GREATER BOSTON LEGAL SERVICES
…and justice for all

SEALS Program
Informational Session
September 18, 2007

General Welfare Rights

- **Right to apply for benefits the day you first visit the DTA office**. This is important because when a family is found eligible, their case is opened retroactive to the date of application.

- **Right to a decision on your TAFDC, EAEDC, and/or Food Stamp application within 30 days** (assuming necessary information has been provided) and, in some cases, to Food Stamps within 7 days.

- **Right to written notices** whenever DTA changes your benefits, including child care, in any way or asks you to do something.

- **Right to appeal** all decisions, whether you are informed in writing or verbally, or where DTA delays in giving you a decision. The appeal must go to DTA's Division of Hearings. You can fax it to them at (617) 348-5311. You can appeal up to 90 days from the date the notice was issued. However, usually you should appeal right away.

- **Right to receive "aid pending"** your appeal. If your appeal is *received* at the Division of Hearings *before* the day on which the lowering or stopping of your benefits is to occur, your benefits will be continued while you wait for a hearing. For example, if benefits are to stop on June 30th, but an appeal is received on June 22nd and you have asked for aid pending, your benefits will continue uninterrupted. If an appeal is filed close to June 30th, there will probably be an interruption in benefits before they are reopened. If the hearing decision is negative, DTA can slowly "recoup" the amount of aid pending the family got by reducing their grant by 10% per month until it is repaid. (If you end up withdrawing the appeal, DTA should not recoup the aid pending.)

- **Right to have a DTA worker assist you** if you are having trouble getting the documentation ("verification " or "proof") DTA wants.

- **Right to have your legal representative** deal with DTA on your behalf.

- **Right to inspect your DTA file.**

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- **Right to an interpreter**. DTA must supply an interpreter in person or by phone when they talk to you are you need to talk to them. DTA is not supposed to tell you to bring your own interpreter or to have your child interpret for you.

- **Right to be treated fairly.** If you feel mistreated, you can ask to talk to the person's supervisor, an office Assistant Director, or DTA Recipient Services which is at (800) 445-6604.