

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)A)
CalFresh Program Guide Letter**

State Utility Assistance Subsidy (SUAS)	Number	Page
	603	1 of 3

Issue Date:

11/6/2014

Effective Date:

July 1, 2014

Purpose:

To provide instructions regarding the SUAS, and to incorporate the regulations into the CalFresh Program Guide (CFPG). Preliminary information regarding the SUAS was provided in Special Notice (SN) 14-03 issued July 18, 2014. SN 14-03 is now obsolete.

Background:

Assembly Bill (AB) 6 (Chapter 501, Statutes of 2011) required the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to implement the "Heat and Eat" Program beginning January 2013 to allow the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) deduction for all CalFresh households.

Effective January 1, 2013, CDSS, in partnership with the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) provided all CalFresh recipients with an annual Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) payment of \$0.10 in order to qualify for the SUA deduction and promote awareness of LIHEAP benefits. This program was commonly referred to as "Heat and Eat."

On February 7, 2014, President Obama signed H.R. 2642, the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Farm Bill) into law. Section 4006 of the Farm Bill mandated that the minimum energy assistance payment required to qualify for the SUA deduction be an amount greater than \$20. The Farm Bill specifies that the payment must be made under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 **or other similar energy assistance program.**

To continue "Heat and Eat", and to comply with the mandate in the Farm Bill, the California Legislature and Governor Brown approved Senate Bill (SB) 855 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014) on June 24, 2014 with an effective date of July 1, 2014. SB 855 repealed LIHEAP (\$0.10)-based Heat and Eat and established SUAS, a State-funded energy assistance program.

Policy Change:

SUAS is a state-funded energy assistance program that provides households who otherwise do not qualify for the SUA deduction, with a payment of \$20.01. The SUAS payment will only be provided to those households who would receive more benefits or would become eligible for CalFresh when receiving the SUA deduction.

Households are eligible for the SUA deduction effective the month they receive the SUAS payment and continue to be eligible to the SUA deduction for the remainder of their certification (12 months). Households discontinued before the end of their certification that reapply may receive another SUAS payment within a 12-month period.

- Evaluate eligibility to the SUAS payment and issued if eligible at the next recertification.
- Evaluate, and issue the SUAS payment if eligible during the required 12-month contact to households that are certified for 24 months.

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)
CalFresh Program Guide Letter**

State Utility Assistance Subsidy (SUAS)

Number

Page

603

2 of 3

- Issue the SUAS payment to homeless households only if the household would receive additional CalFresh benefits as a result of receiving the SUA deduction.
- When determining entitlement to Expedited Services, use the SUA only if the household incurs heating or cooling costs that are billed separately. Otherwise use the:
 - Limited Utility Allowance (LUA) if the household incurs two utility expenses, which are not used for heating or cooling, or
 - Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA) if the household incurs a telephone expense.

Once the case is approved, determine if the household is eligible for the SUAS payment. Do not use LUA or TUA in the determination of CalFresh allotments.

Summary of Changes:

- [63-105.1](#) - Updated evaluation for Expedited Services to count the SUA, LUA or TUA
- [63-115.1](#) - Re-formatted section and removed requirement to inform the household of the SUA
- [63-117.22](#) - Updated verification requirements
- [63-234.1, 3](#) - Updated evaluation of SUAS for homeless households
- [63-235.4](#) - Updated utility expenses and SUAS information
- [63-236.1-5](#) - Added SUAS information and updated other energy assistance information
- [63-236.6](#) - New section: added SUAS policy
- [63-237](#) - Added SUAS information

Impacts:

Automation

Continue using [BENDS #6851](#) to issue the SUAS payment to allow the SUA deduction until CalWIN is updated.

With Release 39, CalWIN will evaluate SUAS for cases with certification periods starting in March 2013 through November 2013. It will also evaluate cases with applications dated after March 10 2014. For these cases, CalWIN will issue SUAS December 11 and will allow the SUA deduction in the December budget.

CalWIN will evaluate for SUAS at the 12 month mark (effective the 13th month) for cases with 24 month certification periods. This will be automated with CR7001 in December 2014 or January 2015. Until automation takes effect, staff will evaluate and issue SUAS, if eligible at the 12th month mandatory interim contact ([63-301.4](#)).

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

The \$20.01 SUAS payment will be issued via the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to all SUAS-eligible CalFresh households. At the end of October 2014, CalWIN will automatically:

- Activate cash access on EBT cards for cases which meet criteria for SUAS and do not have access to cash, and
- Re-activate dormant cards.

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)A)
CalFresh Program Guide Letter**

State Utility Assistance Subsidy (SUAS)	Number	Page
	603	3 of 3

These will be one time occurrences.

REMINDER: Select 'both' on the **EBT Account Access** field on the **Maintain Card Request** page for the primary card holder to give cash access when approving a CalFresh case eligible to SUAS.

Forms and Document Capture:

The [CF 1](#) was revised with information regarding the SUAS payment. The CF 1 will be automated in CalWIN with Release 39.

Programs Affected:

No impact.

Quality Control:

Quality Control (QC) will cite the appropriate error when instructions in this material are not followed.

References:

- [All County Letter 14-54](#)
- [All County Letter 14-66](#)
- [All County Welfare Director Letter \(ACWDL\) dated June 30, 2014.](#)
- [MPP 63-502.363](#)

Sunset Date:

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 11/06/2017

Approval for Release:



Rick Wanne, MA, MFT
Director
Eligibility Operations