

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**Center for Employment & Economic Supports**

December 6, 2011

Page: 1

**TO:** Commissioners; TA Directors; FS Directors; WMS Coordinators; Staff Development Coordinators

**FROM:** Phyllis Morris, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment and Economic Supports

**SUBJECT:** SSI COLA and NYSNIP Standard Benefit Amount Adjustments

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 1, 2012

**CONTACT PERSON:** Food Stamp Bureau at 1-800-343-8859, ext. 3-1469; NYC WMS at 212-961-8185

### Background

Every year, the Social Security Administration (SSA) evaluates Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) data to determine if an adjustment (COLA) should be made to RSDI (regular Social Security and Social Security Disability benefits) and federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to reflect an increase or decrease in the cost of living. This year, SSA determined that there was an increase in the CPI-W from the third quarter of 2008 (the last year a COLA was determined) to the third quarter of 2011. Therefore, effective January 1, 2012, RSDI and SSI recipients will receive a 3.6% COLA. There was no COLA adjustment for either 2009 or 2010.

Please see 11 INF-12 for additional details regarding the SSI COLA.

### Purpose

The purpose of this GIS is to inform the local social services districts about the effect of the COLA on food stamp benefits, particularly on NYSNIP benefits; and to inform the local districts about the notices that will be sent to affected households notifying them about the change in FS benefits.

### Program Implications

As part of the 2012 January mass re-budgeting/authorization (MRB/A), New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) benefit levels will be adjusted effective 1/1/12. This adjustment to food stamp benefit amounts is required because of the SSI COLA. NYC WMS will be updated on the weekend of December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to reflect the new NYSNIP benefit levels and the new shelter thresholds. NYSNIP cases will be notified of the change in benefits due to the annual adjustment of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security benefits by laser letter.

Furthermore, the new NYSNIP FS benefit amounts (see attached table of NYSNIP Benefit Levels effective 1/1/12) will be effective for any ABEL **NYSNIP FS Shelter Type** budgets calculated with a budget effective date of 1/A/12 or later.

### \$235 New NYSNIP "High" Shelter Cost Threshold

**New** NYSNIP households having cases opened, and existing NYSNIP households recertified, effective 1/1/12 or later and having shelter costs **greater than \$235** will be considered to be "High Shelter" (Shelter Type 94 or 96) cases by the standard of the project. Conversely, effective 1/1/12, **new** and recertifying NYSNIP households having shelter costs of **\$235 or less** will be considered to be "Low Shelter" (Shelter Type 95 or 97) cases by the standard of the project. This change to the shelter threshold will be migrated on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011 for budgets with a budget effective date of 1/A/12 or later.

Only benefits in Shelter Types 95, 97 and 98 are affected by the SSI COLA increase.

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**  
**Center for Employment & Economic Supports**

December 6, 2011  
 Page: 2

**NYSNIP BENEFITS MATRIX BY SHELTER TYPES**

*01/01/12 - 09/30/12*

HOUSEHOLD		MONTHLY FOOD STAMP BENEFIT AMOUNT		
		New York City	Nassau/Suffolk	Upstate
Shelter Type 94 (High Shelter/SUA)	SSI Only	\$200	\$200	\$200
	Other Income	\$200	\$200	\$200
Shelter Type 95 (Low Shelter/SUA)	SSI Only	\$200	\$188	\$165
	Other Income	\$195	\$179	\$156
Shelter Type 96 (High Shelter/ SUA/\$1 HEAP)	SSI Only	\$200	\$200	\$200
	Other Income	\$200	\$200	\$200
Shelter Type 97 (Low Shelter/ SUA/\$1 HEAP)	SSI Only	\$200	\$188	\$165
	Other Income	\$195	\$179	\$156
Shelter Type 98 (No Shelter or SUA Data)	SSI Only	\$51	\$51	\$51
	Other Income	\$47	\$47	\$47

A sample of the laser letter that is being sent to affected households is attached to this GIS.

P.O. BOX 02-9121  
Brooklyn GPO  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202-9121

**The City Of New York**  
HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION  
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE ADMINISTRATION

CONFERENCE PHONE  
NÚMERO PARA CONFERENCIA

IMC/FSO :  
CASE :  
CLI :

FAM SIZE:  
DATE: **November 28, 2011**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO REDUCE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS  
PREAVISO DE REDUCCIÓN EN SUS BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS**

DEAR SIR/MADAM:

THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT WE INTEND TO REDUCE YOUR FOOD STAMP BENEFITS EFFECTIVE **JANUARY 1, 2012** FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

BEGINNING JANUARY **2012**, SOCIAL SECURITY, SSI AND/OR VETERAN'S BENEFITS WILL INCREASE **BY 3.6%**. IF YOU ARE IN RECEIPT OF ANY OF THESE FEDERAL BENEFITS, THIS INCREASE IN INCOME TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD MUST BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING YOUR FOOD STAMP BENEFIT LEVEL. **IF YOU ARE IN RECEIPT OF BOTH SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AND SSI, YOUR JANUARY SSI BENEFITS WILL BE REDUCED BY THE AMOUNT OF YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT INCREASE. THESE INCOME CHANGES MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING YOUR FOOD STAMP BENEFITS.**

IF YOU ARE AN SSI RECIPIENT LIVING ALONE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO IS PARTICIPATING IN THE NEW YORK STATE NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (NYSNIP), AND YOUR ONLY SOURCE OF INCOME IS SSI, YOUR MONTHLY FOOD STAMP BENEFIT OF \$200 WILL NOT CHANGE. IF YOU ARE AN SSI RECIPIENT LIVING ALONE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO IS PARTICIPATING IN THE NEW YORK STATE NUTRITION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (NYSNIP), AND YOU RECEIVE INCOME IN ADDITION TO SSI AND YOUR RENT IS BELOW \$235.00, BEGINNING IN **JANUARY 2012** YOU WILL RECEIVE \$195.00.

**IF YOU ARE A NYSNIP PARTICIPANT WHO WAS** RECEIVING \$60 PER MONTH IN FOOD STAMP BENEFITS, BEGINNING IN JANUARY 2012 YOU WILL RECEIVE \$51 PER MONTH, IF YOU WERE RECEIVING \$56 PER MONTH IN FOOD STAMP BENEFITS, BEGINNING IN JANUARY 2012 YOU WILL RECEIVE \$47 PER MONTH, AS STATED ABOVE. THIS REDUCTION IN YOUR FOOD STAMP GRANT IS DUE TO THE INCREASE IN YOUR FEDERAL BENEFITS.

PAGE 2 OF THIS NOTICE IS A FINANCIAL FACT SHEET WHICH SHOWS YOUR NEW FOOD STAMP BENEFIT AMOUNT AND ALL THE INCOME INFORMATION ON OUR COMPUTER FILE THAT WAS USED TO CALCULATE YOUR NEW FOOD STAMP BENEFIT. WE HAVE ENCLOSED BUDGET WORKSHEETS WHICH YOU CAN USE TO DETERMINE WHETHER WE HAVE CORRECTLY DETERMINED YOUR NET FOOD STAMP INCOME. SEE 18 NYCRR 387.10, 387.12 AND 387.15.

POR MEDIO DE LA PRESENTE LE INFORMAMOS QUE REDUCIREMOS SUS BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS A PARTIR DEL **1º DE ENERO DE 2012** POR LA SIGUIENTE RAZÓN:

COMENZANDO EN ENERO DE **2012**, LOS BENEFICIOS DE SEGURO SOCIAL, SSI Y/O BENEFICIOS A VETERANOS, AUMENTARÁN POR UN **3.6%**. SI USTED RECIBE ALGUNO DE LOS BENEFICIOS FEDERALES ANTES MENCIONADOS, ESTE AUMENTO EN EL INGRESO DE SU GRUPO FAMILIAR SE TOMARÁ EN CUENTA AL CALCULAR EL MONTO DE BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS QUE USTED RECIBE. **SI USTED ACTUALMENTE RECIBE AMBOS BENEFICIOS, SEGURO SOCIAL Y SSI, EL MONTO DEL BENEFICIO DE SSI PARA EL MES DE ENERO SERÁ REDUCIDO POR EL MONTO DEL AUMENTO EN SU BENEFICIO DE SEGURO SOCIAL. ESTOS CAMBIOS EN INGRESO TAMBIÉN DEBEN TOMARSE EN CUENTA EN EL CÁLCULO DE SUS BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS.**

SI USTED ES UN BENEFICIARIO DE SSI QUE VIVE SOLO(A) EN LA COMUNIDAD Y PARTICIPA EN EL PROYECTO DE MEJORA NUTRICIONAL DEL ESTADO DE NUEVA YORK (NYSNIP), Y SU ÚNICA FUENTE DE INGRESOS ES SSI, SU BENEFICIO MENSUAL DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS DE \$200 NO CAMBIARÁ. SI USTED ES UN BENEFICIARIO DE SSI QUE VIVE SOLO(A) EN LA COMUNIDAD Y PARTICIPA EN EL PROYECTO DE MEJORA NUTRICIONAL DEL ESTADO DE NUEVA YORK (NYSNIP), Y RECIBE INGRESOS ADEMÁS DEL SSI Y SU ALQUILER ES INFERIOR A LOS \$235.00, COMENZANDO EN **ENERO DE 2012** USTED RECIBIRÁ \$195.00.

**SI USTED ES UN PARTICIPANTE DEL PROYECTO DE MEJORA NUTRICIONAL DEL ESTADO DE NUEVA YORK (NYSNIP)** QUE RECIBÍA \$60 AL MES EN BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS, COMENZANDO EN ENERO DE 2012, USTED RECIBIRÁ \$51 AL MES; SI USTED RECIBÍA \$56 AL MES EN CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS, COMENZANDO EN ENERO DE 2012, USTED RECIBIRÁ \$47 AL MES, TAL COMO SE ESTIPULA ARRIBA. ESTA REDUCCIÓN EN SU SUBVENCIÓN DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS SE DEBE AL INCREMENTO EN SUS BENEFICIOS DEL GOBIERNO FEDERAL.

LA PÁGINA 2 DE ESTE AVISO ES UNA HOJA DE DATOS FINANCIEROS LA CUAL MUESTRA SU NUEVO MONTO DE BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS COMO TAMBIÉN TODOS LOS DATOS SOBRE INGRESOS CONTENIDOS EN NUESTRO ARCHIVO COMPUTARIZADO Y EL CUAL FUE UTILIZADO EN EL CÁLCULO DE SU NUEVO MONTO DE BENEFICIOS DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS. HEMOS ADJUNTADO HOJAS DE CÁLCULO DE PRESUPUESTO LAS CUALES USTED PUEDE UTILIZAR PARA DETERMINAR SI HEMOS CALCULADO CORRECTAMENTE SU INGRESO NETO EN RELACIÓN CON LA SUBVENCIÓN DE CUPONES PARA ALIMENTOS. CONSULTE 18 NYCRR 387.10, 387.12 Y 387.15.

SINCERELY,  
ATENTAMENTE,  
MATTHEW BRUNE, EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER / SUBCOMISIONADO  
EXECUTIVO FAMILY INDEPENDENCE ADMINISTRATION

XL0263 (11/11)

**YOUR FINANCIAL FACTS CURRENTLY ON FILE  
SUS DATOS FINANCIEROS ACTUALMENTE EN ARCHIVO**

**Previous Net Food Stamp Income**  
*Ingreso anterior de cupones*

**Previous Monthly Coupon Amount**  
*Cantidad anterior mensual de cupones*

**New Net Food Stamp Income**  
*Nuevo Ingreso neto de cupones*

**New Monthly Coupon Amount**  
*Nueva cantidad mensual de cupones*

**A. MONTHLY INCOME**  
*Ingreso Mensual*

<b>1a. Monthly Gross Income from Employment or Training.</b> <i>Ingreso bruto mensual por empleo o entrenamiento.</i>	
<b>b. Monthly Net Income from Self Employment.</b> <i>Ingreso neto mensual por trabajo por cuenta propia.</i>	
<b>2a. Net Monthly Income from Boarder/Lodger.</b> <i>Ingreso neto mensual que recibe del hoesped/ inquilino</i>	
<b>b. Net Monthly Income from Lodger.</b> <i>Ingreso neto mensual que recibe del inquilino</i>	
<b>3. Total of Lines 1 and 2.</b> <i>Total de las líneas 1 y 2.</i>	
<b>4a. Monthly Gross Unearned Income.</b> <i>Ingreso bruto mensual no devengado.</i>	
<b>b.</b>	
<b>c.</b>	
<b>5. Monthly Income from Educational Loans, Scholarships.</b> <i>Ingreso mensual por préstamos y becas educacionales.</i>	
<b>6. Total of Lines 3, 4, and 5.</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>A.</b></span> <i>Total de líneas 3, 4 y 5</i>	\$

**B. DEDUCTIONS**  
*Deducciones*

<b>7.</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>% of Line 3.</b></span> <i>% de línea 3</i>	
<b>8. Standard Deduction</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Monthly</b></span> <i>Deducción mensual estandar</i>	
<b>9. Monthly Child Care/Dependent Care Costs.</b> <i>Gastos mensuales por cuidado de niños / de dependientes</i> <b>(Mamimum )</b> <i>(Maximo )</i>	
<b>10. Monthly Automatic Recoupment (from Public Assistance Grant)</b> <i>Recuperación mensual automática (de subsidio de Asistencia Publica)</i>	
<b>11. Monthly Tuition and Mandatory Fees</b> <i>Gastos mensuales de colegiatura y cuotas obligatorias</i>	
<b>12a. Monthly Medical Expense (less \$35 Deductible)</b> <i>Gasto medicos mensuales (menos \$35 de deducible)</i>	
<b>b.</b>	
<b>13. Total Lines 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12</b> <i>Total de líneas 7, 8, 9, 10, y 12</i> <span style="float: right;"><b>B.</b></span>	\$

**C. ADJUSTED INCOME**  
*Ingreso ajustado*

<b>14. Subtract B from A. (Line 13 from Line 6.)</b> <i>Reste B de A. (Línea 13 de línea 6.)</i>	
<b>C.</b>	\$

**D. SHELTER COSTS**  
*Gastos de Vivienda*

<b>15. Monthly Rent or Mortgage actually paid.</b> <i>Renta o hipoteca actualmente pagada cada mes.</i>	
<b>16. Monthly Heating Expense</b> <i>Gasto mensual por calefacción.</i>	
<b>17. Monthly Utility Expense</b> <i>Gasto mensual por utilidades.</i>	
<b>18. Monthly Telephone Expense</b> <i>Gasto mensual por teléfono.</i>	
<b>19. Other Monthly Shelter Expense. (Real Estate Taxes, Insurance, Installation of Utilities, etc.)</b> <i>Otros gastos mensuales de vivienda. (Impuestos inmobiliarios, seguro, conexión de servicios publicos etc.)</i>	
<b>20. Total of Lines 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19.</b> <i>Total de líneas 15, 16, 17, 18 y 19</i> <span style="float: right;"><b>D.</b></span>	\$

**E. FOOD STAMP NET INCOME**  
*Ingreso neto por Cupones de Alimentos*

<b>21. Excess Shelter Deduction (Line 20 minus ½ of Line 14. The total cannot be more than ½ of Line 14. The total cannot be more than</b>  <i>Deducción de gastos de vivienda en exceso (línea 20 menos ½ de línea 14. El total no puede ser mas de)</i>	
<b>22. MONTHLY NET FOOD STAMP INCOME (Subtract Line 21 from Line 14.)</b> <i>Ingreso neto mensual de cupones (reste línea 21 de línea 14)</i>	
<b>23. MONTHLY COUPONS AMOUNT</b> <i>Cantidad mensual de cupones</i> <span style="float: right;"><b>E.</b></span>	\$

**MINUS RECOUPMENT OF  
MENOS EL REEMBOLSO DE**

**ADJUSTED COUPON AMOUNT  
MONTA AJUSTADO DE CUPONES**

Notice of Intent To Change Food Stamp Benefits Due To An Increase In Social Security, SSI and/or Veteran's Benefits

**CONFERENCE AND FAIR HEARING SECTION – DO YOU THINK WE ARE WRONG?**

If you think our decision is wrong, you can ask for a review of our decision. We will correct our mistakes. You can do both 1 and 2:

1. Ask for a meeting (conference) with one of our supervisors;                      2. Ask for a State fair hearing with a State hearing officer.

1. **CONFERENCE (Informal meeting with us)** - If you think our decision was wrong, or if you do not understand our decision, please call us to set up a meeting. To do this, call the conference phone number on the front of this notice or write to us at the address on the front of this notice. Sometimes this is the fastest way to solve any problem you may have. We encourage you to do this even when you have asked for a fair hearing.

If you only ask for a meeting with us, we will not keep your benefits the same while you appeal. Your benefits will stay the same only if you ask for a State fair hearing. (See "Keeping Your Benefits The Same" below.)

2. **STATE FAIR HEARING** – You have **90 days** from the date of this notice to ask for a fair hearing:

**KEEPING YOUR BENEFITS THE SAME:** We will restore your Food Stamp Benefits to the same level they were before this notice, if you ask for a fair hearing before the effective date stated in this notice. However, if you lose the fair hearing, you will have to pay back any Food Stamp Benefits you got, but should not have gotten, while you were waiting for the decision.

If you do not want your benefits to stay the same until the decision is issued, you must tell the State when you call for a fair hearing or, if you send back this notice, check the box below:

I do not want to keep my Food Stamp Benefits the same until the Fair Hearing decision is issued.

If at the hearing, the hearing officer determines that you are not complaining about an incorrect computation of your benefits or that there has been a misapplication or misinterpretation of Federal Law or regulations, the hearing officer may determine that you were not entitled to have your Food Stamp Benefits continue unchanged until the fair hearing decision is issued, and order that the reduction take effect immediately.

**HOW TO ASK FOR A FAIR HEARING:** You can ask for a fair hearing by mail, by phone, by fax, by walk-in or online.

**Mail:** Send a copy of the notice *completed* to the Office of Administrative Hearings, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, P.O. Box 1930, Albany, New York 12201. Please keep a copy for yourself.

I want a fair hearing. I do not agree with the agency's action. (You may explain why you disagree below, but you do not have to include a written explanation.)

---

**Phone:** 800-342-3334 (Please have this notice with you when you call.)

**Fax:** Fax a copy of the front and reverse of this notice to: (518) 473-6735.

**Walk-In:** Bring a copy of this entire notice to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance at 14 Boerum Place, Brooklyn.

**Online:** Complete an online request form at: <http://www.otda.ny.gov/oah/forms.asp>.

If you cannot reach the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance by phone, fax, walk-in or on-line, please write to ask for a fair hearing before the deadline.

**WHAT TO EXPECT AT A FAIR HEARING:** The State will send you a notice that tells you when and where the fair hearing will be held.

At the hearing, you will have a chance to explain why you think our decision is wrong. You can bring a lawyer, a relative, a friend or someone else to help you do this. If you cannot come yourself, you can send someone to represent you. If you are sending someone who is not a lawyer to the hearing instead of you, you must give this person a letter to show the hearing officer that you want this person to represent you at the hearing.

At the hearing, you and your lawyer or other representative will have a chance to explain why we are wrong and a chance to give the hearing officer written papers that explain why we are wrong.

To help you explain at the hearing why you think we are wrong, you should bring any witnesses who can help you. You should also bring any papers you have, such as: pay stubs, leases, receipts, bills, doctor's statements.

At the hearing, you and your lawyer or other representative can ask questions of witnesses which we bring or which you bring to help your case.

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE:** If you think you need a lawyer to help you with this problem, you may be able to get a lawyer at no cost to you by contacting your local Legal Aid Society or other legal advocate group. For the names of other lawyers, check your Yellow Pages under "Lawyers".

**ACCESS TO YOUR FILE AND COPIES OF DOCUMENTS:** To help you get ready for the hearing, you have a right to look at your case file. If you call, write or fax to us, we will send you free copies of the documents from your files, which we will give to the Hearing Officer at the Fair Hearing. Also, if you call, write or fax to us, we will send you free copies of other specific documents from your files which you think you may need to prepare for your Fair Hearing. To ask for documents or to find out how to look at your file, call (718) 722-5012, or fax (718) 722-5018 or write to HRA Division of Fair Hearing, 14 Boerum Place, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

If you want copies of documents from your case file, you should ask for them ahead of time. They will be provided to you within a reasonable time before the date of the hearing. Documents will be mailed to you only if you specifically ask that they be mailed.

**INFORMATION:** If you want more information about your case, how to ask for a fair hearing, how to see your file, or how to get additional copies of documents, call us at the phone numbers on the front of this notice or write to us at the address on the front of this notice.