December 3, 2014

Dear Partner Agencies:

This letter’s intent is to inform everyone regarding the updated Eligibility Verification Guidelines that the state has provided to all MEAP grantees effective December 1, 2014. Any applications that are date stamped prior to December 1, 2014, will use both the original guidelines set at the beginning of the grant cycle and the updated version provided with this letter. Those applications date stamped on or after December 1, 2014 will use the new guidelines.

***Documentation of Income***

Updated Eligibility Guidelines state that the client must provide proof of all income for the past 30 days. Our application states that we need 30 consecutive days of income within the last 60 days and as we have already printed all applications we will being using the 60 day timeframe.

Current award letters or benefit statements for unearned income that is only verified once per year such as SSI and SS benefits, unemployment benefits, Veterans benefits, and pension/retirement income are now accepted, which is a great change as this is one requirement that has delayed applications of being considered complete.

Bank statements are NO longer acceptable as the sole source of any proof of income. They can be used in conjunction with award letters, but not required.

Paystubs need to be 30 consecutive days within the last 60 days.

If an applicant claims that an income source has or will be ending, please verify the end date and project the income accordingly. If no income is expected to be received in the next 30 days, budget $0 for that income source. The income end date must be verified to determine the correct FPL for the household. If the applicant has had zero income for the most recent 30 days, the zero income affidavit must be signed and dated by the applicant.

Self-Employment Income: If anyone in the household receives self-employment income, they must fill out the Self-Employment Affidavit and provide one of the following; their last year 1040 form and 1040 Schedule C, business receipts/check stubs, a statement from an accountant/bookkeeper, or a current profit and loss statement.

***Update on Processing Timeline***

We are currently entering applications we received from December 2, 2014. We have a one business day lag from the time the application is submitted to when it is entered into our system.

Within 6 business days we are determining if the client is eligible. If the client is missing information we will send them a missing documents letter. If we determine that they are eligible we will move to payment commitment. If we determine they are ineligible we will mail them a denial letter.

We have two fully staffed shifts in Payment Processing and we are working on applications from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM Monday-Friday.

An application only starts our process when all of the necessary documentation is submitted. If we send out a missing information letter the application process stops. When we receive the requested information the process starts again from the beginning. All applications are being processed in the order that they are received to ensure we are fair to all requesting assistance.

***Returning Calls***

If a client has a question or wants to check status of their application, they can call 231-924-0641 x 155 and leave a voicemail. We are returning all calls within 24 hours Monday through Friday.

Caseworkers and agency inquiries: Please contact Niki Fanjoy, emPower Division Director either by email ([nfanjoy@tnempower.org](mailto:nfanjoy@tnempower.org)) or by phone (231-924-0641 x172).

***Faxing Applications***

Faxes can be directed to the following lines:   
231-538-4446  
231-355-3030  
231-924-3667

***Calls and Application Volumes***

To give you an idea of the number of calls and applications we are receiving; 400 applications are received each day and we are experiencing 2,000 incoming phone calls each day.

If you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call or email.

Respectfully,

Niki Fanjoy  
emPower Division Director  
231-924-0641 x172  
[nfanjoy@tnempower.org](mailto:nfanjoy@tnempower.org)

