



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

## DTA's FY 2012 Budget, January 2011

### Who We Are

The mission of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is to assist low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life. Located within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), the Department ensures the emergency and transitional needs of the individuals and families of the Commonwealth are met through a combination of federal- and state-funded programs.

### What We Do

DTA serves one out of every eight people in Massachusetts – including working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities. Our services currently include food and nutritional assistance, cash assistance, and employment supports.

### The FY 2012 Budget

On January 26, 2011, Governor Patrick announced his House 1 budget for FY 2012. The budget is a responsible and balanced plan to fund as many of the state's programs and services as possible, while recognizing that we all must live within the resources available.

We are pleased to preserve ongoing subsistence benefits for thousands of families, including cash assistance for more than 52,000 Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) households and more than 22,000 Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) households. The Governor's budget maintains the critical monthly benefits provided by these programs at the Fiscal Year 2011 levels. Services for survivors of domestic violence are also protected.

### Reductions to DTA's Budget

Unfortunately, the Commonwealth continues to face economic challenges and fewer resources, in large part because of the loss of federal stimulus aid. Difficult choices were necessary, and the Department is facing some reductions. The budget:

- Eliminates the Employment Services Program (ESP). This means that all ESP programs will be discontinued effective July 1, including:
  - Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES)
  - Young Parents Program (YPP)
  - Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants – Job Placement Services
  - Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission - Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach Program
  - DTA Works Internship Program
  - GED Program
  - Community College Program
  - Vocational Specialists
  - Transportation.

#### Please note:

- TAFDC clients are still required by statute to participate in work or education and training activities under the TAFDC Work Program. We will work with other state agencies and community organizations to ensure the ongoing availability of education, training, and community service. In the event that no activity is available, recipients will be excused from participation (good cause).
- TAFDC clients who are employed or who are enrolled in education, training, and community service activities will still be able to access child care vouchers. If a client is enrolled in an activity that ends as a result of the elimination of ESP, he or she will need





DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

## DTA's FY 2012 Budget, January 2011

to find employment or a new activity in order to continue receiving child care assistance.

Current DTA Works interns will not be affected by this reduction.

- DTA will continue to offer Learning Disability Assessments.
  - We will work closely with our staff, our stakeholders, and ESP providers to develop a plan that will phase out these programs as smoothly as possible.
  - Employment services, training, and education are critical to assisting families to move out of poverty; however, maintaining subsistence-level benefits that are already very low must be a priority, particularly since any reduction would not be replaced by assistance from other organizations.
- Does not fund the September clothing allowance for children on TAFDC. Although it is an important resource for TAFDC families, the clothing allowance is not a basic ongoing benefit and we believe protecting ongoing monthly benefits is most important for our clients, and most critical to our mission.
  - Funds the caseworker account at a level that will preserve our existing staff. While this is a relief, the loss of federal stimulus money will likely mean we will be unable to backfill vacant caseworker positions during FY12. With current SNAP caseloads nearing 1,000 per case manager, loss of any existing staff is likely to impact our service delivery.

- Assumes the state will take over administration of the state supplement portion of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Currently, the state supplement for SSI is administered by the federal government at a cost of nearly \$26 million per year. In FY12, these functions will be assumed by the University of Massachusetts Medical School, at an estimated savings of about \$5.5 million.

**Please note:** This change will not affect the amount of benefits received by SSI clients.

### Conclusion

The FY12 budget is not yet final. The budget will move through the House and Senate and each branch will release a budget; the House and Senate will submit a “conference committee” budget; the Governor will submit his vetoes; and the House and Senate will have the opportunity to override the Governor’s vetoes. Since the final FY12 budget will not be available for several months, we must work under the assumption that the Governor’s budget will take effect in July. As such, we will soon develop plans to implement these reductions. It is our goal to be able to preserve all existing DTA staff, which will be crucial as we continue to face caseload growth.

### Contacts

Amy West, Deputy Chief of Staff, 617-348-5614  
Mary Sheehan, Budget Director, 617-348-5974

