MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 19-11

Date: December 3, 2019

To: Eligibility Services – Regional Directors
    Program Managers
    Eligibility Services Supervisors
    Regional Attorneys
    Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
      State Office 2115

Subject: 1. Counting Certain Income for SNAP
          2. SNAP Illegal Self-Employment Income Deductions
          3. SNAP Uncapped Shelter Deduction
          4. Temporary Census Income
          5. Countable ABAWD Months for SNAP
          6. Veteran’s Programs and ABAWD Work Requirements

Bulletins are sent to supervisors and other regional managers. Supervisors must share this information with all eligibility staff. Please ensure that copies are provided to staff that do not have access to e-mail. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- Texas Works Handbook (TWH) at http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins;
1. **Counting Certain Income for SNAP**

**Background**
Texas implemented the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) Rules Modification Demonstration Waiver in September 2002 to waive certain federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations to align SNAP policy and system functionality with other Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) programs.

In 2018, FNS conducted an evaluation and determined that the Texas HHSC TIERS Rules Modification Demonstration waiver did not meet the new FNS demonstration waiver criteria and did not approve extending the waiver. In the absence of an approved waiver, HHSC will apply federal SNAP regulations effective January 1, 2020.

**Current Policy**

**SNAP**
The full amount of certain payments to Native Americans under Public Law (P.L.) 93-134, the Indian Tribal Judgment Funds Use or Distribution Act, and P.L. 98-500, the Old Age Assistance Claims Settlement Act, is exempt from income when determining SNAP eligibility (TWH A-1324.8, Native and Indian Claims).

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) payments under Title I of the Domestic Volunteer Services Act (DVSA) of 1973 are exempt from income when determining SNAP eligibility (TWH A-1324.7, National and Community Services Act).

**New Policy**

**SNAP**
Payments up to $2,000 per year to Native Americans under P.L. 93-134, the Indian Tribal Judgment Funds Use or Distribution Act, and P.L. 98-500, the Old Age Assistance Claims Settlement Act, are exempt from income for SNAP. Any payment amount over $2,000 per year counts as unearned income.

VISTA payments under Title I of the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 are exempt from income only if the person is receiving SNAP at the time they begin participating in the VISTA program. VISTA payments are counted as earned income for people who apply for SNAP while already participating in the VISTA program.

**Automation**
Automation changes are not required.
**Correspondence**
Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**
The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the July 2020 revision.

Revisions to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

**Case Processing**
Starting in January, case processing instructions will be available in the ASKiT Knowledgebase. Staff must use one of the following **Clues & Issues** located in the ASKiT Knowledgebase to process case actions as appropriate to the type of income:

- Counting Native American Payments in SNAP; or
- Counting VISTA Payments in SNAP.

**Effective Date**
This policy is effective for case actions disposed on or after January 1, 2020.
2. **SNAP Illegal Self-Employment Income Deductions**

**Background**
Texas implemented the TIERS Rules Modification Demonstration Waiver in September 2002 to waive certain federal SNAP regulations to align SNAP policy and system functionality with other HHSC programs.

In 2018, FNS conducted an evaluation and determined that the Texas HHSC TIERS Rules Modification Demonstration waiver did not meet the new FNS demonstration waiver criteria and did not approve extending the waiver. In the absence of an approved waiver, HHSC will apply federal SNAP regulations effective January 1, 2020.

**Current Policy**

**SNAP**
Costs related to producing income gained from illegal activities, such as prostitution or the sale of illegal drugs, are not allowable self-employment expenses for SNAP (TWH A-1323.4.5, Allowable Costs of Producing Income).

**Note:** Income obtained from legal activities that are not reported to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, such as painting houses or babysitting, is not considered illegal income. In addition, income earned by a disqualified household member is not considered illegal income. For example, a disqualified alien who earns income through legal activities is earning legal income.

**New Policy**

**SNAP**
Costs related to producing income gained from illegal activities, such as prostitution and the sale of illegal drugs, are allowable self-employment expenses for SNAP.

At application, recertification and change action, staff must ensure when entering self-employment income in TIERS that the question “Is self-employment type legal?” on the **Self Employment – Details** page within the **Income LUW** is answered correctly. To ensure self-employment deductions are appropriately calculated, staff must only indicate “No” for this question when the income is gained from illegal activities.

**Automation**
Changes to TIERS were deployed with TIERS Release 105.2 on November 9, 2019 and are effective January 1, 2020.
Correspondence
Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook
The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated with the July 2020 revision.

Revisions to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

Training
Training was provided through the web-based training (WBT) portal titled R105.2 General Information, on October 30, 2019. A training broadcast was sent with further details.

Effective Date
This policy is effective for case actions disposed on or after January 1, 2020.
3. SNAP Uncapped Shelter Deduction

**Background**
Texas implemented TIERS Rules Modification Demonstration Waiver in September 2002 to waive certain federal SNAP regulations to align SNAP policy and system functionality with other Texas HHSC programs.

In 2018, FNS conducted an evaluation and determined that the Texas HHSC TIERS Rules Modification Demonstration waiver did not meet the new FNS demonstration waiver criteria and did not approve extending the waiver. In the absence of an approved waiver, HHSC will apply federal SNAP regulations effective January 1, 2020.

**Current Policy**

**SNAP**
Households with an elderly member or a member with a disability are eligible to receive an uncapped shelter deduction even when a household member is disqualified for any reason (TWH A-1362.3, SNAP-Budgeting for Members Disqualified for Citizenship, SNAP ABAWD Work Requirement or Noncompliance with Social Security Number Requirements; and TWH A-1362.4, SNAP-Budgeting for Persons Disqualified for Intentional Program Violations, SNAP Employment Services Noncompliances, Felony Drug Convictions or Being a Fugitive).

**New Policy**

**SNAP**
Households with an elderly member or a member with a disability continue to be eligible to receive an uncapped shelter deduction if a household member is disqualified for intentional program violation (IPV), a felony drug conviction, being a fleeing felon, parole/probation violation, or failure to meet work requirements.

Households with an elderly member or a member with a disability with a member disqualified for any other reason receive a capped shelter deduction, as specified in TWH C-121.1, Deduction Amounts. Capped shelter deductions apply to households with an elderly member or a member with a disability with members disqualified for not meeting Social Security number (SSN) requirements, meeting the time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) and not meeting alien status.

**Automation**
Changes to TIERS were deployed with TIERS Release 105.2 on November 9, 2019 and are effective January 1, 2020.
Correspondence
Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook
The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated with the July 2020 revision.

Revisions to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

Training
Training was made available through the web-based training (WBT) portal titled R105.2 General Information, on October 30, 2019. A training broadcast was sent with further details.

Effective Date
This policy is effective for case actions disposed on or after January 1, 2020.
4. Temporary Census Income

Background
Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau hires temporary workers to conduct census activities. Census activities in 2020 will be conducted primarily from January 2020 through June 2020. As part of a federal initiative to recruit census workers from low-income neighborhoods, FNS allows states the option to exempt wages paid by the U.S. Census Bureau to temporary census workers when determining SNAP eligibility.

Additionally, with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) rules are used to determine whether income is countable when determining eligibility for MAGI types of assistance. Because MAGI rules are based on federal income tax rules for countable income, temporary census income must be counted as earned income when determining eligibility for MAGI types of assistance.

Current Policy

Texas Works
Temporary census income is excluded for all Texas Works programs (TWH A-1323.6, Temporary Census Income).

MEPD
Temporary census income is countable for all Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities (MEPD) programs except Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) (MEPDH E-3170, Census Bureau Wages; and MEPDH G-4200, Special Exclusion for Medicare Savings Plans-Census Bureau Wages).

Note: This policy only applies to temporary census workers. The income of U.S. Census Bureau employees who are not considered temporary workers is counted as earned income for all programs.

New Policy

SNAP, TANF, TP 32 and TP 56
There are no policy changes for SNAP, TANF, TP 32 and TP 56. Temporary census income is excluded.

Texas Works Medical Programs except TP 32 and TP 56
Temporary census income is countable as earned income.

MEPD
There are no policy changes for MEPD types of assistance. Temporary census income is countable for all MEPD programs except MSP.
**Note:** The applicant or recipient must provide verification of their status as a temporary census worker for the wages to be exempt.

**Automation**

Changes to TIERS were deployed with TIERS Release 105.1 on October 5, 2019 and are effective January 1, 2020. Automation changes will exclude temporary census income from the SNAP budget and count census income for MAGI types of assistance. Staff should continue to select *Temporary Census* from the **Employment Type** drop-down menu when temporary census income from the U.S. Census Bureau is reported.

**Correspondence**

Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the July 2020 revision.

Revisions to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

**Training**

Training is not required.

**Effective Date**

This policy is effective January 1, 2020.
5. Countable ABAWD Months for SNAP

Background
During the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Management Evaluation (ME) Review for Fiscal Year 2018, FNS clarified that able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) should not have Federal Time Limits (FTLs) months counted during any month in which they participated in SNAP E&T, regardless of the number of participation hours they have for that month.

Current Policy
SNAP

Counting Months Toward Time-Limited Eligibility
Unless exempt, an ABAWD not meeting the ABAWD work requirements is limited to three months of benefits in a 36-month period. A non-exempt person’s 36-month period begins with the first countable month for which the person works or participates less than an average of 20 hours per week and receives SNAP benefits in Texas or any other state (TWH A-1940, SNAP ABAWD Work Requirements).

Count a benefit month as one of the three ABAWD FTLs months if the person (TWH-1950, Counting Months Toward Time-Limited Eligibility):

- receives SNAP benefits in Texas or any other state that month;
- is not exempt from the work requirement that month; and
- fails to work an average of 20 hours per week that month.

Based on entries by staff in the TIERS Miscellaneous ABAWD Summary, ABAWD FTLs months are counted at application for each full month of benefits unless HHSC receives notification that the ABAWD begins meeting the work requirement.

Upon notification from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) [using Form H1822, ABAWD E&T Work Requirement Verification] that the ABAWD is participating in SNAP E&T, the ABAWD time limit months are not counted effective the following month (TWH B-642.1, Verification Provided Timely). Any ABAWD FTL months already counted in the TIERS ABAWD Override screen are removed effective the month after TWC notifies HHSC that the person is participating in SNAP E&T.

Second Time-Limited Three-Month SNAP Eligibility Period
A person who receives three months of time-limited benefits can qualify for one additional three-month period of eligibility in the 36-month period if the person is not meeting the work requirements but has worked for a specified period after receiving all three months of time-limited benefits. The additional eligibility period is limited to three consecutive months, even if the person returns to work or if HHSC...
denies SNAP for another reason during the three-month period (TWH A-1961, Second Time-Limited Three-Month SNAP Eligibility Period).

When notification is received from TWC during the second 3-month segment that the ABAWD is meeting work requirements by participating in SNAP E&T, do not remove ABAWD FTL months in the second 3-month segment.

**New Policy**

**SNAP**

*Counting Months Toward Time-Limited Eligibility*

Count a benefit month as one of the three ABAWD FTLs months if the person:

- receives SNAP benefits in Texas or any other state that month;
- is not exempt from the work requirement that month; and
- fails to work an average of 20 hours per week that month.

**Exception:** Do not count a benefit month as one of the three initial ABAWD FTLs months if the ABAWD participates in SNAP E&T, regardless of the number of participation hours they have for that month.

Upon notification from TWC that the ABAWD is participating in SNAP E&T, stop counting ABAWD FTLs months effective the same month the person started participating and remove any ABAWD FTLs months already counted in TIERS for the current month of participation and future months.

Additionally, when the modification of the ABAWD FTLs months results in the first countable month of the 36-month period being removed, the 36-month period must be adjusted to start with the first countable month in which the ABAWD does not meet the work requirements. If all countable ABAWD FTLs months are removed, the 36-month period must also be removed.

*Second Time-Limited Three-Month SNAP Eligibility Period*

A person who receives the three months of time-limited benefits and qualifies for one additional three-month period of eligibility in the 36-month period is limited to three consecutive months, even if the person returns to work or if HHSC denies SNAP for another reason during the 3-month period.

**Exception:** When notification is received from TWC that the ABAWD is meeting work requirements by participating in SNAP E&T in the first month of the second 3-month segment, remove ABAWD FTLs months. If the ABAWD begins participating in SNAP E&T in the second or third month of the second 3-month segment, the three consecutive ABAWD FTLs months must remain.
Additionally, when the modification of the ABAWD FTLs months results in the first countable month of the second 3-month segment being removed, the second 3-month segment must be adjusted to start with the first countable month in which the ABAWD does not meet the work requirements. If the first countable month of the second 3-month segment is removed, the consecutive months of the second 3-month segment must also be removed.

**Automation**
Changes to TIERS will be implemented with TIERS Release 105.3 currently scheduled for December 14, 2019.

**Correspondence**
Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**
The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the July 2020 revision.

Revisions to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

**Training**
Training will be made available through the web-based training (WBT) portal titled *R105.3 Changes to ABAWD Countable Months*, currently scheduled for December 6, 2019. A training broadcast will be sent with further details.

**Effective Date**
This policy is effective with TIERS Release R105.3 currently scheduled for December 14, 2019.
6. **Veteran’s Programs and ABAWD Work Requirements**

**Background**
The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (commonly referred to as the 2018 Farm Bill) passed in December 2018 expands the definition of a work program for purposes of meeting the work requirement for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) by adding employment and training (E&T) programs for veterans operated by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

**Current Policy**

**SNAP**
An ABAWD may participate in one of the following work programs an average of at least 20 hours per week to meet the work requirement (TWH A-1941.2, Meeting the Work Requirement Through a Work Program):

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program; or
- SNAP E&T Program (Note: SNAP E&T Workfare also meets this work requirement even if it is less than an average of 20 hours per week).

Veterans programs operated by the DOL or VA do not qualify as work programs for purposes of meeting the work requirements for ABAWDs.

Staff must use Form H1822, ABAWD E&T Work Requirement Verification, to verify with TWC when an ABAWD is participating in an allowable work program administered through TWC. For veteran employment and training programs administered by DOL or VA verify participation.

**New Policy**

**SNAP**
An ABAWD may participate in one of the following work programs an average of at least 20 hours per week to meet the work requirement:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program;
- SNAP E&T Program; or
- an employment and training program for veterans operated by DOL or VA.

Staff must continue to use Form H1822 to verify with TWC when an ABAWD is participating in an allowable work program administered through TWC. For veteran employment and training programs administered by DOL or VA verify participation.
in the veteran employment and training program using one of the following sources:

- contact with the DOL or VA veteran employment and training program provider; or
- letter from the DOL or VA veteran employment and training program provider verifying that the ABAWD is participating at least an average of 20 hours per week.

**Automation**
Automation changes are not required.

**Correspondence**
Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**
The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the July 2020 revision.

Revisions to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

**Training**
Training will be made available through the web-based training (WBT) portal titled *R105.3 Changes to ABAWD Countable Months*, currently scheduled for December 6, 2019. A training broadcast will be sent with further details.

**Effective Date**
This policy is effective January 1, 2020.

Background
The Social Security Administration adjusts Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to reflect the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) effective January 1 of each year. The COLA adjustment also impacts Railroad Retirement (RR) benefits. The annual COLA is based on increases in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The COLA increase for 2020 is 1.6 percent.

Policy Update
Federal Income Cap Increases

**MEPD**
Effective January 1, 2020, the special income limit based on 300 percent of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefit rate for the institutional, Community Attendant Services (CAS), Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver, and Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) programs for the 2020 level are as follows:

- Individual: $2,349
- Couple: $4,698

The 2020 resource limits for the above MEPD programs will remain:

- Individual: $2,000
- Couple: $3,000

Medicare Savings Program (MSP) Resource Limits

**MEPD**
The MSP resource limits are adjusted annually based on changes in the CPI. Effective January 1, 2020, the resource limits for Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMB), Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiaries (SLMB), and Qualifying Individuals 1 (QI-1) will change.

The 2020 resource limits for QMB, SLMB, and QI-1 are as follows:

- Individual: $7,860
- Couple: $11,800

The resource limits for the Qualified Disabled and Working Individuals (QDWI) Program are twice the countable resources allowed under the SSI program and will remain the same.

- Individual: $4,000
Couple: $6,000

**MSP Income Limits**

**MEPD**

The MSP income limits are adjusted annually based on the federal poverty level (FPL). There are no changes to the QMB, SLMB and QI-1 income limits until the new FPL amounts are published in early 2020.

**Federal Benefit Increases**

**All Programs**

Social Security - RSDI and SSI beneficiaries receive a 1.6 percent COLA increase effective January 1, 2020.

Effective January 1, 2020, the maximum SSI standard payment amount is:

- Individual: $783
- Couple: $1,175

**MEPD**

Income limits based on the SSI Federal Benefit Rate for the 2020 levels are:

- Individual: $783
- Couple: $1,175

**All Programs**

The following federal benefits are not included in the TIERS Mass Update but receive a COLA update effective January 1, 2020:

- Civil Service annuitants receive a 1.6 percent COLA increase in benefits for 2020;
- Railroad Retirement beneficiaries receive 1.6 percent COLA increase in Tier I benefits and a 0.5 percent increase in Tier II benefits for 2020; and
- Veterans Administration (VA) beneficiaries will receive a 1.6 percent COLA increase for 2020.

**Note:** Under federal law, the VA's compensation, pension rates, VA "new law" pension, and VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits for surviving dependents of deceased veterans receive the same percentage increase as Social Security benefits.

**Note:** Institutionalized VA beneficiaries whose benefits are capped at $90 do not receive an increase.
Medicare Part A

**MEPD**

The standard Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) premium for beneficiaries not entitled to free Medicare Part A coverage increases from $437 to $458 for 2020. The reduced Medicare Part A premium amount will increase from $240 to $252 for 2020.

The annual Medicare Part A deductible for hospitalized beneficiaries will increase from $1,364 to $1,408 for 2020.

Medicare Part B

**All Programs**

The standard Medicare Part B premium will increase to $144.60 for 2020. By law, most beneficiaries with Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) are covered by the "hold harmless" provision, which means the 2020 RSDI benefit cannot be less than the 2019 RSDI benefit. For these beneficiaries, the Medicare Part B premium for 2020 will vary based on the COLA increase in their RSDI benefit for 2020. Staff will need to rely on SOLQ for the exact amount.

The annual Medicare Part B deductible will increase to $198 in 2020.

Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)

**MEPD**

The monthly amount of earned income that can be excluded under the SEIE will change from $1,870 for 2019 to $1,900 for 2020. The yearly amount that can be excluded under the SEIE will change from $7,550 for 2019 to $7,670 for 2020.

Substantial Home Equity

**MEPD**

The maximum home equity amount will change from $585,000 for 2019 to $595,000 for 2020.

Spousal Standards

**MEPD**

The minimum spousal protected resource amount (SPRA) will change from $25,284 for 2019 to $25,728 for 2020.

The maximum SPRA will change from $126,420 for 2019 to $128,640 for 2020.

The maximum monthly maintenance needs allowance (MMMNA) for spousal cases will change from $3,160.50 for 2019 to $3,216.50 for 2020.
Appeal Procedures
Recipients may appeal any adverse action resulting from the COLA update. Staff may continue benefits or continue benefits at the previous levels, if applicable, only if all of the following conditions are met:

- the appeal is based on incorrect computation of eligibility/benefits or misapplication of federal policy;
- the appeal is requested within 13 days of the date of the adverse action notice; and
- the person does not waive the right to continued benefits.

Remind TANF and SNAP recipients that an overpayment, subject to recoupment, will occur if the:

- benefits are continued at the previous level; and
- hearing officer's decision is not in the recipient's favor.

Automation
Mass Update of TIERS Data
Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) updates will run on December 8, 2019. TIERS will update the income and expenses for all recipients who have RSDI, SSI, and/or RR income or a Medicare premium expense, including EDGs/cases that are denied or not active.

The income and expense pages will reflect the updated effective begin dates, income amounts, Medicare Part B premium amount, and the new co-pay budget information. TIERS will generate exception reports for staff action on EDGs/cases that cannot be updated.

In addition, TIERS Mass Update will run eligibility, dispose the EDGs in the case, and send case-specific correspondence on active cases/EDGs in Ongoing case mode.

In the following situations, TIERS only updates the data but will not run eligibility:

- a case not in Ongoing mode;
- a case that contains an EDG with ongoing benefits that were overridden; or
- a case that contains a denied EDG.

TIERS generates a Mass Update Exception Report for cases in which the COLA update cannot be completed because the case was not in Ongoing mode or the case had an EDG with overridden benefits. Staff must take the appropriate action to verify and correct the recipient’s income and premium amounts and run eligibility
for all cases that appear on the exception report according to policy for each type of program assistance.

**Verification Sources**

The following verification sources are used to update the income amounts and Medicare Part B premiums:

- "Percentage Increase Used" when TIERS calculated the new RSDI, SSI, or RR amount using the percentage calculation;
- "SDX" when TIERS updated the new RSDI, SSI, or RR amount from the SDX interface file;
- "BENDEX" when RSDI income amounts were updated from the annual BENDEX file;
- "SMIB" when Medicare Part B premium amounts were updated based on the interface file; and
- "COLA Update" when the Medicare Part B premium amount is updated and the recipient is not on the Supplemental Medical Insurance Benefits (SMIB) or BENDEX file.

A report (Excel spreadsheet) of all MEPD cases with a decrease in co-pay as a result of the COLA update will be created. Staff must take the appropriate action to verify and correct the recipient’s income and premium amounts to ensure the co-payment calculation is accurate.

**Reports**

TIERS generates interface exception reports (for the reasons in the list that follows) for cases that were not processed in the interface update. Automation staff forward the interface exception reports to Eligibility Operations. The interface exception reports contain specific instructions on the actions required by staff. Staff must take appropriate action to verify and correct income, and premium amounts for all EDGs or cases that appear on the exception reports according to policy for each type of program assistance.

**Interface Exception Reports**

are generated for the reasons below:

- TIERS and/or the interface file have multiple Social Security Claim Numbers (SSCNs); however, all the SSCNs do not match. The RSDI income records were not updated. Verify the RSDI amount for all SSCNs for the person and correct income amounts and SSCNs.
- The RSDI income records were not updated because the person is receiving RSDI on four or more SSCNs. Verify the RSDI amount for all SSCNs for the person and correct income amounts and SSCNs.
The Medicare Part B premium does not equal the amount of $144.60. Mass Update was not performed on this case. Review the case and update the premium.

According to interface data, the Medicare Part B premium is paid by the state of Texas; however, TIERS does not reflect this information. Review the case, update data collection, and run eligibility.

According to TIERS data, the Medicare Part B premium is paid by the State of Texas; however, the SMIB file does not reflect this information. Review the case, update data collection, and run eligibility.

TIERS has multiple RSDI income records for a person with different SSCNs and the person also receives SSI. The records were not updated because the combined amount (RSDI and SSI) could not be determined. Verify the RSDI and SSI amounts for the person.

TIERS indicates the person is receiving RSDI and SSI; however, based on BENDEX the person’s combined RSDI and SSI is over the individual SSI income limit. The RSDI income amount was updated with the amount from BENDEX, and the SSI amount was updated to the difference between the combined amount and the RSDI amount. Verify both the RSDI and SSI amounts for the person.

TIERS indicates the person is receiving RSDI and SSI. However, the person’s combined RSDI and SSI is over the individual SSI income limit. Only the SSI income amount was updated using the percentage increase. Verify both the RSDI and SSI amounts for the person and take appropriate action.

Correspondence
TIERS generates a TF0001 only if benefits are increased, decreased, or denied. The date on the TF0001, Notice of Case Action, is December 8, 2019. The COLA TF0001, Notice of Case Action, contains the following messages based on the type of assistance impacted:

**SNAP**

*English:* “The amount of state benefits you get has changed. This is due to either a change in (1) the amount of money you get in federal benefits (RSDI, SSI, or Railroad Retirement), or (2) the amount you pay for Medicare Part B.”

*Spanish:* “La cantidad de beneficios que usted recibe se ha modificado. Ello se debe a que uno de los datos siguientes ha sufrido un cambio: (1) la cantidad de dinero que usted recibe a través de beneficios federales (RSDI,
SSI o pensión de ferrocarril), o (2) la cantidad que paga por Medicare Parte B.”

**TANF**

**English:** “The amount of benefits you get has changed. This is due to the change in the amount of money you get in federal benefits (RSDI, SSI or Railroad Retirement).”

**Spanish:** “La cantidad de beneficios que usted recibe se ha modificado. Ello se debe a que la cantidad de dinero que usted recibe a través de beneficios federales (RSDI, SSI o pensión de ferrocarril) ha sufrido un cambio.”

**Medicaid (Texas Works and MEPD)**

**English:** “Your benefits are denied. This is due to the change in the amount of money you get in federal benefits (RSDI, SSI or Railroad Retirement).

**Spanish:** “Se rechaza la prestación de beneficios. Ello se debe a que la cantidad de dinero que usted recibe a través de beneficios federales (RSDI, SSI o pensión de ferrocarril) ha sufrido un cambio.”

**Co-Payment Changes for Types of Assistance TA 10, TA 12, TP 10, TP 15, TP 16 or TP 17**

**English:** “The amount you need to pay each month has changed. This is due to either a change in (1) the amount of money you get in federal benefits (RSDI, SSI or Railroad Retirement) or (2) the amount you pay for Medicare Part B.

**Spanish:** “La cantidad que usted tiene que pagar cada mes se ha modificado. Ello se debe a que uno de los datos siguientes ha sufrido un cambio: (1) la cantidad de dinero que usted recibe a través de beneficios federales (RSDI, SSI o pensión de ferrocarril), o (2) la cantidad que paga por Medicare Parte B.”

These messages appear in correspondence triggered due to either Mass Update or the first time the EDG is disposed after the COLA update.

**Handbook**

The MEPD Handbook updates are scheduled for the March 2020 revision.

The MEPD Appendices will be updated on the Loop on December 9, 2019.

Texas Works Handbook updates are not required.
Training
The MEPD New Hire Training and TIERS training will be updated.

Effective Date
The COLA updates are effective January 1, 2020.