



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

November 29, 2012

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-59-12

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CalFresh COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL SUPERVISORS
ALL CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (SSA) COST-OF-LIVING
ADJUSTMENT (COLA) – EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2012

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

Social Security recipients will receive a 1.7 percent cost-of-living increase in their Social Security benefits effective December 1, 2012, which is payable January 2013. The new Social Security benefit amount can be determined by multiplying the former benefit amount by 1.017. This increase will affect California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) cash aid and CalFresh allotment amounts. When cash aid or CalFresh allotment amounts are adjusted due to the Social Security COLA benefit increase, the requirements for a timely and adequate Notice of Action shall apply pursuant to CalFresh Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 63-504.26 and CalWORKs MPP Sections 22-071 and 22-072.

NEW APPLICANTS

For new applicants in both the CalWORKs and CalFresh programs, the actual amount of the Social Security benefit, including the increase, shall be used for eligibility and budgeting purposes beginning with the month of January 2013.

TREATMENT OF THE SSA COLA IN THE CURRENT QUARTER (OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2012)

For CalWORKs and CalFresh households currently in the October, November, and December quarter, the County Welfare Department (CWD) will reasonably anticipate the increase in the Social Security income in accordance with CalWORKs and CalFresh MPP Section 63-509(a) (2). The amount of the SSA COLA will be considered “known to the county,” per MPP Sections 63-509(h) (3) and 44-316.331 (QR) (r), upon receipt of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) and will be reasonably anticipated to be received by recipients of Social Security benefits beginning in January 2013 and thereafter. Therefore, starting with the Quarterly Reporting (QR) Data Month of November 2012, the SSA COLA will be reasonably anticipated to be received in the QR Payment Quarter of January/February/March 2013.

COUNTY-INITIATED MID-QUARTER CHANGES FOR ALL OTHER CalWORKs AND CalFresh QR HOUSEHOLDS

MPP 44-316.331 (QR) (r) and 63-509(h) provide that counties shall take mid-quarter actions based on SSA COLAs. Since the SSA COLA is effective December 2012 and payable in January, counties are to take a mid-quarter county-initiated action to decrease benefits effective January 1, 2013 for all cases in which Social Security benefits are being used to determine CalFresh allotments or CalWORKs cash grant amounts.

TREATMENT OF THE SSA COLA FOR CalWORKs ANNUAL REPORTING/CHILD ONLY (AR/CO) CASES

For CalWORKs cases subject to AR/CO rules, the amount of the SSA COLA will be considered "known to the county" and acted upon mid-period, pursuant to ACL No. 12-49, page 20, example (n). Action shall be taken by the CWD, effective January 2013, upon receipt of this ACIN for those CalWORKs AR/CO recipients in receipt of Social Security income. The only cases where this action will not be considered "mid-period" are those AR/CO cases with a December 2012 redetermination (RD). For AR/CO cases with a December 2012 RD, the CWD will include the SSA COLA amount (for those with SSA income) in budgeting for the upcoming AR/CO period. As with any adverse action, and as stated in the first paragraph of this letter, timely and adequate notice is required when decreasing a grant based on the SSA COLA increase.

CalFresh CHANGE REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

Pursuant to MPP Section 63-504.46, CWDs are required to automatically adjust CalFresh benefits to reflect the SSA COLA no later than the second allotment issued after the month in which the change becomes effective for non-quarterly reporting households.

PAYMENT VERIFICATION SYSTEM (PVS) COLA NOTIFICATION

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will not be providing additional notification of the SSA COLA through the PVS. However, upon request, a cost-of-living printout or magnetic tape will be provided to the counties. The COLA printouts will be subject to the 45-day timeliness requirements of the Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS). If you wish to receive your county's printouts or magnetic tape, please contact CDSS' Fraud Bureau at (916) 653-1826 no later than December 14, 2012.

ACCESSING INFORMATION ON SSA COLAS

The CWDs may obtain annual updates on SSA COLAs through the following web link:
<http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA>.

CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding this ACIN, please contact your CalWORKs Eligibility County Consultant at (916) 657-2128 or your CalFresh County Consultant at (916) 654-1896.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

LINDA PATTERSON, Chief
CalFresh Branch

Original Document Signed By:

KÄREN DICKERSON, Chief
Employment and Eligibility Branch