



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


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-66
September 21, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
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 usually adjusts maximum SNAP benefits, deductions, and income eligibility standards. These adjustments are based on changes in the cost of living.

Additionally, on an annual basis, states are also required to adjust their Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs). To minimize the number of potential benefit changes for clients, the Department implements the adjustment in SUAs with the SNAP COLA.

Purpose

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

- COLA-related changes;
 - clients impacted by the COLA; and
 - updates to the Online Guide.
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**Changes in
Benefit
Amounts**

This year, the maximum SNAP benefit amounts for all household sizes have increased. The minimum benefit level for eligible one- and two-person households will remain the same.

The standard deduction, maximum shelter deduction, gross income threshold and net income threshold have increased.

The homeless deduction increased from \$152 to \$157.

The SUA amounts did not change.

The Bay State CAP High Shelter value will remain the same at \$481.

**Impacted
Clients**

The SNAP COLA will be processed during the weekend of September 18, 2020 and will impact October SNAP benefits. Effective on Monday, September 21, the new COLA standards will be operational in BEACON.

Most households will see an increase in their October SNAP issuance.

The Department will automatically send a notice to households whose SNAP benefits change as a result of the COLA.

**Revised Online
Guide Pages**

Topic:	Scheduled Mailings/Projects
Book:	SNAP COLA
Page:	SNAP Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

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 them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

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