



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Interim Secretary

DATE: November 25, 2014 **TRANSMITTAL NO:** I-14-11-0013

TO: Economic Self-Sufficiency Operations Managers
Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Offices

FROM: Debbie McLemore, Chief EBT, Data and Technology
Dianna Laffey, Chief, Program Policy (**Signatures on File**)

SUBJECT: 2015 Cost of Living Adjustment Increases and Other Changes

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2015

This memorandum is to inform staff of the January 2015 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increases and case actions required for the SSI and Family-Related Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance, Food Assistance, and Refugee Assistance Programs.

OVERVIEW

There will be a 1.7 percent COLA increase effective January 2015 for Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans Administration (VA), Civil Service Annuity, and Railroad Retirement benefits.

There will also be changes in January 2015 to the eligibility standards for the SSI related Program and the Optional State Supplementation (OSS) Program.

INTERIM CHANGES FOR SSI-RELATED PROGRAMS

An interim increase of 1.7 percent has been calculated for programs whose income standards are based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). These interim standards will be used for the SSI-Related Programs, as indicated on attachment 4, until the official figures are released for March 2015.

For SSI-Related Programs, use the new standards for eligibility beginning January 2015 and ongoing for all applications currently pending on FLORIDA.

Staff must NOT terminate benefits for recipients in active SSI-Related cases that would be ineligible based on these interim standard increases. When the official Federal Poverty Level standards are released, instructions on how to process the cases will be provided.

AUTOMATIC UPDATE ON FLORIDA (ALL PROGRAMS)

The FLORIDA system will automatically update Social Security and SSI income during pull-down in December 2014, applying the 1.7 percent COLA, effective January 1, 2015.

The update will affect cases in open and enrolled status, and cases with pending assistance groups.

When FLORIDA updates an individual's income amount on the AFMI screen, the old amount will have an end date of 12/31/2014 in history, and the new amount will have a begin date of 01/01/2015.

MASS CHANGE (ALL PROGRAMS)

The FLORIDA system will run Mass Change along with the Automatic COLA update. Mass change will apply these income changes to the budgets of all affected assistance groups. Notices will be sent to all affected assistance groups.

EXCEPTION REPORTS (ALL PROGRAMS)

Cases that cannot be updated automatically or updated by mass change will be listed on an exception report. The report will be available on the ACCESS Online Systems Homepage following the automatic update. The exception report must be worked **by January 31, 2015**.

The following situations will be posted to the exceptions report:

- **System Determined Closed:** This condition occurs when EDBC was previously run, FLORIDA determined the assistance group needed to be closed, but staff had not closed the assistance group on the FLORIDA system.
- **Failure Reason Code 241:** If during the mass change an assistance group displays a 241 failure reason code, staff must run EDBC and authorize as appropriate. Note: Food assistance groups which fail due to reason code 241 will be closed and a termination notice will be sent.
- **Maintenance Need Allowance (MNA) Recalculation Required:** For Institutional Care Programs, when there is a community spouse allocation, the Social Security amount will be automatically updated, however staff must run EDBC. If there are two separate cases (one for the Institutional Care Program individual and one for the community spouse), staff must run EDBC and reauthorize the nursing home case first.

OTHER INFORMATION (ALL PROGRAMS)

Pending Assistance Groups: Income will be updated on FLORIDA, but the budget will not be affected until the next time EDBC is run. Staff must take action the next time EDBC is run.

Overpayment: If there is a discrepancy between the amount updated on FLORIDA and the verified amount of benefits, do not report this difference as an overpayment.

Verification: It is not necessary to re-verify the income if the income amount is changed by automatic update. If the income is not changed by automatic update or by the mass change, the actual amount of income must be verified when the change is reported or at the next review.

Income entered by staff after the Automatic Update and Mass Change must include the new benefit amount for January 2015.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Instructions on processing non-Florida cases.

Attachment 2: Cost of Living Adjustment Chart of Social Security and SSI.

Attachment 3: Updated conversion chart on FLORIDA and the Table for SSA income COLA Adjustments (TSCA) for Protected Medicaid cases.

Attachment 4: Eligibility chart containing the new income levels for each SSI-Related Program (Appendix 9)

Attachment 5: Chart containing OSS eligibility standards (Appendix 12)

Attachment 6: SSI Federal Benefit Rates (Appendix 10)

If Regional or Circuit Program Office staff have any Medicaid questions please contact Dorthene Baker at (850) 717-4293. For Food Assistance Program, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Refugee Assistance Program contact Connie Mathers at (850) 717-4121. Contact Ron Hardcastle at (850) 717-4645 for system issues.

cc: Assistant Secretary for Economic Self-Sufficiency (Jennifer Lange)
Director (Nathan Lewis)
Customer Call Center (Pat Badland, Liesta Sykes, Irene Hill, Hyung Kim, Georgina Santana)
EBT and Technology (Debbie McLemore, Florence Hollinghead, Michael Pogue)
FLORIDA Help Desk (Anthony Gaston)
Information Technology (Kit Goodner, Barbara Roglieri)
Medicaid Eligibility System (Suzanne Poirier, Margie France, William Martinez, Eileen Schilling)
Office of Appeal Hearings (Betty Zachem)
Office of Communications (Alexis Lambert)
Office of the General Counsel (Herschel Minnis)
Office of Quality Management (Tonyaleah Veltkamp, Cindy Mickler, Annette Wiechers, Susan Thomas)
Program Policy (Dorthene Baker, Jena Grignon, Connie Mathers)
Public Benefits Integrity (Andrew McClenahan, Sheri Hall, Fred Young)
AHCA (Kathy Austin, Melanie Brown-Woofter, Lisa Gill, Peggy Hall, Shevaun Harris, Beth Kidder, David Rogers)
Florida Bar Elder Law Section (Emma Hemness, Twyla Sketchley)
Florida Legal Services (Cindy Huddleston)

**NON-FLORIDA Cases (HCDA, OSS) with
Social Security, SSI, VA, Civil Service, Railroad Retirement, and/or other income**

Program	Action
Home Care for the Disabled	A desk review is <u>not</u> necessary. At the next re-determination, verify the increase and notify the Adult Protective Services counselor of the increased amount.
OSS	<p>A desk review is not necessary for cases receiving SSI only; the new amount will be automatically updated on SPS.</p> <p>For cases without SSI, the SPS will automatically update the Social Security amounts and the provider rates on the system.</p> <p><u>A desk review is necessary for all non-SSI direct assistance OSS cases in which the OSS payment is reduced due to the Cost of Living Adjustment.</u> An SPS exception report of cases requiring a desk review will be generated after the December payroll is run and forwarded under separate cover. Desk reviews must be completed by March 2015.</p> <p>Take the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the new OSS cost of care for all budgets effective January 2015. • Complete the budget and appropriate SPS change for the January 2015 change. • Send a notice of adverse case action (10 day adverse action notice) to advise that the supplement is being reduced. <p>If income is over the income limit, cancel the case, and provide 10 days advanced notice of adverse action.</p> <p>A warrant message regarding the change in the cost of care will be sent to all OSS recipients with their December and January warrants.</p> <p>Note: Staff must verify Veterans Administration (VA) benefits, Civil Service Annuity benefits, or Railroad Retirement benefits at the next review or when the change is reported, whichever occurs sooner.</p>

SSI	Jan-13	Jan-14	Jan-15				
Individual	710	721	733				
Couple	1066	1082	1100				
Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase
450	458	500	509	550	560	600	611
451	459	501	510	551	561	601	612
452	460	502	511	552	562	602	613
453	461	503	512	553	563	603	614
454	462	504	513	554	564	604	615
455	463	505	514	555	565	605	616
456	464	506	515	556	566	606	617
457	465	507	516	557	567	607	618
458	466	508	517	558	568	608	619
459	467	509	518	559	569	609	620
460	468	510	519	560	570	610	621
461	469	511	520	561	571	611	622
462	470	512	521	562	572	612	623
463	471	513	522	563	573	613	624
464	472	514	523	564	574	614	625
465	473	515	524	565	575	615	626
466	474	516	525	566	576	616	627
467	475	517	526	567	577	617	628
468	476	518	527	568	578	618	629
469	477	519	528	569	579	619	630
470	478	520	529	570	580	620	631
471	480	521	530	571	581	621	632
472	481	522	531	572	582	622	633
473	482	523	532	573	583	623	634
474	483	524	533	574	584	624	635
475	484	525	534	575	585	625	636
476	485	526	535	576	586	626	637
477	486	527	536	577	587	627	638
478	487	528	537	578	588	628	639
479	488	529	538	579	589	629	640
480	489	530	540	580	590	630	641
481	490	531	541	581	591	631	642
482	491	532	542	582	592	632	643
483	492	533	543	583	593	633	644
484	493	534	544	584	594	634	645
485	494	535	545	585	595	635	646
486	495	536	546	586	596	636	647
487	496	537	547	587	597	637	648
488	497	538	548	588	598	638	649
489	498	539	549	589	600	639	650
490	499	540	550	590	601	640	651
491	500	541	551	591	602	641	652
492	501	542	552	592	603	642	653
493	502	543	553	593	604	643	654
494	503	544	554	594	605	644	655
495	504	545	555	595	606	645	656
496	505	546	556	596	607	646	657
497	506	547	557	597	608	647	658
498	507	548	558	598	609	648	660
499	508	549	559	599	610	649	661

Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase
650	662	700	712	750	763	800	814
651	663	701	713	751	764	801	815
652	664	702	714	752	765	802	816
653	665	703	715	753	766	803	817
654	666	704	716	754	767	804	818
655	667	705	717	755	768	805	819
656	668	706	719	756	769	806	820
657	669	707	720	757	770	807	821
658	670	708	721	758	771	808	822
659	671	709	722	759	772	809	823
660	672	710	723	760	773	810	824
661	673	711	724	761	774	811	825
662	674	712	725	762	775	812	826
663	675	713	726	763	776	813	827
664	676	714	727	764	777	814	828
665	677	715	728	765	779	815	829
666	678	716	729	766	780	816	830
667	679	717	730	767	781	817	831
668	680	718	731	768	782	818	832
669	681	719	732	769	783	819	833
670	682	720	733	770	784	820	834
671	683	721	733	771	785	821	835
672	684	722	735	772	786	822	836
673	685	723	736	773	787	823	837
674	686	724	737	774	788	824	839
675	687	725	738	775	789	825	840
676	688	726	739	776	790	826	841
677	689	727	740	777	791	827	842
678	690	728	741	778	792	828	843
679	691	729	742	779	793	829	844
680	692	730	743	780	794	830	845
681	693	731	744	781	795	831	846
682	694	732	745	782	796	832	847
683	695	733	746	783	797	833	848
684	696	734	747	784	798	834	849
685	697	735	748	785	799	835	850
686	698	736	749	786	800	836	851
687	699	737	750	787	801	837	852
688	700	738	751	788	802	838	853
689	701	739	752	789	803	839	854
690	702	740	753	790	804	840	855
691	703	741	754	791	805	841	856
692	704	742	755	792	806	842	857
693	705	743	756	793	807	843	858
694	706	744	757	794	808	844	859
695	707	745	758	795	809	845	860
696	708	746	759	796	810	846	861
697	709	747	760	797	811	847	862
698	710	748	761	798	812	848	863
699	711	749	762	799	813	849	864

Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase
850	865	900	916	950	967	1000	1017
851	866	901	917	951	968	1001	1019
852	867	902	918	952	969	1002	1020
853	868	903	919	953	970	1003	1021
854	869	904	920	954	971	1004	1022
855	870	905	921	955	972	1005	1023
856	871	906	922	956	973	1006	1024
857	872	907	923	957	974	1007	1025
858	873	908	924	958	975	1008	1026
859	874	909	925	959	976	1009	1027
860	875	910	926	960	977	1010	1028
861	876	911	927	961	978	1011	1029
862	877	912	928	962	979	1012	1030
863	878	913	929	963	980	1013	1031
864	879	914	930	964	981	1014	1032
865	880	915	931	965	982	1015	1033
866	881	916	932	966	983	1016	1034
867	882	917	933	967	984	1017	1035
868	883	918	934	968	985	1018	1036
869	884	919	935	969	986	1019	1037
870	885	920	936	970	987	1020	1038
871	886	921	937	971	988	1021	1039
872	887	922	938	972	989	1022	1040
873	888	923	939	973	990	1023	1041
874	889	924	940	974	991	1024	1042
875	890	925	941	975	992	1025	1043
876	891	926	942	976	993	1026	1044
877	892	927	943	977	994	1027	1045
878	893	928	944	978	995	1028	1046
879	894	929	945	979	996	1029	1047
880	895	930	946	980	997	1030	1048
881	896	931	947	981	998	1031	1049
882	897	932	948	982	999	1032	1050
883	899	933	949	983	1000	1033	1051
884	900	934	950	984	1001	1034	1052
885	901	935	951	985	1002	1035	1053
886	902	936	952	986	1003	1036	1054
887	903	937	953	987	1004	1037	1055
888	904	938	954	988	1005	1038	1056
889	905	939	955	989	1006	1039	1057
890	906	940	956	990	1007	1040	1058
891	907	941	957	991	1008	1041	1059
892	908	942	959	992	1009	1042	1060
893	909	943	960	993	1010	1043	1061
894	910	944	961	994	1011	1044	1062
895	911	945	962	995	1012	1045	1063
896	912	946	963	996	1013	1046	1064
897	913	947	964	997	1014	1047	1065
898	914	948	965	998	1015	1048	1066
899	915	949	966	999	1016	1049	1067

Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase	Current SSA Amount	With 1.7% Increase
1050	1068	1100	1119	1150	1170	1200	1221
1051	1069	1101	1120	1151	1171	1201	1222
1052	1070	1102	1121	1152	1172	1202	1223
1053	1071	1103	1122	1153	1173	1203	1224
1054	1072	1104	1123	1154	1174	1204	1225
1055	1073	1105	1124	1155	1175	1205	1226
1056	1074	1106	1125	1156	1176	1206	1227
1057	1075	1107	1126	1157	1177	1207	1228
1058	1076	1108	1127	1158	1178	1208	1229
1059	1078	1109	1128	1159	1179	1209	1230
1060	1079	1110	1129	1160	1180	1210	1231
1061	1080	1111	1130	1161	1181	1211	1232
1062	1081	1112	1131	1162	1182	1212	1233
1063	1082	1113	1132	1163	1183	1213	1234
1064	1083	1114	1133	1164	1184	1214	1235
1065	1084	1115	1134	1165	1185	1215	1236
1066	1085	1116	1135	1166	1186	1216	1237
1067	1086	1117	1136	1167	1187	1217	1238
1068	1087	1118	1138	1168	1188	1218	1239
1069	1088	1119	1139	1169	1189	1219	1240
1070	1089	1120	1140	1170	1190	1220	1241
1071	1090	1121	1141	1171	1191	1221	1242
1072	1091	1122	1142	1172	1192	1222	1243
1073	1092	1123	1143	1173	1193	1223	1244
1074	1093	1124	1144	1174	1194	1224	1245
1075	1094	1125	1145	1175	1195	1225	1246
1076	1095	1126	1146	1176	1196	1226	1247
1077	1096	1127	1147	1177	1198	1227	1248
1078	1097	1128	1148	1178	1199	1228	1249
1079	1098	1129	1149	1179	1200	1229	1250
1080	1099	1130	1150	1180	1201	1230	1251
1081	1100	1131	1151	1181	1202	1231	1252
1082	1100	1132	1152	1182	1203	1232	1253
1083	1102	1133	1153	1183	1204	1233	1254
1084	1103	1134	1154	1184	1205	1234	1255
1085	1104	1135	1155	1185	1206	1235	1256
1086	1105	1136	1156	1186	1207	1236	1258
1087	1106	1137	1157	1187	1208	1237	1259
1088	1107	1138	1158	1188	1209	1238	1260
1089	1108	1139	1159	1189	1210	1239	1261
1090	1109	1140	1160	1190	1211	1240	1262
1091	1110	1141	1161	1191	1212	1241	1263
1092	1111	1142	1162	1192	1213	1242	1264
1093	1112	1143	1163	1193	1214	1243	1265
1094	1113	1144	1164	1194	1215	1244	1266
1095	1114	1145	1165	1195	1216	1245	1267
1096	1115	1146	1166	1196	1217	1246	1268
1097	1116	1147	1167	1197	1218	1247	1269
1098	1117	1148	1168	1198	1219	1248	1270
1099	1118	1149	1169	1199	1220	1249	1271

Title II Cost of Living Increases
Under Public Law 94-566
(Protected Medicaid Conversion Factors)

Month of COLA	Amount of COLA	Conversion Factor
Jan-15	1.7%	0.983
Jan-14	1.5%	0.969
Jan-13	1.7%	0.953
Jan-12	3.6%	0.919
Jan-11	0.0%	0.919
Jan-10	0.0%	0.919
Jan-09	5.8%	0.869
Jan-08	2.3%	0.850
Jan-07	3.3%	0.822
Jan-06	4.1%	0.790
Jan-05	2.7%	0.769
Jan-04	2.1%	0.753
Jan-03	1.4%	0.743
Jan-02	2.6%	0.724
Jan-01	3.5%	0.700
Jan-00	2.5%	0.683
Jan-99	1.3%	0.674
Jan-98	2.1%	0.660
Jan-97	2.9%	0.641
Jan-96	2.6%	0.625
Jan-95	2.8%	0.608
Jan-94	2.6%	0.593
Jan-93	3.0%	0.575
Jan-92	3.7%	0.555
Jan-91	5.4%	0.526
Jan-90	4.7%	0.503
Jan-89	4.0%	0.484
Jan-88	4.2%	0.464
Jan-87	1.3%	0.458
Jan-86	3.1%	0.444
Jan-85	3.5%	0.429
Jan-84	3.5%	0.415
Jul-82	7.4%	0.386
Jul-81	11.2%	0.347
Jul-80	14.3%	0.304
Jul-79	9.9%	0.276
Jul-78	6.5%	0.260
Jul-77	5.9%	0.245

Eligibility Standards for SSI-Related Programs – January 2015		
Coverage Group	Income Limit	Asset Limit
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Individual*	\$ 733	\$ 2,000
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Couple*	\$ 1,100	\$ 3,000
ICP/HCBS/Hospice/HCDA Individual	\$ 2,199	\$ 2,000
ICP/HCBS/Hospice/HCDA Couple	\$ 4,398	\$ 3,000
MEDS-AD/ICP-MEDS/Individual (88% FPL)	\$ 871	\$ 5,000
MEDS-AD/ICP-MEDS/Couple	\$ 1,175	\$ 6,000
QMB Individual (100% FPL)	\$ 990	\$ 7,160
QMB Couple	\$ 1,335	\$ 10,750
SLMB Individual (100-120% FPL)	\$ 1,187	\$ 7,160
SLMB Couple	\$ 1,602	\$ 10,750
QI1 Individual (120-135% FPL)	\$ 1,335	\$ 7,160
QI1 Couple	\$ 1,802	\$ 10,750
Working Disabled Individual (200% FPL)	\$ 1,978	\$ 5,000
Working Disabled Couple	\$ 2,669	\$ 6,000
Protected Medicaid	See A-11 and policy in Chapter 2000	
<u>Medicare Part B Premium</u>	\$ 104.90	
<u>Medicare Part A Premium</u>	Number of Qualifying Quarters of Employment	
	Free	40 or more
	\$ 224	30 to 39
	\$ 407	Less than 30
<u>Personal Needs Allowance</u>		
ICP/ICP-MEDS/Hospice (Institution)	\$ 105	
Hospice (Community) 100% FPL	\$ 990	
PACE/SMMC-LTC/iBudget (resident of assisted living facility)	Facility Room and Board Charge, plus 20% of the FPL(\$198 individual, \$396 couple)	
<u>Spousal Impoverishment</u>		
Minimum Monthly Maintenance Needs Allowance (MMMNA)**	\$ 1,966	
Excess Shelter Standard**	\$ 590	
Maximum Community Spouse Income Allowance (MMMNA plus excess shelter allowance cannot exceed this figure)	\$ 2,981	
Community Spouse Asset Allocation Standard	\$ 119,220	
<u>Home Equity Interest Limit</u>	\$ 552,000	
<u>Student Earned Income Disregard Limit</u>	\$ 1,780 per month \$ 7,180 per calendar year	
<u>Substantial Gainful Activity</u>	\$ 1,090 per month	

* Eligibility for SSI is determined by the Social Security Administration.

** These standards change effective July 1 of each year in accordance with federal law.

OPTIONAL STATE SUPPLEMENTATION ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

**OSS PROTECTED PROGRAM STANDARDS
(RTF Not Enrolled for ACS and 2001 "Gap" Group)**

	December 2014	January 2015
Income Standard	\$906/individual \$1812/couple	\$918/individual \$1836/couple
Provider Rate	\$906/individual \$1812/couple	\$918/individual \$1836/couple
Personal needs allowance	\$54 per person	\$54 per person
Maximum OSS Payment	\$239/individual \$478/couple	\$239/individual \$478/couple

**OSS REDESIGN STANDARDS
(ALF, AFCH and RTF Enrolled provider for ACS)**

	December 2014	January 2015
Income Standard	\$799.40/individual \$1598.80/couple	\$811.40/individual \$1622.80/couple
Provider Rate	\$745.40/individual \$1490.80/couple	\$757.40/individual \$1514.80/couple
Personal Needs Allowance	\$54 per person	\$54 per person
Maximum OSS Payment	\$78.40/individual \$156.80/couple	\$78.40/individual \$156.80/couple

OTHER STANDARDS FOR OSS PROGRAM

	December 2014	January 2015
SSI Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)		
Individual	\$721	\$733
Couple	\$1082	\$1100
Maximum Resources		
Individual	\$2,000	\$2,000
Couple	\$3,000	\$3,000

Federal Benefit Rates - January 2015**SSI-DA (Supplemental Security Income - Direct Assistance)**

Situation	FBR
<u>Individual</u>	
Own assistance group or non-Medicaid institution	\$ 733
In Medicaid institution	\$ 30
In public institution	\$ 0
<u>Couple</u>	
Own assistance group or non-Medicaid institution	\$1100
In Medicaid institution (both members)	\$ 60
Child Allocation for Deeming	\$ 367