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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2006-52
November 24, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: TAFDC: New Five-Year (60-Month) Period

Overview

On December 1, 1996, the Department instituted a five-year (60-month) period for all recipients. Nonexempt TAFDC recipients could receive up to 24 months of time-limited benefits within this 60-month period. As of November 30, 2006, the second five-year period is ending for some recipients. These recipients begin another five-year period.

Because the five-year period is a “rolling” five-year period, not all recipients subject to this rule are eligible for a new five-year period at the same point. Any recipient whose five-year period began December 1, 2001 begins a new five-year period effective December 1, 2006. Any recipient whose five-year period began January 1, 2002 begins a new five-year period effective January 1, 2007 and so on.

Additionally, the new five-year period:

- resets the 24-month clock;
- resets the 60-day work-search period (106 CMR 203.400 (A)); and

gives the recipient a new first-time claim of disability (a period of presumptive eligibility should he or she claim a disability) (106 CMR 203.530 (F) and (G)).

**Processing
Applications for
Former
Recipients**

Any former recipient whose 60-month period has ended is eligible to reapply for TAFDC even if he or she has used 24 months of time-limited benefits.

Before taking any application, it is important to review:

- the Time Limits window in the Program Administration workflow to determine if the applicant is eligible for a new 60-month period; and
- the Work Requirements window to determine if the applicant is subject to a new work-search period.

Each applicant must be reminded that:

- if applicable, a new 60-day work-search period begins on the application date (and will be automatically reset on BEACON);
- the new 60-month period also begins on the application date (and will be automatically reset on BEACON); and
- if applicable, he or she may be presumptively eligible under a first-time medical disability claim and be exempt from the Work Program and time-limited benefits.

**“State Clock”
View on
BEACON**

AU Managers are reminded that the View “State Clocks,” contains information on months used for 24 months of time-limited benefits (listed on the “Count” field), the last time the 24-month clock was adjusted (listed on the “Entered” field) and ALL currently active, exempt and nonexempt TAFDC AUs and their respective 60-month period (listed on the “Start” and “End” fields).

To determine who must be seen to discuss the impact of the new 60-month period on the AU, AU Managers should look at the “End” field on this View. AU Managers can “sort” this field by clicking on the “End” column heading. This will sort the 60-month period end date for the AU Manager’s AUs by closest to the present date to determine who needs to be called in for an appointment. For those needing appointments, schedule them *no more than* two months in advance. Those who have a new 60-month period beginning either December 1, 2006 or January 1, 2007 should have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible.

Example: Lisa Smith is listed on the “State Clocks” View with an end date of 5/01/07. She needs an appointment scheduled to discuss the impact the new 60-month period has on the AU. Her AU Manager will schedule an appointment no earlier than March 2007.

Active Recipient Groups All active recipients appearing on the State Clocks View are broken down into four groups and the impact on each group once they reach the beginning of the new 60-month period are as follows:

Group: Currently Exempt Used None of 24 Months
60-Month Period: Reset* to zero
24-Month Clock: NA
60-Day Work Search: NA

Group: Currently Exempt Used Less Than or All of 24 Months
60-Month Period: Reset* to zero
24-Month Clock: Reset* to zero
60-Day Work Search: NA

Group: Currently Nonexempt+ Used Less Than 24 Months
60-Month Period: Reset* to zero
24-Month Clock: Reset* to zero
60-Day Work Search: Reset* Work Search Period, if applicable

Group: Currently Nonexempt+ Extension Related
60-Month Period: Reset* to zero
24-Month Clock: Reset* to zero
60-Day Work Search: Reset* Work Search Period, if applicable (Reset centrally by Systems Division)

* Reset automatically by BEACON.

+ Special procedures for nonexempt recipients who have Domestic Violence Waivers are found later in this memo.

Reminders: 60-month period and 24-month clock information are found on the Time Limits window.
60-day work-search period is found on the Work Requirements window.

The remaining sections contain procedures for processing the various groups on this View.

Currently Exempt Used None of 24 Months

No AU Manager contact is necessary now. Recipients who begin a new 60-month period must be told about it at the next TAO contact. AU Managers must then review the Time Limits window to ensure the 60-month period has been reset, which should be recorded on the BEACON Narratives tab of the Eligibility Explorer window.

**Currently
Exempt
Recipients: Used
Less Than or All
of 24 Months**

No AU Manager contact is necessary now. Recipients who begin a new 60-month period must be told about it at the next TAO contact. AU Managers must then review the Time Limits window to ensure the 60-month period and 24-month clock have been reset, which should be recorded on the BEACON Narratives tab of the Eligibility Explorer window. Systems will automatically reset the 24-month clock when the recipient begins a new 60-month period.

**Currently
Nonexempt
Recipients: Used
Less Than 24
Months**

For currently nonexempt recipients who have used fewer than 24 months of time-limited benefits and in at least the final two months of the 60-month period, the AU Manager must:

- schedule an eligibility review for the AU, excluding those recipients with a Domestic Violence Waiver (see the section on Domestic Violence Waivers in this memo for procedures);
- at the eligibility review inform the AU of the impact of this new 60-month period on the AU:
 - ◆ the 24-month clock will be reset to “0” on the Time Limits window for the recipient with a new 60-month period; and
 - ◆ if Work Program-required, a new 60-day work search period for the Work Program requirement will be set on the Work Requirements window; and

Note: Recipients who are currently enrolled in Job Search/Job Readiness and get a new 60-month period, may continue in Job Search/Job Readiness during the new 60-day work search period. Recipients with a new 60-month period and a new 60-day work search period who are not enrolled in Job Search/Job Readiness should be referred to Job Search/Job Readiness following procedures established in Field Operations Memo 2006-39.

- ensure the new 60-month period, 24-month period and/or the work search period are accurately reflected on BEACON.

IMPORTANT: A reapplicant’s/recipient’s Work Program Sanction level is NOT reset when he or she gets a new 60-month period. The sanction must be “cured” before the sanction is removed.

**Currently
Nonexempt
Recipients:
Extension
Related (In an
Extension)**

For currently nonexempt recipients who are in an extension and have used the full 60-month period, the AU Manager must at the **end** of the extension period:

- schedule an appointment for the AU;
- close the Extension AU on BEACON following the instructions in *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, Chapter XVI, Section E;
- ask the TAO Director to update the *ETNA* system with the appropriate action;
- conduct a reapplication interview following procedures found in *A User's Guide*, Chapter IV, Sections A and B, ensuring the new 60-month period, 24-month period and/or the work-search period are accurately reflected on BEACON; and
- inform the AU how this new 60-month period impacts the AU:
 - ◆ the extension will end and the 24-month clock will be reset to “0” for the recipient with a new 60-month period; and
 - ◆ if work program-required, a new 60-day work search period for the Work Program requirement will be set.

Note: Extension AUs with a new 60-month period pending to close should be allowed to close. Follow the procedures above to process the AU who still wants to receive TAFDC.

**Currently
Nonexempt
Recipients:
Extension
Related
(continued)
(Pending an
Extension)**

For currently nonexempt recipients who have a pending extension request and have used the full 60-month period, the TAO Director must:

- deny the Extension AU with the reason “Your Request for a TAFDC Extension Has Been Denied”; and
- update the *ETNA* system with the appropriate denial reason (Use the reason that begins “106 CMR” and then fill in the following: “203.210. You have started a new 60-month and 24-month period. No extension is needed.”)

Once this is done the AU Manager must:

- schedule an eligibility review for the AU, excluding those recipients with a Domestic Violence Waiver (see the section on Domestic Violence Waivers in this memo for procedures);
- at the eligibility review inform the AU of the impact of this new 60-month period on the AU:
 - ◆ the 24-month clock will be reset to “0” on the Time Limits window for the recipient with a new 60-month period; and
 - ◆ if Work Program-required, a new 60-day work search period for the Work Program requirement will be set on the Work Requirements window; and
- ensure the new 60-month period, 24-month period and/or the work search period are accurately reflected on BEACON.

**Domestic
Violence Waivers
and the New 60-
Month Period**

Recipients subject to the 24-month time limit, the work program requirement or mandatory participation in an ESP component can receive waivers of these requirements due to domestic violence. AUs with approved Domestic Violence Waivers who have reached the end of the 60-month period but not the end of the waiver must come in for a review when the *waiver* expires.

When a waiver expires, the AU must be reviewed by the AU Manager to ensure that:

- the 24-month clock and 60-month period have been reset.
- a new 60-day work search period has started.

A recipient granted a Domestic Violence Waiver of the work program requirement or mandatory participation in an ESP component must be told to either comply with the specific requirement at this time or request another Domestic Violence Waiver.

**Domestic
Violence Waivers
and the New 60-
Month Period
(continued)**

A recipient granted a Domestic Violence Waiver of the time limit is no longer in need of this waiver since the 24-month clock has been reset, but must be informed that she may be required to participate in the work program or an ESP component unless she chooses to apply for a Domestic Violence Waiver of these requirements. A recipient may claim “Good Cause” for not participating or request an exemption.

**Two-Parent AUs
and the New 60-
Month Period**

In a two-parent AU, each parent may have a different 60-month period.

When conducting a review with the parent eligible for the new 60-month period, it is important to review the other parent’s status to determine if this parent has time left in his or her 60-month period.

If there is a nonexempt parent with time left in his or her 60-month period, he or she continues to be subject to the work program, if applicable, and the AU’s time-limited benefits continue to be determined by his or her 24-month clock.

See Attachment A for some examples of two-parent AUs and the impact the new 60-month period has on them.

**Supervisor
Responsibilities**

Supervisors must:

- review progress being made to process applications for reinstatement and eligibility reviews by checking the AU Manager’s View; and
 - take appropriate action on the applications/reviews.
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Questions

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

Attachment A

Two-Parent AU Examples

Example 1: John and Sally Smith are a nonexempt AU with a four-year-old child.

John's 60-month period and 24-month clock are reset on December 1, 2006.

Sally's 60-month period and 24-month clock are also reset on December 1, 2006.

John and Sally and their family are eligible to receive a new 24-months of time-limited benefits.

Example 2: Bill and Mary Ivy are a nonexempt AU with a six-year-old child.

Bill's 60-month period and 24-month clock are reset on January 1, 2007. On January 1, 2007, Mary has five months remaining in her 60-month period. She has two months remaining on her 24-month clock.

On March 31, 2007, Mary will have used 24 months of time-limited benefits. If Mary does not apply for an extension or applies for an extension which is subsequently denied, the entire AU is ineligible because Mary has time remaining in her 60-month period and has received 24 months of time-limited benefits in that period.

The AU may reapply for an extension at any time but on June 1, 2007, when Mary's 60-month period is reset, the AU may reapply and if otherwise eligible, qualify for TAFDC benefits.

Example 3: Barbara and Mark Jones are an exempt AU with a medically disabled five-year-old child. Mark is also disabled, exempt and unable to care for their child. Barbara is exempt because she is needed in the home to care for their child.

Barbara's 60-month period and 24-month clock are reset on February 1, 2007.

Mark's 60-month period and 24-month clock are also reset on February 1, 2007.

Barbara becomes nonexempt in March 2007, when Mark's disability improves and he is able to care for their child. He is still considered disabled and remains exempt.

Because Barbara becomes nonexempt in March, she and the AU are subject to the 24-months of time-limited benefits effective April 1, 2007.