



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2009-13
February 27, 2009

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: SNAP Application Process for Veterans Receiving State Veterans' Benefits

Overview

Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits are administered by local Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs) in cities and towns. In some instances, the VSO makes vendor payments directly to the veteran's landlord and/or utility company for the veteran's housing or heating/cooling costs. These vendor payments should be excluded from countable income for SNAP eligibility purposes.

This Field Operations Memo:

- clarifies procedures for processing SNAP applications received from veterans whose VSO makes a vendor payment for shelter or utilities; and
- introduces the *Veterans' SNAP Benefit Job Aid* (Attachment A).

Case Manager Responsibilities for Processing Applications from Veterans with Vendor Payments

When processing an application for a veteran, ask the veteran if the VSO makes vendor payments directly to the veteran's landlord and/or utility company. If the answer is yes, these vendor payments should be excluded from countable income for SNAP eligibility purposes (see 106 CMR 363.230). The VSO must provide verification of these vendor payments.

The attached *Veterans' SNAP Benefits Job Aid* details how Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits are budgeted by VSOs and how vendor payments made on behalf of the veteran are to be processed by case managers when completing a SNAP application. This job aid may be accessed via Policy Online under *Job Aids*.

Case Manager Responsibilities for Processing Applications from Veterans with Vendor Payments (continued)

The case manager must:

- subtract the total amount of vendor payments from the total amount of the Veterans' Benefits and enter the resulting income amount on BEACON as *VA State* in the Other Income Status window;
- subtract the amount of any vendor payment for shelter from the veteran's full shelter cost and enter the remainder, if any, as the veteran's shelter amount in the Housing Expenses window;
- select the appropriate SUA based on the utility expense(s) that the veteran incurs;
- enter other income and expense data, as appropriate; and
- wrap up the case.

Note: Annotate the BEACON Narratives tab identifying the vendor payments made on the veteran's behalf and the verification provided to confirm the vendor payment.

Example: The veteran's only source of income is \$1,255 in Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits. This amount includes the allowances for a single individual, an unheated shelter and fuel. The veteran's rent is \$900 per month not including heat.

The VSO makes vendor payments of \$405 directly to the landlord for the rent and \$250 to a utility company for heating/cooling. Subtract these amounts from \$1255 and enter \$600 as *VA State* in the Other Income Status window.

For shelter expenses, because the veteran's total rent is \$900, subtract the \$405 paid directly to the landlord and enter the balance, which is \$595, for the allowable shelter expense in the Housing Expenses window.

For the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), use the Heating/Cooling SUA in the Standard Utility Allowance window.

Follow all other application processing guidelines as described in Field Operation Memo 2006-30, *FS (NPA or PA) Application Processing Guidelines*.

Reminder: Recipients of Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits are not eligible for TAFDC or EAEDC benefits (see 106 CMR 702.720).

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

Veterans' SNAP Benefits Job Aid

Massachusetts Veterans' Benefits are provided according to a schedule of benefits determined by the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). The current benefits (through June 30, 2009) are:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Basic Benefit	
Single Applicant Living Alone	\$600
Married Applicant Living with Spouse	\$810
Institutional Resident	\$170
Transitional Housing	\$450 to Applicant; \$192 to Shelter

Special Allowances

Shelter Allowance for Unheated Shelter	up to \$405 (may be made as a vendor payment)
Shelter Allowance for Heated Shelter	up to \$540 (may be made as a vendor payment)
Special Allowance for Fuel	up to \$250 (may be made as a vendor payment)
Retired and Elder Benefit Adjustment (REBA)	\$290
First Two Children	\$270 each
Additional Children	\$140 each

For example, a single veteran, not elderly or retired, living alone with rent costing \$500 and responsible for his own heat would receive:

\$600	basic benefit
405	maximum unheated shelter allowance
<u>250</u>	fuel allowance
\$1,255	total benefit amount

A veteran whose rent is only \$300 per month would receive:

\$600	basic benefit
300	unheated shelter allowance
<u>250</u>	fuel allowance
\$1,150	total benefit amount

The case manager must:

- subtract the total amount of vendor payments from the total amount of Veterans' Benefits income and enter the resulting income amount on BEACON as *VA State* in the Other Income Status window;
- subtract the amount of any vendor payment for shelter from the veteran's full shelter cost and enter the remainder, if any, as the veteran's shelter amount in the Housing Expenses window;
- select the appropriate SUA based on the utility expense(s) that the veteran incurs;
- enter other income and expense data, as appropriate; and
- wrap up the case.

Note: Annotate the BEACON Narratives tab identifying the vendor payments made on the veteran's behalf and the verification provided to confirm the vendor payment.