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SNAP Policy Update #3 17-18'

DATE: September 15, 2017

RE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Standards and Deductions for October 1

Each October 1 the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) adjusts the guidelines used to determine the amount of monthly benefits an eligible family will receive. This policy update highlights the changes to SNAP standards and deductions for October 1, 2017, provided in [GIS 17 TA/DC032](#).

More families may be eligible for SNAP starting on October 1st, due to increases in the SNAP income guidelines (see chart below). This includes families who had previously been slightly over income for SNAP or who were considered categorically eligible but did not qualify for a monthly SNAP benefit in the past.

Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) - Monthly Gross Income Maximums by Family Size October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018

<u>Family Size</u>	130% FPL	150% FPL	200% FPL	100% FPL NET Income Test
1	\$1,307	\$1,508	\$2,010	\$1,005
2	\$1,760	\$2,030	\$2,707	\$1,354
3	\$2,213	\$2,553	\$3,403	\$1,702
4	\$2,665	\$3,075	\$4,100	\$2,050
5	\$3,118	\$3,598	\$4,797	\$2,399
6	\$3,571	\$4,120	\$5,493	\$2,747
7	\$4,024	\$4,643	\$6,190	\$3,095
8	\$4,477	\$5,165	\$6,887	\$3,444
Each Additional Person	+\$453	+\$523	+\$697	+ \$349

October 1 Changes to SNAP Standards and Deductions

For detailed charts on the following changes, see Hunger Solutions New York's updated budget worksheet, and the NYSNIP matrix. Both are available with this policy update. For a tutorial on how to use the SNAP budget worksheet, see pages 52-58 of the 2016 version of our [SNAP Guide](#), available online.

As of October 1, 2017, the following standards will increase:

1. Gross income maximums for 200%, 165%, 150%, and 130% of poverty
2. Resource limit for households that must meet a resource test and that include an elderly or disabled members: \$3,500
3. Standard deduction for households of 1-3: \$160
4. Standard deduction for families of 4, 5 and 6+: \$170, \$199, \$228
5. Maximum excess shelter cap: \$535
6. Heating/Air Conditioning (HT/AC) Standard Utility Allowance (SUA): *Levels 1 and 2*
7. Net income maximums for 100% of poverty

As of October 1, 2017, the following standards will decrease:

1. Boarder/Lodger exclusion: *\$192 for one person or \$352 for two people*
2. HT/AC SUA – Level 3 (Phone): \$30
3. Minimum SNAP Benefit for 1- to 2-person households: \$15
4. Maximum SNAP Benefit Allotment by household size

As of October 1, 2017, the following standards will remain unchanged:

1. Homeless shelter deduction: \$143
2. Resource limits for households that need to meet the resource test and that **DO NOT** include an elderly or disabled member: \$2,250

*See attached NYSNIP Matrix for changes in NYSNIP benefit amounts.

Benefit Decreases for Some Families/Individuals

Due to the decrease in the maximum SNAP benefit allotments and the minimum benefit amount, some families may see a small decrease in their SNAP benefit on October 1. This will be especially true for any family receiving the maximum benefit allotment for their household size and for elderly/disabled households who are currently receiving the minimum benefit. This change in benefits may be confusing to SNAP recipients because many will experience a small reduction in their monthly SNAP benefit even though they have not had any changes in their income or expenses.

Ways to Help These Families:

- ✓ **Check the information on the notice from the SNAP office to be sure that the amounts listed for gross income, rent/mortgage and other deductions are up-to-date and accurate.** Help the SNAP recipient report any mistakes or updates to their local SNAP office right away. Other deductions include:
 - day care or adult care costs,
 - utility costs to ensure the use of the correct SUA level, and
 - child support payments.

- ✓ **Assist seniors and persons with disabilities with claiming unreimbursed medical expenses.**
Seniors and persons with disabilities who can verify medical expenses over \$35 per month may be eligible for higher SNAP benefits. In NYS, most seniors and persons with a disability do not know that they can deduct their out-of-pocket medical expenses. For more information on medical deductions, including a worksheet, see Hunger Solutions New York’s [Medical Exemption Fact Sheet](#).
- ✓ **See the “Help for Your Clients” section below and refer these households to a NOEP Coordinator in your community**

Impact on New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) Participants

As of October 1, some NYSNIP participants will see a decrease in their SNAP benefits due to the aforementioned changes in SNAP standards. It is important to talk to NYSNIP recipients about the value of participating in the NYSNIP program versus the regular SNAP program. Some NYSNIP participants may receive a higher benefit amount by switching to the regular SNAP program because their actual shelter costs may be higher than the shelter costs being granted under NYSNIP budgeting.

Local offices should do a comparison budget to see if there will be a higher benefit amount under NYSNIP versus regular SNAP participation. If the benefit amount is higher under the regular SNAP program, recipients should be given the opportunity to opt out of NYSNIP. If an individual decides to opt out of NYSNIP, they will not be eligible for the 48-month certification period. No new application submission is required when transitioning from NYSNIP to regular SNAP. Additional information and documentation may be required in order to maximize the SNAP benefit for these households.

For more information on NYSNIP, see Hunger Solutions New York’s [SNAP Guide](#), available on our website.

Tools and Resources for Community Organizations:

Hunger Solution New York’s Tools:

- SNAP Budget Worksheet Oct. 2017
- SNAP Benefit Estimator Tools Oct. 2017
- How-to Sheet for SNAP Estimator Tools
- NYSNIP Matrix by Shelter Type for October 2017

Links:

- [GIS17 TA/DC032 Upstate and NYC](#) – Updated SNAP Standards for October, 2016 and sample notices for both upstate and NYC.
- For a tutorial on how to use our SNAP budget worksheet, see pages 52-58 of our [SNAP Guide](#), available online.

Help for Your Clients

There are Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) Coordinators in many communities across NYS. NOEP Coordinators are available to help potentially eligible individuals and families apply for SNAP benefits by:

- conducting confidential pre-screenings to see if a family may be eligible for SNAP,

- assisting with completing the application, including the online version,
- answering any questions, and/or
- working with current recipients around recertification or other issues with their SNAP case.

NOEP Coordinators can also come to your community site to help your clients.

To find out if there is a NOEP Coordinator in your community, go to: <http://www.foodhelpny.org>.

Visit <http://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp> for a listing of SNAP offices and contact information outside of NYC or call 1-800-342-3009.

Visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/services/snap_centers.shtml for a listing of SNAP offices in New York City or call 311.

For More Information

If you have, any questions about this SNAP update or SNAP in general, please contact Dawn Secor by phone at (518) 436-8757 ext. 112, or by e-mailing dawn.secor@hungersolutionsny.org.