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Annual Department of Transitional Assistance Organizational Report

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Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance



REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE (DTA) ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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OVERVIEW

Chapter 18 Section 10 requires DTA to file a report containing a description of the organization of the department and a review of the work of the agency.

BACKGROUND

DTA's mission is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports to help individuals and families achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, including food and nutritional assistance, financial assistance, and employment supports.

DTA serves one out of every eight people in the Commonwealth including working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities.

PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP benefits help families supplement their food budgets to afford nutritious food. Residents of the Commonwealth who participate in SNAP are families with children, elders, and persons with disabilities. Nearly 50% of SNAP recipients are working people. While administered by DTA, SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded and regulated. The Commonwealth is responsible for 50% of the costs to administer the program.

Beyond the core responsibilities in administering the SNAP program, DTA is one of a number of agencies contributing to the mission of food security in the Commonwealth.

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)

TAFDC is a state and federally-funded program that provides financial assistance to families with children, and pregnant women, with little or no assets or income. TAFDC is operated under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. Participants receive child care and transportation support associated with job assistance, and can access a number of supportive referrals. As a part of TAFDC, participants may be required to perform a work-related activity as a condition of eligibility.

Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC)

EAEDC is a state-funded program, which provides financial assistance to certain elderly and disabled persons, and children. Those eligible for EAEDC include people over 65 who are waiting for Supplemental Security Income payments to begin, individuals unable to work due to a physical or mental incapacity, and individuals who are participating in a Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission program.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and State Supplemental Payments (SSP)

The SSI program is a federal program that provides cash assistance to the elderly, disabled, and blind. Massachusetts provides optional state-funded supplemental payments designed to supplement these funds. DTA funds SSP payments for elderly, disabled, and blind recipients. Currently, the University of Massachusetts Medical School administers SSP payments for DTA.

Program Integrity

All programs administered by DTA require rigorous oversight and special attention to eligibility standards and program compliance. DTA uses advanced analytics and a variety of fraud detection practices to ensure benefits are available for only those eligible.

AGENCY STAFFING

DTA employs approximately 1,657 civil servants across the state in the areas of programs, policy, and management. DTA's staff has a range of responsibilities from benefit eligibility, employment and training supports, program integrity, legal, policy development, and fair hearings.

With a modernization of business practices, DTA is able to more evenly distribute the workload to SNAP staff. The current model was implemented with the understanding that enabling a client to reach the first available worker would have a significant impact on improving efficiency.

DTA's SNAP workforce is currently 677. Of that number, 537 are caseworkers and 140 are supervisors.

DTA staff serving those receiving TAFDC and EAEDC is currently 367. Of that total, 216 are TAFDC workers, 59 EAEDC workers, and 92 are supervisors.

DTA also employs 23 Self-Sufficiency Specialists and 66 office managers across the Commonwealth.

ORGANIZATION OF DTA

DTA is organized into 23 local Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs), and a Central Office. TAOs are responsible for providing direct services to clients and those seeking assistance across the Commonwealth. Central Office houses the Office of the Commissioner, senior management, Program Integrity, and other administrative units.

The following pages provide an organizational chart of DTA's Central Office as well as the 23 local offices.









