

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES
EFS_FNS_AL-22-2016
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veteran's Benefits (VA)
Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)
(December 9, 2016)

(Food and Nutrition Services)

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers &
Supervisors and Program Integrity Supervisors

DATE: December 9, 2016

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

EFFECTIVE: December 9, 2016

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 (.3% increase)
- B. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments (.3% increase) and
- C. Veteran's Benefits (VA) payments (.3% increase)

NC FAST will automatically update Food and Nutrition Services benefits effective January 2017 to reflect these changes. NC FAST will communicate alerts to caseworkers that this change has been executed in the system.

The attached mass change notice will be sent to households by December 15, 2016. 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 .3%. 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 .3 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, 2017

For pending applications, the old Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts need to be end dated for December 31, 2016 and add start date of January 1, 2017 with the new amount.

For active cases already processed, NCFASST will run a batch that will end date the old amount December 30, 2016 and add new amount with start date of December 31, 2016 effective for January 1, 2017.

NOTE: If an individual is approved for SSA, SSI and/or VA benefits effective December 2016 or later and you erroneously enter the new amount prior to January 1, 2017, issue a supplement to the client if applicable.

B. Actions Taken On Or After January 1, 2017

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 2017 or later. Enter the new Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts for Food and Nutrition Services benefits effective January 2017 or later.

C. Actions on eligible cases

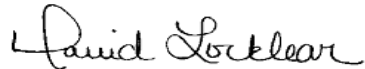
NC FAST will round all calculated amounts downward for the mass change. Should an amount be incorrect due to rounding, it is not necessary to manually correct the amounts immediately following the mass change. Take action to correct Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts at the next recertification 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. 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 2017.

If you have any FNS policy questions, please contact DHHS Operational Support Team (OST) at ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Chief
Economic and Family Services

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ATTACHMENTS (3)

[EFS FNS AL-22-2016a1](#) (Notice to Food and Nutrition Services Recipients)

[EFS FNS AL-22-2016a2](#) (Notice to Food and Nutrition Services Recipients Spanish)

[EFS FNS AL-22-2016a3](#) (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services [seven languages])