



Transitions

September 2015

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Dear Colleagues,

Today is bittersweet, as we say thank you to 23 hardworking and experienced employees from across the state who are retiring from DTA. You have done so much to assist those in need of a helping hand, and your dedication has been an integral part of DTA's successes. I hope that you will all enjoy your retirement and take full advantage of your newfound freedom. You have certainly earned it, but you will be sorely missed.

As we once again move forward after the loss of another set of experienced and dedicated coworkers, I ask that when we show up at the office on Monday we continue to meet challenges head on. We have been working hard as a department to ensure that our clients are receiving the best possible service, let's keep it up. I would also encourage our staff to keep innovating and looking for new ways to improve how we work. The ideas that come from the field are often the most meaningful and useful because of your hands on experience and knowledge. Please do not hesitate to share your creativity and experience with your supervisors or with me directly.

I deeply appreciate the commitment of all our staff, both those who will be leaving and those who are continuing to serve. The work that DTA does is not always easy, but it does make a profound impact in the lives of many of our friends, neighbors, and acquaintances.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Jeff McCue
Commissioner

Quality Corner

This month we review a SNAP error that occurred in a Non Public Assistance (NPA) case and a negative error.

Wrapping up Changes in BEACON/LPR Noncitizen Becoming Eligible

The case was a household of one receiving a monthly SNAP benefit of \$82 per month. The household's monthly allotment was based on gross earnings of \$1126 of the grantee, and an SSI payment of \$740 for her dependent. The household was responsible for rent in the amount of \$742 and received the heating/cooling SUA through the H-EAT program. On April 24, 2013, the client reported a decrease in rent from \$742 to \$507. She also reported that she was no longer working at Youth Opportunities and had started a new job at Multicultural Wellness Center. For each reported change, the client provided verifications. The case manager subsequently entered the changes into BEACON but failed to wrap-up the transactions.

The Quality Control (QC) reviewer determined that there was a \$66 overissuance caused by the unprocessed changes on the case. Additionally, effective April 1, 2013, the grantee had become eligible for SNAP as she had been in the United States as a Legal Permanent Resident for five years.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

During recertification, the case manager must review all aspects of the case as the main objective of this process is to determine continued eligibility for a subsequent certification period. Some changes happen over time and may impact the eligibility of one or more household members. In this instance, the case manager made the appropriate changes in rent and income reported by the client but failed to review the client's noncitizen status. Once all changes are entered in BEACON, the case must be wrapped up for supervisory approval or the changes entered will not impact the SNAP benefit amount.

Terminated Income at Application

The household of three applied for SNAP benefits on April 5, 2015. An interview was conducted on April 9, 2015 and it was determined that client had terminated income. A Verification Checklist was sent to household requesting paystubs for the previous 4 weeks. The client provided two paystubs, each representing wages received for a bi-weekly period. The first paystub was dated March 27, 2015, in the amount of \$1115.40 and the other paystub, dated April 10, 2015 was in the amount of \$1,464.96.

The case manager used both paystubs to determine eligibility for the initial month of application. The case was consequently denied for being over the gross limit. The QC reviewer determined that only the paystub dated April 10, in the amount of \$1463.96, fell within the cyclical period. This inappropriate use of the entire monthly terminated income caused the household to be denied. The household was, in fact, eligible for \$353 in SNAP benefits.

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Quality Corner *(Continued from page 2)*

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Whenever an applicant has terminated income, case managers must be careful to count the income that is received during the cyclical month. Often times, this is only for the first month of the certification period. In this case, the client's cyclical period began April 5, 2015 and ended on May 4, 2015. Therefore, only the April 10 paystub was countable to the case for the initial month of eligibility. The earnings from this paystub must then be removed before the release date for the next monthly issuance.

If the case was denied because the terminated income countable for the first cyclical month exceeded program limits, the same application must be used to determine eligibility for the next cyclical period. For more information on Initial Applications, see 106 CMR 364.110(A).

Diversity Quote

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.

Maya Angelou

From the DTA Policy/Procedure Mailbox

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your manager or supervisor email the **DTA Mailbox**.

As we approach National Domestic Violence Awareness month, the questions and answers below address concerns and common misconceptions associated with domestic violence. For more information on domestic violence procedures, refer to the Online Guide, Cross Program topic, Domestic Violence book and Domestic Violence Unit and Services page. For information on TAFDC good cause waivers due to domestic violence, refer to 106 CMR 203.110 and the Online Guide, TAFDC topic, Services book, Good Cause Criteria book and page.

- Q. 1.** Can SNAP clients who are conducting business in DTA offices get help from the Department's Domestic Violence (DV) Specialists, even though they may not be receiving TAFDC?
- A. 1.** Yes. DTA's DV Specialists will speak with any in-office individuals who need information or referrals to domestic violence-related resources and services.
- Q. 2.** Can any DTA client be referred to the on duty DV Specialist?
- A. 2.** No. A referral to the DV Specialist on duty is for SNAP-only and non-DTA clients who contact DTA's Assistance Line. Clients who are requesting service in-person or are in receipt of cash assistance must be referred to that TAO's DV Specialist. It is important to try to connect a client in need of DV-related services to the DV Specialist in their area, as they are most familiar with the resources available.
- Q. 3.** If the SNAP client on the DTA Assistance Line does not want to leave a message for a DV Specialist, are there other places this client can call for help?
- A. 3.** Yes. If a client needs immediate assistance they should contact SafeLink at 1-877-785-2020. SafeLink is a state-wide 24-hour confidential hotline. Be sure to provide the DV Specialist's name and phone number so that the client may call directly if he or she desires at a later time. Of, course a referral must be made to the DV Specialist anytime a client indicates domestic violence or that they are in an unsafe situation.
- Q. 4.** BEACON indicated a heightened level of security (HLS) for a client whose name appeared on my phone queue. Can I forward this phone call to a domestic violence specialist for help and information?
- A. 4.** No. Clients who request the HLS indicator are told that no information regarding their case will be discussed over the telephone with the client or with anyone else. This restriction includes the inability to talk on the phone with the DV Specialist, as well as other central office or Department staff. For more information on the HLS indicator, refer to the Online Guide, Cross Program topic, Heightened Level of Security book.

Training Corner

IMPORTANT: It is only appropriate to use this calculation when there is only one missing weekly pay stub that is neither the first nor the last. If there are two consecutive missing weekly pay stubs, the case manager must obtain at least one of the missing stubs.

Missing Pay Stub Calculation Worksheet

1. Enter the *Gross Year-to-date* amount from the client's *most recent* weekly pay stub \$ _____
2. **Subtract** the *Gross wages* from the client's *most recent* weekly pay stub -\$ _____
3. This total is the *missing Gross Year-to-date* \$ _____
4. **Subtract** the *Gross Year-to-date* amount from pay stub prior to the missing stub -\$ _____
5. This total is the missing *Wages* \$ _____
6. **Divide** the *missing wage* amount by the client's hourly rate ÷ _____
7. This total is the *missing hours* from the Missing pay stub _____

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Training Corner *(Continued from Page 5)*

Missing Weekly Pay Stub Calculation Worksheet (EXAMPLE)

John Q. Doe submits three out of four required weekly pay stubs to you:

7/11/2015: GYTD: \$500, Gross Wage \$100, \$8.50 / hr.

7/18/2015: GYTD: \$650, Gross Wage \$150, \$8.50 / hr.

7/25/2015: Missing

8/1/2015: GYTD \$1000. Gross Wage \$100, \$8.50 / hr.

1. Enter the *Gross Year-to-date (GYTD)* amount from the client's most recent weekly pay stub \$ 1000

2. **Subtract** the *Gross wages* from the client's most recent weekly pay stub -\$ 100

3. This total is the *missing Gross Year-to-date* \$ 900

4. **Subtract** the *Gross Year-to-date* amount from pay stub prior to the missing stub -\$ 650

5. This total is the *missing Wages* \$ 250

6. **Divide** the *missing wage* amount by the client's hourly rate ÷ 8.5

7. This total is the *missing hours* from the Missing pay stub 29.4

Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC and EAEDC – SORB Match

Online Guide Transmittal 2015-34

TAFDC, EAEDC

BEACON Build 47.5 contains implementation of certain changes to functionality related to welfare reform. The Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB) Match is mandated by welfare reform to ensure that clients who must register with SORB actually do. This match will be performed by the Fraud Investigation/Data Match (FIDM) unit. No case manager action is required.

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to inform DTA staff of:

- changes to BEACON;
- the SORB match; and
- changes to the BEACON Online Guide.

TAFDC, SNAP and EAEDC – Simplified Calculation Page

Online Guide Transmittal 2015-44

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

The Department is in the process of reviewing and making changes to many of its policies and procedures to improve services to its clients. In an effort to improve services through better communication with clients, the Department has simplified the Calculation pages on EBC Notices. These changes were effective with BEACON Build 47.6 implemented August 24, 2015.

The Department has redesigned the Calculation page on EBC Notices to make it easier to understand. These changes include:

- a listing of people in the cash/SNAP household who impact the benefit calculation;
- a listing of people living in the household not getting benefits, if applicable (this includes sanctioned people, non-legally liable people and basic persons)
- the income used to determine the benefit amount (this can be earned, unearned, recoupment and sanction income); and
- an explanation of how the benefits have been calculated.



Online Guide Transmittals

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: Holiday Gift (Globe Santa Fund) Verification Mailing

Online Guide Transmittal 2015-46

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

The Holiday Gift (Globe Santa Fund) Verification mailing was sent August 31, 2015 to active TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP clients with children 12 years old or younger who live in the geographical areas designated by the Globe Santa Fund. A second mailing to new cases approved for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP after August 31, 2015 is scheduled for October 13, 2015.

The following Online Guide book and page have been added to the Scheduled Mailings/Projects topic:

Topic: Scheduled Mailing/Projects

Book: Holiday Gift (Globe Santa)

Page: Holiday Gift Verification Mailing

TAFDC:Transportation Payments for Employed Clients Procedural Change

Online Guide Transmittal 2015-50

TAFDC

Prior to BEACON Build 47.6, deployed August 31, 2015, transportation reimbursement payments for employed clients could only be requested and paid on the Related Benefit page.

With the deployment, transportation payments for employed clients are requested and approved on the Transportation Request page in the ESP services workflow.

Effective September 4, 2015, the procedures for requesting and paying transportation payments for employed clients on the Related Benefit page were removed from the Online Guide.

From the Forms File

New Form

CAC Appt Ltr (Rev. 9/2015)

Client Assistance Coordinator (CAC) Appointment Letter

A new appointment letter has been created for use by the CACs when attempting to contact an individual who has requested an accommodation. The English version of the *Client Assistance Coordinator (CAC) Appointment Letter (CAC Appt Ltr)* is currently in production and can be accessed through the Online Forms folder in Policy Online. The Spanish version of this form will be available shortly.

Revised Forms

CCE-1 Form (Rev.8/2015)

09-440-0815-05

Community College Verification Form

EDUC-1 (Rev. 8/2015)

02-122-0815-05

Educational Income and Expense Form

SV-1 (Rev. 8/2015)

02-075-0815-05

School Verification Form

TAFDC-2 (Rev. 9/2015)

02-191-0915-05

Verification of Immunization Status

EAEDC-10 (Rev. 9/2015)

04-206-0915-05

EAEDC Family Disability Exemption Denial Notice

FCP-Record (Rev. 9/2015)

17-091-0915-05

Foster Care Verification Form

Based on suggestions from the Forms and Notices workgroup, convened at the Commissioner's request and comprised of Field managers, the above forms have been revised and can be accessed from the Online Forms folder in Policy Online. They are also available in WebCRD. Please destroy existing supplies of these forms.

DVWR(S) (Rev. 8/2015)

02-560-0815-05

Request for a Waiver of TAFDC Program Requirement(s) Due to Domestic Violence

The Spanish version of the DVWR is now available for ordering from Document Production.

FYI

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

How did October become Domestic Violence Awareness Month? In 1981, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) began the *Day of Unity* to bring together all the advocates across the nation who were working to end violence against women and their children. Soon, the Day of Unity became a week devoted to local, statewide and national activities that recognized those who died because of domestic violence and celebrated those who survived as well as to connect those who were working to end it.

In October of 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed during the same year that the 1st National Domestic Violence Hotline began. In 1989, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 101-112 designating October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Such legislation has been passed every year since.

Massachusetts has activities open to the public throughout the month of October and across the entire state. Most of these activities are free. The Statewide Domestic Violence Coalition, Jane Doe Inc. has many of these activities listed on their website, janedoe.org. Please visit Jane Doe's website for activities in your area.

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) invites men and boys to be leaders and take the pledge to be part of the solution to end violence against women. It first began in Canada when a small group of men decided on the 2nd anniversary of one man's massacre of 14 women in Montreal, to urge men to speak out against violence against women. The white ribbon became a symbol of this movement that has spread worldwide and today is in 60 countries. The WRC has collected over 5 million signatures and continues to grow. Be a part of the movement and take the pledge!

Massachusetts has local WRC activities throughout the year including during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Each year, on the 1st Thursday in March, there is a WRC Proclamation at the State House. This inspirational event is free and open to the public. In 2016, it will be held on Thursday, March 3 from 1pm – 4pm.

Visit <http://whiteribbonday.janedoe.org> to take the pledge, find a listing of the local activities in your community, or to find out more about the WRC.

FYI

Fuel Assistance 2015-2016

The Fuel Assistance Program begins accepting applications for fuel assistance on November 1, 2015. TAOs will receive a supply of Fuel Assistance brochures in October for clients who are interested in applying for fuel assistance that contains information on how the program works. The brochure will also be available on our website at www.mass.gov/dta/fuelassistance.

Clients can obtain income verification letters to submit with their Fuel Assistance application in the following ways:

- Clients may use their “My Account Page” (MAP) screen, which displays their case information. For more information on how clients can access MAP, see the Online Guide page [Informing Clients How to Access My Account Page \(MAP\)](#).
- Clients may use the DTA Assistance Line telephone number to request an income verification letter. The DTA Assistance Line telephone number is 1-877-382-2363, and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Clients will receive an income verification letter within five days at the mailing address identified in BEACON.
- Clients may visit a TAO to request an income verification letter. Clients who visit a TAO to request an income verification letter must receive the letter before leaving the TAO. Clients who telephone their case managers requesting an income verification letter should be directed to use the DTA Assistance Line telephone number or to access MAP to print out their case information.

Each TAO was previously sent a poster advertising the availability of income verification letters through the DTA Assistance Line telephone number and MAP. Contact Schrafft's if a new poster is needed in your TAO.

Xerox Cardholder Customer Service Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Changes

Beginning **9/18/2015** Xerox Cardholder Customer Service **1-800-997-2555** voice recording will have new features.

Additional languages-

The Cardholder Customer Service IVR will be available in 6 additional languages besides English and Spanish.

- Portuguese (Press 3)
- Cantonese (Press 4)
- Vietnamese (Press 5)
- Russian (Press 6)
- Haitian (Press 7)
- Khmer (Press 8)

If a client elects to speak to a customer service representative (CSR), the call will be transferred to an English speaking CSR. The CSR will be able to see on their screen a language indicator (sent by the IVR) for the caller, e.g. Russian. Before answering the call, the CSR will patch in a Russian-speaking person from their language line service for translation during the call. The CSRs have the ability to identify the language at the time of transfer and are able to assist in that language.

Personalization –

- Once a client has called Cardholder Customer Service twice from the same phone number on the same card number, the IVR system will link the phone number with the card number. On the third and subsequent calls, the client will be prompted to enter the last 4 digits of their card number. They will no longer need to enter the full 18 digits when calling from that phone number. After entering the last 4 digits of the card number, the client will be prompted to enter their PIN as a security measure. This is the same PIN used to make SNAP purchases. Every call thereafter from the same phone on the same card number will require the PIN entry after the last 4 digits of the card number are entered.
- The IVR system will link up to three card numbers to one phone number for those instances where there are multiple cardholders using the same phone number.

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Xerox Cardholder Customer Service Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Changes

Forgotten PIN –

- If a client has forgotten their PIN and calls to select a new PIN, the following will occur.
 - If the card number and phone number are linked in the system, the client will be prompted to enter the last 4 digits of the card number and then their PIN. If they don't enter the PIN, the response will be "We did not receive your entry. Please try again. Please enter your PIN."
 - If the client doesn't enter their PIN after the second request, they will be prompted to enter the full 18 digit card number. After entering the card number, the account balance(s) will play followed by the main menu including option 2, "To select a new PIN". After selecting 2, the client will be prompted to enter the last 4 digits of their Social Security Number and their date of birth before selecting a new PIN.

Incorrect PIN –

- If a client enters an incorrect PIN, the following will occur.
 - The client will be prompted to enter the last 4 digits of the card number and then their PIN. If they enter the incorrect PIN, the response will be "Your card number and PIN do not match. Please enter your PIN."
 - If the client enters the incorrect PIN the second time, they will be prompted to enter the full 18 digit card number. After entering the card number, the account balance(s) will play followed by the main menu including option 2, "To select a new PIN". After selecting 2, the client will be prompted to enter the last 4 digits of their Social Security Number and their date of birth before selecting a new PIN.

Password enhancement –

- Currently clients that need additional security to prevent unauthorized access to their account information may request a password. Staff with EPPIC security access (roles: TAO MGMT, CIS Operator, EBT Liaison) can generate the random 8 character password on the EPPIC Recipient Information Management screen. They can also remove the password at the client's request. This process hasn't changed.
- With the enhancement, immediately after entering the card number, the Cardholder Customer Service interactive voice response (IVR) will request the caller to enter their password. If the caller doesn't enter the password or the password doesn't match, the caller will be requested a second time to enter the password. If the correct password isn't entered the caller will be told that they have exceeded the maximum number of attempts to enter a valid password and to contact DTA.
- This enhancement prevents an unauthorized caller from hearing the account balance(s), changing the PIN or cancelling the card. No account information will be available to the caller.

TAO Meeting Notes