TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS

FROM: NETSANET KIBRET, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: CHILD SUPPORT PASS-THROUGH INITIATIVE

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE (TCA) AND
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (SNAP)

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

Summary

As mandated by state law, Family Investment Administration (FIA) is implementing the Child Support (CS) Pass-Through initiative beginning July 1, 2019. Human Services Article 5-310(a)(2) requires the first $100 of child support collected in a month for one child and the first $200 of child support collected for two or more children to pass through to the family. This benefit will be disregarded towards the household’s TCA calculation. This benefit will, however, be counted towards the household’s SNAP benefit.

Program Overview

Beginning July 1, 2019, all or a portion of child support payments received through Department of Human Services’ (DHS’s) Child Support Administration will be passed through to eligible TCA household’s Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. If the TCA household has one child, up to $100 of the monthly child support payment received will be passed-through to the TCA household. If the TCA household has two or more children, up to $200 of the monthly child support payment received will be passed-through to the TCA household.
The maximum $100 for one-child households and $200 for two or more children households remains, regardless of the number of non-custodial parents and the total amount of child support payments received.

The first child support pass-through amount will be issued to eligible TCA households in August 2019 and placed on the customer’s EBT card. The CS Pass-Through amount will be added to the customer’s TCA benefit - this means that the customer will not see the CS Pass-Through differentiated from his or her TCA benefit.

The Child Support Pass-Through policy is the same for all TCA households. Neither the relationship of the child(ren) to the head of household, nor the relationship of the children to one another impacts the way the policy is applied.

For SNAP, the amount of CS Pass-Through is countable as unearned income and may impact SNAP benefits. CARES has been modified to average three consecutive months of child support payments and determine the unearned income amount that will be counted toward the household’s SNAP benefit calculation. Should the non-custodial parent miss a child support monthly payment, CARES will stop counting the CS Pass-Through toward the SNAP benefits. There must be at least three consecutive months of child support payments received before CARES can recalculate the unearned income and begin counting it toward SNAP benefits again.

**Action Required**

**Customer Inquiries**

This initiative involves two DHS administrations: Child Support Administration (CSA) and FIA. Follow the directions below for customer inquiries.

- If the customer has questions about child support after the case manager has explained the benefit program to them, direct the customer to DHS’s Call Center at 1-800-332-6347.

- If the customer has a question about the reduction in the SNAP benefit amount, the case manager should directly assist the customer. If the SNAP reduction is a result of the CS Pass-Through, the case manager may need to reach out to the child support worker regarding the child support amounts.

- If the customer questions the increase in his or her TCA benefit amount, the case managers should directly assist the customer. If the increase is due to the household receiving a CS Pass-Through benefit amount, the case manager should explain how the CS Pass-Through calculation is determined. The case manager should also explain that anything above the TCA grant amount is not guaranteed and may change from month to
month depending on three factors: 1) whether child support has been paid, 2) the amount of the child support paid, and 3) the number of children in the TCA household.

**Best Practices Recommendation**

It is a best practice for case managers to explain this initiative to customers during the TCA interview.

**CARES**

- The CS Pass-Through amount counted toward the SNAP case will be shown on the CARES FSFI screen.
- Below is a screenshot of the CARES FSFI screen with an arrow to indicate where the CS Pass-Through amount can be found.

**Attachments**

TCA Manual Section 1312  
SNAP Manual Section 210

**Training**

A training webinar will be available on The HUB by Monday, June 24, 2019.
Inquiries
For policy-related questions, please complete the FIA Policy Information Request Form found on Knowledge Base as shown in the screenshot below.

For CARES/systems related inquiries, please contact fia.bsdm@maryland.gov.

cc:  DHS Executive Staff
     FIA Management Staff
     Constituent Services
     DHS Help Desk
     Office of Administrative Hearings