

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

JOYCE MASSEY-SMITH • Director
Division of Aging and Adult Services

April 5, 2022

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: SPECIAL ASSISTANCE AND ADULT SERVICES SUPERVISORS,
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

SUBJECT: Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) 2022 and Veteran
Affairs (VA) Compensation and Benefits COLA 2022 for Special
Assistance In-Home (SAIH)

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

Effective January 1, 2022, Special Assistance beneficiaries received a 5.9% cost-of-living increase in their RSDI/SSI/VA benefits. Special Assistance In-Home (SAIH) cases were exempt from counting the COLA increase until April 2022, after the new Federal Poverty Levels were published.

This letter outlines the COLA automated process executed by NC FAST and provides counties procedures for handling COLA mass change updates.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND VETERANS' CHANGES DUE TO COLA ADJUSTMENT

1. RSDI/SSI- Effective January 1, 2022, recipients of RSDI and/or SSI received a 5.9% COLA increase in their monthly benefits.
2. SSI Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)- Effective January 1, 2022, the SSI FBR for an individual has increased to \$841.00 per month.
3. VA Compensation and Benefits – Effective January 1, 2022, most recipients of VA compensation and benefits received a 5.9% COLA increase in their monthly benefit.

SAIH PENDING APPLICATIONS

Pending applications will not be automatically updated by NC FAST. All pending applications will require RSDI/SSI/VA benefit evidence to be entered with a start date of January 1, 2022. The 2021 RSDI/SSI/VA benefit evidence will also need to be entered into NC FAST in the 'last year's benefit amount' field to ensure computation of the SAIH benefit is determined correctly.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF AGING AND ADULT SERVICES

LOCATION: 693 Palmer Drive, Taylor Hall, Raleigh, NC 27603
MAILING ADDRESS: 2101 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2101
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-855-3400 • FAX: 919-733-0443

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

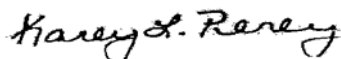
ROUNDING CORRECTIONS

1. NC FAST does not use cents for Social Security, SSI, and VA benefits when executing the automated COLA updates for the mass change. Should an amount be incorrect due to exclusion of cents for cases automatically updated by NC FAST, it is not necessary to manually correct the amounts immediately following the mass change. Take action to correct Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts at the next redetermination or change of circumstance, whichever occurs first, by entering the increased benefit amount on Benefit/Income evidence in NC FAST. The start date for the corrected evidence is January 1, 2022.
2. When corrections are needed at the next recertification or change of circumstance and the corrected benefit amount results in a SA payment decrease, send a new timely DSS-8110 indicating the new SA payment. Correcting the Benefit/Income Evidence to the increased Social Security, SSI, or VA benefit amount will create an overpayment in NC FAST. The overpayment created when adding the corrected Benefit/Income Evidence timely (the first time the case is touched after the NC FAST COLA 2022 COLA mass change) is a state responsible overpayment and charged to the state.
3. SA cases not automatically updated by the NC FAST Mass Change (Exception Cases requiring manual county caseworker review/updates) should be completed prior to the April 2022 NC FAST processing deadline to avoid county responsible overpayment(s) that require recoupment.
4. Due to the 'rounding cents' process in NC FAST, a number of cases resulted in an 'ineligible' decision that was automatically accepted for cases that fell below the FBR due to rounding down total countable benefits to \$840.00 rather than \$841.00. COLA reports are available on NC FAST Help under: Reports > Mass Change > RSDI/SSI/VA COLA Reports > April 2022. Caseworkers should have completed the SAIH reports prior to the SAIH COLA run to ensure that cases did not terminate in error.

NC FAST has provided notification, further guidance, and reports on March 11, 2022, related to COLA automation. All communication, guidance, and instructions must be followed timely and accurately to ensure appropriate actions are taken to avoid potential overpayments.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Special Assistance listserv at specialassistance@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Karey Perez,
Adult Services Section Chief
Division of Aging and Adult Services

KP/ap/lh/wb/ctw

DAAS_AS_06_2022