



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

Date: December 2, 2020

Dear County Directors of Social Services:

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

Subject: 2021 Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA) Mass Change in Social Security Administration (SSA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Payment Amounts

Priority: For Information and Action

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 by 1.3%
- SSI payment amounts by 1.3% and
- VA payment amounts by 1.3%

NC FAST will automatically update benefit evidence to reflect the payment amounts for January 2021.

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 for SSA, SSI and VA payment by 1.3%, 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 1.3% 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.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

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www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6300 • FAX: 919-334-1265

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- D. Benefit evidence for SNAP cases will be updated to reflect the SSI amount, but the allotment amount will not change.

III. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

A. **Actions Taken on or after December 2, 2020**

For pending applications, the old SSA, SSI and VA payment amounts need to be ended for December 30, 2020. Add new evidence with the new amount effective for January 1, 2021 a start date of December 31, 2020.

Cases with certification periods that end December 31, 2020 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 2020 or later and the new amount is erroneously entered prior to January 2021, 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 2021 and reassess the case.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective January 1, 2021. Submit any questions regarding this policy to the Operational Support Team (OST) at DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services

DL/vd

EFS-FNSEP-41-2020

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)