



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

DEVAL L. PATRICK  
 Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.  
 Secretary

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
 Lieutenant Governor

DANIEL J. CURLEY  
 Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2012-44**  
**September 24, 2012**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

**From:** *Stephanie Brown*, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

**Re:** SNAP: Cost-of-Living Changes

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**Overview**

The annual SNAP COLA was processed during the weekend of September 22, 2012. This is a mass change affecting the entire SNAP caseload. The recalculation will impact the household's monthly benefit for October.

The following elements of the COLA will change effective October 1, 2012.

- **Shelter Deduction** - The maximum shelter deduction (for households without an elderly or disabled member) **has increased to \$469**.
- **Standard Deduction has increased for all Household Sizes**

AU Size	Old Standard Deduction	New Standard Deduction
1	147	149
2	147	149
3	147	149
4	155	160
5	181	187
AU size 6 or more	208	214

- **Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs)**
  - The Heating/Cooling SUA **has decreased to \$586**;
  - The Nonheating SUA **has decreased to \$360**;
  - The Phone SUA **has decreased to \$41**; and
  - The Bay State CAP SUA **has decreased to 586**.

See Attachment A for revised COLA standard amounts.

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**Overview  
(continued)**

**Unchanged COLA Standards**

- **Maximum Benefit Levels** - The maximum SNAP benefit levels for all household sizes remain unchanged.
  - **Minimum Benefit Level** - The minimum benefit level for eligible one- and two-person households remains at **\$16**.
  - **Homeless Shelter/Utility Deduction** - The Homeless Shelter/Utility Deduction remains at **\$143**.
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**Impact of  
COLA on  
SNAP  
Benefits**

Recalculation results indicate that some SNAP households:

- Will be negatively impacted by the decrease of the heating/cooling SUA and the nonheating SUA;
  - will receive a small increase in SNAP benefits; or
  - will remain at the same SNAP benefit amount.
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**Recipient  
Services  
To Handle  
COLA Calls**

To alleviate the burden a surge in call volume could place on TAOs, the COLA notices do not include case managers' phone numbers. Instead, Recipient Services staff at Central Office will handle COLA-related calls.

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**Automatic  
Update of  
Active SNAP  
Households**

During the weekend of September 22, 2012, active SNAP cases on BEACON, including Bay State CAP, were automatically recalculated using the new COLA standards. SNAP cases with a decrease in benefit amount are displayed on the Active by Grantee Name view under Assistance Unit Lists.

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**Report of  
Updated  
Households**

A report entitled "*Food Stamp 10/2012 COLA Updated Case*":

- will be available on View Direct, Report ID:DTA 9023 on September 25, 2012;
  - lists all households that have experienced a change in benefit amount as a result of the COLA;
  - lists the household's old and new SNAP benefit amounts (as adjusted by the system); and
  - can be used for reference by TAO staff.
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**Client Notices**

A notice will be sent to each household experiencing a decrease in their SNAP benefit based on the recalculation of their case:

- an English/Spanish notice (Attachment B) to active SNAP households;
  - an English/Spanish notice (Attachment C) to active Bay State CAP households; and
  - a multilingual notice that states, “Important! Please have this notice translated immediately.”
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**When to Use New Standards**

SNAP cases authorized **after** the close of business on Friday, September 21, 2012 were recalculated using the new COLA standards. Effective Monday, September 24, 2012, the new COLA standards will be used in all automated SNAP calculations. Case managers must be careful to use these standards for any necessary manual calculations.

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**Closed SNAP Households**

Retroactive benefits are not owed to closed households because the COLA is effective on the client’s cyclical date in October and not on October 1.

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**Eligibility Charts and Issuance Tables**

SNAP eligibility charts, issuance tables, standard utility allowance amounts, maximum and minimum benefit amounts, shelter deduction and standard deduction amounts are posted at the [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) website.

All necessary updates will be made to the relevant SNAP tables at the [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) website by October 1, 2012.

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**Questions**

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

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<b>MAXIMUM MONTHLY GROSS INCOME LEVELS</b>	
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>GROSS INCOME LEVELS</b>
1	\$1,211
2	\$1,640
3	\$ 2,069
4	\$ 2,498
5	\$ 2,927
6	\$ 3,356
7	\$ 3,785
8	\$ 4,214
<b>Each additional HH member will increase by \$429</b>	

<b>MAXIMUM MONTHLY NET INCOME LEVELS</b>	
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>NET INCOME LEVELS</b>
1	\$ 931
2	\$ 1,261
3	\$ 1,591
4	\$ 1,921
5	\$ 2,251
6	\$ 2,581
7	\$ 2,911
8	\$ 3,241
<b>Each additional HH member will increase by \$330</b>	

<b>STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVING AN ELDERLY &amp; DISABLED INDIVIDUAL</b>	
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>165% OF POVERTY LEVEL</b>
1	\$ 1,536
2	\$ 2,081
3	\$ 2,625
4	\$ 3,170
5	\$ 3,714
6	\$ 4,259
7	\$ 4, 803
8	\$ 5,348
<b>Each additional HH member will increase by \$545</b>	

**SUA AMOUNTS**

Heating	\$586 (decrease)
Nonheating	\$360 (decrease)
Phone	\$41 (decrease)

**STANDARD DEDUCTION**

<b>AU Size</b>	<b>New Standard</b>
1	149
2	149
3	149
4	160
5	187
<b>AU size 6 or more</b>	214

**Attachment B**

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

09/24/2012

Notice of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
Annual Benefit Adjustment

Dear *Mary Jones*:

Each year, federal law requires a change in the amount of the deductions for utility costs for all SNAP households. This will cause your SNAP benefits to change. This change is not related to your household's actual expenses.

On October 1, 2012, your SNAP benefits will go from \$220.00 to \$216.00. This change also includes any changes to your household circumstances (for example: change in income or change in the number of household members).

If you disagree with this change in your SNAP benefits, you have the right to appeal. The other side of this notice contains important information about your appeal rights. To ask for an appeal, follow the instructions on the other side of this notice.

The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 364.500, 364.600, 366.130.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice.

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

09/24/2012

Notice of Bay State Combined Application Project (CAP)  
Annual Benefit Adjustment

Dear Mary Jones:

Each year, federal law requires a change in the amount of the deductions for utility costs for all food assistance households. This will cause your food assistance benefits to change. This change is not related to your households' actual expenses.

On October 1, 2012, your food assistance benefits will go from \$220.00 to \$216.00. This change also includes any changes to your household circumstances (for example: change in income or change in the number of household members).

If you disagree with this change in your food assistance benefits, you have the right to appeal. The other side of this notice contains important information about your appeal rights. To ask for an appeal, follow the instructions on the other side of this notice.

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