

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Part 1 General Eligibility Rules</b> .....	5
1 Who can get TAFDC? .....	5
2 Which families with children can get TAFDC? .....	5
3 Can you get TAFDC if neither parent is in the home? .....	5
4 Can you get TAFDC if the child is not in the home? .....	6
5 How young must children be to qualify? .....	7
6 Can you qualify if you are pregnant and do not have a child living with you? .....	8
7 What if you just moved to Massachusetts? What if you are homeless? .....	8
8 What if you are not a citizen? .....	9
9 What are the special non-citizen eligibility rules for battered immigrants and their families? .....	12
10 Do you have to have a social security number? .....	13
11 Do you have to tell DTA anything about the father of your child? .....	14
12 Can you get TAFDC if you are a teen parent? .....	15
13 What are the school attendance rules for teen parents? .....	16
14 What is the living arrangement rule for minor teen parents? .....	17
15 What if you are a minor teen parent and your parent’s home is not safe for you or there is some other reason you cannot live there? .....	18
16 Are there any living arrangement rules for teen parents who are 18 or 19? .....	19
17 Can you get your own grant if you are living with a parent? .....	19
18 What are the school requirements for children (“Learnfare”)? .....	20
19 How do you verify school attendance and which absences are excused? .....	21
20 What are the immunization rules? .....	22
21 What if you are on strike? .....	23
22 What if you have an outstanding default or arrest warrant? .....	23
23 What if you have a criminal history or are fleeing prosecution or punishment? .....	24
24 What if a disability makes it hard for you to meet DTA rules or use DTA services? .....	25
25 What are your rights if DTA denies your reasonable accommodation request? .....	26

<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Assistance Units</b>	29
26	Who has to be in the assistance unit?	29
27	Who cannot be in the assistance unit?	30
28	What happens if you are excluded from the assistance unit?	31
29	Who has a choice about whether to be in the assistance unit?	32
30	Can you get TAFDC just for your children if you are a non-citizen?	34
31	What is the “family cap”?	35
32	Are “family cap” children eligible for any benefits?	36
33	What is the “family cap date”?	37
34	Who is the “child of record”?	37
35	Can you get a waiver or exception to the family cap?	38
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Time Limit and Work Program Rules and Exemptions</b>	41
36	What is the time limit rule and when does your time limit start over?	41
37	What is the Work Program?	43
	<i>Time Limit and Work Program Exemptions, Waivers and Extensions</i>	
38	Who is exempt from the time limit and Work Program?	43
39	How do you qualify for a disability exemption?	44
40	Are you subject to the time limit and work rules while DTA evaluates your disability claim?	45
41	How do you qualify for an exemption as the caregiver for a disabled child?	46
42	How do you qualify for an exemption as the caregiver for a disabled spouse or other family member living in your home?	47
43	Can you get a waiver of welfare rules because of domestic violence?	48
44	What can you do if you are getting close to the end of your time limit?	50
45	Can you get an extension of benefits past the time limit?	51
46	How do you request an extension of benefits past the time limit?	51
47	When do you have to file your extension request to be sure that benefits do not stop before DTA makes a decision?	52
48	How long will your extension last?	53
49	What if your extension request is denied?	53
50	How does DTA count income for families applying for or receiving an extension?	54

	<b><i>Work Program Rules</i></b>	
51	What activities count as work? . . . . .	54
52	How many hours a week do you have to do a work activity? . . . . .	56
53	What are the work rules for two-parent families? . . . . .	57
54	What are the work rules for non-citizen parents? . . . . .	58
55	When do you have to start a Work Program activity? . . . . .	58
56	How should you choose a Work Program activity? . . . . .	59
57	Who decides where you do community service? . . . . .	60
58	What if you need child care or transportation to meet the Work Program rules? . . . . .	61
59	What happens if you do not meet the Work Program rules? . . . . .	62
60	What if you have a good reason for not meeting Work Program rules? . . .	63
<b>Part 4</b>	<b>Financial Eligibility . . . . .</b>	<b>67</b>
61	What is financial eligibility? . . . . .	67
62	What is the difference between income and assets? . . . . .	67
63	What assets count? . . . . .	68
64	How does DTA treat assets you no longer have? . . . . .	70
65	What if you are expecting money from an accident or illness? . . . . .	71
66	What income is not counted? . . . . .	72
67	What income is counted? . . . . .	73
68	What happens if your child's father (or mother) pays child support? . . . . .	74
69	Does DTA ever count money as income even if you do not get it? . . . . .	75
70	How does DTA count income of a stepparent or ineligible non-citizen parent? . . . . .	76
71	How is grandparent income counted towards the baby of a teen parent? . . . . .	77
72	Does DTA count the income of a non-citizen's sponsor (alien sponsor deeming)? . . . . .	78
73	What if a stepparent, parent, or grandparent refuses to give income information? . . . . .	79
74	What is in-kind income (and how can you avoid having it counted)? . . . . .	79
75	Do gifts count as income? . . . . .	80
76	How do you figure monthly income? . . . . .	82
77	What deductions can you take from income? . . . . .	83
78	How much income can you have and still get TAFDC? . . . . .	84
79	What is the Gross Income Eligibility Test? . . . . .	85
80	What is the Net Income Eligibility Test? . . . . .	87
81	How much will you get each month? . . . . .	89
82	What is lump sum income and why is it such a problem? . . . . .	91

83	Can you exclude any money from the lump sum rule? . . . . .	92
84	What happens if you run out of money before the lump sum time is up? . . . . .	94
<b>Part 5</b>	<b>Benefits and Services . . . . .</b>	<b>95</b>
85	What are the basic benefits available to TAFDC recipients? . . . . .	95
86	When will you get your TAFDC benefits? . . . . .	96
87	How will you get your grant—direct deposit or benefits transfer? . . . . .	97
88	What other benefits do TAFDC recipients get? . . . . .	99
89	What if DTA makes a mistake and owes you money? . . . . .	100
90	When are your benefits paid directly to your landlord or utility company? . . . . .	101
91	What is the Employment Services Program (ESP)? . . . . .	102
92	What are your ESP choices? . . . . .	103
93	What is an Employment Development Plan? . . . . .	105
94	Will DTA approve college attendance? . . . . .	106
95	Who is eligible for child care? . . . . .	106
96	Which children can get child care? . . . . .	110
97	How do you get child care? How should you choose a child care provider? . . . . .	111
98	Can you get licensed child care? Can you get full-time care? . . . . .	112
99	Can you get money for transportation? . . . . .	114
<b>Part 6</b>	<b>Applications and Proofs . . . . .</b>	<b>117</b>
100	Where do you apply for TAFDC? . . . . .	117
101	What should you bring with you? . . . . .	118
102	How long does it take to decide whether you are eligible? . . . . .	120
103	What if you need help right away? . . . . .	120
104	What is BEACON? . . . . .	121
<b>Part 7</b>	<b>Proving Continuing Eligibility . . . . .</b>	<b>123</b>
105	How often will DTA review your eligibility? . . . . .	123
106	When do you have to report changes? . . . . .	124
107	What is Monthly Reporting? . . . . .	125
108	How are your benefits calculated if you are on Monthly Reporting? . . . . .	125
109	What can you do if your income drops? . . . . .	126

<b>Part 8</b>	<b>Emergency Assistance</b>	129
110	What is Emergency Assistance (EA)?	129
111	Do you have to be receiving TAFDC to be eligible for EA?	129
112	Can you get EA if you are not a citizen?	130
113	What is the EA income limit?	130
114	What are the asset rules for EA?	132
115	How do you qualify for emergency shelter?	132
116	Where can DTA place you?	134
117	How long does it take to be placed in emergency shelter?	136
118	Can DTA refuse to provide you with shelter if you have no place to live?	136
119	Can DTA terminate your emergency shelter benefits?	138
120	What are your emergency assistance notice and hearing rights?	140
121	Can you get help relocating to permanent housing?	142
<b>Part 9</b>	<b>Appeal Rights</b>	145
122	What are your rights if DTA will not give you benefits or reduces or stops your benefits?	145
123	How much time do you have to ask for a fair hearing?	146
124	How do you ask for a fair hearing?	147
125	If you have the proof your worker wanted, should you still ask for a hearing?	148
126	How should you present your case at the hearing?	148
127	When will you get a decision and what should you do if you lose?	150
128	Can you fix problems without going to a hearing?	151
<b>Part 10</b>	<b>Overpayments and Fraud</b>	153
129	What if you are overpaid?	153
130	What is an intentional program violation? What is welfare fraud?	153
131	When can your benefits be stopped for an intentional program violation?	154
132	What should you do if you are told to go to a Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI) interview?	155
133	Can you go to jail? Will you have a criminal record?	156
134	When can DTA cut your benefits to pay itself back?	156
135	Can your tax refund be intercepted to pay an overpayment?	157
136	Are there other ways DTA collects overpayments?	158

**Appendix A: Simplified TAFDC Grant Calculation Worksheet** ..... 159

**Appendix B: Legal Services Offices** ..... 163

**Index** ..... 165