



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

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Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2013-54  
October 17, 2013**

**To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**

**From: *JC* Lydia Conley, Acting Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations**

**Re: SNAP: Benefit Decrease due to End of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009**

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**Overview**

In April 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), commonly known as the Stimulus package, helped improve food security for many people affected by the recession. The extra benefits provided by ARRA will end on October 31, 2013. All SNAP benefits will be recalculated using the new eligibility standards.

Barring any other simultaneous case activity, the impact of the ARRA recalculation **will cause a decrease** in SNAP benefits in November.

The maximum SNAP benefit allotment amounts effective November 1, 2013 will be as follows:

Maximum SNAP Benefit Allotments

1	\$189
2	\$347
3	\$497
4	\$632
5	\$750
6	\$900
7	\$995
8	\$1,137
Each additional person: \$142	

The minimum SNAP benefit allotment will decrease from \$16 to \$15.

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**Purpose of Memo**

The purpose of this memo is to inform staff about:

- the recalculation and reduction of SNAP benefits effective on the household's November issuance date;
  - the notice SNAP households will receive; and
  - the phone bank established to answer client calls.
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**Recalculation and Reduction of SNAP Benefit**

During the weekend of October 26, 2013, active SNAP cases will be automatically recalculated using the new, post-ARRA standards. The termination of the extra benefits provided by ARRA will cause SNAP households to experience a decrease which will be effective on the household's cyclical date in November 2013.

SNAP cases with decreased benefits will be displayed on the Active by Grantee Name view under Assistance Unit Lists.

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**Notice**

A notice will be sent to each SNAP household that experiences a change in their SNAP benefit as a result of the post-ARRA recalculation. The notices will be as follows:

- an English/Spanish notice (Attachment A) to SNAP households;
  - an English/Spanish notice to (Attachment B) Bay State CAP households;
  - a multilingual notice that states, "Important! Please have this notice translated immediately."
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**Phone Bank**

To alleviate the burden of anticipated high call volumes, the ARRA notices will not include case managers' phone numbers. Instead, a special Phone Bank will be established at Central Office to address ARRA-related calls. The Recipient Services phone number, 1-800-445-6604 will become the Phone Bank number on October 30, 2013. When a client calls the phone number, a Central Office volunteer will respond to ARRA-related questions and concerns.

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**Questions**

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

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80 Everett Avenue CAN 71  
Chelsea, MA 02472

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: 9999999  
EOHHS – Chelsea Center

11/XX/2013

Notice of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
Fall 2013 Benefit Changes

Dear *Mary Jones*:

Every October, the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) can change SNAP benefit amounts. In October 2013, some benefits went up slightly and some benefits did not change.

Unfortunately, all SNAP benefits will go down in November due to the end of extra funding from ARRA. ARRA is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the Stimulus Plan.

ARRA increased funding for SNAP benefits in 2009 to help families in the economic downturn. **On November 1, 2013, the ARRA funding ends, and SNAP benefits go down for almost every household.** In November 2013, your monthly SNAP benefits will go from \$XXX to \$XXX.

It is possible your monthly SNAP benefits can go up if you tell your case manager about:

- Costs you pay for caring for a child or adult;
- If you are elderly or disabled, medical costs you pay that are over \$35 per month.

If you have questions, call DTA at 1-800-445-6604 about your benefit changes. To find emergency food in your area, please call the Project Bread's Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333.

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**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance**

Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Somerville, MA 02148

Agency ID: 9999999  
EOHHS – Chelsea Center

11/XX/2013

**Notice of Food Assistance Benefit Changes**  
Fall 2013

Dear *Mary Jones*:

Every October, the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) can change food assistance benefit amounts. In October 2013, food assistance benefits through Bay State CAP changed due to this adjustment.

In November, food assistance benefits will go down due to the end of extra funding from ARRA. ARRA is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the Stimulus Plan.

ARRA increased funding for food assistance benefits in 2009 to help families in the economic downturn. **On November 1, 2013, the ARRA funding ends, and benefits go down for almost every household.** In November 2013, your monthly food assistance benefits will go from \$XXX to \$XXX.

If you have questions, call DTA at 1-800-445-6604 about your benefit changes. To find emergency food in your area, please call the Project Bread's Food Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333.

**600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111**

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