

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES  
EFS\_FNS\_AL-7-2019**

**(Food and Nutrition Services)**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

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

**DATE:** November 25, 2019

**SUBJECT:** 2020 Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA) Mass Change in Social Security Administration (SSA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Payment Amounts

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 1, 2020

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The purpose of this letter is to outline the procedures for handling the 2020 Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) mass change in:

- SSA payment amounts (1.6% increase)
- SSI payment amounts (1.6% increase) and
- VA payment amounts (1.6% increase)

NC FAST will automatically update benefit evidence to reflect the increased payment amounts for January 2020.

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. POLICY PROCEDURES**

- A. NC FAST will calculate the new payments by increasing the SSA, SSI and VA payment by 1.6%, 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 1.6% 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. Benefit evidence for SNAP cases will be updated to reflect the increased SSI amount, but the allotment amount will not change.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

#### A. Actions Taken on or after December 2, 2019

For pending applications, the old SSA, SSI and VA payment amounts need to be ended for December 30, 2019. Add new evidence with the new amount effective for January 1, 2020 a start date of December 31, 2019.

Cases with certification periods that end December 31, 2019 or earlier, the caseworker will manually update the SSA, SSI and VA payment amounts prior to recertification or reapplication.

NOTE: If an individual is approved for SSA, SSI and/or VA payment amounts effective December 2019 or later and the new amount is erroneously entered prior to January 2020, 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. The 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 2020 and reassess the case.

### IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective January 1, 2020. 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 (Multilingual Language Notice)