

Part 5 Benefits and Services

86 What are the basic benefits available to TAFDC recipients?

- The basic grant amount depends on the number of people in your TAFDC assistance unit and your net countable income. See **Question 82**.
- The basic grant includes a \$40 per month rent or mortgage allowance if you pay for private, unsubsidized housing. 106 C.M.R. § 705.910.
- Your family automatically qualifies for MassHealth, 106 C.M.R. § 705.100, but you may be told you have to show proof of citizenship if you are a citizen. See DTA Field Operations Memo 2007-10 (Feb. 20, 2007).
- In September, you will receive a \$150 clothing allowance for each individual in the assistance unit who is under age 19. 106 C.M.R. §§ 204.420-204.425. This includes pregnant or parenting teens under age 19. Children excluded by the family cap do not get a clothing allowance.

The minimum grant amount is \$10 a month. If you are eligible for less than that, you will not get a cash payment but you will still be considered a recipient for purposes of MassHealth and other benefits (and you will get the clothing allowance in September). 106 C.M.R. § 204.610.

Advocacy Reminders:

- ✓ If you are not receiving a cash grant because of the \$10 minimum, you are still subject to the time limit and Work Program if you are not

exempt, and you are subject to the family cap rules. You can choose to close your TAFDC case if you do not want to have these rules apply to you. You can apply for MassHealth and food stamps (SNAP) separately and in most cases will continue to be eligible for them. If you are eligible for any TAFDC, you can reapply in late August to get the clothing allowance in September.

- ✓ The DTA worker has a duty to help identify any benefits you might be eligible for. 106 C.M.R. § 701.220(A); DTA Transitions, August 2007, p. 5.
- ✓ To get the full \$150 clothing allowance, you have to be a recipient on September 1 or be approved effective September 1. If your start date is later in September, the clothing allowance will be pro rated. See DTA Field Operations Memo 2010-38 (Aug. 23, 2010); DTA Transitions, Sept. 2010, p. 5.

87 When will you get your TAFDC benefits?

TAFDC benefits are deposited twice a month directly to your bank account or benefits transfer account. See **Question 88**. The date of the deposit depends on the last digit of your Social Security number. You get half of the monthly grant at a time. 106 C.M.R. § 204.600.

Timetable for Deposit of Cash Benefits		
Last Digit of Social Security Number	Day of the Month	
	First Deposit	Second Deposit
0	1	16
1	2	17
2	4	19
3	5	20
4	7	22
5	8	23
6	10	25
7	11	26
8	13	28
9	14	29

Benefits due on Sunday are deposited on Saturday. Benefits due on a holiday are deposited the day before the holiday. Unless it is a leap year, a February benefit deposit due on the 29th is deposited on the 28th.

88 How will you get your grant—direct deposit or benefits transfer?

Your TAFDC grant will be deposited directly to your bank account if you have an account. Otherwise your TAFDC grant will be paid through electronic benefits transfer (EBT). 106 C.M.R. §§ 706.400-706.420. You can no longer get paid by check except in special circumstances.

How to get and use your Mass Benefits Access Card

DTA will issue you a Mass Benefits Access Card to withdraw money from your cash benefits transfer account and to access your food stamps (SNAP). 106 C.M.R. §§ 701.450, 706.420.

- You can use your Mass Benefits Access Card to get your cash benefits wherever you see the *NYCE* logo (at bank ATMs). You can also use the card to get your cash benefits and to pay for food wherever you see the *QUEST* logo (in food stores).
- To use the card you need to have a Personal Identification Number (PIN). The PIN is the key that unlocks your account. DTA will assign you a PIN. You can change your PIN at the local office or by mail or by calling customer service at 1-800-997-2555. DTA Field Operations Memo 2005-31 (July 28, 2005). Choose a PIN that is easy for you to remember but hard for other people to guess.
- Keep your **PIN a secret**.
- Never write your secret PIN on your card.

Call customer service at 800-997-2555:

- If you have questions or problems using your card or secret PIN.
- Your card is lost or stolen. Report this right away. DTA will replace the card.
- Your card does not work. DTA will replace the card.
- To find out your cash or food stamp (SNAP) account balance.
- To find out where you can use your card.

You can make up to two withdrawals a month from your cash benefits transfer account without a fee. After that, the fee is 85 cents for each withdrawal. You can make as many ATM balance inquiries as you want without paying a fee. You can make as many food stamp (SNAP) withdrawals a month as you want without paying a fee.

If you leave more than a month's worth of benefits in your cash benefits transfer account, your worker may call you in for an eligibility review

because DTA suspects you do not really need the money. If you want to prevent this from happening, you should withdraw enough from your account so that the balance will be less than your monthly grant, or you can switch to direct deposit.

If you do not withdraw money from your cash benefits transfer account for 90 days, DTA will put a stop on your card. You have six months to get the stop lifted and get your benefits back. You will have to explain why you did not withdraw benefits for 90 days.

Direct Deposit

If you have a bank account, your cash benefits will be deposited directly to your bank account. You will still need to use your Benefits Access Card to get your food stamp (SNAP) benefits. You can use the Benefits Access Card instead of direct deposit for cash as well as food stamps if you lack transportation to the bank or the co-owner of the account has abused you. Or, you can close your bank account and switch to the Benefits Access Card for cash.

Account fees and service charges depend on the bank. Most Massachusetts banks have a basic banking service account with no fees or low fees. DTA gets information every three months on bank balances and will cut off your benefits if you exceed the asset limit, see **Question 64**, but will not review your bank balance to see if you are using your benefits.

Advocacy Reminders:

- ✓ If you wish, you can pick someone else to withdraw money from your account or buy food for you with your Benefits Access Card, either on a regular basis or in an emergency. This is called an “authorized representative.” If you want, you can have DTA issue two Benefits Access Cards—one for you and one for your authorized representative. An authorized representative has access to all your money and food stamp (SNAP) benefits, so be sure you trust the person you pick. 106 C.M.R. § 701.370.
- ✓ If you have problems with your Benefits Access Card, for example if the machine tells you the wrong amount of your benefits, call EBT Customer Service at 800-997-2555. Contact an advocate if your problems are not fixed.

89 What other benefits do TAFDC recipients get?

DTA will pay for

- a crib and layette up to \$300 for a newborn infant (unless the baby is excluded by the family cap) if you ask for the money before the baby is six months old. You do not need to ask in writing. 106 C.M.R. § 705.600; DTA Transitions, Aug. 2007, p. 5.
- a relocation benefit of up to \$1,000 to secure permanent housing (by paying for expenses such as advance rent, security deposit, rent or utility arrears, storage, moving costs, or critical household furniture or equipment) for recipients who have been in an emergency shelter or a domestic violence shelter for 60 days and for some older teens who have been in a teen living program for 60 days. 106 C.M.R. § 705.350; DTA Transitions, May 2008, p. 8, Feb. 2007, p. 4.
- up to \$1,100 for funeral and burial expenses for a TAFDC applicant or recipient, including a child excluded by the family cap, and other people who do not have resources to pay for funeral and burial. 106 C.M.R. §§ 705.700-705.710; DTA Operations Memo 2010-54 (Nov. 23, 2010).
- supplemental payments for recipients in Monthly Reporting whose income has gone down. See **Question 113**. 106 C.M.R. § 702.980.

You are also eligible for education and training services and payment for GED testing under the Employment Services Program and for child care if you are working or in an approved education, training or job search program. You may be eligible for transportation assistance. DTA Field Operations Memos 2009-69, 2009-52A (Dec. 18, 2009, Oct. 6, 2009). See **Questions 92-100**.

Subject to available funding, DTA will pay for transportation costs if you want to move out of state. 106 C.M.R. §§ 705.800-705.840.

90 What if DTA makes a mistake and owes you money?

DTA has to correct all underpayments. 106 C.M.R. § 706.210. An underpayment is any mistake that makes you get less than you should have gotten. For example, you might be underpaid because

- your worker did not add a new household member to your grant on time, *or*
- DTA counted income against your grant that should not have been counted.

If you are underpaid, you should ask DTA in writing to correct the underpayment. If DTA will not make the correction, you can appeal. See **Part 8**.

91 When are your benefits paid directly to your landlord or utility company?

A payment directly to a landlord, mortgage company or utility company is called a “vendor payment.” Vendor payments can be voluntary or involuntary.

Voluntary Vendor Payments

You can ask DTA to pay all or part of your benefits directly to your landlord, mortgage company or utility company. You can cancel your request in writing and get the benefits yourself. 106 C.M.R. § 706.630. DTA usually gives the vendor one month’s notice before it stops a vendor payment. 106 C.M.R. §§ 706.680-706.690.

Involuntary Vendor Payments

If you are behind on your bills, DTA may decide you have “mismanaged” your benefits and send all or part of your benefits to a landlord or utility company. You can challenge DTA’s decision to put you on vendor payments for “mismanagement” if DTA has not shown that letting you manage your own money would be a threat to your child’s health or safety. DTA has to give you advance notice and an opportunity to appeal before it starts sending your benefits to a landlord or utility company. 106 C.M.R. §§ 706.620-706.680.

DTA can also put you on vendor payments if you lose your part of the grant because you do not meet the child support requirements, if you do not meet the Work Program requirements or the terms of an Employment Development Plan, or if you do not meet certain other program requirements. 106 C.M.R. § 706.610.

A vendor payment for housing must be the amount of the monthly payment. A vendor payment for fuel or utilities must be the average monthly cost. DTA can pay all of your grant to your landlord or your utility company even if you are left without any money for other expenses. 106 C.M.R. § 706.650.

Advocacy Reminder:

- ✓ Vendor payments for rent cannot be made if the housing does not comply with minimum standards for health and safety. The worker has to get a Board of Health certificate of compliance. 106 C.M.R. § 706.660.

92 What is the Employment Services Program (ESP)?

DTA’s Employment Services Program (ESP) covers employment, education, and training services for TAFDC recipients and some former TAFDC recipients. ESP includes community service, job search, education, and training. ESP also provides child care for TAFDC recipients who are working or participating in a DTA-approved education

or training program and provides transportation assistance for TAFDC recipients in approved education or training programs. 106 C.M.R. §§ 207.000, 207.100.

ESP is voluntary unless you are subject to the time limit and the Work Program. DTA regulations provide for sanctions for failure to comply with an Employment Development Plan, 106 C.M.R. § 207.200, but these regulations do not apply to volunteers. See DTA Field Operations Memo 2001-9 (Feb. 20, 2001).

Advocacy Reminder:

- ✓ DTA is required by law to provide appropriate services for people with disabilities. Consult an advocate if you need special training, education, or employment services because you have a physical or mental disability, including a learning disability. See **Question 24**.

93 What are your ESP choices?

ESP choices include

- **Basic and secondary education.** Except for the Young Parents Program and education that is combined with skills training, DTA does not pay for basic or secondary education. DTA will also pay for GED testing. You can also arrange for your own basic education or GED program and get child care and transportation help from DTA. 106 C.M.R. §§ 207.140, 207.210; DTA Field Operations Memos 2009-69, 2009-52A (Dec. 18, 2009, Oct. 6, 2009).
- **Young Parents Program.** This program provides education and life skills training to pregnant and parenting TAFDC recipients ages 14 through 21 who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent. 106 C.M.R. §207.140; DTA Field Operations Memo 2009-52A (Oct. 6, 2009).
- **Post-secondary education (college).** You can get approval to go to college or even graduate school. See **Question 95** on the special rules for college. DTA does not pay for college. You have to pay for college with grants and loans. But if DTA approves you to go to college, DTA

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

will pay for child care and some transportation. 106 C.M.R. §§ 207.140(D); 207.210; DTA Field Operations Memos 2009-52A and 2009-45 (Oct. 6, 2009, July 31, 2009).

- **Employment (skills) training.** DTA pays for some skills training. Some programs are offered through community colleges and some through other contracts. Most DTA-funded skills training programs are short-term (4-12 weeks, or sometimes 16 weeks for some of the community college programs). Examples include programs in business skills, certified nurse aide, child care, customer service, dental assistant, electronics assembly, food service and home health aide. Some of these programs include some basic and English education. Skills training is also available at no cost to TAFDC recipients through the career centers. 106 C.M.R. § 207.150; DTA Field Operations Memo 2009-52A (Oct. 6, 2009).
- **DTA Works Program.** This program places recipients in full-time jobs at DTA for up to 6 months. Recipients receive \$200 a month for expenses which is not counted for TAFDC or SNAP (food stamps). Many graduates of this program have been placed in regular jobs at DTA or other state agencies. You may be eligible if you are subject to the TAFDC work requirement, are enrolled in an ESP activity, and can pass a criminal history check. You can apply by e-mailing your resume to DTAWorks@state.ma.us. Ask your DTA worker for more details. DTA Field Operations Memo 2010-20 (March 29, 2010).
- **Job Search/Job Readiness.** Many of the DTA-funded programs include job search and job readiness activities. DTA sometimes call this activity “Employment Ready.” You can also do job search at a local career center. If you are doing job search at the career center you will need to fill out a DTA form to keep track of your attendance. DTA Field Operations Memo 2009-58 (Oct. 21, 2009).
- **Employment Supports Work Activities.** This program is supposed to give you on-the-job training and a job for a total of 30 hours a week; programs also include job search, job readiness, and follow-up services. 106 C.M.R. § 207.160; DTA Field Operations Memo 2009-52A (Oct. 6, 2009).
- **Community Service.** You can volunteer for unpaid community service. 106 C.M.R. § 207.170; DTA Field Operations Memo 2009-

52A (Oct. 6, 2009). See **Question 58** for more information on community service.

- **Full Employment Program.** FEP is a full-time job paying at least minimum wage. The employer gets a subsidy towards your wage. DTA also pays \$1 for each hour you work into a special “Individual Asset Account” which you get when you leave FEP. Participants do not get food stamps (SNAP), and are only eligible for TAFDC if the FEP wage is less than what the TAFDC plus food stamps would have been otherwise. 106 C.M.R. §§ 207.180, 208.000-208.150.
- **Services for refugees and immigrants.** The Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants provides employment services for TAFDC recipients who do not speak English or Spanish. DTA Field Operations Memo 2009-52A (Oct. 6, 2009).

DTA guidelines for referring TAFDC recipients to DTA-funded activities may be found in DTA Field Operations Memos 2009-52A and 2009-45 (Oct. 6, 2009, July 31, 2009).

Advocacy Reminders:

- ✓ It is usually not a good idea to borrow money for skills training. Consult an advocate if DTA doesn’t give you information about publicly-funded training.
- ✓ A program that sounds good on paper may not offer the services you need. If you are subject to the work requirement, DTA may try to sanction you if you stop participating. You should also be sure to choose carefully so you do not use up the limited time you have to participate in education or training.

94 What is an Employment Development Plan?

The Employment Development Plan (EDP) is a written plan for people in the Employment Services Program. The EDP contains your job goal, the education and training that you need to get to that goal, and the services

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

like child care and transportation that you need. See 106 C.M.R. § 207.110.

DTA is supposed to do an assessment of your skills and interests and the job market and get your agreement before it writes the Employment Development Plan. The EDP should reflect the agreement between you and your worker and be signed by both of you.

- Make sure the EDP does not set an unrealistic timetable.
- If DTA wants you to do an activity you do not want to do, put in the plan that you want an assessment and want to be able to revise the plan if the assessment shows that another program would be better for you.
- DTA may say it will not approve your plan if it cannot be completed in the time left on your 24-month time limit clock, but there is no rule that allows DTA to disapprove a plan for this reason.
- Ask DTA to change your plan if it is not working out.

Consult an advocate if you cannot agree on an EDP, if DTA will not approve your plan for what you want to do, or if DTA will not change your plan. You can also appeal any of these DTA decisions. See **Part 8**.

95 Will DTA approve college attendance?

DTA will approve college attendance as long as

- the activities are can be credited toward a certificate, associate's degree or other degree (including a four-year or graduate degree),
- the program is at least half time,
- the activities are expected to lead to a job,
- you are making satisfactory progress.

106 C.M.R. § 207.140(D).

Advocacy Reminders:

- ✓ Every month you are in college counts towards the 12-month limit on education and training if you are subject to the work requirement. For ideas on how to maximize the time you can spend in college, see **Question 52**. You may be able to continue in college after the 12 months if you are not subject to the work requirement or you can go to college and meet the work requirement at the same time (for example by doing a work study job at the college).
- ✓ What if you want to go to college but have already used up some of your 12 months of education and training. You can count college attendance towards the work requirement for any of the 12 months you have left even if you don't have enough months left to finish the program. Once your 12 months are up you can continue your education if you find another way to meet the work requirement. DTA Transitions, Sept. 2009, pp. 6-7.
- ✓ You can get child care for college even if you have used up your 12 months. See DTA Transitions, Oct. 2008, p. 5.

96 Who is eligible for child care?

There are special child care rules for TAFDC recipients and applicants, former TAFDC recipients, and teen parents. Unlike other low-income families, these families do not have to go on a wait list for a subsidy. Eligible current recipients and applicants and teen parents referred for child care by DTA do not have to pay a fee.

Child care for TAFDC recipients and applicants

You are eligible for free child care as long as you

- are doing paid work (including self-employment) or participating in an approved ESP activity (including job search), *and*
- meet the other requirements for child care listed in **Question 97**. 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(A); DTA Transitions, Nov. 2007, p.4.

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

You are also eligible for child care for up to two weeks while you are waiting to start an activity. This is especially important if your benefits were stopped because of a sanction and you must participate in an activity for two weeks to get back on benefits. It is also important if you already have child care and want to be able to keep your current provider while you are waiting for an activity to start. See 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(A)(2).

You may continue child care for up to one month after an activity ends if the child care arrangements would otherwise be lost and you are scheduled to start or resume an activity within the month. DTA Transitions, Feb. 2009, p. 7, June 2005, p. 4.

You may be able to get child care if you are on maternity leave from your job. Ask your worker. DTA Field Operations Memo 2006-47 (Oct. 26, 2006).

If you are not getting TAFDC for yourself because of your immigration status, but you are receiving TAFDC for a child and you can legally work for pay, you are eligible for child care on the same basis as TAFDC recipients. DTA Transitions, Feb. 2009, pp. 7-9, June 2005, p.4; DTA Field Operations Memo 2002-18A (Oct. 10, 2002).

DTA may say you cannot get child care if you are not getting TAFDC for yourself, for example, if you have been sanctioned, get SSI, are undocumented, or are a relative who chooses not to be on the grant. Consult an advocate.

Child care for teen parents

You are eligible for a DTA referral for child care if you are a teen parent who is in school or another ESP activity *and*

- receiving TAFDC, *or*
- receiving SSI or foster care for yourself and TAFDC for your child, 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(A)(1)(c), *or*
- under the age of 18, living with a parent, and household income is below 200% of the poverty level, see **Question 72**, or cannot get verification of your parent's income. 106 C.M.R. § 207.230.

Child care for former TAFDC recipients

You are eligible for child care for

- 12 months after your TAFDC case closes if you are working. You can ask for child care at any time during the 12 months. 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(A)(1)(f). If you are working and also in a training program, you can get child care to cover your training time and your work time. DTA Field Operations Memo 2004-17 (Apr. 1, 2004).
- up to 6 months after your TAFDC case closes if you reached your 24-month time limit and need more time to continue a DTA-approved education or training program. 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(A)(1)(d). After the 6 months, you can get child care for the rest of the year if you are working.
- 12 months after your TAFDC case closes if you are receiving unemployment insurance benefits, and you are participating in a “Section 30” training program approved by the Division of Unemployment Assistance with a “service need” of at least 20 hours a week. Consult an advocate to find out more about how to get into a Section 30 program.

To get child care after your TAFDC case closes, you must

- cooperate with child support enforcement, 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(A)(1)(f), *and*
- pay a fee based on your income.

You should be able to keep your child care subsidy for more than a year as long as you have a service need recognized by the Department of Early Education and Care and your income is below the maximum for subsidized child care (\$70,372 for a family of three; \$82,791 for a family of three with a special needs child). Service needs recognized by EEC include

- your child has a documented special need and a health professional verifies that the child would benefit from child care,
- you need child care because you have a documented special need,
- you are working,

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

- you are looking for work (up to 8 weeks) after leaving a job or finishing education or training (may be extended to 12 weeks in extraordinary circumstances),
- you are participating in education or training, *or*
- you are on maternity leave from your job. See Department of Early Education and Care *Financial Assistance Policy Guide*, http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs_policies/201071_policy_guide.pdf.

Advocacy Reminders:

- ✓ If you are not eligible for a child care referral from DTA and you have a service need recognized by the Department of Early Education and Care, you can apply directly to the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency but you will have to go on a waiting list unless you have a priority. If you had subsidized child care within the previous three months that was suspended temporarily (for example, because of summer break or travel out of state), you may have a priority for continuing to receive child care through EEC. Department of Early Education and Care *Financial Assistance Policy Guide*, 2.0.1.A, http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs_policies/201071_policy_guide.pdf; EEC Management Bulletin EMB FY 2010-05 (May 12, 2010), pp. 5-6.
- ✓ Former TAFDC recipients are eligible for child care even if they received assistance for a very short time. If you lose your job and expect to get unemployment insurance benefits, you may want to apply for TAFDC before your unemployment benefits begin. Although you may not be eligible for TAFDC once unemployment benefits start, you will be eligible for child care as a former TAFDC recipient once you start working again.
- ✓ It may be illegal for DTA to require current or former recipients to cooperate with child support requirements to receive child care. Consult an advocate.

97 Which children can get child care?

You can get child care for

- a child under age 13, *or*
- a child 13 or over who is disabled and cannot take care of herself.

The child must be

- receiving TAFDC or foster care benefits,
- under court supervision,
- receiving SSI but otherwise eligible for TAFDC,
- excluded under the family cap, *or*
- in a family headed by a parent eligible for child care for teen parents. See **Question 96**. See 106 C.M.R. §§ 207.210(A)(2), 207.230.

Advocacy Reminder:

- ✓ DTA will not authorize child care for a child age 13 or older unless the child is disabled. Sometimes it is not safe to leave a teenager unsupervised after school or during school vacations. Consult an advocate if you need out of school time care for a teenager who is not disabled. You may be able to get child care or you may have good cause for not meeting TAFDC work rules.

98 How do you get child care? How should you choose a child care provider?

To get child care based on current or former receipt of TAFDC, you must

- get a child care referral from DTA,

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

- get a voucher from the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency,
- find a child care provider who will accept your voucher.

Your DTA worker will tell you the name of the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R). You can also get a list at www.mass.gov/eec. The CCR&R will decide if you need to meet with a CCR&R worker (at the CCR&R or at DTA) or if the voucher may be authorized by telephone or fax. DTA Field Operations Memo 2007-17 (March 26, 2007).

The Child Care Resource and Referral Agency is supposed to help you find a child care provider. You can also find a partial list of local child care providers at www.mass.gov/eec.

How to choose a child care provider

- Visit the program. Go in the morning when children are most active. If the provider is very busy but you like what you see, go back when there is time to talk.
- Look for the license.
- Trust your instincts.
- And always ask questions.

The Department of Early Education and Care says you should take care to make sure your child is safe and happy. The child care provider should have experience and education working with young children. The facility should be safe and clean. The program should offer educational and fun activities, have plenty of safe toys and learning materials, encourage creative play, and plan quiet time both indoors and out. For more information on what to look for, see Tips on Choosing Child Care at www.mass.gov/eec.

99 Can you get licensed child care? Can you get full-time care?

Licensed child care

The Department of Early Education and Care says a license is a very important credential. It shows the provider meets rules for health, safety and education.

You qualify for licensed child care if the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (or DTA) determines you have a “service need” of 20 or more hours a week. The service need hours are based on the number of hours you are working or participating in education, training, job search or other allowed activities.

Full-time or part-time care

You qualify for full-time child care if the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (or DTA) determines you have a service need of 30 or more hours a week. You qualify for part-time child care if the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency determines you have a service need of less than 30 hours a week.

Even if you qualify for full-time care, the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (or DTA) may not give you a voucher for five full days a week if your schedule does not require full-day care every day. Consult an advocate if this is a problem.

Informal (unlicensed) child care

You can get reimbursed for child care you arrange for yourself. Informal child care pays \$15 per day per child for six or more hours and \$8 per day per child for fewer than six hours. There is no minimum number of hours you must be working or participating in education, training or job search to get informal child care.

An informal child care provider can be

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

- any adult person you choose providing care in your home (must pass criminal history check), *or*
- an adult relative providing care in your home or hers. 606 C.M.R. § 10.10(2); Department of Early Education and Care *Financial Assistance Policy Guide*, Appendix M, http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs_policies/201071_policy_guide.pdf.

Determining your service need

The Child Care Resource and Referral Agency calculates your service need. If you are eligible for child care as a TAFDC applicant or recipient, the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency calculates your service need based on the referral from DTA. If you are in education or training, DTA should add one hour of study time for each hour of class or other activity time. DTA Transitions, Aug. 2010, p. 9.

The Child Care Resource and Referral Agency should

- add up to five hours a week for transportation time between the child care provider and your work or other activity – provided you otherwise have a service need of at least 20 hours a week, see Department of Early Education and Care *Financial Assistance Policy Guide*, 4.0.3, http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs_policies/201071_policy_guide.pdf; EEC Management Bulletin EMB FY 2010-03 (April 2, 2010), pp. 5-6; DTA Field Operations Memos 2006-57 and 2005-1A (Dec. 15, 2006; April 15, 2005),
- determine you have a full-time service need if you have 12 credit hours of college courses, see Department of Early Education and Care *Financial Assistance Policy Guide*, 4.2.5; DTA Field Operations Memo 2006-47 (Oct. 26, 2006),
- add time for verified paid work, education, or training hours even if they are not listed in the DTA authorization. DTA Field Operations Memo 2007-62 (Nov. 14, 2007).

Advocacy Reminders:

- ✓ If DTA won't give you a child care referral or the referral does not cover the hours you need, you can file an appeal with DTA. See **Part 8**. Consult an advocate.
- ✓ If you are only authorized for part-time licensed care because your travel time was not counted, or if your voucher does not include 30 hours for 12 credit hours, or does not include time you spend in paid work, education or training that is not listed on the DTA authorization, or otherwise denies you the child care you need or violates policies of the Department of Early Education and Care, you can file a request for review with the Department of Early Education and Care. You can appeal if your request is denied. See http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs_policies/201071_policy_guide.pdf; 606 C.M.R. § 10.13. Consult an advocate.

100 Can you get money for transportation?

DTA provides transportation assistance to cover some of the costs of getting to and from some DTA-approved activities and the costs of taking children to and from child care so you can participate in the activity. As this Guide goes to press, DTA provides transportation assistance to

- current recipients participating in DTA-approved education, training, or employment supports work activity—
 - ▶ up to \$80 a month for public transit, *or*
 - ▶ up to \$80 a month for gas if you have access to a car or a ride and public transit is not available;
- current recipients participating in job search at least two days a week—
 - ▶ up to \$20 a week for public transit or gas;

Part 5 ■ Benefits and Services

- former recipients participating in a DTA-approved education or training program that began before the closing (limited to six months after the closing)
 - ▶ up to \$80 a month for public transit.

See 106 C.M.R. § 207.210(B), DTA Field Operations Memos 2009-69, 2009-52A (Dec. 18, 2009, Oct. 6, 2009).

DTA will not provide transportation assistance if your transportation costs are supposed to be covered by another source, such as a student loan or a job search program. DTA does not provide transportation assistance to go to a community service site. Effective January 1, 2010, DTA stopped providing transportation assistance for current or former recipients to get to paid work. DTA Field Operations Memos 2009-69 (Dec. 18, 2009).

Advocacy Reminder:

- ✓ If you do not have reliable and affordable transportation to community service, you should have good cause for not meeting the Work Program. See **Question 61**.