

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 9-2013  
**Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veteran's Benefits (VA)  
Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)  
November 26, 2013**

(Food and Nutrition Services)

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

**ATTENTION:** Food and Nutrition Services Managers & Supervisors

**SUBJECT:** Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veteran's Benefits (VA)  
Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

**DATE:** November 26, 2013

**I. General Information.**

The purpose of this letter is to outline the procedures for handling the Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veteran's Benefits (VA) Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) mass change in:

- A. Social Security payments (1.5% increase) and
- B. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments (1.5% increase) and
- C. Veteran's Benefits (VA) payments (1.5% increase)

Prior to the night of December 31, 2013, NC FAST will automatically update Food and Nutrition Services benefits effective JANUARY 2014 to reflect these changes. NC FAST will issue a communication to alert caseworkers when this change has been executed in the system.

The attached mass change notice will be sent to households on or before December 16, 2013. NC FAST will issue a communication to alert caseworkers when the notices are sent. The notice will be in English and Spanish. These notices meet the federal requirements for a mass change. Notice of adverse action is not needed; however, the household is entitled to a fair hearing if they believe benefits were improperly computed.

**II. MASS CHANGE FOR RECIPIENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS, SSI, AND VA OR A COMBINATION OF SSI, SOCIAL SECURITY AND VA PAYMENTS**

- A. NC FAST recalculates the allotment by increasing the Social Security payment, SSI payment and/or VA payment amount by 1.5%. The cents will be dropped from Social Security, SSI AND VA payments.

For example, a payment of \$159.65 will be \$159.00. This does not change current policy procedures used for rounding income.

- B. If the Social Security, SSI or VA payment amount is \$66.00 or less, the 1.5 percent increase will calculate to less than \$1.00. As a result, these cases will not receive an increase in the SSI, SSA AND VA benefit amount.
- C. Transitional Food and Nutrition Services cases will not be included in the mass change.
- D. SNAP cases will be updated to reflect the increased SSI amount but the allotment amount will remain the same.

### **III. PROCEDURES FOR UPDATING INCREASED SSA, SSI and VA PAYMENT AMOUNTS**

#### **A. Actions Taken Prior to January 1, 2014**

Enter the old Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts. Do not enter increased payments into NC FAST prior to January 1, 2014. If this is done, NC FAST will calculate the increase again resulting in erroneous benefits.

NOTE: If an individual is approved for SSA, SSI and/or VA benefits effective December 2013 or later and you erroneously enter the new amount prior to January 1, 2014, issue a supplement to the client if applicable.

#### **B. Actions Taken On Or After January 1, 2014**

Complete the information using the appropriate amounts for benefits at the appropriate time. For example, enter old SSI payment amounts in December and new SSI payment amount effective January 2014 or later. Enter the new Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts for Food and Nutrition Services benefits effective January 2014 or later.

#### **C. Actions on Eligible Cases**

NC FAST will round all calculated amounts downward for the mass change. Should an amount be incorrect due to rounding, it is not necessary to manually correct the amounts immediately following the mass change. Take action to correct Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts at the next recertification or change in situation, whichever is first.

#### **D. Actions on Ineligible Cases**

Cases in NC FAST that were determined to be ineligible based on these changes will be updated as such in NC FAST. A report will be created and counties will be notified once the report is available. Use this report to review the case. If the case is correct, close it. If the case was deemed ineligible in error, determine the correct Social Security, SSI and/or VA payment amount. Update the benefit evidence for January-2014.

If you have any questions, contact your Food and Nutrition Services & Energy Programs Regional Support Team directly via email.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Acting Chief  
Economic and Family Services

DL/vd

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Recipient Notice  
Recipient Notice (sp)

# NOTICE TO FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES RECIPIENTS

The 2014 Social Security (SSA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veteran's Benefits payments increased 1.5%. The Medicare Part B premium will not change from \$104.90. **This may affect your Food and Nutrition Services benefits effective JANUARY 2014.**

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REPORT THESE CHANGES TO YOUR CASEWORKER.**

This change may cause a change in the amount of your Food and Nutrition Services benefits. **To find out what your JANUARY balance is, login through your web browser at [www.ebtedge.com](http://www.ebtedge.com) or call Customer Service at 1-888-622-7328 on the day you normally receive benefits.**

If you have any other questions about these changes, contact your local Food and Nutrition Services office at the local Department of Social Services.

You have the right to request a fair hearing if you do not believe your benefits were determined correctly when these changes were made.

## HOW TO GET A HEARING

You have the right to a fair hearing of your case if you do not agree with our decision. You can request a fair hearing by letting your local Food and Nutrition Services office or county department of social services know of your request. You may request the hearing in person, by telephone, or in writing. The hearing may be requested by any member of your Food and Nutrition Services unit or by your representative, including an attorney obtained at your own expense. Free legal advice may be available. Contact your nearest Legal Services Office. For more information, you may call the North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services EBT Customer Service Center at 1-866-719-0141.

You have 90 calendar days from the date of this notice to ask for a hearing. Unless you ask for a hearing by this date, xx-xx-xxxx you cannot have one.

## AVISO A LOS BENEFICIARIOS DEL PROGRAMA DE ALIMENTOS Y SERVICIOS DE NUTRICIÓN

Los pagos de Seguridad Social (Social Security) y de Ingreso Suplementario del Seguro Social (Social Security Income) y Beneficios para Veteranos aumentaran un 1.5% en el 2013. El premium del Medicare Parte B, continúa siendo \$104.90. **Esto podría afectar sus beneficios del Programa de Alimentos y Servicios de Nutrición, a partir de ENERO del 2014.**

### USTED NO TIENE QUE NOTIFICAR ESTOS CAMBIOS A SU TRABAJADOR DEL CASO.

Este cambio pueden afectar sus *Beneficios de Alimentos y Servicios de Nutrición*. **Para saber su balance del mes de ENERO, verifíquelo en: [www.ebtedge.com](http://www.ebtedge.com) o llame al Centro de Servicios al Cliente al 1-888-622-7328 en el día en que usted normalmente recibe sus beneficios.**

Si usted tiene preguntas sobre estos cambios, comuníquese con su oficina de *Alimentos y Servicios de Nutrición* en el *Departamento de Servicios Sociales* local.

Usted tiene derecho a solicitar una *Audiencia Justa* si usted cree que sus beneficios fueron determinados incorrectamente.

### CÓMO SOLICITAR UNA AUDIENCIA

Usted tiene derecho a una *Audiencia Justa* si no está de acuerdo con nuestra decisión. Puede solicitar una *Audiencia Justa* dejándolo saber en la oficina local de *Alimentos y Servicios de Nutrición* o el *Departamento de Servicios Sociales* de su condado. Puede solicitar la audiencia en persona, por el teléfono, o por escrito. La audiencia se puede solicitar por cualquier miembro de su familia o por su representante, incluyendo un abogado obtenido en su propio costo. Asesoramiento legal gratuito puede estar disponible contactado la Oficina de Servicios Legales mas cercana a usted. Para más información, llame al Centro de Servicio al Cliente EBT del Programa de Servicios de Alimentos y Nutrición de Carolina del Norte al 1-866-719-0141.

Si desea solicitar una Audiencia, tiene 90 días de calendario a partir de la fecha que este aviso fue enviado, o sea hasta xx-xx-xxxx