



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

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Governor


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Lieutenant Governor

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2018-68
September 28, 2018**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Paul Sutliff, Assistant Commissioner for Programs and Field Operations

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

Overview

At the beginning of each Federal fiscal year, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service adjusts maximum SNAP benefits, 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. DTA implements the adjustment in SUAs with the SNAP COLA to minimize the number of potential benefit changes for clients.

Purpose

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

- Changes to benefit levels;
 - Changes in SUA amounts;
 - Notice to impacted clients;
 - Updates to the Online Guide.
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**Changes in
Benefit
Amounts**

This year, maximum SNAP benefit amounts for most household sizes have increased; the maximum benefit for a household of 1 remains unchanged.

The minimum benefit level for eligible one- and two-person households remains unchanged at \$15, and the homeless shelter deduction remains unchanged at \$143

The standard deduction, maximum shelter deduction, and the gross/net income thresholds have increased.

Due to a rise in energy costs, SUA amounts have increased.

**Impacted
Clients**

The SNAP COLA and SUA change was processed during the weekend of September 21, 2018 and will impact October SNAP benefit.

The majority of SNAP clients will see an increase in their October SNAP benefits. Some households will not see any change in benefit as a result of the COLA.

**Revised
Online
Guide Page**

Topic: Scheduled Mailings/Projects
Book: SNAP COLA
Page: 2019 SNAP COLA Adjustment

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email the DTA Mailbox.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
