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

FROM: NETSANET KIBRET, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: HOMELESS SHELTER DEDUCTION INCREASE

PROGRAM AFFECTED: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(SNAP)

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

Background

With the recent passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, the amount of the homeless shelter deduction increased. Effective immediately, the value of the deduction is now $148 (an increase of $5) per month.

Policy Review

Definition of Homeless

A household is considered homeless if the individual or family does not have a fixed and adequate nighttime residence. Examples of such living arrangements include:

- the street,
- a temporary shelter,
- a different friend or relative’s house each night,
- a bus station,
- a lobby,
- a car, or
- an abandoned building or any similar place.
Special Eligibility for Persons who live in Homeless Shelters

The policy which states residents of institutions cannot receive SNAP benefits does **NOT** apply to people who live in public or private non-profit homeless shelters. If otherwise eligible, residents of homeless shelters may receive SNAP benefits, even if the shelter provides meals.

**Action Required**

Case managers should not give the household the $148 homeless shelter deduction unless the household meets the definition of homeless.

- When all members of the household are homeless and they are paying any amount for shelter, the household is still entitled to the $148 standard homeless shelter deduction.

- Case managers should allow actual shelter expenses, instead of the homeless shelter deduction, **if** the actual shelter costs would result in a higher deduction under the excess shelter calculation.

**CARES Procedures**

To ensure the household receives the homeless shelter deduction:

- The residential address field of the ADDR screen should indicate homeless. A valid mailing address is required in the mailing address fields; a local department’s mailing address can be used if the customer does not have a mailing address. The Special Circumstances field located at the bottom of the ADDR screen must be coded homeless (**HO**) to indicate homelessness.
- The **DEM1** screen should also indicate homeless (HL) in the **Living Arrangement** field.

- To ensure the customer receives the homeless shelter deduction, case managers **MUST** enter the $148 in the rent field of the SHEL screen. If the household is paying actual shelter expenses which exceed the $148 homeless shelter allowance, actual expenses should be used instead of the $148.
The homeless shelter deduction will appear on the CARES FSFI screen.
Attachment

SNAP Manual Section 600

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 questions, please contact fia.bsdm@maryland.gov.

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