

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM****DIVISION: Temporary Assistance****February 18, 2004**

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

**FROM:** Patricia A. Stevens, Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Temporary Assistance

**SUBJECT:** SUA for Telephone

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Eastern Regional Team @ 1-800-343-8859, extension 3-1469

This message is being issued to alert local districts to a recent change made in the Automated Budgeting and Eligibility Logic (ABEL) regarding the provision of the telephone Standard Utility Allowance (SUA). All households can reasonably be expected to incur some type of phone expense, whether it is in the form of a traditional home phone service, pay phones, calling cards, cell phones, or another type of phone expense. In New York State most households in receipt of food stamp benefits are automatically given an allowance for phone expenses as part of the higher level SUA's for heating/cooling or domestic non-heating utilities.

Upstate ABEL has been changed to automatically give a phone allowance to households that do not qualify for the higher level SUA's. The only exception is for households that are Undomiciled (Shelter Code 23) which are given the Homeless Shelter Deduction and as such are prohibited in Federal FS regulations from also receiving traditional SUA's.

This change took effect February 2, 2004 for budgets with effective FROM DATES of February 1, 2004 or later. Please see ABEL Transmittal 04-1, Information #1 "Food Stamps Telephone SUA Eligibility" for additional details.