

N. C. Division of Aging and Adult Services Administrative Letter No. 18-02
Adult Services Section

Date: March 14, 2018

Subject: Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA 2018) and Veteran's Assistance (VA) Cost-of- Living Adjustment for Special Assistance In-Home (SA-IH) Beneficiaries.

Distribution: County Directors
Special Assistance Supervisors
Adult Services Supervisors

Effective Date: April 1, 2018

I. BACKGROUND:

Effective January 1, 2018, Special Assistance beneficiaries who receive RSDI/SSI/VA received a 2.0 percent cost-of-living increase (COLA) in their RSDI/SSI/VA benefits. SA-IH cases were exempt from counting the COLA increase until April 2018, after the publication of the new federal poverty levels.

NC FAST automatically updated SA-IH payments to be effective April 1, 2018 to reflect these changes. This letter explains the 2018 SA-IH COLA mass change reports issued by NC FAST and actions to be taken by counties.

II. SA-IH COLA REPORTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

The COLA reports are available on FAST Help at: **Reports>Economic Services>Mass Change>RSDI/SSI/VA COLA Reports**. The 2018 SA-IH Mass Change COLA Reports are posted to FAST Help as follows:

SA-IH Payment Change Report/Timely DSS-8110 Sent Report

This report lists SA-IH Cases automatically updated by NC FAST and decision automatically accepted. DSS-8110, Timely Notices with the new SA payment amount effective April 1, 2018, are automatically sent by NC FAST for these cases. No county caseworker action is required for these cases.

SA-IH Exceptions Report/Mass Change Timely NCF 20032 Sent Report

This report includes SA-IH cases not automatically updated by NC FAST and require caseworker review and appropriate action to be taken by the caseworker. NCF-20032's, mass change Timely Notices, effective April 1, 2018, are mailed for these cases. After the caseworker reviews and takes appropriate action, the DSS-8110, Adequate Notice, effective April 1, 2018, must be sent by the county caseworker to notify recipients of the SA payment amount. Adequate Notices must be sent by March 30, 2018.

III. SA-IH PENDING APPLICATIONS

Pending applications will not be automatically updated by NC Fast. All pending applications will require RSDI/SSI/VA benefit evidence to be entered for month(s) prior to April 2018 and the new RSDI/SSI/VA evidence effective April 1, 2018.

IV. RSDI/SSI/VA PAYMENT AMOUNT CORRECTIONS

NC FAST rounded all RSDI/SSI/VA calculated payment amounts downward for the COLA mass change. Should an amount be incorrect due to rounding, it is not necessary to correct the payment amounts immediately following the mass change. The county should act to correct Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts at the next recertification or change in situation, whichever is first.

V. SA-IH CASES WITH SA-IH ADJUSTED PAYMENT EVIDENCE

NC FAST will automatically issue the SA-IH Maximum (Difference) Payment effective April 2018 and ongoing when the automated COLA calculations result in the existing SA-IH Adjusted Payment amount being higher than the Maximum (Difference) Payment amount.

VI. NC FAST COLA COMMUNICATIONS

NC FAST will provide notification, further guidance, and reports related to COLA mass change automation on a later date. All communication, guidance and instructions must be followed within required time-frames and executed accurately to ensure appropriate actions are taken and to avoid potential overpayments.

VII. EFFECTIVE DATE OF CHANGE AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for SA-IH is effective April 1, 2018.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Special Assistance listserv at specialassistance@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Hank. Bowers
Assistant Director

HB/JMS/CG/pg