

# Part 6 Proving Continuing Eligibility

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## 85 How often will my eligibility be reviewed?

DTA generally reviews ("reevaluates") eligibility for most recipients at a minimum every 12 months. See DTA Online Guide: EAEDC > Basic Case Activities & Maintenance > Reevaluations > Reevaluations Overview.

DTA can review your case sooner than that if it thinks your eligibility may have changed or if the Disability Evaluation Service (DES) decides your disability needs to be reviewed or has changed. 106 C.M.R. § 702.210.

DTA can complete your reevaluation over the phone or in person. See DTA Online Guide: EAEDC > Basic Case Activities & Maintenance > Reevaluations > Reevaluations Overview.

When DTA reviews your case, it can only make you bring in proof of those things that might have changed since the last review. 106 C.M.R. § 702.230.

If your worker thinks DTA needs more proofs, the worker is supposed to send you a checklist (VC-1) listing the proofs that are needed.

If your disability is being reviewed, you will be sent a medical report for your doctor to fill out *and* a disability supplement for you to fill out. 106 C.M.R. § 702.315.

Tell your worker if you need an extension to get the proofs, help filling out forms, or a referral to a doctor. If you do not get the proofs on time, your worker will send you a notice saying your benefits will stop. You still have 30 days from the date of that notice to bring in the proofs and your worker will reopen your case if the proofs show you are eligible. 106 C.M.R. § 702.240.

You might also be asked to come in for a quality control (QC) review. 106 C.M.R. §§ 701.430, 706.700-706.710. This is a special review to make sure the

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local DTA office is following the rules. If you are asked to go to a QC review, you have to go or your worker will stop your benefits.

If DTA thinks your eligibility has changed, it has to send you an advance notice before it stops or reduces your benefits. 106 C.M.R. §§ 702.500, 343.140. If you ask for a fair hearing before the termination or reduction go into effect, your benefits will continue until a hearing officer decides your case. 106 C.M.R. § 702.610. See **Part 7, Appeal Rights**.

### ***Advocacy Reminders:***

- ✓ Tell your DTA worker if you need an appointment at a special time because of work, a medical problem, care of a disabled household member or other reason. If DTA schedules an appointment for a time that is bad for you, call your worker before the appointment to reschedule. If your worker will not reschedule, call the supervisor, Assistant Director, Director or the DTA Ombuds Office, 617-348-5354.
- ✓ Tell your DTA worker if you are unable to come to the office because of a disability and you need an accommodation.
- ✓ If you miss your interview appointment and do not call to reschedule, DTA will close your case. If you complete the reevaluation within 30 days of the closing, your case will be reinstated. See DTA Online Guide: EAEDC > Basic Case Activities & Maintenance > Reevaluations > Reevaluations Case Manager Responsibilities.
- ✓ Each time you go to the DTA office, ask to sign a log if there is one. If you are dropping off proof, ask to have a copy made and date-stamped. Write down the name of the DTA staff you talk to. You can use this as proof later if DTA cannot find the verification or says you missed your appointment.
- ✓ If you are sending proof by mail, use the DTA postage-paid envelope if you have one. Try to keep a copy of anything you mail and make a note on the copy of the date that you mailed it. See **Question 76**.
- ✓ If getting to the DTA office is hard for you, takes a long time, or costs too much, ask your DTA worker if you can have your interview by telephone or a home visit. Check with an advocate if DTA will not meet with you by telephone. Although DTA rules do not provide for telephone meetings for

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EAEDC, an advocate may be able to help you persuade DTA to meet with you by telephone.

- ✓ If you have email you can choose to get notices electronically instead of by mail. The email will tell you that there is a notice that you can see on your My Account Page (MAP). You can also access notices on your smartphone or tablet on DTA's DTA Connect app. See **Question 83**. DTA Operations Memo 2014-41 (June 12, 2014).

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# 86 When do I have to report changes?

You have 10 days to report changes that could make you ineligible or decrease your benefits. This includes changes in income or assets, who lives with you, or if you move to a new address. 106 C.M.R. § 701.420.

Report changes that will increase your benefits, such as a drop in income, at any time.

Because it is hard to know what changes may affect your eligibility, it is good to report other changes promptly too. For example, you should report a change of address even if it will not affect your eligibility so that DTA notices will not be mailed to the wrong address.

### *Advocacy Reminders:*

- ✓ What if you can't reach your worker to report a change? If possible, mail or fax information about the change to the Electronic Document Management (EDM) center and keep a copy and proof that you sent it. You can also take a picture of and upload documents to your case record through DTA Connect. See **Questions 76** and **83**.
- ✓ If you call your DTA worker to report a change, make sure he or she makes a note in the case record. You should also keep a record of any phone calls you make to report a change (or try to report a change). You may need this record later to prove that you tried to report a change.

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- ✓ You can report a change of address or a new phone number to the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. You can also report a new address or phone number through DTA Connect. See **Question 83**.
- ✓ Be sure to report a change of address and tell the post office about the change. If DTA mail is returned to you without a forwarding address, DTA will send you a request for verification of address and will close your case if you do not respond within 10 days (30 days for applications). DTA Operations Memo 2013-13A (March 28, 2013).
- ✓ If you move to an address covered by a different DTA office, your case should be transferred to the new office unless you are doubled up with a host family in public or subsidized housing. If there is a problem, ask to speak with the Transfer Specialist in the new office. DTA Operations Memo 2012-39 (Aug. 27, 2012).