

STATE OF VERMONT  
 AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES

**DCF**

**Department for Children and Families**

**BULLETIN NO.:** 15-26

**FROM:** Sean Brown, Deputy Commissioner  
 Economic Services Division

**DATE:** 8/20/2015

**SUBJECT:** Reach Ahead Procedures

**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-2281
- P-2282
- P-2283
- P-2284

The purpose of this bulletin is to establish procedures for the Reach Ahead program (Reach Ahead Procedures P-2280), and to remove multiple obsolete procedures as listed below.

**Manual Maintenance**

**Reach Ahead Procedures**

**Remove**

**Insert**

- Nothing
- Nothing
- Nothing
- Nothing

- P-2281 (B15-26)
- P-2282 (B15-26)
- P-2283 (B15-26)
- P-2284 (B15-26)

- P-2210B
- P-2210G
- P-2210I
- P-2210K
- P-2210M

- Nothing
- Nothing
- Nothing
- Nothing
- Nothing

**Remove**

P-2210N  
P-2220I

P-2336A  
P-2336B  
P-2336C  
P-2336D  
P-2336F

P-2336G  
P-2336H  
P-2336H5  
P-2336I  
P-2336J  
P-2336K

**Insert**

Nothing  
Nothing

Nothing  
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8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2281

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P-2281 Reach Ahead Auto-Enrollment and Applications

A. Auto-Enrollment into Reach Ahead

1. When Reach Up or PSE closes, ACCESS will automatically enroll participant into Reach Ahead if eligible for program
2. If you are expecting auto-enrollment and it does not auto-enroll, bring case to district Reach Ahead designee
3. If case should have auto-enrolled and did not, APPL case for RA and approve

B. Reach Ahead Application (when participant was not eligible for, or opted out of, auto-enrollment)

1. BPS or case manager mails or hands Reach Ahead Enrollment/Review (600) to participant
2. When application is returned, enter APPL into ACCESS. For RUFA type, enter "RA"
3. Participant must return last 30 days of paystubs, or statement from employer that includes both income and hours worked, with application
  - a. Last 30 days of paystubs should include paystubs 30 days prior to the application date
  - b. If a paystub is missing, but returned paystubs are reflective of ongoing income, process RA
  - c. If paystubs are not returned or application is otherwise incomplete, send 202v requesting correct information. Check off "RA" on 202v.
4. If it appears that the applicant is not meeting the work requirement and ACCESS wants to deny, bring case to Reach Ahead designee before denying.

C. When one parent is not able to work in a two parent household

1. At time of application or auto-enrollment:
  - a. Case manager will have already documented inability to work with a 210TMD for the purpose of the Reach Up program. No additional documentation is necessary.
  - b. Align review date on DISA with the review date for the next Reach Ahead review.
2. If parent states later (at a review or any other time during RA eligibility), that they are not able to work, and a 210TMD was not already completed while on Reach Up:
  - a. BPS sends email to case manager to let the case manager know the parent cannot work
  - b. Case manager sends parent a 210TMD to verify that they are unable to work
  - c. When 210TMD is returned:
    - i. If able to work, DISA is not entered and work requirement remains the same. Send free form notice to parent letting them know of the decision.
    - ii. If not able to work, enter DISA with review date aligned with next Reach Ahead review date.

8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2281 P.2

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- D. When a second parent who is meeting the Reach Up work requirement for the family's size and composition joins a household
- a. If the household is currently receiving Reach Up
    - i. Add the second parent according to current Reach Up procedures
    - ii. If the case closes and the family is otherwise eligible for Reach Ahead, follow RA application procedures
  - b. If the household is not receiving Reach Up or Reach Ahead, and the family applies for RA
    - i. Follow RA application procedures
    - ii. Add second parent to the household
  - c. If the household is receiving Reach Ahead
    - i. Add the second parent to the household; verify parent's income/hours (if income is not verified, do not close RA unless the second parent's hours are needed to meet the RA work requirement)

8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2282

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P-2282 Reach Ahead Reviews

A. If Reach Ahead participant is receiving both Reach Ahead and 3SVT

1. If participant is automatically enrolled by ACCESS, ACCESS will set the first review date to align with the 3SVT review date. The review date in ACCESS may be set out as far as 12 months. The six month Reach Ahead review will be processed using an Interim Report (IR)
2. If participant is manually enrolled into Reach Ahead, the BPS should set the first review date to align with the 3SVT review date. The review date in ACCESS may be set out as far as 12 months. The six month Reach Ahead review will be processed using an Interim Report (IR)
3. Processing the IR
  - a. If IR is returned without income verification:
    - i. Request income/work hours verification for the 30 days prior to the receipt of the IR
    - ii. If income verification is returned at any time within the IR month, **or** the month following the IR month, complete review or (if applicable) reinstate Reach Ahead
  - b. If income verification is returned without IR, complete Reach Ahead review. IR is not needed.
  - c. If income verification is not returned by the requested date, close Reach Ahead for Non-Coop.
  - d. If two parent household, check case for DISA panel in ACCESS:
    - i. If DISA is for a permanent disability (determined by Social Security), no action is necessary
    - ii. If DISA is for a temporary disability, change the review date to align with the next Reach Ahead review date six months out in ACCESS.
4. Processing the review (at 12 months) with an application (202) or Reach Ahead Review/Enrollment Form (600)
  - a. If 202/600 Is returned without income verification
    - i. Request income/work hours verification for the 30 days prior to the receipt of the 202/600
    - ii. If income verification is returned at any time within the review month, **or** the month following the review month, complete review or (if applicable) reinstate Reach Ahead

8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2282 P.2

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- b. If income verification is returned without 202/600, complete Reach Ahead review and update review date in ACCESS. 202/600 is not needed. If 3SquaresVT is also complete, align review dates. If 3SquaresVT is not complete, set RA review date out six months.
- c. If income verification is not returned by the requested date, ACCESS will automatically close RA if review date is not updated
- d. If two parent household, check case for DISA panel in ACCESS:
  - i. If DISA is for a permanent disability (determined by Social Security), no action is necessary
  - ii. If DISA is for a temporary disability, and the parent is still not able to work according to the 202/600, change the review date to align with the next Reach Ahead review date six months out in ACCESS.
  - iii. If DISA is for a temporary disability, and the parent is able to work according to the 202/600, delete the DISA panel.

B. If Reach Ahead participant is receiving Reach Ahead only, or Reach Ahead and Fuel only

1. If participant is automatically enrolled by ACCESS, ACCESS will set the first review date out six months
2. If participant is manually enrolled into Reach Ahead, the BPS should set the first review date out six months
3. The review notice and Reach Ahead Review/Enrollment form (600) will be mailed out by the ADPC or BGS
4. Follow review procedures above for Reach Ahead Reviews 2284 A.4

C. When one parent in a Reach Ahead household has a temporary DISA:

*When one parent in a 2 parent family is not able to work, the work requirement for that family is changed from 35 hours per week to 30.*

1. Check RA Review/Enrollment form (600) to see if parent states they are still unable to work.
  - a. If still not able to work, update DISA panel review date to align with the next RA review date
  - b. If now able to work, remove DISA panel from ACCESS

8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2283

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P- 2283 Reach Ahead Re-Instatement

*A break in RA participation occurs when the family does not receive any food assistance in a month.  
(Rule 2502.3)*

- A. When client reapplies at any time within the month of closure or the month following closure (Example: RA closed July 31, and client reapplies in July or August)
  1. Re-APPL case in ACCESS for the date the necessary documentation is provided
  2. If eligible approve benefits; no “break in benefits”
  
- B. When client reapplies at least two months following RA closure (Example: RA closes July 31, client reapplies in September).
  1. If PSE/RU closed within the last six months, client is meeting the work requirement, and has not had 24 months of RA
    - a. New application; request enrollment form
    - b. APPL case the day the information is received
  
  2. If PSE/RU closed within the last six months and/or client has already had 24 months of RA (see PERS D HIST)
    - a. APPL case in ACCESS the date the application or request is received
    - b. ACCESS will deny

8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2284

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P-2284 Transfer from Reach Ahead back to Reach Up

*When a Reach Ahead case closes for failure to meet the work requirement, a blurb on the notice will inform participant that if they wish to be transferred to Reach Up without an application, they must contact the BSC within ten days of receiving the notice.*

A. Client calls Benefit Service Center requesting transfer from RA to Reach Up

1. Check notices for date of RA closure notice and reason for closure
2. Transfer back to Reach First **may** occur if client requests transfer within 10 days of the date the notice is received, or before the date of RA closure, whichever is later:
  - a. Enter the date the request was made (either verbally or in writing) as the APPL date in ACCESS
  - b. Send 202v requesting:
    - 1) Child support forms 137s (if applicable)
    - 2) Verification of shelter expense
    - 3) Verification of last 30 days of income,
    - 4) Information about resources if change from last application/review
    - 5) Verification of shelter expenses
    - 6) Information about any new household members
    - 7) Verification of any other information affecting eligibility
  - c. If above verification is not received by due date, deny RU, unless good cause is provided or an extension has been requested.
  - d. If the approved case has had at least 60 countable cumulative months of Reach Up, ask team leader to enter a deferment code so that ACCESS will not prevent approval before two weeks of compliance.

B. Client calls Benefit Service Center requesting transfer from RA to Reach First

1. Check notices for date of RA closure notice and reason for closure
2. Transfer back to Reach First **may** occur if client requests transfer within 10 days of the date the notice is received, or before the date of RA closure, whichever is later:
  - a. Enter the date the request was made (either verbally or in writing) as the APPL date in ACCESS.
  - b. Send 202v requesting:
    - 1) Reach First Questionnaire (604)
    - 2) Child support forms 137s (if applicable)
    - 3) Verification of shelter expense
    - 4) Verification of last 30 days of income,
    - 5) Information about resources if change from last application/review
    - 6) Verification of shelter expenses



8/1/15

Bulletin No. 15 - 26

P-2284 P.2

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- 7) Information about any new household members
- 8) Verification of any other information affecting eligibility

- c. If above verification is not received by due date, deny RU, unless good cause is provided or an extension has been requested.
- d. If above verification is received by due date, and Reach First Questionnaire indicates RF is appropriate, transfer to Reach First.
- e. If above verification is received by due date, and Reach First Questionnaire indicated RF is **not** appropriate, transfer to Reach Up.

C. Client contacts case manager requesting transfer

- 1. Case manager sends a TODO to the assigned Reach Up district number - G[*district initial*]1 – indicating the date on which the request was made and which program (RU or RF) was requested
- 2. BPS follows procedures 2284 A or B for transfer

D. How to proceed after Reach Up or Reach First has been approved

- 1. BPS sends email to district team leader and enters CATN (cc team leader), letting team leader know that the case has been approved
- 2. Team leader assigns case to appropriate case manager for assessment and follow-up