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**Field Operations Memo 2009-32**
**June 3, 2009**

**To:**  **Transitional Assistance Office Staff**

**From:**  **John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**

**Re:**  **EA Program Transitions from DTA to DHCD**

**Overview**

Effective July 1, 2009, the Emergency Assistance (EA) program will transition to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). All of the eligibility and case management services and activities associated with the EA program will become the responsibility of DHCD. This new division will be called the *Division of Housing Stabilization* and the central office will be located at 100 Cambridge St. in Boston.

**Purpose of Memo**

The purpose of this memo is to inform DTA directors, supervisors, case managers and homeless coordinators what actions they need to complete to assist in the transition of the EA program to DHCD. A second Field Operations Memo will be issued this month to inform DTA staff plus the DHCD staff in the TAOs about all processing-related issues associated with the EA program after the transition to DHCD, including, but not limited to, personnel-related issues, client-related issues, BEACON-related issues, etc.

**Background**

Currently, DTA is responsible for all aspects of the case. Post transition, the TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP programs will remain with DTA to be managed by a DTA case manager. The EA program will be managed by a DHCD homeless coordinator.

As part of the transition, program and administrative staff from the Central Office Housing Unit, including the Centralized Placement Unit, will transfer to DHCD. Thirty-seven field staff, 6 supervisors and 31 case managers, will transfer as well. In addition, 2 field managers and other central office housing-related support staff will be transitioning with the program.

**Background (continued)**

The new DHCD *Division of Housing Stabilization* will be comprised of five regional areas staffed by former DTA supervisors and case managers. Each area will have a team comprised of a supervisor and case managers, except for the Boston team (Team 1) which will have 2 supervisors (see Attachment A). The attachment shows the five teams, the DTA office(s) covered, the DTA office location and the specific team composition.

With the transition comes the dissolution of the Boston Family Housing office and the homeless units associated with the North Shore and Holyoke TAOs. Those caseloads will be reassigned to other TAOs based upon the shelter location where the EA family resides and the TAO that serves that geographic area.

Former DTA field staff will continue to be located in designated DTA offices to accommodate applicants and ongoing clients applying for and receiving EA benefits from the *Division of Housing Stabilization.* To ensure that there is a presence in each of DTA's current offices, it will be necessary for some DHCD homeless coordinators to travel between offices.

**Reception Process**

When an individual enters a TAO, the first agency contact is the receptionist. This will continue to be the case post-transition when an individual arrives at the TAO to apply for EA. It can not be stressed enough the importance the receptionist plays in the business model for both departments. It is the role of the receptionist to be cordial and professional and to determine the reason why the individual has come to the TAO. At times this presents a challenge, since the individual may not be clear about the reason for the visit or the services that are available.

Until the transition date of July 1, 2009, applications for EA, cash and/or SNAP benefits will be taken following established procedures and assigned to the DTA case manager or homeless coordinator.

As of July 1, the receptionist should:

- follow the TAO's established procedures for logging the individual into the reception log; and

- determine the reason for the visit by asking if:
  - the individual wants to apply for benefits; or
  - the individual is currently in receipt of benefits and wants to see the DTA case manager or the DHCD homeless coordinator.

**Reception Process (continued)**

Once the receptionist has determined what benefits the individual wants to apply for, the receptionist must do the following:

- if the benefit is EA shelter only, or EA shelter plus cash and/or SNAP benefits, the individual must first be referred to the DHCD homeless coordinator who will complete the EA application. If the individual wishes to apply for other programs, due to the serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of the family members, the EA shelter application will be taken first. After the EA application is taken, the individual will be referred to the appropriate DTA case manager to complete the cash and/or SNAP application; or

- if the benefit is cash and/or SNAP only, refer the individual to the appropriate DTA case manager.

  **Note:** If the individual is in receipt of TAFDC, EAEDC, SNAP and/or EA benefits, refer the individual to the appropriate DTA case manager or DHCD homeless coordinator depending on the reason for the TAO visit.

**DTA Case Manager**

As of July 1, the EA program and all of the activities associated with the EA program will no longer be the responsibility of the DTA case manager or homeless coordinator.

The DTA case manager will continue to take applications for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP benefits, determine eligibility and perform all case maintenance activities associated with the cash and/or SNAP cases.

Until the case record is reassigned or transferred, the current DTA case manager or homeless coordinator is responsible for all eligibility or case maintenance services and activities associated with the TAFDC, EAEDC, SNAP or EA case. Until the transition date of July 1, 2009, all applications for EA, cash and/or SNAP benefits will be taken following established procedures and assigned to the DTA case manager or homeless coordinator. The case manager or homeless coordinator will then follow the instructions found later in this memo for preparing the EA case record for DHCD and the cash and/or SNAP case record for the appropriate TAO.

**DHCD Homeless Coordinator**

As of July 1, the DHCD homeless coordinator will take applications for EA benefits, determine EA eligibility and perform all case maintenance activities associated with ongoing EA cases. DHCD homeless coordinators and supervisors will be located in selected TAOs. An office with no DHCD homeless coordinator assigned to it will be covered by a mobile homeless coordinator who will travel from the assigned TAO to the uncovered office. Each DHCD homeless coordinator in the TAO will be assigned to a team. The DHCD homeless coordinator will report to his or her team's regional supervisor who in turn will report to the team's regional manager.

## Transition Preparation

**TAO Central Area for Cases**

To prepare for the transition, the TAO director/designee will set aside a secure central location in the TAO where the physical DTA and DHCD case records will be kept for future assignment or transfer.  Label the boxes "DTA" and "DHCD."

**Timelines**

The following are timelines for processing cases affected by this transition.

| | |
|---|---|
| Create separate case, reviewed and ready for transfer or reassignment | 6/3 – 6/16 |
| Shelter contact by current DTA case manager or homeless coordinator | 6/3 – 6/19 |
| Shelter contact by new DHCD case manager | 6/22 – 7/3 |
| Identify cases located in service area or out of service area | 6/16 – 6/30 |

**DTA Case Manager or Homeless Coordinator Responsibilities Prior to Transition**

To prepare for the transition, case managers or homeless coordinators in each TAO must inventory their homeless caseload.  If there is a cash and/or SNAP case associated with the EA case, the DTA case manager or homeless coordinator will be responsible to create a separate EA case record to be forwarded to the DHCD homeless coordinator.  All documentation pertinent to the EA case must be included in the separate EA case record. Cash case records must include verification that the family resides in an EA shelter and documentation of work program participation, if applicable. Cash and SNAP cases must include verification of the free household expense of $148.50 for auditing purposes. A tracking form has been created to easily identify the case, including case name, shelter/hotel/motel placement, cash or SNAP benefits, assignment information or transfer information (Attachment B).

1) Upon receipt of this memo, the DTA case manager or homeless coordinator will:

   - create a list to identify all of their EA cases using the BEACON query. Go to TAO Office Explorer, select View and select Assistance Unit list, active by Program to display the list of cases.  When the list of cases is displayed, select File and scroll to Print, Assistance Unit list, Active by Program.  This will print the entire list of active cases.  Give a copy of the list to the unit supervisor.  Both the DTA case manager or homeless coordinator and the unit supervisor will annotate their list once a separate EA case record has been created.  Update the list with the names of the new EA cases and the closed EA cases and forward additions and changes to the supervisor.  Continue updating the list through June 30, 2009;

**DTA Case Manager
or Homeless
Coordinator
Responsibilities
Prior to Transition
(continued)**

- compare the names of the EA cases to the list of cash and/or SNAP cases:

    - when there is an associated cash and/or SNAP case,
        - pull the existing case record and create a separate EA case record including all of the pertinent documentation for the EA case. Separate EA cases must be created by June 16. Separate EA cases for new EA cases that apply during the month of June must be created by June 30;
        - Cash case records must include verification that the family resides in an EA shelter and documentation of work program participation, if applicable;
        - Cash and SNAP cases must include verification of the free household expense of $148.50 for auditing purposes;
        - complete the entries on the DTA tracking form with the case name, shelter/hotel/motel name, city/town location, and indicate if the case record is cash or SNAP;
        - write on the outside of the EA case record the name of the shelter/ hotel/motel, the current date, and "DHCD" in bold lettering;
        - attach a tracking form to the outside of the cash and/or SNAP case record;
        - give each case record to the supervisor to review for pertinent documentation; and
        - annotate on the list that the case records have been created, identifying the shelter/hotel/motel name and location;

    - when it is an EA-only case,
        - write on the outside of the EA case record the name of the shelter/hotel/motel, the city/town, the current date, and "DHCD" in bold lettering;
        - give the case record to the supervisor to review for pertinent documentation; and
        - annotate the list as an EA-only case, and the shelter/hotel/motel name and location.

2) Beginning with the receipt of this memo, all current EA case managers or homeless coordinators will contact all of the families currently in shelter to advise them of the change effective July 1, 2009. Assure the families that this transition will be seamless; services provided will not be impacted and there will be a DTA case manager and a DHCD homeless coordinator working with the family. Distribute the informational handouts to the families. These handouts are currently being developed. The DTA case manager or homeless coordinator should also inform the families that a DHCD homeless coordinator will visit the family.

**…Responsibilities Prior to Transition (continued)**

3) Until the cash and/or SNAP case records are reassigned or transferred, the current DTA case manager or homeless coordinator will assume responsibility for the case maintenance activities.

4) Once the DHCD homeless coordinator has possession of the physical EA case record and the cash and/or SNAP case records have been reassigned, the new DTA case manager will contact the shelter/hotel/motel to introduce him or herself to the families and the shelter/hotel/motel staff.

**DTA Supervisor Responsibilities Prior to Transition**

The DTA supervisor is responsible to review all lists of EA cases to ensure that:

- the list of active EA cases is accurate and complete;

- a case record exists for each name on the list for EA, cash and/or SNAP as appropriate;

- the case records are moved to the secure TAO central location;

- the cash and/or SNAP cases are placed in a box marked DTA;

- the EA cases are placed in a box marked DHCD;

- a copy of the annotated list is forwarded to the TAO director/designee; and

- all case records are created by June 16.

Beginning June 16, each supervisor will:

- use the shelter listing and the hotel listing (see Shelter Information and Hotel/Motel information on page 7) to prepare and review the case record for transfers or case reassignments;

- annotate the BEACON list of active EA cases with information on impending transfers or reassignments; and

- ensure that all cash and/or SNAP case records are prepared for transfer or reassignment for July 1.

**Important:** All case records will remain in the TAO until DHCD staff determines a hand off date.

**DTA TAO Director or Designee Prior to Transition**

Case Manager Assignment

The new DHCD staff will be announced by June 3, 2009.

To coincide with the transfer of EA cases to DHCD, current DTA BERS C or D staff who are staying with DTA will be assigned the responsibility of serving as liaisons between DTA, and the shelters/hotels/motels. The TAO's cash and/or SNAP cases that are associated with EA cases will be assigned to these staff as they have experience working with homeless families. To the extent possible, the cash and SNAP cases for the EA families residing in a particular shelter/hotel/motel should be assigned to the same DTA case manager.

Shelter Information
A shelter list with the shelter name, type, address and phone number, shelter director's or manager's name and capacity is being created as a tool for determining reassignments and potential caseload size. This shelter listing will be distributed as soon as possible.

The director/designee will:

- use the shelter list to determine which shelters are in or out of the TAO's service area;

- highlight the shelters that are in the TAO's service area;

- forward a copy of the annotated shelter list to each DTA case manager, homeless coordinator and supervisor with a homeless caseload. This list will be used by the case manager or homeless coordinator in conjunction with their BEACON list of active EA cases to create the case records;

- use this list to ensure that the cash and/or SNAP case records of families residing in shelters out of the TAO's service area are ready to be transferred to the appropriate TAO when DHCD makes the determination;

- notify the receiving TAO director once the transfer is completed in BEACON;

- use this list to ensure that the cash and/or SNAP case records of families residing in shelters in the TAO's service area are assigned to appropriate office staff, with the families at one shelter assigned to one designated case manager to the extent possible;

- annotate the shelter lists until every cash and/or SNAP case record has been transferred or reassigned; and

- ensure that all case records are boxed and kept in a secure central location until DHCD removes them.

**DTA TAO Director
or Designee Prior to
Transition
(continued)**

Hotel/Motel Information

TAO directors are sent an electronic file, *EA Families in Motels*, every week. Use this file to identify where the case records (EA, cash, SNAP) need to be transferred, as it identifies all of the families in hotels/motels across the state. Use the tabs on the bottom of the screen to select the type of sort needed.  To view names of families in hotels/motels for a particular TAO:

- select the "TAO" tab on the bottom of the screen;

- put the cursor in the empty box in Row 5 column B; go to Windows in the menu bar and select "freeze pane";

- scroll to the bottom of the screen to "Grand Total", double click on the total under the TAO heading to see the families names and hotel/motel placements and locations. This will create a "sheet" which appears as a "Sheet" tab on the bottom of the screen.  A sheet can be deleted by putting the cursor on the "Sheet" tab, right click on the mouse, select delete, and select delete again;

- print the TAO's hotel/motel list;

- use the hotel/motel list to determine which hotels/motels are in or out of the TAO's service area;

- highlight the hotels/motels that are in the TAO's service area;

- forward a copy of the annotated hotel/motel list to each DTA case manager, homeless coordinator and supervisor with a homeless caseload. This list will be used by the case manager or homeless coordinator in conjunction with their BEACON list of active EA cases to create the case records;

- use this hotel/motel list to ensure that the cash and/or SNAP case records of families residing in hotels/motels that are out of the TAO's service area are ready to be transferred to the appropriate TAO when DHCD makes the determination;

- notify the receiving TAO director once the transfer is completed in BEACON;

- use this list to ensure that the cash and/or SNAP case records of families residing in hotels/motels in the TAO's service area are assigned to appropriate office staff, with families at one hotel/motel assigned to one designated case manager to the extent possible;

- annotate the hotel/motel list until every cash and/or SNAP case record has been transferred or reassigned, and

- ensure that the all case records are boxed and kept in a secure location until DHCD removes them.

**Transfer Cases**  The director/designee will begin to transfer the cash and/or SNAP case record to the appropriate TAO based on the location of the shelter/hotel/motel when DHCD makes the determination. Update BEACON by entering the TAO transfer information on the AU Transfer window of the Program Administration section.

**Note**:  No case records will be transferred until DHCD staff removes them; they will remain in the current TAO.

The director/designee will:

- box EA case records by shelter/hotel/motel name;

- reconcile the boxed cash and/or SNAP case records to the family names on the shelter/hotel/motel lists; and

- based on the geographic location of the shelter/hotel/motel placement, the cash and/or SNAP case records will be transferred to the appropriate TAO responsible for that location when DHCD makes the determination.

**Marketing Materials**  DTA and DHCD will jointly prepare and distribute notices to clients, providers and community stakeholders explaining the transition.  In addition, posters will be created and displayed in conspicuous areas in the TAOs, shelters and hotels/motels announcing the change.

**Questions**  If you have any questions about the transition procedures, please have your Hotline designee call your Regional Director.

# DHCD TEAMS

| DTA Office | Number of DHCD Case Managers | Base DTA Location | Team Regional Supervisor(s) and Base DTA Location |
|---|---|---|---|
| **TEAM 1**<br>Boston | 10 | Dudley Square | 2 – based at Dudley Square |
|  |  |  |  |
| **TEAM 2**<br>North Shore | 2 | North Shore | 1 –based at North Shore |
| Revere | 2 | Revere |  |
| Malden | 1 | Malden |  |
| Lawrence | 1 | Lawrence |  |
| Lowell | 1 | Lowell |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **TEAM 3**<br>Worcester | 3 | Worcester: 1 of 3 float Southbridge/ Fitchburg | 1 – based at Worcester |
| Framingham/ Milford | 1 | Framingham and float to Milford |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **TEAM 4**<br>Brockton | 2 | Brockton | 1 - based at Brockton |
| Taunton/Plymouth | 1 | Taunton and float to Plymouth |  |
| Fall River/New Bedford | 1 | New Bedford and float to Fall River |  |
| Cape and Islands | 1 | Hyannis |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **TEAM 5**<br>Holyoke | 2 | Holyoke | 1 – based at Holyoke |
| Springfield Liberty/ Springfield State | 2 | Springfield State |  |
| Greenfield/Pittsfield/North Adams | 1 | Float to all 3 offices |  |

# DTA Case Record Tracking Form

*Completed by DTA case manager or homeless coordinator:*

Place an "x" if the family receives:

|  |  |
|---|---|
| TAFDC/EAEDC | _____ |
| SNAP | _____ |
| SNAP – NPA | _____ |

Case Name _____

Shelter/Hotel/Motel Name _____

Shelter/Hotel/Motel Location _____
(City/ Town)

– – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –

*Completed by TAO director/designee*:

Cash and/or SNAP case record transferred to  _____
**(TAO)**

Cash and/or SNAP case reassigned within TAO to _____