

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM  
DIVISION: Temporary Assistance**

November 2, 2004

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**TO:** Local District Commissioners, TA and FS Directors, Staff Development  
Coordinators, TOP and CAP Coordinators

**FROM:** Russell Sykes/rs, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Temporary Assistance

**SUBJECT:** Implementation of Standardized Food Stamps Benefits for Group Home  
Residents

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 1, 2005

**CONTACT PERSON:** Food Stamp Policy Team at 1-800-343-8859, ext. 3-1469

New York State recently secured federal approval to implement a standardized Food Stamp benefit for Group Home Program (FSGHP) residents. Upstate/Rest of State implementation for FSGHP will be effective January 1, 2005. WMS migration for system support of FSGHP on ABEL budgets will occur the weekend of November 6, 2004, and specific ABEL instructions were released in ABEL Transmittal 04-4.

As previously discussed during ESPRIT advisory meetings and at NYPWA sessions, the anticipated benefits related to this initiative will positively impact the targeted group home program participants, local district administrative practices and group home providers. New York State's traditional group home benefit determination process involved much on and off-line budgeting complexity, resulting in inordinate amounts of staff time and resources at the State, local and provider levels.

For the FSGHP project, we have calculated benefits based on the statewide past participation record and averaged the results to develop cost-neutral, standardized benefits. These benefits are arrayed in the matrix displayed below by geographic region, shelter type and household income source. Generally, the group home residents are one-person households. They are individual recipients whose benefits are given to group home "authorized representatives" who apply on their behalf. Most of the program participants are either disabled and/or in substance abuse rehabilitation. **Homeless shelter residents and domestic violence shelter residents are not included in this project.**

### **FS Standards for Group Home Residents**

Effective January 1, 2005 (N/A for Homeless or DV shelter residents)

<b>Income Source</b>	<b>TA</b>	<b>SSI/SSA</b>	<b>Other (No TA, No SSI/SSA)</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>FS Benefit Amount</b>		
<b>Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk, Westchester</b>	<b>\$82</b>	<b>\$32</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>All Other "Rest of State" Counties</b>	<b>\$96</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>\$137</b>

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These FS benefit rates will be effective January 1, 2005 for the current and new cases in all counties outside New York City. NYC implementation is anticipated in the first quarter of 2005. These standardized benefits will be adjusted once each calendar year to accommodate changes in both the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) and in SSI/SSA COLA income increases.

As this change is fully supported by the current ABEL shelter and income source codes, the implementation will be accomplished by a mass change during the weekend of the November 13, 2004 migration for the entire population of recipients in the following shelter types:

- ?? 10 - Congregate Care Level II Drug/Alcohol Treatment Facility
- ?? 12 - Non-Level II Alcohol Treatment Facility
- ?? 13 - State Operated Community Residence
- ?? 15 - Congregate Care Level I - Family Care
- ?? 16 - Congregate Care Level II - Not Drug /Alcohol Treatment or "Apartment Like"
- ?? 17 - Congregate Care Level II - "Apartment Like" (OMH/OMRDD Supportive/Supervised Apartments; DSS Enriched Housing)

The mass change will convert all one-person FS households in the affected shelter types using current system data, and CNS notices will advise recipients, and their authorized representatives in the group homes, of changes in their benefit levels. The mass change exceptions will be the multi-person households (160 cases Statewide), which will require districts to do system input described in the ABEL Transmittal 04-4 to add households to the project. Districts will be provided with an exception list of the cases requiring a one-time-only manual input.

OTDA is currently communicating with State level oversight agencies (OMH, OMRDD, & OASAS) regarding these changes. Local district staff also may wish to alert individual group home community providers of the new standards.