

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



November 3, 1995

ALL COUNTY LETTER 95-64

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM INFORMATION: COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA), STANDARD DEDUCTION, SHELTER DEDUCTION, HOMELESS HOUSEHOLD SHELTER ALLOWANCE, INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS, STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE, VEHICLE EXCLUSION LIMIT, AND FOOD STAMP TABLES OF COUPON ISSUANCE

NOTE: THERE ARE TWO CHANGES TO THE STANDARD DEDUCTION

REFERENCE: ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS LETTER DATED OCTOBER 3, 1995

This letter transmits to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) final information on the status of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1996 Food Stamp Program COLAs. Preliminary information was transmitted in an All Food Stamp Coordinators Letter dated October 3, 1995.

Due to pending legislation in Congress which could have affected the way allotments and deductions are to be calculated, no action could be taken to implement the Food Stamp Program COLAs prior to October 1, 1995. On September 30, 1995, President Clinton signed a Continuing Resolution that continued the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (amended). Subsequently, on October 21, 1995, the President signed the FFY 1996 Agriculture Appropriations Bill reauthorizing the Food Stamp Program.

As stated in the October 3, 1995 letter, the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (amended) requires annual adjustments to the Program's allotments, eligibility standards, and certain deductions. Food Stamp allotments are adjusted every October 1 to take into account changes in the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). As a result of an increase in the cost of the TFP and the requirements of the Food Stamp Act, Food Stamp allotments for FFY 1996 have increased as shown below.

Also described below is the adjustment to the Standard Utility Allowance as a result of an increase in the Fuel and Other Utilities Component of the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.

MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT

The maximum allotment for all household sizes is as follows:

| Household Size: | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>8</u> | Each Additional Person |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| | \$119 | \$218 | \$313 | \$397 | \$472 | \$566 | \$626 | \$716 | +90 |

STANDARD DEDUCTION, SHELTER DEDUCTION, HOMELESS HOUSEHOLD SHELTER ALLOWANCE, AND INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

We are also providing you with the new standard deduction, shelter deduction and homeless household shelter allowance amounts and the new eligibility standards. These amounts are effective as of October 1, 1995 and must be applied to allotments for October, which would be based on August information for retrospectively budgeted cases.

The standard deduction, shelter deduction, and homeless household shelter allowance amounts are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| •Standard Deduction | \$138 [\$134 effective 12/1/95]* |
| •Shelter Deduction | \$247 |
| •Homeless Household Shelter Allowance | \$143 |

Eligibility standards are shown on Attachment I which contains a chart of the "Net and Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Standards" and a chart of the "Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Standards for Households Where Elderly/Disabled Are a Separate Household."

*The increase in the Standard Deduction to \$138 referenced in the All Food Stamp Coordinators Letter dated October 3, 1995 was mandated by the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (amended). On October 21, 1995, the President signed the FFY 1996 Agriculture Appropriations Bill reauthorizing the Food Stamp Program. This bill included a provision requiring that the Standard Deduction be frozen at the FFY 1995 level (\$134) upon enactment, October 21, 1995. **Therefore, effective December 1, 1995, the Standard Deduction amount must be decreased to \$134.** However, this rollback is not retroactive. CWDs must still base October and November 1995 allotments on the \$138 Standard Deduction amount.

STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE (SUA)

In accordance with Manual Section (M.S.) 63-502.353(d), the SUA has been adjusted to reflect changes in the cost-of-living. Effective October 1, 1995 the new SUA amount is \$149 and must be applied to allotments for October, based on August information for retrospectively budgeted cases.

VEHICLE EXCLUSION LIMIT

In accordance with M.S. 63-501.522, effective October 1, 1995 the Vehicle Exclusion Limit has been increased from \$4550 to \$4600.

TABLES OF COUPON ISSUANCE

The attached Tables of Coupon Issuance must be used for all cases when calculating allotments for October 1995. The tables are bracketed for categorically eligible (CE) households whose income exceeds the maximum net monthly income limit. Please note that there are no bracketed amounts for CE households of three persons because food stamp allotment amounts stopped short of the maximum net monthly income limit of \$1050. While CE, these households have a zero allotment amount. **The attached tables have been amended (bracketing of maximum net income amounts) and are to replace those issued with the Food Stamp Coordinators letter dated October 3, 1995.**

STUFFER NOTICE

Attached to this letter are the English and Spanish versions of the FS 11A (9/95) Multilingual, the general mass change notice for retroactive notification to clients. CWDs are encouraged to mail a copy of this notice to all households along with the retroactive amount. This notice informs clients about changes in the SUA and deduction amounts.

Also attached are the English and Spanish versions of the FS 14 (10/95) Multilingual. This notice provides information regarding the rollback of the Standard Deduction effective December 1, 1995 as referenced above. CWDs are encouraged to mail a copy of this notice to all households with the December allotments.

Prior to duplication, CWDs must ensure that these notices contain the county specific address which 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) must be used to provide individual notice to the household.

TRANSLATIONS

Counties that need a camera-ready copy of the stuffer notice should call:

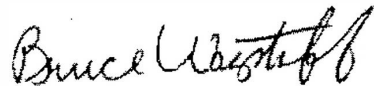
- For English and Spanish: the Forms Management Bureau at (916) 657-1907 or CALNET 437-1907.
- For the Asian language versions (Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese): the Language Services Bureau at (916) 654-1305 or CALNET 464-1305. These translations will be forwarded to the County Forms Coordinator when they are available.

RETROACTIVE BENEFITS

As indicated above, the new benefit and deduction amounts were effective October 1, 1995. Therefore, benefits must be restored back to that date. All retroactivity must be completed as soon as administratively possible and may be included with the November issuance. The county must specify on the FS 11A (9/95) the method that will be used to restore benefits; for example, inclusion with the November allotment, special issuance, etc.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Service has indicated that Quality Control reviews for October and November will be conducted against whichever standards states used for October and November issuances.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact David Badal of the Food Stamp Program Bureau at (916) 654-1405.



BRUCE WAGSTAFF
Deputy Director
Welfare Programs Division

Attachments

c: CWDA