Date: September 20, 2018

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Federal Changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program go into effect October 1, 2018

SALEM, Ore. – The United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service approved an adjustment to the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps. The COLA sets the income guidelines and benefit allotment amounts, and the SUA determines the amount of heating and cooling costs an eligible person may claim. These adjustments will be effective on October 1, 2018.

Oregon SNAP participants do not need to take any action. The state will automatically recalculate cases and adjust when required. Families may experience the following: no change, a $9 increase or a $4 decrease. Changes are based on a family’s individual case and will be reflected in the October 2018 disbursement.

Currently, slightly less than one in seven Oregonians – or 626,038 Oregonians – receive food benefits through SNAP. The amount of benefits a SNAP participant receives is based on many factors, including income and deductions for necessities like shelter and utilities.

The change in the 2018 standards will not increase the number of people receiving SNAP, and it does not change program eligibility requirements. To be eligible for SNAP, most families must have income less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level and meet other eligibility factors. For a family of four, this means having gross income less than $3,870 per month. Some individuals or families, which include a disabled person or a person at least 60 years of age, can be eligible for SNAP benefits with income higher than this amount.

SNAP participants with questions about the changes can contact their local Oregon Department of Human Services office for assistance:
orregon.gov/DHS/Offices/Pages/index.aspx

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1 Based on latest US Census 2017 estimates & SNAP Participation numbers from July 2018