Update 2005-10: Common Place Handbook
January 2006 SSA COLA

Background
Social Security recipients receive an annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) at the beginning of each calendar year.

Changes
A 4.1% increase to Social Security benefits is effective December 1, 2005 and payable January 2006. The new benefit amount can be determined by multiplying the current amount by 1.041.

CalWORKs & Food Stamps
The following changes apply to both CalWORKs and Food Stamp benefits.

New Applicants
The increased Social Security benefit amount must be used for eligibility and budgeting purposes beginning with the month of January 2006.

Example:
A client applies in November. The QR payment quarter is November/December/January based on the date of application. The SSA COLA increase will be reasonably anticipated for the month of January.

$100.00 in November, $100.00 in December, and $104.10 in January (with COLA increase).

$304.10 divide by 3 months = $101.37 Qtr. Average
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Continuing Cases</strong></th>
<th>For Quarterly Reporting recipients, the SSA COLA is considered a county initiated mid-quarter action. Since the COLA is effective December 2005 and payable in January, EWs must take action to decrease CalWORKS and Food Stamp benefits effective January 1, 2006.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food Stamps</strong></td>
<td>The following changes apply to Food Stamps benefits only.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change Reporting Households</strong></td>
<td>For non-quarterly reporting households, benefits must be adjusted to reflect the SSA COLA no later than the second allotment issued after the month in which the change becomes effective (i.e. no later than February 2006).</td>
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</table>
| **Medi-Cal** | The various Medi-Cal standard amounts affected by the COLA are updated in the Chart Book and in CalWIN.  
  Disregard the SSA COLA increase for all programs where eligibility is based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) limits from January 1, 2006 through March 31, 2006. These programs include the Income Disregard, 100%, 133%, 250% WDP, A&D FPL, QMB/SLMB/QI-1 and Section 1931 (b).  
  There will be two SSI/SSP Payment Standards (1/1/06 - 3/31/06 and 4/1/06 - 12/31/06) due to scheduled increase in the SSP portion which will take effect on 4/1/06. |
| **GA** | The increased Social Security benefit amount must be used for eligibility and budgeting purposes beginning with the month of January 2006. |
| **CAPI** | The CAPI payment standards for Non-Medical Out-of-Home Care (NMOHC) will increase to $1,005 for an individual and $2,010 for a couple. The Presumed Maximum Value (PMV) allocation will increase to $309.66 for an individual and $321.33 for a couple. The sponsor deeming allocation is changing from $579 to $603. This will decrease grants for January 2006. An adequate 10-day NOA must be sent to the clients that are affected by this change.  
  The CAPI PMV and NMOHC amounts affected by the COLA are updated in the Chart Book and in CalWIN. |
| **Foster Care** | Some Foster Care children may become ineligible if the income they receive exceeds the cost of their placement. If this occurs, a child sub-payee account will need to be set up by Fiscal. A 10-day Notice of Action is required for any adverse actions:  
  - For Foster Care, the Social Security benefit received in January 2006 must be reflected in the January Foster Care payment issued on February 1, 2006. |
• For AAP and KinGAP, the change is effective January 1, 2006.

Intake staff may need to manually calculate the Social Security/SSI increase for pending cases that are approved after the automated COLA has been run.

Social Worker Coordinator, Hieu Tran, receives the SSA COLA notices when our agency is the payee for the child’s benefits.

CalWIN

The SSA COLA mass update is scheduled to run on the evening of December 2, 2005 for all open and pending cases. The “RSDI COLA Increased Amount” field on the [Collect Unearned Income Detail] window will be populated with the 4.1% increase amount; and a new income record for January 2006 will be created in the [Collect Income Received Detail] window. Cases with income types listed below will be updated:

- SSA/RSDI: Income based on parent, spouse, or child disability
- SSA/RSDI: Survivors benefits
- SSA/RSDI: Blind
- SSA/RSDI: Disability benefits
- SSA/RSDI: Widow’s benefits
- SSA/RSDI: Retirement benefits

Exception:

Cases for which EWs have entered the new SSA income values for 1/2006 will not be updated.

EDBC & Authorization

The following will happen depending on the case status:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>For Non-Discrepant Cases:</th>
<th>For Discrepant Cases; Cases with Batch AU Exception Special Indicator; or Cases for which EDBC would run for month(s) other than 1/2006:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The new SSA amount will be automatically updated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• EDBC will be auto-triggered and benefits authorized.</td>
<td>• EW must manually run EDBC and authorize results online.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Client Correspondence

Notices of Action (NOAs) will be generated for those cases that have a change in benefits. Most of these notices will be mailed to clients automatically in batch. EWs must review the Client Correspondence subsystem for NOAs that are placed online to either mail or delete them. A report of cases with online notices will be provided by the Project soon.
Reports

Reports will be generated as a result of the mass update and they will be provided along with instructions as soon as they become available. Here are examples of some of the reports:

- Mass Update Exception Report (MU003R)
- List of cases with exception from income record update
- List of cases with exception from batch EDBC/Authorization
- List of cases that had income increased in the COLA.

Medi-Cal

**Standard Amounts**

During the mass COLA run, the following Medi-Cal standard amounts will also be updated:

- Medicare Premiums
- SSI/SSP Standard Allocation/Payment Standards
- Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)
- Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)
- Pickle multiplier and In-Kind Support and Maintenance values
- Community Spouse and Family Member Allocation.

FPL Programs

Though the SSA amounts will be updated during the mass COLA run, CalWIN will auto-populate a “Y” value in the “RSDI COLA Revised but FPL Revision Pending” field on the [Collect Case Summary Detail] window to exclude the SSA COLA increase from January through March 2006 for any FPL program evaluation.

EWs who are manually processing intake cases online and cases that will exception out during the COLA run (discrepant cases) will need to change the Effective Begin Date to January 2006 and set the [RSDI COLA Revised but FPL Revision Pending] switch to “Y” on the [Collect Case Summary Detail] window prior to running EDBC.

Clerical

See CalWIN “Reports.”

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