



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

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Governor
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Gerald Whitburn
Secretary
Joseph Gallant
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 95-40
December 1, 1995

To: Local Office Staff
From: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Food Stamp Program - 12/1/95 Standard Deduction Decrease

Overview We recently implemented a Food Stamp Program COLA effective with November 1995 ATPs retroactive to 10/1/95. As part of this COLA, the Food Stamp Program *standard deduction* was increased from \$134 to \$138.

A federal law passed in late October 1995 requires that the Food Stamp Program *standard deduction* be frozen at the previous level of \$134.

The Standard Deduction has been decreased from \$138 to \$134.

This change will result in a \$1-\$2 decrease in food stamp benefits.

Automatic Update of Active Food Stamp Cases

Date of Automatic Update All active food stamp cases on the Recipient Masterfile as of the close of business on **11/20/95** will be automatically recalculated and updated for December issuances.

When the New Standard Will be Used Cases key-entered on **11/20/95** and after will have benefits calculated using the 12/1/95 decreased standard deduction amount.

Report of Updated Cases

A report, "FSP - Standard Deduction Decrease Report," will:

- Be sent to local offices during the week of 11/27/95;
- List all cases that were automatically updated;
- List the household's old and new food stamp benefit amounts (as adjusted by the system); and
- Be used for case reference.

No action by local office staff is required at this time. Additional information will be provided if further action is necessary.

Note: Case recalculation using the new standard deduction amount may result in no change in the monthly food stamp allotment. These cases will not appear on this report.

Recipient Notice

All households listed on the "FSP - Standard Deduction Decrease Report" will be sent the following notices:

- An English/Spanish notice (see Attachment A);
- A multilingual notice that states, "Important! Please have this notice translated immediately."; and
- A name and address card which indicates that the food stamp action is a result of the standard deduction decrease.

Note: Case recalculation using the new standard deduction amount may result in no change in the monthly food stamp allotment. These cases will not be sent notices.

Questions

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



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Important! Food Stamp Program Notice

As a result of action in the United States Congress, there will be a decrease in your food stamp benefits beginning in December, 1995.

This law requires that the Food Stamp Program *standard deduction* be frozen at the 1995 level of \$134 versus the recently changed level of \$138.

The effect of this required change will be approximately a \$1-\$2 decrease in your monthly food stamp benefits.

Food Stamp Manual Citation: 106 CMR 364.370 and 366.130.

If you have any questions about your new food stamp amount call your worker.

It is your right to request a fair hearing at any time if you disagree with the amount of food stamps you receive. To request a fair hearing, you must sign and date the enclosed card which has your name and address on it and mail it to: Department of Transitional Assistance, Division of Hearings, P.O. Box 167, Boston, MA 02112.

FSP 12/95 SD