

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



October 3, 1996

ALL COUNTY LETTER 96-56

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change  
 Federal Law Changee  
 Court Order or Settlemente 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

REFERENCE: ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS LETTER DATED AUGUST 23, 1996

This letter transmits to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) final information on the status of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1997 Food Stamp Program COLAs. This information was previously transmitted with an All Food Stamp Coordinators Letter dated August 23, 1996.

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 1997 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 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------|
|                 | \$120    | \$220    | \$315    | \$400    | \$475    | \$570    | \$630    | \$720    | +90e                   |

STANDARD DEDUCTION, SHELTER DEDUCTION, HOMELESS HOUSEHOLD SHELTER ALLOWANCE

We are also providing you with the standard deduction, shelter deduction and homeless household shelter allowance amounts and the new eligibility standards. These amounts are effective as of October 1, 1996 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 \$247 (\$250 effective 1/1/97)\*
- Homeless Household Shelter Allowance \$143 (unchanged)

\*The Shelter Deduction change to \$250 is effective January 1, 1997 and must be applied to allotments for January, based on November information for retrospectively budgeted cases.

#### INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

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 (M.S.) 63-502.353(d), the SUA has been adjusted to reflect changes in the cost-of-living. Effective October 1, 1996 the new SUA amount is \$151 and must be applied to allotments for October, based on August information for retrospectively budgeted cases.

#### VEHICLE EXCLUSION LIMIT

Effective October 1, 1996 the Vehicle Exclusion Limit has been increased from \$4600 to \$4650. M.S. 63-501.522 will be revised in the future to reflect this change.

#### TABLES OF COUPON ISSUANCE

The attached Tables of Coupon Issuance must be used for all cases when calculating allotments for October 1996. 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 \$1082. While CE, these households have a zero allotment amount.

**NOTE:** The Tables of Coupon Issuance were received from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Service with an incorrect effective date of October 2, 1997. The correct effective date is October 1, 1996 and is noted on the first page of the tables.

#### STUFFER NOTICE

Attached to this letter are the English and Spanish versions of the FS 11 (8/96) Multilingual, 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 (8/96) Multilingual, for retroactive notification to clients. These notices inform clients about changes in the SUA and deduction amounts.

Also attached are the English and Spanish versions of the FS 15 (10/96) Multilingual. This notice provides information regarding the increase in the Standard Deduction effective January 1, 1997 as referenced above. CWDs are encouraged to mail a copy of this notice to all households with the January 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 are effective October 1, 1996. 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, 1996. All retroactivity must be completed as soon as is administratively feasible, but no later than with the issuance of the December 1996 allotment.

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 David Badal of the Food Stamp Program Bureau at (916) 654-1405.



BRUCE WAGSTAFF  
Deputy Director  
Welfare Programs Division

Attachments

c: CWDA