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**Field Operations Memo 2005-54**  
**December 1, 2005**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff  
**From:**  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**Re:** 2006 Social Security/SSI COLA for TAFDC, EAEDC and FS

**Overview**

The Social Security and SSI Cost-Of-Living Adjustments (COLA) have been scheduled. Effective January 2006, Social Security benefits and SSI payments will increase by 4.1 percent. The basic Medicare Part B premium will increase from \$78.20 to \$88.50 per month.

This Field Operations Memo identifies:

- general BEACON activities for processing the 2006 Social Security/SSI COLA; and
- AU Manager and Supervisor activities required to prepare for the 2006 Social Security/SSI COLA.

**BEACON  
Actions**

As of close of business **January 20, 2006** for grantees whose SSN ends in 0-5 and **January 27, 2006** for grantees whose SSN ends in 6-9, BEACON will automatically begin recalculating Social Security/SSI COLA amounts for all active TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs with an active or ineligible Assessed Person (AP). The Social Security and SSI COLA Batch Program released to FMCS will automatically change February benefit amounts for these AUs.

**BEACON  
Actions  
(continued)**

**RSDI (BENDEX) and SSI (SDX) Batch Job Updates:**

The SDX Batch Job will continue to update with November (pre-COLA) data until COLA is calculated in January. This is because the EAEDC/SSI Automatic Closing and FS CAP calculations must continue to run through this time period as well. The BENDEX Batch Job update will **not** be run in December. Both SDX and BENDEX Batch Job updates will run in January with the COLA information.

**BA Options:**

*Options E and H on the BA Screen* currently displays a message that the screens are unavailable until **January 3, 2006**. However, anyone who applies for SSI or appeals his or her SSI decision will be added to SDX during this time period.

*Option S on the BA Screen*, the SVES overnight inquiry, is available from **November 21, 2005** through **January 3, 2006** to verify *current* RSDI and SSI income while Options E and H are unavailable.

**Active AUs:**

BEACON will generate income change notices informing active TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs with an active or ineligible AP of changes in their February benefits. These notices can be viewed on the Document History tab or the Daily Priority Action View - Documents Sent For Past Week.

**Note:** Even though the new COLA amounts will be displayed on BEACON beginning the week of **January 16, 2006**, these amounts will **not** be used in benefit calculations to impact January benefits. They will impact February benefits.

**Denied, Pending and Closed AUs:**

All denied, pending and closed TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs will have their COLA amount updated on the Income Tab of the Other Income Status window. EBC requests, however, will not be automatically created and released for these AUs. If AU Managers take action on these AUs such as (re)opening an AU, they must review the information found on the Income Tab of the Income Status window to ensure that this information is correct and up to date.

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**Additional  
AU Manager  
Actions**

**New and Reopened AUs:**

When establishing new or reopened AUs in January 2006, use the new (current) Social Security and/or SSI COLA amounts.

Any AU with a discrepant Social Security or SSI amount (e.g., if the amount is unavailable from Social Security or the amount found on BEACON is greater than the new Social Security amount, etc.) will be identified on the "Clients With RSDI and/or SSI" View. Detailed information and instructions on Social Security/SSI discrepancies will be issued prior to the COLA being completed and should be received by TAOs in January 2006.

**IMPORTANT: AU Managers must ensure that the SSI and RSDI income is labeled correctly on BEACON for accurate income calculations to occur.**

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**Supervisor  
Actions**

Supervisors must authorize any pending transactions for grantees whose SSN ends in 0-5 before close of business on **January 20, 2006** and for grantees whose SSN ends in 6-9 before close of business on **January 27, 2006**. This will ensure that recipients receive the correct notice regarding their benefit amount when COLA is run.

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**Questions**

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

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