



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


CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS  
Secretary

KARYN POLITO  
Lieutenant Governor

MARY SHEEHAN  
Acting Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2022-75  
September 21, 2022**

**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 (FNS) adjusts SNAP income standards, deduction amounts, and maximum benefit levels to reflect changes in the cost of living. This is known as the “SNAP COLA.”

The Department also recalculates the Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs) every year, per federal rules, and includes the recalculated SUAs in the SNAP COLA. This combined calculation minimizes the frequency of benefit changes communicated to the client and the number of associated notices that a separate recalculation would generate.

The SNAP COLA will be processed over the weekend of September 17, 2022. These adjustments will impact October SNAP benefits.

Additionally, minor adjustments were made to corresponding OLG pages to reflect these new amounts.

**Purpose**

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

- COLA-related changes;
  - clients impacted by the COLA;
  - client communications about the COLA; and
  - related updates to the Online Guide.
- 

**COLA-related Changes**

The 2022 COLA will increase SNAP benefit levels. This includes increases in the:

- minimum benefit level for eligible one- and two-person households;
  - standard deduction;
  - homeless shelter deduction;
  - maximum shelter deduction;
  - maximum benefit level for all household sizes;
  - gross income thresholds;
  - net income thresholds;
  - SUA amounts; and
  - maximum asset limits.
- 

**Communication**

For SNAP-only clients whose benefits **increase** as a result of the COLA, the Department plans to send the following text message/DTA Connect alert:

“Your monthly SNAP benefits are going up starting in October. Learn more: <https://Mass.gov/DTAFAQ>.”

The text messages should be received by each client over three days 9/28/2022, 9/29/2022, and 9/30/2022. The DTA Connect alerts will be displayed for one week starting on 9/28/2022.

The text message will be sent in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese and Vietnamese based on the client’s language on file. Households with Heightened Level of Security or who have affirmatively opted out of text messaging will not be sent one. Text messages are sent regardless of the phone type on file.

The Department will send a notice to households who receive both cash (TAFDC or EAEDC) and SNAP benefits if the household has a change in cash or SNAP benefit amount after their cash and SNAP cases are recalculated to account for the cash grant increase and the SNAP COLA.

---

**Revised Online  
Guide Pages**

**Topic:** Cross Programs  
**Page:** Helpful Charts and Figures

**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.

---