

# Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) Program Guide Letter No. 17

December 23, 2008

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**Subject**                    **JANUARY 2009 COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLA)**

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**Effective date**        January 1, 2009

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**Reference**                All-County Information Notices (ACIN) I-84-08 and I-93-08

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**Purpose**                    The purpose of this CAPI Program Guide Letter is to provide staff:

- Revised payment standards for CAPI effective January 1, 2009
- Reminder for treatment of COLAs for CAPI/Supplemental Security Income (SSI) couple cases.

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**Background on CAPI payment standards**        The documents listed in the chart below determine the CAPI payment standards.

Document	Purpose
Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18941	Requires CAPI payment standards based on the SSI/SSP payment standards, minus \$10.00 for an individual and \$20.00 for a couple.
ACIN I-93-08	Notified counties of the following, per Senate Bill 68: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New CAPI Payment Standards for 2009, resulting from the Federal SSI/(State Supplemental Payments (SSP) COLA, effective January 1, 2009.</li> <li>• Treatment of COLAs for CAPI/SSI couple cases.</li> </ul>

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**Increases in other values**        The Federal SSI COLA affects the following values for 2009 that can affect CAPI eligibility and benefit amounts.

Variable Value	Amount for 2008	Amount as of 1/1/09	Enter Amount, When Appropriate, on Form...
Presumed Maximum	Individual:	Individual:	SOC 452, Income

Value (PMV) of the In-Kind Support and Maintenance	\$232.33 Couple: \$338.66	\$244.66 Couple: \$357.00	Eligibility Worksheet, line A.1.b.
Allowance for Ineligible Children in Deeming Situations (i.e., deeming income from an ineligible spouse)	\$319.00	\$337.00	SOC 452, Income Eligibility Worksheet, line B.2.a. or SOC 452A, Income Eligibility – Child Worksheet, line A.4.a
Sponsor's Allocation in Alien Deeming Situations	\$637.00	\$674.00	SOC 454, Sponsor to Alien Deeming Worksheet, line 2.
Allowance for Parent(s) in Parent-to-Child Deeming Situations	One parent: \$637.00  Two parents: \$956.00	One parent: \$674.00  Two parents: \$1011.00	SOC 452A, Income Eligibility – Child Worksheet

**SSI couple cases**

ACIN I-81-04 instructs counties to change the way they prepare budgets for CAPI/SSI/SSP couples in the month that a COLA occurs and the subsequent month. Currently, per All-County Letter (ACL) No. 99-13, workers count the SSI/SSP benefits received by one spouse as income, while using a special Payment Standard for CAPI/SSI/SSP couples. This is to ensure that these couples receive combined benefits that total \$10.00 less than the benefit rate for SSI/SSP couples, as opposed to \$20.00 less for CAPI couples. However, this intended result will NOT occur for a CAPI/SSI/SSP couple if workers use normal retrospective budgeting of the spouse's SSI/SSP benefit to determine the CAPI payment in the effective month of a COLA and the subsequent month. Using the current retrospective budgeting for these two months results in the CAPI/SSI/SSP couples receiving *higher* combined benefits in the two months in question than either the SSI/SSP or the CAPI couple.

Therefore, workers must use prospective budgeting for the month that a COLA occurs and the subsequent month. CalWIN will not use prospective budgeting. In order for the income to be counted correctly, workers must enter the begin date of November 2008 for the increased income. Otherwise, it will not be counted correctly for January 2009.

**Example of budgeting methods**

Using January 2009 the following example illustrates the difference between the current retrospective budgeting for the COLA and subsequent months (i.e., January and February of 2009) and the new

prospective budgeting for this same period. This example assumes the SSI spouse receives the full SSI benefit and there are no other income adjustments for an aged or disabled couple.

CAPI/SSI Couple's Payment Standard	SSI Spouse's Benefit for Appropriate Months	CAPI Spouse's Benefit
<u>Retrospective</u>		
\$1,569	- \$870	= \$699
<u>Prospective</u>		
\$1,569	- \$907	= \$662

**Note:** This example is for the months of January and February. However, prospective budgeting will be used for all future COLA and subsequent months.

**Reports** The COLA ran on the weekend of December 13, 2008 for all CalWORKs, Food Stamps (FS), Medi-Cal, GR, and CAPI cases with SSA/Veterans' Benefits.

Reports from the COLA run will be distributed separately and instructions will be attached to those reports.

**Required worker actions** Workers must take the following actions:

- Use prospective budgeting for recalculating budgets for the January 1, 2009 COLA.
- Review the cases on the attached lists as stated above.

**Forms impact** None.

**Quality Assurance impact** The California Department of Social Services has not specified a Quality Assurance requirement for CAPI and appeals are handled through the usual State hearing process.

**Food Stamps impacts** CAPI Grant adjustments due to COLA and CAPI Payment Standard changes will be treated for FS according to Quarterly Reporting/Prospective Budget (QR/PB) regulations.

CAPI payments are considered Public Assistance (PA) income. The actual monthly CAPI grant amount must be used each month to compute FS benefits for FS households receiving CAPI benefits.

Changes to PA benefits are considered information that is known to the county. The worker shall review all changes to PA benefits for possible FS benefit increases or decreases by calculating a new FS budget. FS benefits shall be increased if the calculation indicates such an increase. For QR reporting households, if the calculation indicates a mid-quarter decrease, benefits cannot be decreased.

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**Medi-Cal  
impact**

Since CAPI payments are considered public assistance income and are exempt for Medi-Cal budgeting purposes, do not count CAPI when determining Medi-Cal eligibility and/or share of cost.

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**Manager  
approval**

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