



**Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Housing Stabilization**

To: DHCD Field Staff
From: Robert Pulster, Associate Director
Date: August 21, 2009
RE: Housing Stabilization Notice 2009-2

The following information is being provided as a means of keeping you updated and informed of the newest changes and developments occurring within the Division.

Office Hours

As of September 1, 2009 EA services will be offered to clients between the hours of **8:00am and 4:00pm**. Please post the flyers included as an attachment in this email in TAO reception areas. Color flyers will also be sent directly to each TAO.

SharePoint

We are aware that the view of the EA Forms folder in SharePoint has changed. As we work to restore it to the original view please follow the instructions below to view the full list of forms.

1. Click on **Shared Documents** (Found on the left side of the screen.)
2. Click on **EA Forms**

By using this additional step all forms will be listed in alphabetical order as they were previously.

Please contact Gretchen Lucas at (617) 573-1131 if you need assistance.

BEACON

1. Data Collection

It is important that client data be entered into BEACON. This provides for up-to-date information on clients and allows for timely and accurate data collection. We are hopeful that the change in office hours will allow additional time for record-keeping.

2. EA eligibility

BEACON has not yet been programmed to calculate 115% of the federal poverty guideline to determine EA eligibility. Until this has been done eligibility must be determined manually.

Use What If on BEACON to calculate a family's eligibility for EA. Below is the EA eligibility standard chart to use when determining eligibility.

AU Size	115% EA Income Eligibility Standard
	As of 7-1-2009
1	\$1038
2	1397
3	1755
4	2114
5	2472
6	2831
7	3189
8	3547
9	3906
10	4264
Add person	359

Forms

1. nfl-9, nfl-st, nfl-st ca, tes-wn-13 and hm-nt

These forms have been updated in SharePoint based the last regulatory changes that were made. Please use these updated versions going forward. The new revision date on the bottom of each form will read 8/2009. Discard any pre-printed forms that are dated 6/2009.

2. Applicant's Statement – Part I and Pre-Assessment Re-Housing Tool – Part II

A new two part Applicant's Statement and Pre-Assessment Re-Housing Tool has been posted in SharePoint to replace the previously released *Pre-Assessment and Applicant Statement for Emergency Shelter*. The new documents can be found in the forms list alphabetically listed as follows:

Applicant's Statement – Part I

Updated 8/14/09

Pre-Assessment Re-Housing Tool – Part II

Updated 8/14/09

3. EA 6-month Notice

When a family's income exceeds the EA Eligibility Standard, of either 130% for families receiving shelter benefits prior to July 1, 2009, or 115% for families receiving benefits on or after July 1, 2009, Beacon generates an EA 6-month notice ONLY for the 130%. This notice should be suppressed and in its place the DHCD **ea 6-month notice** posted in SharePoint should be sent. Please note that BEACON will only sent a notice out if income is greater than 130% so all families reporting income need to be carefully checked and monitored against the 115% standards.

4. HM-NT Notice to EA Families Placed in Motels - Hotels

Please fax completed HM-NT notices with all placement requests to the Placement Unit to assist in the packaging of Non-Compliance referrals.

Non-Compliance Referrals

As a means of supporting shelter providers and ensuring a safe and secure environment for families, it is important that non-compliance referrals are being packaged and submitted in a timely manner. Please note that any noncompliance cases involving motel families will be processed at the DHS central office. DHS has assembled a Non-compliance committee that is meeting regularly.

Recordkeeping

Until another means of collecting such data is developed please work with your Manager/Supervisor in keeping daily records of the following:

- The number of families requesting assistance (includes all families screened for EA); and
- The number of out-of-state families being placed in shelter/motel.

EA Flexible Funds

Flexible funds are now available to EA families to assist with short term subsidies, both in shelter and in motels/hotels, who were placed prior to August 1, 2009. Families entering shelter or motel after August 1 are only eligible for toolbox that provides up to \$2000 for costs related to moving. Flexible funds that include up to three months of rental arrearages are also being made available to assist EA eligible families to be diverted from shelter. Currently these funds can only be accessed through one of our shelter providers. If there is a family that you believe can be diverted please refer to the Diversion worker assigned to your office who will assist with filing the necessary forms.

As we continue to work with ICHH Regional Networks Diversion workers will be assigned to each office.

For further information see the attachment: *Frequently Asked Questions about EA Flexible Funds*. We will also discuss this program during our next round of calls.

DCF Home Visits

We are working with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to begin a home visit program that will assess families who identify doubled-up, overcrowding, health and safety and asked to leave as their reason for applying for EA. We anticipate a September start date; prior to the start of assessments you will be notified of the process for submitting referrals to DCF so they may schedule an assessment with the family.

There will be three possible outcomes to an assessment:

1. Assessment results determine that there is no immediate health and safety risk at the present time that warrants immediate placement of the household into shelter
2. Assessment results indicate some risk but with supports and other resources a shelter placement can be averted.
3. Assessment results indicate an immediate threat to health and safety to the children and a shelter placement is, therefore, required.

Telecommunications/IT Support

Any technical difficulty that you experience should be reported to the EHS IT Site Manager. If the IT Site Manager is not on-site the staff should contact the EOHHS Customer Services Center.

The EOHHS Customer Service Center hours are 7:45 am and 5:30 pm. and can be contacted in one of the following ways:

- Telephone and Voicemail, 617-348-5290 option 3
- Email - SystemsSupportHelpDesk@massmail.state.ma.us

EOHHS IT Operations Services is responsible for the management of basic computing infrastructure components such as: Telephone and Voice Services, E-Mail, Personal Computing Devices/PC, Laptop, Peripherals/Printers, Scanners, Software, Network Connectivity, and Security Access.