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TO: **Income Maintenance Supervisors**
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators

FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens, Chief
Technical Assistance and Training Section
Bureau of Enrollment Management
Division of Health Care Access and Accountability

BEM/DFS OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 08 - 45

DATE: 8/29/2008

FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input type="checkbox"/>
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>
CC	<input type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>
CF	<input type="checkbox"/>	JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>
RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
				EP	

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: 2009 FoodShare Program Mass Change and Implementation of Farm Bill Changes

CROSS REFERENCE: FoodShare Handbook, Chapter 8.1.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2008

PURPOSE:

This memo announces the FoodShare (FS) cost of living adjustments (COLA) and the new Utility Standard amounts for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009. It also includes implementation of two of the recent Farm Bill changes:

- Removal of the dependent care cap of \$175 or \$200 (depending on the age of the child).
- The minimum FoodShare benefit level will be changed from \$10 to \$14.

BACKGROUND

Each year the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) adjusts the gross and net income limits, the allotment tables, standard deduction amounts, and the excess shelter expense deduction. Adjustments to the standard utility allowance amounts are based on statewide average utility costs.

POLICY

FS COLA FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2009

Reference table changes will be made in CARES, so that ongoing cases will use the new amounts effective October 1, 2008. The mass change will occur on the weekend of September 6, 2008. The FS mass change will select all FS cases and process eligibility for October using the new reference table changes and standards. Eligibility determinations for FS for October 2008 and later will use the new amounts. These amounts can be found in CARES tables TFST and TFEP. They will be added to Chapter 8.1, of the FS Handbook in the next release.

The following changes are effective October 1, 2008:

Maximum Excess Shelter Deduction

The maximum excess shelter deduction will increase to \$446.

Income Limit & Allotment Changes

AG Size	200%FPL Gross Income Limit	165% FPL Gross Income Limit	130% FPL Gross Income Limit	100% FPL Net Income Limit	Maximum Allotment
1	\$1734	\$1430	\$1127	\$867	\$176
2	\$2334	\$1925	\$1517	\$1167	\$323
3	\$2934	\$2420	\$1907	\$1467	\$463
4	\$3534	\$2915	\$2297	\$1767	\$588
5	\$4134	\$3410	\$2687	\$2067	\$698
6	\$4734	\$3905	\$3077	\$2367	\$838
7	\$5334	\$4400	\$3467	\$2667	\$926
8	\$5934	\$4895	\$3857	\$2967	\$1058
9	\$6534	\$5390	\$4247	\$3267	\$1190
10	\$7134	\$5885	\$4637	\$3567	\$1322
11	\$7734	\$6380	\$5027	\$3867	\$1454
12	\$8334	\$6875	\$5417	\$4167	\$1586

(AG = Assistance Group, FPL = Federal Poverty Level)

NOTE : Notices of decision will reflect the new 130% FPL income reporting limits.

Standard Deduction

The Standard Deduction increase is based on the AG size.

AG Size	Standard Deduction Amount
1-3	\$144
4	\$147
5	\$172
6 or more	\$197

Maximum Monthly Dependent Care Change

With the recent changes in the Farm Bill, the maximum allowable deduction cap for Dependent Care expenses (\$200 for children less than two years old and \$175 for children 2 and over), will be removed. Effective October 1, 2008, applicants and members will be allowed to deduct their total monthly dependent care costs (FSHB 4.6.6).

CARES

The mass change the weekend of September 6, 2008, will run October eligibility for all FS cases. The current entry for actual dependent care expenses on the Dependent Care page in CWW will be used as an expense deduction in the benefit calculation. Agencies have always been instructed to enter actual dependent care expenses in CWW and CARES has capped the deduction when determining eligibility. Expenses should be changed:

1. The next time a change is reported in expenses,
2. When the worker becomes aware of a change in dependent care expenses, or
3. At next recertification or 6 month report.

However, if the maximum allowable expense cap was entered on the Dependent Care Page in CWW instead of the actual expense, workers must update ongoing cases. If workers become aware that the expense was capped and the actual verified amount in the file was not budgeted correctly for benefits received after 10/1/08, benefits must be restored back to 10/1/08.

Best Practice: To prevent QC errors, when updating or processing changes on an ongoing case, workers should check to make sure the current dependent care expense verification in the file matches the entry in CARES.

New Standard Utility Allowances

Standard	Allowance	Definition
HSUA	\$305	Heating
LUA	\$208	No heat, with at least two other qualifying expenses
EUA	\$78	Non-heat electric
FUA	\$27	Cooking fuel used for other than heating, gas, LP, etc.
WUA	\$59*	Water, well installation and maintenance, sewer, septic tank installation and maintenance, and/or wastewater treatment
PUA	\$29	Telephone
TUA	\$15*	Garbage and trash pick up

*No change in amount.

PROCEDURE

Any cases that are run for FS eligibility after September 6, 2008, will have the new SUA standard amounts applied effective October 1, 2008.

CONTACTS

BEM CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – FoodShare Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

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