

STATE OF VERMONT
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES

DCF

Department for Children and Families



BULLETIN NO.: 15-24

FROM: Sean Brown, Deputy Commissioner
Economic Services Division

DATE: 7/23/2015

SUBJECT: Reach Up Procedures: Counting Up To \$125 of a Parent's SSI Payment in the Reach Up Budget; and
Reach Up Services Procedures: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Screening

CHANGES ADOPTED EFFECTIVE 8/1/2015

INSTRUCTIONS

- Maintain Manual - See instructions below.**
- Proposed Regulation - Retain bulletin and attachments until you receive Manual Maintenance Bulletin: _____**
- Information or Instructions - Retain until _____**

MANUAL REFERENCE(S):

P-2210 C23
P-2351

The purpose of this bulletin is to establish a policy on how to count up to \$125 of a parent's SSI income in the Reach Up budget, and to establish substance abuse and mental health screening procedures for Reach Up case managers.

Manual Maintenance

Reach Up Procedures

Remove

None

Insert

P-2210 C23
p.1 & p.2

Reach Up Services Procedures

None

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P-2210 C23

P-2210 Determination and Documentation Eligibility Factors

C. Financial Eligibility Computation (Continued)

- Counting Up to \$125 of Parent's SSI Income in the Reach Up Budget

Beginning August 1, 2015, the Reach Up program must count a portion of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments received by a parent when determining the amount of a family's financial assistance. Up to \$125 of a parent's SSI payment will count as unearned income when determining the family's monthly cash benefit. If both parents receive SSI, only up to \$125 for both parents combined will be countable. SSI payments received by/for children will not count. SSI payments received by caretakers will not count.

New Reach Up Application with Parent(s) in Household that Receive SSI

1. Determine how much SSI income the parent(s) have as matched by SDX within ACCESS, or as confirmed by SSA. During the interview, inform the client how much of this income will now be counting.
2. Create an UNEA panel under an eligible child's name. If there is no child on Reach Up then complete this step with the parent's name that is on Reach Up. Enter a CODE 20 under "TYPE", and enter the amount, up to \$125, in a UNEA panel. If the parent(s) has less than \$125 of SSI income, then enter the full amount of the SSI payment in the UNEA. In the "DESCRIPTION" type "SSI-RUFA ONLY".
3. Enter a CATN, stating "UNEA created in child's (or parent on Reach Up if applicable) name in order to correctly count the parent's SSI income of up to \$125".
4. Check ELIG D RUFA to see that \$125 of unearned income is counting in the RUFA budget.
5. Approve the changes to all benefits in ELIG C.
6. When all other verification for a new application has been received approve case.
7. Check the RUFA "Notice of Decision" to ensure the \$125 of unearned income is listed in the budget. (Please note this amount could be more or less depending on how much SSI income the person has, or if they have any other unearned income that should be counting.)

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06/24/15 15:28 UNEARNED INCOME QUESTION 28 ( UNEA : 03 )
3609 491 (LAST UPDATED: 06/24/15 15:20 | ASPAFI )
AVG MONTHLY
NAME OF PERSON INCOME AMT RECEIPT DATE
RECEIVING UNEARNED INCOME $$$$ cc MO DA YEAR TYPE REC
COLIN BLACK 125 00 06 01 2015 20 Y
**DESCRIPTION**
SS I-RUFA ONLY

UNEARNED INCOME TYPES:
01 SSA 09 MILITARY ALLOTMENT 17 RETIREMENT
02 SSI-AABD 10 GENERAL ASSISTANCE 18 COUNT FOR ALL PROGRAMS
03 VT UNEMPLOYMENT COMP 11 VA PENSION 19 NOT COUNT ANY PROGRAM
04 CHILD SUPPORT 12 GIFTS, PRIZES, INHERIT 20 COUNT RUFA, RUFA-ME, TCC
05 WORKMANS COMP 13 STRIKE BENEFITS 21 COUNT FS
06 RAILROAD RETIREMENT 14 FOSTER CARE 22 COUNT SSI-ME
07 DIVIDENDS 15 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE 23 COUNT SF
08 VA COMPENSATION 16 LUMP SUM 24 COUNT FS AND SF
25 JTPA STIPEND

USER: DJJ FNX: STAT MODE: D RPTGRP: [REDACTED] PERIOD: 06 15 COMMAND: |
DO: Z INS: DJJ REPORTING ADULT: JACK BLACK
    
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P-2210 Determination and Documentation Eligibility Factors

Active Reach Up Grant: New Parent added to Household that Receives SSI

1. Determine how much SSI income the parent has as matched by SDX within ACCESS, or as confirmed by SSA.
2. Create an UNEA panel under an eligible child's name. If there is no child on Reach Up then complete this step with the parent's name that is on Reach Up. Enter a CODE 20 under "TYPE", and enter the amount, up to \$125, in a UNEA panel. If the parent(s) has less than \$125 of SSI income, then enter the full amount of the SSI payment in the UNEA. In the "DESCRIPTION" type "SSI-RUFA ONLY".
3. Enter a CATN, stating "UNEA created in child's (or parent on Reach Up if applicable) name in order to correctly count the parent's SSI income of up to \$125".
4. Check ELIG D RUFA to see that \$125 of unearned income is counting in the RUFA budget.
5. Approve the changes to all benefits in ELIG C.
6. Check the RUFA "Notice of Decision" to ensure the \$125 of unearned income is listed in the budget. (Please note this amount could be more or less depending on how much SSI income the person has, or if they have any other unearned income that should be counting.)

Temporary Absence Where Parent(s) Receives SSI and all Children are Absent from Household

1. Remove the "Date Left" of one of the children that is temporarily absent from the household.
2. Follow the above steps for "Active Reach Up Grant" 1-4.
3. Go back to this child's MEMB panel and put the original left date back in with a code "6".
4. Update the UNEA panel that is in the parent's name coded 24 (count for FS and SF only) for the amount of Reach Up grant.
5. Then follow steps 4 through 6 above.

What to Count if the Parent has an Active Recoupment with Social Security

If the parent's SSI payments are being recouped, and the parent receives no payment or a reduced payment, only count the portion of the SSI payment (up to \$125) that the parent actually receives.

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P-2351

P-2351 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Screening

The purpose of these procedures is to identify Department for Children and Families (DCF) clients who are at risk for substance abuse, in order to intervene early and coordinate services within DCF and with other departments across the Agency of Human Services (AHS) as noted in the DCF Substance Abuse Protocol and Implementation Plan. Training on how to administer these screenings will be handled by the Economic Services Training Unit, and will be administered twice a year. The Team Leaders in each district can provide additional support as needed for the case managers.

A. Initial Screening with the UNCOPE and PHQ2

1. Screening should take place at the initial assessment appointment with the case manager.
 - a. Administer the UNCOPE and PHQ2 along with the SSOM at the initial assessment appointment.
 - b. Document the results of the UNCOPE and PHQ2 on the SSOM in the comment box and in ACCESS. If the result is that it is an interfere then make a comment in ACCESS in the “other” field that participant was referred for assessment.

B. Administering the Screen – Best Practices

1. When possible, allow the participant to complete the UNCOPE and PHQ2 independently in a quiet, private space.
2. If it is clear that reading the screen to them would be more beneficial, then administer the screen that way.
3. Use the tele interpreter when administering the screen with non-English speakers.

C. Screening Indicates Need for Further Assessment

Uncope score of 2 or more indicates a need for further assessment; PHQ2 score of 3 or more indicates a need for further assessment.

1. Case manager will offer to:
 - a. Refer the participant to their designated substance abuse/mental health case manager or;
 - b. Offer to help call a private provider the participant is open to seeing, or;
 - c. Provide resources on the local provider network for the participant to follow up on their own.
2. If participant engages in further assessment or treatment:
 - a. Document this activity on the participants FDP

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P-2351 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Screening

3. If participant doesn't engage in further assessment:

- a. Case manager shall continue to discuss and offer further assessment resources/referrals. At the next SSOM (6 months from initial date it was done) the case manager shall further discuss connecting to treatment, particularly if this is a barrier to employment.

D. Screening Does Not Indicate Need for Further Assessment

1. If the case manager has no reason to believe that the screening result was false, then reassess every 6 months when the SSOM is administered. If there is a change in circumstances then reassess prior to the next SSOM being administered. Examples of reasons to rescreen would include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Participant gets a DUI
 - b. Participant is charged with possession and or
 - c. use of illicit drugs
 - d. Participant discloses that they have a substance abuse or mental health barrier

E. Screening Indicates a Need for Further Assessment, but Participant is already engaged in Services

1. If the screen indicates a need for treatment but the participant is already engaged with a provider, indicate this on the UNCOPE and PHQ2 and the SSOM.

F. Sharing the Results and Collaboration with other DCF Divisions and AHS Departments

1. If a participant is involved with another division within the Department for Children and Families (DCF), the case manager shall share the results of the UNCOPE and PHQ2 and will note if the screening took place within the last 3 months.
 - a. Document on the SSOM comment box and in ACCESS if Family Services notifies ESD that they administered a screen and it is an interfere.
 - b. In ACCESS note on the "other" field the date, FSD and the score.
 - c. Document as well in case notes the communication from FSD with the above date and score outlined.
2. For all other departments within AHS (excluding DCF), Reach Up must have a signed release in order to share the screening results. However, the case manager should work with the participant to obtain this release so that the participant's intra-agency team can work collaboratively to help the participant overcome this barrier.