



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
*Department of Transitional Assistance*

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Secretary

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Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2016-52**  
**September 30, 2016**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

**From:** Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Program and Policy Implementation  
Paul Sutliff, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

**Re:** SNAP – Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and Standard Utility Allowances Change

**Overview**

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At the beginning of each Federal fiscal year, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service adjusts SNAP maximum allotments, deductions, and income eligibility standards. These adjustments are based on changes in the cost of living. States are also required to adjust their Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs) on an annual basis. The SUA changes are made concurrent with the annual COLA.

This year, a reduction in energy costs caused the SUAs to decrease, which in turn will cause SNAP benefits to decrease for many clients. It is anticipated that after the COLA/SUA recalculation, most SNAP households will either remain at the same SNAP benefit amount or will see a small decrease in their benefit.

The annual SNAP COLA and SUA changes were processed during the weekend of September 23, 2016. This mass recalculation will impact households' monthly benefit for October.

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this Online Guide update is to inform staff of:

- the annual COLA changes; and
  - the standard utility allowance changes.
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**New Online  
Guide Book and  
Page**

**Topic:** Scheduled Mailings/Projects  
**Book:** SNAP COLA  
**Page:** 2017 SNAP COLA Adjustment

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**Questions**

If you have any questions, please email the DTA Mailbox.  
Systems questions should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.

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