

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



March 2, 2001

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 01-17

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS**REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL**

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE MID-YEAR
INCREASE – EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2001

The purpose of this letter is to transmit implementing instructions to County Welfare Departments (CWDs), regarding the new Standard Utility Allowance (SUA). Federal rules require State agencies to review and adjust standard utility allowances annually, but allow flexibility to update the standards more than once per year.

Due to rising energy costs, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has reevaluated the current SUA methodology in order to calculate a mid-year adjustment. We have updated the SUA based on the most current percent change in the Fuel and Other Utilities Index of the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) and projected energy rate increases from January to March 2001.

Based on this information, the current \$170 SUA is being increased by 19.4 percent resulting in a new SUA amount of \$203 effective April 1, 2001. The new SUA amount shall be applied to all allotments for April.

Please note that this letter addresses a mid-year increase in the SUA only. CDSS will continue to adjust the SUA for annual cost-of-living changes effective October 1 of each year.

Stuffer Notice

Enclosed is a copy of the TEMP 2193 (ENG/SP), a *temporary* mass change notice. County Welfare Departments (CWDs) are encouraged to mail a copy of this notice to all households along with the April allotment. Also included is the TEMP 2193A (ENG/SP), for retroactive notification to clients. These notices inform clients about the SUA deduction amount.

Page Two

Prior to duplication, CWDs must ensure that these notices contain the county specific address that clients should use to send written state hearing requests.

Those CWDs that do not mail a copy of these notices to all households shall utilize the news media or post this information in certification offices, issuance locations or other sites frequented by certified households. If any other change is to be effective with the retroactive allotment, the Food Stamp Notice of Change (DFA 377.4) shall be used to provide individual notice to the household.

Translations

For camera-ready copies of English and Spanish forms, please call the Forms Management Unit (FMU) at (916) 657-1907 or CALNET at 437-1907. CWDs may obtain these forms from the Department's web page at: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov>, or obtain copies by contacting FMU.

Your Forms Coordinator now receives all translations as soon as they become available, if your county is on the Language Translation Services (LTS) mailing list. All translated messages in Russian and Asian (Cambodian, Chinese and Vietnamese) versions of forms will follow shortly. Call LTS at (916) 657-3429 if your county does not receive the Russian and Asian translations.

Retroactive Benefits

If the CWD is unable to effect necessary programming changes to reflect the changes in the April allotments, lost benefits must be restored back to April 1, 2001. All retroactivity shall be completed as soon as is administratively feasible, but no later than with the issuance of the June 2001 allotment.

NOTE: If retroactive benefits are paid, the CWD must specify on the TEMP 2193A (ENG/SP) the method of retroactivity, for example, inclusion with the May allotment, special issuance, etc.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Tiffany Jones at (916) 654-1905.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED ON 03-02-01 BY:

BRUCE WAGSTAFF
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

Enclosures

NOTICE TO ALL FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IMPORTANT — PLEASE READ

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved an increase to the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), which may be used in figuring out your food stamp benefit. Effective April 1, 2001, the SUA amount will be raised from \$170.00 to \$203.00.

You will get a notice about these changes and any other changes to your household status that make your food stamp benefit different than it was before.

If you think we made a mistake in figuring your April food stamps due to the new SUA you may ask for a state hearing, ***within 90 days of when you got this letter*** by writing to:

or you may call toll free: 1-800-952-5253. If you are deaf and use TDD, call 1-800-952-8349. When you ask for a state hearing, you must tell us why you think we made a mistake. You can speak for yourself at the hearing or you can have a friend, attorney, or other person speak for you, but you must get these people to help you. You may ask for free legal aid at a legal aid office in your area.

AVISO A TODAS LAS PERSONAS QUE RECIBEN ESTAMPILLAS PARA COMIDA IMPORTANTE — FAVOR DE LEER

A partir del 1º de octubre de 2000, aumentarán sus beneficios de estampillas para comida. Esto se debe a que el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA) aprobó un aumento en las asignaciones de estampillas para comida. También aprobó un aumento en la cantidad normal permitida para servicios públicos y municipales (esta cantidad se conoce como SUA por sus siglas en inglés) y en la deducción para vivienda, las cuales se usan para calcular sus beneficios de estampillas para comida. La SUA aumentó de \$163.00 a \$170.00. Comenzando el 1º de marzo de 2001, la deducción para vivienda se aumentará de \$300.00 a \$340.00 para los solicitantes nuevos y los grupos para fines de estampillas para comida (grupos) cuya recertificación comienza en o después de dicha fecha.

Recibirá una notificación acerca de estos cambios y cualquier otro cambio en relación a la situación de su grupo que causen que sus beneficios de estampillas para comida sean diferentes a los que tenía antes.

Si cree que cometimos un error al calcular la cantidad de sus estampillas para comida correspondientes al mes de octubre debido a las nuevas cantidades relacionadas con las asignaciones y la SUA, puede pedir una audiencia con el estado ***antes de que pasen 90 días a partir de la fecha en que recibió esta carta***, escribiendo a:

o llamando gratuitamente al 1-800-952-5253. Si es sordo y usa un aparato de telecomunicaciones para las personas sordas (TDD), llame al 1-800-952-8349. Cuando pida una audiencia con el estado, tiene que decirnos por qué cree que cometimos un error. Puede representarse a sí mismo en la audiencia o puede representarle un amigo, un abogado u otra persona, pero usted tiene que pedirle a esa persona que le ayude. Puede pedir asistencia legal gratuita en una oficina de asesoramiento legal (*legal aid*) en el área donde usted vive.

NOTICE TO ALL FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IMPORTANT — PLEASE READ

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved an increase to the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA), which may be used in figuring out your food stamp benefit. Effective April 1, 2001, the SUA amount was raised from \$170.00 to \$203.00.

You will get a notice about these changes and any other changes to your household status that make your food stamp benefit different than it was before.

If you think we made a mistake in figuring your April food stamps due to the new SUA you may ask for a state hearing, ***within 90 days of when you got this letter*** by writing to:

or you may call toll free: 1-800-952-5253. If you are deaf and use TDD, call 1-800-952-8349. When you ask for a state hearing, you must tell us why you think we made a mistake. You can speak for yourself at the hearing or you can have a friend, attorney, or other person speak for you, but you must get these people to help you. You may ask for free legal aid at a legal aid office in your area.

AVISO A TODAS LAS PERSONAS QUE RECIBEN ESTAMPILLAS PARA COMIDA IMPORTANTE — FAVOR DE LEER

A partir del 1º de octubre de 2000, se aumentaron sus beneficios de estampillas para comida. Esto se debe a que el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA) aprobó un aumento en las asignaciones de estampillas para comida. También aprobó un aumento en la cantidad normal permitida para servicios públicos y municipales (esta cantidad se conoce como SUA por sus siglas en inglés) y en la deducción para vivienda, las cuales se usan para calcular sus beneficios de estampillas para comida. La SUA aumentó de \$163.00 a \$170.00. Comenzando el 1º de marzo de 2001, la deducción para vivienda se aumentará de \$300.00 a \$340.00 para los solicitantes nuevos y los grupos para fines de estampillas para comida (grupos) cuya recertificación comienza en o después de dicha fecha.

Recibirá una notificación acerca de estos cambios y cualquier otro cambio en relación a la situación de su grupo que causen que sus beneficios de estampillas para comida sean diferentes a los que tenía antes.

Si cree que cometimos un error al calcular la cantidad de sus estampillas para comida correspondientes al mes de octubre debido a las nuevas cantidades relacionadas con las asignaciones y la SUA, puede pedir una audiencia con el estado ***antes de que pasen 90 días a partir de la fecha en que recibió esta carta***, escribiendo a:

o llamando gratuitamente al 1-800-952-5253. Si es sordo y usa un aparato de telecomunicaciones para las personas sordas (TDD), llame al 1-800-952-8349. Cuando pida una audiencia con el estado, tiene que decirnos por qué cree que cometimos un error. Puede representarse a sí mismo en la audiencia o puede representarle un amigo, un abogado u otra persona, pero usted tiene que pedirle a esa persona que le ayude. Puede pedir asistencia legal gratuita en una oficina de asesoramiento legal (*legal aid*) en el área donde usted vive.