

December 6, 2024

MANUAL LETTER NO. 14-B8-41

ISSUED BY: Community Access and Eligibility, Economic Assistance

SUBJECT: Cost of Living Adjustments for 2025.

Summary

This letter transmits cost-of-living percentage increases and new benefit amounts as known at this time. All cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) are effective with benefits received in January 2025, unless otherwise noted.

TYPE OF BENEFIT	PERCENTAGE INCREASE OR NEW AMOUNT	
SSI	Individual in own home	\$ 967.00
	Couple in own home	\$ 1,450.00
	Individual in medical institution	\$ 30.00
	Individual in household of another	\$ 644.67
	Couple in household of another	\$ 966.67
	Essential person increment	\$ 484.00
Medical institution income limit	\$2,901.00	
Social Security	2.5% increase	
Medicare Part B premium	The standard Medicare Part B premium will be \$185.00 effective January 2025.	
Minimum monthly maintenance needs allowance (MMMNA)	\$3,948.00	
Maximum community spouse resource allowance	\$157,920.00	
Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Organization Retirement and Disability System (ORDS)	2.5% increase	
Federal Employees Retirement (FERS) and FERS special benefits	2.0% increase	
Black Lung	COLA information is not yet available.	
Veterans Improved Pension	2.5% increase	

TYPE OF BENEFIT

PERCENTAGE INCREASE OR NEW AMOUNT

Railroad Retirement

Tier 1 benefits: 2.5% increase
Tier 2 benefits: 0.8% increase

Beneficiaries will be notified of their COLA increase by mail in late December 2024.

If the client requests your help to get verification of the new railroad retirement amount, obtain a signed form **470-0461, Authorization for Release of Information**. Contact information can be found at www.rrb.gov.

IPERS

For eligible retirees who retired **before** July 1990, dividends will be paid with the November 30 benefit check. IPERS has sent letters to recipients to verify the amount they will receive.

For eligible retirees who retired **on or after** July 1990, the final dividend payments were made in January 2014. No additional dividends will be paid for this group of retirees.

Implementation

The 2025 COLA will include anyone on the ABC system as of November 20, 2024, with an active, pending, or recently canceled status. Refer to [14-B\(8\), Manual Processing](#) for instructions on non-calculated Medicaid cases.

Delay of Facility Calculations

Calculations from income records updated by COLA are delayed allowing you to enter other data. This results in only one notice being sent to the client. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this delay feature by entering any other changes before December 13.

This year the facility calculations are scheduled for December 13, 2024. If no income or deduction changes are entered on a case between the COLA run on December 6 and December 13, the client receives a notice after the facility calculations are run on December 13. The notice includes income from the COLA run.

If an income or deduction change is entered after December 6, but before December 13, the client receives a notice when that change is processed on ABC. The notice includes the income or deduction changes and the new income from the COLA run. The client should not receive another notice when the facility calculations are run on December 13

Medicare Premiums

Sometimes Medicare buy-in has occurred but BENDEX has not been updated. Therefore, when determining client participation for facility cases, note that the BENDEX information in WISE may not reflect the correct amount of social security benefits.

When a notice has been issued that shows a new client participation amount based on buy-in, but BENDEX does not show that buy-in has occurred, use the gross amount of the social security amount on BENDEX. Round down the cents to determine the correct amount of social security benefits to enter for determining client participation. If there are questions about whether buy-in has occurred, access the SSBI system.

Social Security and SSI Changes for SNAP

For SNAP, use the new social security amount when determining prospective eligibility and benefits for January 2025 and future months. In the COLA process, the new social security amount is updated on the BCW2 for January for all cases.

For applications and recertifications, use the actual income received or anticipated to be received to determine eligibility and benefits for months included in the process.

The BENDEX amount does not reflect the actual payment amount when child support is being deducted from social security disability payments because the beneficiary owes back support. The COLA run will update the amount on the BCW2 on these cases with the incorrect BENDEX amount with the COLA increase. Manually correct the social security income on these cases.

The SDX data for the SSI COLA is not adequate to determine what the increased SSI amount will be when there is an SSI overpayment. The SSI amount from COLA processing on January BCWs is the amount **without** the SSI recoupment subtracted.

For cases that have SSI overpayments, correct this amount using the Treasury SDX received in December. The December Treasury SDX will have the SSI amount **with** the recoupment subtracted. Remember, you use the gross or net, whichever is less. See [14-E, SNAP Cases](#). Use this amount on the BCW2 for January with an E/B indicator of "A."

Social Security Changes for FIP and RCA

For FIP and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), use the new social security amount when determining prospective eligibility and benefits for January 2025 and future months. In the COLA process, the new social security amount is updated on the BCW2 for January eligibility and benefits.

The BENDEX amount does not reflect child support being deducted from the social security disability payment. Manually correct the social security amount in these cases.

Social Security Changes for Medicaid

All SSI-related Medicaid cases are budgeted prospectively. Use increased income due to COLA for Medicaid eligibility and benefits for January, with the exception of QMB, SLMB, E-SLMB, QDWP, and MEPD.

Desk Review of SSI-Related Medically Needy Ongoing Eligible Cases

To determine which Medically Needy clients are ongoing eligibles, refer to the Monthly Eligibility Case List (608 report). If the report shows an “S” in the “CP” column, the case has SSI-related ongoing eligibility.

Complete a desk review when the SSI-related person’s income exceeds the MNIL in any month. Redetermine the person with a spenddown to a two-month certification period. The effective date of redetermination is the month that the person’s income exceeds the MNIL. Follow instructions in [14-B\(8\), Manual Processing](#).

Social Security Overpayment Deductions

According to policy, the SNAP, FIP, RCA, and FMAP-related Medicaid programs use the social security amount **after** any overpayment is deducted to calculate eligibility and benefits. However, by policy, the SSI-related programs use the social security amount **before** the deduction for overpayment.

Automated COLA updates use the social security amount according to the policy of the program. For SNAP, FIP, RCA, and FMAP-related Medicaid, the social security amount is the amount after the deduction of an overpayment.

Mr. A has an overpayment deducted from his social security benefits. He is eligible for SNAP and an SSI-related Medicaid program.

The social security benefit used as income for SNAP is the amount with the overpayment deducted.

The social security benefit used as income for SSI-related Medicaid is the amount without the overpayment deducted.

Cases Excluded from the Automated COLA Run

For cases in ABC that are excluded from the automated COLA run, you will have to manually enter the new social security or SSI amounts on the case.

Cases in the following aid types are **excluded** from the automated ABC COLA run:

00-0	02-8	14-6	53-1	64-6
02-1	10-0	24-6	60-0	64-7
02-3	14-1	37-E	64-1	73-4
02-7	14-4	50-1	64-4	

Cases with **included** aid types that have a case medical status code of “D,” “M,” “R,” or “S” are **excluded** from the automated COLA run.

Cases with FBUs of **18** or **19** (foster care cases) are **excluded** from the automated COLA run.

COLA Alerts

COLA alerts are located in the WISE system. The COLA alerts are being divided into COLA-Bendex alerts (identified by a “1” in front of the number) and COLA-SDX alerts (identified by a “2” in front of the number).

No.	WISE Wording	Instructions
1971	COLA-Bendex	BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##> <##Last Name##>, NIS Case. This case has a person with an OHP code of 1. COLA income has been entered, but the case was not recalculated on ABC. Review the diversion amount and other income. Make appropriate BCW entries on ABC to cause a recalculation.
2971	COLA-SDX	SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, NIS Case. This case has a person with an OHP code of 1. COLA income has been entered, but the case was not recalculated on ABC. Review the diversion amount and other income. Make appropriate BCW entries on ABC to cause a recalculation.
2972	COLA-SDX	SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, no source code “A”. COLA processed, entered “A” in BCW2 and recalculated the case.
1973	COLA-Bendex	BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, unearned income source code “B” (SSA income) was missing for COLA processing. The ABC system placed the code and amount in BCW2 and recalculated the case.
1974	COLA-Bendex	BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, too many BCWs. Income records could not update or be calculated for COLA processing because there were too many BCWs. The system allows only 24 income records per person. If there are too many income records, wait until after the next cutoff to enter more income. (Depending on your case’s situation, you may have to cancel the program or the person and make a TD06 entry for the coming month.)
2974	COLA-SDX	SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, too many BCWs. Income records could not update or be calculated for COLA processing because there were too many BCWs. The system allows only 24 income records per person. If there are too many income records, wait until after the next cutoff to enter more income. (Depending on your case’s situation, you may have to cancel the program or the person and make a TD06 entry for the coming month.)

No.	WISE Wording	Instructions
1975	COLA-Bendex	<p>BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, SSA no COLA. The person's BCW2 record has SSA income but no COLA was done. Possible reasons why COLA did not occur are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No BENDEX record was received. ▪ Client no longer receives SSA benefits. ▪ Birth date did not match. ▪ Person or case was approved after the deadline for exchanges with the Social Security Administration.
2976	COLA-SDX	<p>SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, SSI but no COLA. The person's BCW2 record has SSI income but no COLA was done. Possible reasons why COLA did not occur are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No SDX record was received. ▪ Client no longer receives SSI. ▪ Birth date did not match. ▪ Person or case was approved after the deadline for exchanges with the Social Security Administration.
1982	COLA-Bendex	<p>BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, invalid Medical income. BCW coding requires both "E" and "B" income indicators. One or both were missing. Review and update case.</p>
2982	COLA-SDX	<p>SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, invalid Medical income. BCW coding requires both "E" and "B" income indicators. One or both were missing. Review and update case.</p>
1983	COLA-Bendex	<p>BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, invalid Facility income. BCW coding requires both "E" and "B" income indicators. One or both were missing. Review and update case.</p>
2983	COLA-SDX	<p>SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, invalid Facility income. BCW coding requires both "E" and "B" income indicators. One or both were missing. Review and update case.</p>
1985	COLA-Bendex	<p>BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, FIP/FMAP SSA income. SSA sent a COLA record for a person who has a FIP or FMAP status of "A," "B," "C," "H," "F," or "I." COLA was not done. Review and update case.</p>
2985	COLA-SDX	<p>SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, FIP/FMAP SSI income. SSA sent a COLA record for a person who has a FIP or FMAP status of "A," "B," "C," "H," "F," or "I." COLA was not done. Review and update case.</p>

No.	WISE Wording	Instructions
1986	COLA-Bendex	BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##><##Last Name##>, overpay not \$0. The Social Security COLA amount used is different from the BENDEX amount because recoupment exists at SSA. The amount before recoupment is counted as income on facility cases. The ABC system updated the income and recalculated the case. Review case and update records.
1987	COLA-Bendex	BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##> <##Last Name##>, couple case. This case has a person with a couple case indicator (OHP code of 2) and so must have worker entries for COLA. COLA income has not been entered on ABC.
2987	COLA-SDX	SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##> <##Last Name##>, couple case. This case has a person with a couple case indicator (OHP code of 2) and so must have worker entries for COLA. COLA income has not been entered on ABC.
1989	COLA-Bendex	BENDEX COLA Alert for <##First Name##> <##Last Name##>, unearned BCW full. Unearned income source code of "B," "T," or "A" was missing for COLA processing. The code and amount could not be placed in BCW2 entries because all unearned income fields are in use. Review the BCW2s and enter income as appropriate.
2989	COLA-SDX	SDX COLA Alert for <##First Name##> <##Last Name##>, unearned BCW full. Unearned income source code of "B," "T," or "A" was missing for COLA processing. The code and amount could not be placed in BCW2 entries because all unearned income fields are in use. Review the BCW2s and enter income as appropriate.

Effective Date

January 1, 2025

Material Superseded

This letter replaces Manual Letter No. 14-B(8)-40, dated December 1, 2023, in Employees' Manual, Title 14, Chapter B(8).

Additional Information

Refer questions about this manual letter to your area income maintenance administrator.