

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



October 5, 1998

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 98-78

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

<u>REASON FOR TRANSMITTAL</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	State Law Change
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Federal Law Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	Court Order or Settlement Agreement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
<input type="checkbox"/>	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, AND FOOD STAMP TABLES OF COUPON ISSUANCE

REFERENCE: ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS LETTER DATED AUGUST 25, 1998

This letter transmits to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) final information on the status of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1999 Food Stamp Program Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs). This information was previously transmitted with an All Food Stamp Coordinators Letter dated August 25, 1998.

The Food Stamp Act of 1977 (as amended) requires annual adjustments to the Program's allotments, eligibility standards, and certain deductions. Food Stamp allotments are adjusted by the United States Department of Agriculture 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 1999 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									Each Additional
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>	<u>Person</u>
\$125	\$230	\$329	\$419	\$497	\$597	\$659	\$754	+94	

STANDARD DEDUCTION, SHELTER DEDUCTION, HOMELESS HOUSEHOLD SHELTER ALLOWANCE

We are also providing you with the standard deduction and homeless household shelter allowance which remain the same as the current amounts and the new shelter deduction amount. These amounts are effective as of October 1, 1998, 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 \$134 (unchanged)
- Shelter Deduction \$275
- Homeless Household Shelter Allowance \$143 (unchanged)

INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

Income 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."

STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE (SUA)

In accordance with Manual Section 63-502.353(d), the SUA has been adjusted to reflect changes in the cost-of-living. Effective October 1, 1998, the new SUA amount is \$158 and must be applied to allotments for October, based on August information for retrospectively budgeted cases.

TABLES OF COUPON ISSUANCE

The attached Tables of Coupon Issuance must be used for all cases when calculating allotments for October 1998. 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 stop short of the maximum net monthly income limit of \$1138. While CE, these households have a zero allotment amount.

STUFFER NOTICE

Attached to this letter are the English and Spanish versions of the FS 11 (ENG/SP), (8/98), the general mass change notice. CWDs are encouraged to mail a copy of this notice to all households along with the October allotment. Also included is the FS 11A (ENG/SP), (8/98), for retroactive notification to clients. These notices inform clients about changes in the SUA and deduction amounts.

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 camera-ready copies of English messages and Spanish forms, call Forms Management Unit (FMU) at (916) 657-1907 or CALNET at 437-1907. If your office has Internet access, you may obtain various forms and Notice of Form Change (GEN 127) from the CDSS web page at: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov>. To accommodate agencies without Internet access, copies will be available by contacting FMU.
- For all translated messages and Russian and Asian (Cambodian, Chinese and Vietnamese) versions of forms, call Language Translation Services (LTS) at (916) 654-1282 or CALNET 464-1282. If you need several forms, fax your request to (916) 657-3429 or e-mail your request to lsu@dss.ca.gov. Your Forms Coordinator now receives all translations as soon as they become available, if your county is on the LTS mailing list. Once you have established an e-mail address, please contact FMU by telephone or e-mail at fmu@dss.ca.gov. FMU will then place you on their e-mail list.

RETROACTIVE BENEFITS

As indicated above, the new benefit and deduction amounts are effective October 1, 1998. If the CWD is unable to effect necessary programming changes to reflect the changes in the October allotments, lost benefits must be restored back to October 1, 1998. All retroactivity must be completed as soon as is administratively feasible, but no later than with the issuance of the December 1998 allotment.

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NOTE: If retroactive benefits are paid, the CWD must specify on the FS 11A the method of retroactivity, for example, inclusion with the November allotment, special issuance, etc.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Alan Rowe of the Food Stamp Bureau at (916) 653-5208.

***Original Document Signed By
Bruce Wagstaff on 10/5/98***

BRUCE WAGSTAFF
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

Attachments

c: CWDA
CSAC

Attachment 1

**FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
OCTOBER 1, 1998 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1999
Net Monthly Income Eligibility Standards
(100 Percent of Poverty Level)**

Household Size	48 States *	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$ 671	\$ 840	\$ 772
2	905	1,131	1,040
3	1,138	1,423	1,309
4	1,371	1,715	1,577
5	1,605	2,006	1,845
6	1,838	2,298	2,114
7	2,071	2,590	2,382
8	2,305	2,881	2,650
Each Additional Member	+234	+292	+269

**Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Standards
(130 Percent of Poverty Level)**

Household Size	48 States *	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$ 873	\$ 1,091	\$ 1,004
2	1,176	1,471	1,352
3	1,479	1,850	1,701
4	1,783	2,229	2,050
5	2,086	2,608	2,399
6	2,389	2,987	2,748
7	2,693	3,366	3,097
8	2,996	3,746	3,445
Each Additional Member	+304	+380	+349

**Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Standards For Households
Where Elderly Disabled Are A Separate Household
(165 Percent of Poverty Level)**

Household Size	48 States *	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$ 1,107	\$ 1,385	\$ 1,274
2	1,492	1,866	1,716
3	1,877	2,348	2,159
4	2,262	2,829	2,602
5	2,647	3,310	3,045
6	3,032	3,791	3,487
7	3,417	4,273	3,930
8	3,802	4,754	4,373
Each Additional Member	+ 385	+482	+443

* Includes District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands

NOTICE TO ALL FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IMPORTANT — PLEASE READ

Effective October 1, 1998, the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) will be raised from \$155.00 to \$158.00. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved this raise, which is based upon a change in the Consumer Price Index.

Additionally, effective October 1, 1998, your food stamp benefits will change due to a federal law change. The standard deduction will remain at \$134.00. The maximum excess shelter deduction will be raised from \$250.00 to \$275.00. The homeless shelter allowance will remain at \$143.00.

If the SUA is used as part of your shelter deduction AND if you have had no other changes in your food stamp case, your food stamp benefits may be changed. With the changes in food stamp benefits the amount you will get depends on your household status. These changes will be included in any notice you get that tells you about other changes in your food stamp benefits.

If you think we made a mistake in figuring your October allotment because of the raises in the SUA, or the federal law change, you may ask for a state hearing, **within 90 days of when you got this letter** by writing to:

or by calling toll free: 1-800-952-5253. If you are deaf and use TDD, call 1-800-952-8349. When you ask for a hearing, you must tell us why you think we made a mistake.

You can speak for yourself at the state hearing. 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 1998, la cantidad normal permitida para servicios públicos y municipales (SUA) aumentará de \$155.00 a \$158.00. El Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (*United States Department of Agriculture - USDA*) aprobó este aumento, el cual se basa en un cambio en el Índice de Precios al Consumidor.

Adicionalmente, a partir del 1º de octubre de 1998, sus beneficios de estampillas para comida cambiarán debido a un cambio en la ley federal. La deducción normal continuará siendo \$134.00. La deducción máxima por gastos excesivos de vivienda aumentará de \$250.00 a \$275.00. La asignación para alojamiento para personas sin hogar continuará siendo \$143.00.

Si se usa la SUA como parte de su deducción para vivienda Y no ha tenido otros cambios en su caso de estampillas para comida, es posible que cambien sus beneficios de estampillas para comida. Con los cambios en los beneficios de estampillas para comida, la cantidad que recibirá depende de la situación de su grupo para fines de estampillas para comida. Estos cambios se incluirán en cualquier notificación que reciba informándole sobre otros cambios en relación a sus beneficios de estampillas para comida.

Si cree que cometimos un error al calcular su asignación para octubre debido al aumento en la SUA o al cambio en la ley federal, 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 al número gratuito: 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 tiene que decirnos por qué cree que cometimos un error.

Puede representarse a sí mismo en la audiencia con el estado. Puede pedirle a una amistad, a un abogado o a otra persona que lo represente, pero USTED tiene que pedirle a esa persona que lo ayude. Puede pedir asistencia legal gratuita en una oficina de asesoramiento legal (*legal aid*) en la zona donde usted vive.

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