they have no other viable means of transportation. While lack of transportation is a valid reason for not meeting the work program requirement, no client should be denied enrollment in an activity because of the lack of transportation. TransAction Associates is the contracted agency used by DTA to provide transportation services to our clients.

Since the Southbridge TAO client population is located in an area that lacks public transportation, this TAO will be the focus of this transportation initiative. Beginning March 3, 2008 TransAction Associates has agreed to assist our clients served by the Southbridge TAO with their transportation issues by:

- providing a shuttle van to transport clients to their activities;
- giving gas card bonuses to clients who drive carpools; and
- helping employed or soon to be employed clients keep their cars on the road.

This service will be provided until June 30, 2008 and then evaluated to determine the effectiveness of enhanced transportation initiatives.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to inform TAO Staff about:

- transportation services TransAction Associates will provide to our clients in the Southbridge TAO; and
- making referrals to TransAction Associates.

While this new initiative is taking place, TransAction Associates will continue providing services to our other TAOs as they do now. For a listing of those services, see *A User's Guide, Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*: Chapter XII, Section C.

TransAction Associates Transportation Services: Shuttle Van Service

Using “Data Mapping” to identify where the majority of clients who are not served by public transportation live and where ESP programs are located, TransAction Associates will provide a shuttle van for these clients to transport them to and from their ESP activities. The shuttle van route will be developed to meet the needs of the majority of these clients. For example, a shuttle may run between Southbridge and Worcester/West Boylston with one trip in the morning and a return trip in the afternoon.

TransAction Associates will:

- modify the route of the shuttle based on demand;
- work with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) to evaluate the possibility of a permanent route;
- work with a group of non-profits in the Southbridge area to provide shuttle service; and
- ensure that the shuttle service conform to guidelines established by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

To ensure that the appropriate clients are being served, Southbridge TAO staff will compile a list of clients who have identified transportation as a barrier for meeting their work program requirement.

TransAction Associates will review the list, determine where the majority of clients not served by public transportation live, where their ESP activities are located and contact these clients to determine interest in using a shuttle van to get from Southbridge to and from their ESP activities.

TransAction Associates Transportation Services: Shuttle Van Service (continued)

TransAction Associates will coordinate the van's schedule based on:

- client pick-up locations;
- child care drop-off/pick-up locations;
- activity locations; and
- activity schedule.

TransAction Associates will provide the list of clients participating in the shuttle van program to the TransAction Associates Liaison. The TransAction Associates Liaison will ensure that AU Managers change the "Meets Compliance" reason listed on the BEACON TAFDC tab of the Work Requirements window from "Lack of Transportation" to "Participation."

TransAction Associates will also provide the TransAction Associates Liaison with the name of a client who is offered and refused transportation through the shuttle van program. The TransAction Associates Liaison will ensure that AU Managers remove the "Meets Compliance" reason of "Lack of Transportation" and that the client begins meeting the work program requirement immediately, unless another reason for not meeting the work program requirement applies.

TransAction Associates Transportation Services: Gas Card Bonus

TransAction Associates is committed to developing car pools by:

- helping clients form carpools using an online ride matching system. TransAction Associates will do this by entering information from the completed CVTR-1 form;
- coordinating communication between the client and other clients to create the carpool, once matches are found;
- working with the client to provide the gas card for the duration of the activity, once the carpool is formed;
- providing the same information to the TransAction Associates Liaison.

To encourage clients to become carpool drivers, TransAction Associates will add an extra \$20 per person on the client's gas card for each client who is in the carpool. TransAction Associates will also increase the amount on the card to pay for the additional fuel used to pick-up and drop-off the other clients in the carpool. When making a referral to TransAction Associates, AU Managers should note on the Client Verification and Transportation Request Form (CVTR-1) (Attachment A) if the client has a car and would be interested in being a driver in the carpool. TransAction Associates will be sending a letter (Attachment B) to all current gas card users in the Southbridge TAO informing them of this new benefit.

TransAction Associates Transportation Services: Car Assistance Programs

As part of this new initiative, TransAction Associates will also help clients who are either employed or within 30 days of becoming employed by providing the following services to keep their cars on the road:

- car repairs;
- car insurance;
- license renewal; and/or
- sales tax.

TransAction Associates will provide these services (up to \$760 per client) to ensure that clients with cars can use them to get to work.

For purposes of TAFDC, this money is considered a transportation payment and is noncountable income (see 106 CMR 204.250(I)). For purposes of Food Stamps, this money is considered an excluded reimbursement and is noncountable income (see 106 CMR 363.230(F)).

Referrals to TransAction Associates

The AU Manager must refer the client to TransAction Associates by:

- completing the CVTR-1, paying special attention to filling out the location name and address of the activity. This will assist TransAction Associates to determine the best form of transportation assistance; and
- forwarding the completed CVTR-1 to the TransAction Associates Liaison who will fax it to TransAction Associates at 781-895-1122.

Note: The TransAction Associates Liaison will be the main contact for TransAction Associates if questions arise. The Certification of Recipient in DTA AtJ Program section of the CVTR-1 must be signed by the AU Manager or TAO designees before the provision of TransAction Associates services.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

TransAction Associates Client Verification and Transportation Request Form

Date received at TA: _____

New Customer Address Change Destination Change Schedule Change

Recipient Information – PLEASE PRINT – All information must be completed to process request.

Name: First/M: _____ Last: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: ____-____-____ Bldg: _____ Apt#: _____

SSN: _____ Town: _____ ZIP: ____-____-____ Nearest Intersection: St

1: _____ St 2: _____

Has full-time access to a car that can be used for transportation to Ed/Training if transit is not available? Y/N: ____ Valid Driver's

License? Y/N: ____ Has Disability? Y/N: ____ Use Wheelchair? Y/N: ____ Speak English? Y/N: ____

If NO, please specify other language: _____

Transportation Information – PLEASE PRINT - All information must be completed to process request.

Transportation Purpose (please check one of the purposes listed below):

Employment Job Ed/Training Job Ed/Training with Child care

Location name: _____ Address: _____ Bldg: _____ Apt#: _____

Contact: _____ Town: _____ State: ____ ZIP: ____-____

Childcare name: _____ Address: _____ Apt# ____ Town: _____ ZIP: ____-____

Estimated miles one-way between Home, Ed/Training, Childcare: _____ (not required)

For Education and Training Programs - Start Date: ____-____-____ End Date: ____-____-____

Daily Trip Information – Start and End Times when job or ed/training, begin and end not time person wants pick-up.

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Start Time:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
End Time:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Certification of Recipient in DTA AtJ Program - All information must be completed to process request.

I certify that the above person is eligible to participate in the DTA TransAction Associates Program.

CASE OPEN ____ **CASE CLOSED** ____ **CASE CLOSE DATE:** ____-____-____ **AtJ PROGRAM** **END DATE:** ____-____-____ Print

Name of DTA Official: _____ Telephone: ____-____-____

Signature of DTA Official: _____ Date: _____

Recipient Release (Optional)

I release this information for transportation purposes: _____ Date: _____

Official AtJ Use Only

Fixed-route: ____ **Commuter Check Amount:** ____ **Gas card:** ____ **Amount:** ____/Month **Other:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Comments: _____

Dear <NAME>

In an effort to improve access to vocational, education and training programs, the TransAction Associates Program will be starting a pilot carpool program in the Southbridge Transitional Assistance Office service area. As a current participant in the Gas Card Program you could benefit from this pilot project as listed below:

- The monthly amount on your gas card will increase based on the additional miles traveled to pick-up and drop-off the person(s) you carpool with. Typically, the person will be living within a few miles from your residence and going to the same Vocational, Education or Training program.
- You receive an additional \$20 on your gas card per month for each passenger participating in your carpool.

Here is how it works:

- As an Active Gas Card Program participant you sign-up to participate in the pilot carpool program by calling TransAction Associates at 781-895-1100.
- TransAction Associates staff will put you in our carpool database.
- Once you match with another DTA recipient who needs a ride, we contact you with their information and the additional amount you will receive each month on your TransAction Associates gas card.
- If you decide to carpool with this person (you are the driver), TransAction Associates will increase your monthly gas card amount for the additional mileage plus the \$20 per passenger.

For more information about the TransAction Associates Carpool Program call Bobi, Jane or me at TransAction Associates 781-895-1100. If you are interested in registering in the program, please complete the attached registration form and send to TransAction Associates or fax it to 781-895-1122.

Sincerely,

Rob Tassinari
Program Manager