

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 2-2009
(Food and Nutrition Services)**

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers & Supervisors

SUBJECT: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

DATE: March 10, 2009

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this letter is to outline the procedures for handling the changes associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The President signed this Act into law on February 17, 2009. These changes are effective April 1, 2009.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

A. Maximum Benefit Increase

1. On the night of March 31, 2009, FSIS will perform a mass change on all active Food and Nutrition Services cases with a cert thru date of April 1, 2009 or greater. This change will increase all active Food and Nutrition Services households' benefits by 13.6% and all SNAP households' benefits by \$24 for both the high and low allotments.

NOTE: The mass change increase that historically takes place in October of each year will be suspended until the value of the Thrifty Food Plan increases above 13.6%. This is projected to be through October 2012. The gross income levels will remain the same through September 30, 2009.

2. The mass change will be performed on all active Food and Nutrition Services cases. Active cases are defined as cases that contain a transaction code of 2, 6, 8, or 9 in Field 6 of the DSS-8590.
3. Cases classified as "Forms on Hold" in FSIS, will not be updated with the mass change until the form is released.
4. A notice will be mailed to Food and Nutrition Services recipients on March 13, 2009 notifying them of the change in their benefit allotment.
5. Reports of old and new benefit allotments for each active Food and Nutrition Services case, SNAP case and all cases that were not updated due to being in hold status will be created. The reports titled "MASS CHANGE EFF APRIL 2009 FOR FNS CASES", "MASS CHANGE EFF APRIL 2009 FOR SNAP" and "SUSPENDED CASES DUE TO EXCESS NET/GROSS INCOME/FORMS ON HOLD" are placed in NCXPTR.

B. Changes for Quality Control (QC)

The QC variance exclusion will be adjusted from \$25 to \$50 for cases resulting in errors with a review date between April 1, 2009 and September 30, 2009. The exclusion amount will default back to \$25 for cases with review dates of October 1, 2009 and ongoing.

C. Client Overissuance Claims

1. The portion of benefits overissued as a result of implementing the adjusted benefit levels must be excluded when calculating the amount of a claim against a household. This exclusion is in effect from April 1, 2009 through September 30, 2009 for claims established for these months.
2. Determine the correct overissuance amount by using March 1, 2009 as the certification month to complete SLAW budgets.

D. Economic Recovery Payments/Unemployment Benefit Increases

1. Economic Recovery Payments in the amount of \$250 will be issued to some recipients of Social Security (SSA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Railroad Retirement Benefits, and Veterans Disability Compensation or Pension Benefits. These one-time payments **will not** be counted as income. However, these payments will be subject to interception for the purpose of collecting on delinquent debts. The proposed date of these payments is June 2009.
2. States have the option of increasing Unemployment Benefits (UIB) by \$25 per week for eligible recipients. Any increased amounts of UIB **will** be countable income.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

This change affects all active FNS cases as of March 31, 2009 with a cert thru date of April 2009 or greater. Each active FNS case will receive this increase in benefit allotment when receiving their April 2009 issuance of FNS benefits. FSIS will automatically calculate this increase with each application, change in situation or recertification taken or approved April 1, 2009 and ongoing.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your Food and Nutrition Services & Energy Programs Representative.

Sincerely,



Dean Simpson, Chief
Economic and Family Services Section

DS:dl

Attachments

[EFS FNS AL-2-2009a1](#)

[EFS FNS AL-2-2009a2](#)