

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES  
EFS\_FNS\_AL-22-2018**

**(Food and Nutrition Services)**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

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

**DATE:** November 28, 2018

**SUBJECT:** 2019 Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA) Mass Change in Social Security Administration (SSA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Payment Amounts

**EFFECTIVE:** January 01, 2019

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The purpose of this letter is to outline the procedures for handling the 2019 Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) mass change in:

- SSA payment amounts (2.8% increase)
- SSI payment amounts (2.8% increase) and
- VA payment amounts (2.8% increase)

NC FAST will automatically update benefit evidence to reflect the increased payment amounts for January 2019.

The attached mass change notice will be sent to households in English and Spanish. These notices meet the federal requirements for a mass change. The Notice of Adverse Action is not needed; however, the household is entitled to a fair hearing if they believe benefits were improperly computed.

**II. AUTOMATED MASS CHANGES COMPLETED BY NC FAST**

- A. NC FAST will calculate the new payments by increasing the SSA, SSI and VA payment by 2.8%, the cents will be dropped from SSA, SSI and VA payment amounts. The case will be reassessed for the new allotment amount.
- B. If the SSA, SSI or VA payment amount is \$35.00 or less, the 2.8% increase will calculate to less than \$1.00. As a result, the case will not receive an increase in the Social Security, SSI or VA payment amount.
- C. Transitional Food and Nutrition Services cases will not be included in the mass change.
- D. SNAP cases benefit evidence will be updated to reflect the increased SSI amount, but the allotment amount will not change.

**III. MANUAL MASS CHANGES FOR PENDING/ON-HOLD CASES**

**A. Actions Taken on or after December 3, 2018**

For pending applications, the old SSA, SSI and VA payment amounts need to be end dated for December 30, 2018. Add new evidence with a start date of December 31, 2018 with the new amount effective for January 1, 2019.

Complete the information using the appropriate payment amounts for benefits at the appropriate time. For example, enter old SSI payment amounts in December and new SSI payment amounts effective January 2019 or later.

For the cases with certification periods that end December 31, 2018 or earlier manually update the SSA, SSI and VA payment amounts.

NOTE: If an individual is approved for SSA, SSI and/or VA payment amounts effective December 2018 or later and the new amount is erroneously entered prior to January 2019, issue a supplement to the client if applicable.

**B. Actions on cases deemed ineligible due to COLA Mass change**

NC FAST will update the benefit evidence and reassess the case. Case will be closed if determined ineligible due to the changes. If the case was deemed ineligible in error, determine the correct SSA, SSI and/or VA payment amounts. Reopen the case, update the benefit evidence for January 2019 and reassess the case.

Submit any questions regarding this policy to the Operational Support Team (OST) at [DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov)

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director  
Economic and Family Services

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Attachments (3)

Notice to Food and Nutrition Services Recipients (English)

Notice to Food and Nutrition Services Recipients (Spanish)

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services  
(seven languages)