



DEVAL L. PATRICK  
Governor

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
Lieutenant Governor

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.  
Secretary

JULIA E. KEHOE  
Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2011-50**  
**September 26, 2011**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

**From:** Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

**Re:** SNAP - October 2011 Annual Cost-of-Living and Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs) Change

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**Overview**

The annual SNAP cost-of-living (COLA) was processed during the weekend of September 24, 2011. This is a mass change affecting the entire SNAP caseload.

The following is a summary of the COLA changes in SNAP.

**Gross, Net and 165 Percent Income Eligibility Standards** - The Gross, Net and 165 Percent Income Eligibility Standards have increased. See Attachment A for revised standards.

**Shelter Deduction** - The maximum shelter deduction (for households not comprised of any elderly or disabled member) has increased to \$459.

**Standard Deduction:** The standard deduction for all household sizes has increased.

- The standard deduction for household sizes 1 to 3 has increased to \$147;
- The standard deduction for a household of 4 has increased to \$155;
- The standard deduction for a household of 5 has increased to \$181; and
- The standard deduction for a household of 6 or more has increased to \$208.

**Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)**

- The Heating/Cooling SUA has increased to \$594;
  - The Nonheating SUA has increased to \$365;
  - The Phone SUA has increased to \$42; and
  - The Bay State CAP SUA has increased to \$594.
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**Overview  
(Continued)**

**Maximum Benefit Levels** - The maximum SNAP benefit levels for all household sizes remain at the amounts issued with the April 2009 ARRA changes.

**Minimum Benefit Level** - The minimum benefit level for eligible one- and two-person households remains at **\$16**.

**Homeless Shelter/Utility Deduction** - The Homeless Shelter/Utility Deduction remains at **\$143**.

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**Automatic  
Update of  
Active SNAP  
Households**

As of the close of business on 9/23/11, active SNAP cases, including Bay State CAP cases, were automatically recalculated in BEACON using the new COLA standards. SNAP cases with a change in benefit amount were automatically authorized. The newly calculated benefit amount is now displayed on the Active by Grantee Name view, under Assistance Unit Lists.

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**Report of  
Updated  
Households**

A report entitled “Food Stamp 10/2011 COLA Updated Case”:

- is now available on View Direct, Report ID:DTA 9023;
  - lists all households that have a change in benefit amount as a result of the COLA;
  - lists the household’s old and new SNAP benefit amounts (as adjusted by BEACON); and
  - may be used for reference by TAO staff.
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**Client  
Notices**

The following notices will be sent to households listed on the “Food Stamp 10/2011 COLA Updated Case” report:

- an English/Spanish notice (Attachment B) to SNAP households;
  - an English/Spanish notice (Attachment C) to Bay State CAP households; and
  - a multilingual notice that states, “Important! Please have this notice translated immediately.”
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**Households With Decreased SNAP Benefit Amounts**

Cases with decreased SNAP benefit amounts will appear on the Interview Wrap-Up, Pending Release view under Daily Priority Actions and will require review. Case managers must:

- review each case based upon release date, starting with the earliest release date; and
- allow the decrease to be authorized if appropriate or delete the action pending to be released, if it is determined that the decrease is erroneous.

**Note:** Decreases caused by the COLA do not pend. This year, the COLA recalculation will not cause a decrease in the SNAP benefit amount; therefore, any case with a decrease in the SNAP benefit amount, displayed on the Pending Release view is a decrease caused by other case activity that has taken place at the same time as the COLA.

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**When to Use New Standards**

SNAP cases authorized after the close of business on 9/23/2011 were recalculated using the new COLA standards. As of Monday, September 26, 2011, the new COLA standards must be used in all SNAP calculations, including any necessary manual calculations.

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**Eligibility Charts and Tables**

SNAP eligibility charts, issuance tables, standard utility allowance amounts (SUA), maximum and minimum benefit amounts, shelter deduction and standard deduction are posted on the [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) website.

The following eligibility charts and tables will be updated on the [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) website to reflect new COLA standards effective October 1, 2011:

- gross income standards;
  - net income standards;
  - standards for special circumstances involving an elderly and disabled individual;
  - standard deduction amounts;
  - shelter deduction; and
  - the standard utility allowances.
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**Questions**

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

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<b>MAXIMUM MONTHLY GROSS INCOME LEVELS</b>	
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>GROSS INCOME LEVELS</b>
1	\$1,180
2	\$1,594
3	\$ 2,008
4	\$ 2,422
5	\$ 2,836
6	\$ 3,249
7	\$ 3,663
8	\$ 4,077
<b>Each additional HH member will increase by \$414</b>	

<b>MAXIMUM MONTHLY NET INCOME LEVELS</b>	
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>NET INCOME LEVELS</b>
1	\$ 908
2	\$ 1,226
3	\$ 1,545
4	\$ 1,863
5	\$ 2,181
6	\$ 2,500
7	\$ 2,818
8	\$ 3,136
<b>Each additional HH member will increase by \$319</b>	

<b>STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVING AN ELDERLY &amp; DISABLED INDIVIDUAL</b>	
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>165% OF POVERTY LEVEL</b>
1	\$ 1,498
2	\$ 2,023
3	\$ 2,548
4	\$ 3,074
5	\$ 3,599
6	\$ 4,124
7	\$ 4, 649
8	\$ 5,175
<b>Each additional HH member will increase by \$526</b>	

300 Ocean Ave. CAN 710  
Revere, MA 02151

Important Notice - Read Carefully  
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance**

Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Somerville, MA 02148

Agency ID: 999999  
Revere TAO - DTA

09/26/2011

**Notice of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
Annual Cost of Living Adjustment**

Dear *Mary Jones*:

Each year, the federal government makes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to the calculation of your SNAP benefit amount. SNAP benefits are changing as of October 1, 2011 due to this adjustment.

On October, 1, 2011, your SNAP benefits will go from \$210.00 to \$230.00. This change is based on the adjustment in the cost-of-living and any changes in your circumstances.

If you disagree with the amount of your SNAP benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The back side of this notice contains important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back side of this notice. The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 364.500, 364.600, 366.130.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice.

One Davis Square CAN 710  
Somerville, MA 02145

Important Notice - Read Carefully  
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance**

Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Somerville, MA 02148

Agency ID: 999999  
Davis Square TAO - DTA

09/26/2011

**Notice of Bay State Combined Application Project (CAP) Benefits  
Annual Cost of Living Adjustment**

Dear Mary Jones:

Each year, the federal government makes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to the calculation of your food assistance benefit amount. Food assistance benefits through the Bay State CAP changed as of October 1, 2011 due to this adjustment.

On October, 1, 2011, your food assistance benefits will go from \$210.00 to \$230.00. This change is based on the adjustment in the cost of living and any changes in your circumstances.

If you disagree with the amount of your food assistance benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The back side of this notice contains important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back side of this notice. The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 106 CMR: 364.500, 364.600, 366.130.

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