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**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
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Secretary

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Commissioner

**Field Operations Memo 2005-9**  
**February 4, 2005**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff

**From:** Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

**Re:** TAFDC – Work Program Requirement Expansion (Phase III)

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**Overview**

Field Operations Memo 2004-27 informed TAO staff of the increased Work Program requirement hours for certain recipients.

Effective with the **returned** March Participation and Response forms, Work Program required recipients must meet the increased hours.

A notice (Attachment A) will be mailed during the first week of February to all Work Program required recipients telling them about this change.

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**Purpose of Memo**

This Field Operations Memo informs TAO staff about:

- the mailing to recipients; and
  - processing recipients affected by the increased hourly requirement.
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**Notice**

Attachment A will be sent to all Work Program required recipients the first week in February telling them:

- the Work Program required hours have increased effective March 1;
  - how to meet the Work Program requirement;
  - Good Cause reasons for not meeting the Work Program requirement; and
  - to call their worker if they have any questions.
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**Implementation  
Timetable**

The timetable for implementation of the increased hours is as follows:

- First week of February: Mailing to recipients (Attachment A).
  - March 1: Applicants and recipients subject to increased hours.
  - March 26: Increased hours implemented on BEACON (for April).
  - April 11: Last day for March Participation and Response forms to be returned by recipients.
  - April 19: Last day to enter March Participation and Response forms.
  - April 20: In overnight batch job, sanction created for recipients who fail to meet the increased hours.
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**AU Manager  
Reminders**

AU Managers are reminded that:

- sanctioning recipients requires “user intervention” (detailed in Field Operations Memo 2005-8). This means that participation sanctions are created by a BEACON batch job, but require authorization by both the AU Manager and AU Supervisor to take effect.
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**AU Manager Reminders (continued)**

- although the increased Work Program hours are effective March 1, recipients **must not be sanctioned** for failure to meet those hours for the February Participation and Response forms. February Participation and Response forms, *even though returned after March 1*, report on *February* participation hours and are not subject to the increased hours' requirement.  
**IMPORTANT:** If a recipient does not meet the 20 hour Work Program requirement for February, without good cause, he or she should be sanctioned.
  - Employment Development Plans (EDPs) should have been updated to reflect the appropriate hours as well as the activities a recipient is participating in to meet the Work Program requirement. For instructions on updating an EDP, see *A User's Guide*, Chapter XII, Section A.
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**AU Manager Responsibilities**

When recipients return the March Participation and Response form in April, AU Managers must do the following:

- ensure that the form has been completed accurately. If there is any data that seems incomplete, the AU Manager must contact the recipient so the form can be completed;
- on the Monitor Participation window, enter the hours from the March Participation and Response form;
- if working, enter the information received from the Monthly Report; and
- go to the Interview Wrap-up window to authorize the changes.

If the recipient has not met the increased hourly participation requirements for the month of March (reported on the Participation and Response form returned in April), the batch job will create a sanction. AU Managers must authorize the sanction following procedures found in Field Operations Memo 2005-8, unless the recipient has Good Cause.

If the recipient has good cause, the AU Manager must give the recipient Good Cause by:

- going to the Sanction Tab of the AU Composition Results window;
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**AU Manager  
Responsibilities  
(continued)**

- selecting the Work Program Participation sanction;
- clicking on “Good Cause;”
- on the Reason drop-down box on the Good Cause window, select the appropriate Good Cause reason; and
- deleting the Sanction created by the batch job on the Interview Wrap-up Selection window. See the “Deleting Pending Sanctions” section in this memo for instructions.

For recipients meeting the Work Program requirement through employment only, who did not meet the increased hourly participation requirements for the month of March (reported on the April Monthly Report), the batch job will create a sanction. AU Managers must authorize the sanction following procedures found in Field Operations Memo 2005-8, unless the recipient has Good Cause. (As detailed in Field Operations Memo 2005-8, this is a two-day process).

**IMPORTANT: AU Managers who are processing monthly reports returned prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> filing deadline for March for any recipient whose SSN ends in “2” through “9” must pay special attention to the Week Ending Dates on the Monthly Report to ensure that the recipient is only being held responsible for meeting the increased hours for Week Ending Dates in March. As long as a recipient meets the 20 hours per week requirement for February and the appropriate hours per week requirement for March, he or she must not be sanctioned, but should be given Good Cause.**

If the recipient has good cause, the AU Manager must give the recipient Good Cause by:

- going to the Sanction Tab of the AU Composition Results window;
- selecting the Work Program Participation sanction;
- clicking on “Good Cause;”
- on the Reason drop-down box on the Good Cause window, select the appropriate Good Cause reason; and
- deleting the Sanction created by the batch job on the Interview Wrap-up Selection window. See the “Deleting Pending Sanctions” section in this memo for instructions.

**AU Managers must always consult with their Supervisor if there is any question as to whether a recipient should be sanctioned or not.**

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**Deleting Pending Sanctions** To delete a pending sanction request, the AU Manager must:

- go to the Interview Wrap-up window;
- highlight and select the existing pending sanction request;
- click on the Delete push button;
- click on the “Yes” button in response to the question “Are you sure you want to delete this data?”
- on the Sanctions tab of the AU Composition Results window use the removal reason of “Good Cause.” This will prevent the sanction level from increasing the next time the recipient is sanctioned;
- remove the recipient’s Ineligibility Reason that appears on the AU Composition Results window; and
- if the good cause reason for not meeting the Work Program is expected to last beyond the current month, see Field Operations Memo 2004-37 A for the “Meets Compliance” process. This will prevent the recipient from being sanctioned while this temporary good cause situation exists.  
**Note:** A recipient who is meeting the Work Program by participating in multiple activities or an activity plus employment will not be sanctioned if given good cause for not meeting participation requirements for one of the activities.

Special Instructions For Employed Recipients:

Deleting a sanction for good cause for a recipient who is meeting the Work Program requirement through employment **only** is a **two-day process**:

Day 1: Enter the information from the Monthly Report onto the Employment Status window. The overnight batch job will create a pending sanction request.

Day 2: Follow the instructions above to remove the pending sanction request.

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**Questions**

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

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{BEACON USER STREET\_ADDRESS}  
{BEACON USER CITY, STATE, ZIP}

Important Notice - Read Carefully  
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance**

{RECIPIENT NAME}  
{RECIPIENT ADDRESS}  
{RECIPIENT CITY/TOWN, STATE, ZIP}

{RECIPIENT SSN}  
{BEACON USER OFFICE NAME}

February 2005

**Important Notice Please Read**

Dear -----:

Your worker told you about the hours you are required to participate to meet the Work Program. If you have increased hours, you must start meeting them beginning **March 1**. Failure to do so, without Good Cause may result in the benefits you receive for yourself or your family to be stopped. Please remember:

- A parent whose youngest child is between two and mandatory school age must participate in the Work Program for **20 hours per week**.
- A parent whose youngest child is mandatory school age through eight years old must participate in the Work Program for **24 hours per week**.
- A parent whose youngest child is age nine or older must participate in the Work Program for **30 hours per week**.
- **Both parents** who are Work Program required in a two-parent family, will be required to meet these new hourly requirements.

If you have a child not included in your TAFDC benefits because of the Family Cap rule, your worker told you the hours you had to participate to meet the Work Program requirement.

You can meet the Work Program by:

- Working in a job for pay;
- Participating for up to 12 months total in a Department-approved education or training activity (other than a four year college);
- Participating in a community service program;

## Attachment A

- Working full time in the Full-Employment Program; or
- A combination of the activities listed above; or
- If residing in an EA shelter, housing search activities.

If you feel you have good cause for not meeting the Work Program requirement or your Employment Development Plan (EDP), contact your worker. Good Cause includes:

- lack of appropriate and available child care;
- lack of affordable and reliable transportation;
- lack of an available and appropriate community service site identified by the Department;
- a disability or illness;
- participating in housing search; or
- other reasons established by the Department (including a family crisis, emergency or other compelling circumstances or that the job violates state or federal laws or is available due to a strike or a lockout).

If you need child care, we will help you get it. If no child care is available, you will not have to meet this requirement. Ask your worker about child care availability.

If you have any questions about the new requirements, you should call \_\_\_\_\_ and ask for your worker \_\_\_\_\_ .