

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
Center for Employment & Economic Supports

March 19, 2009

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TO: TA Directors, FS Directors, HEAP Directors

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment and Economic Supports

SUBJECT: Treatment of the One-Time \$250 Stimulus Payments from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau at 1-800-343-8859; ext. 4-9344
Food Stamp Policy Bureau at 1-800-343-8859; ext. 3-1469
HEAP Policy Bureau at 1-800-343-8859; ext. 3-0332
SDOH Medicaid Local District Liaison at 212-417-4500 (NYC)
or 518-474-8887 (Rest of State)

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 "Stimulus Bill" Public Law 111-5, which provides a one time payment of \$250 to each recipient of Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement Benefits and Veterans Disability Compensation or Pension Benefits. These payments are limited to individuals who were eligible for these benefits during the three months prior to the enactment of the ARRA "Stimulus Bill": therefore not all of the aforementioned individuals may receive this payment. The federal government may begin issuing these payments as early as May 2009. It is anticipated that it will take several months to issue payments to all those who are eligible. The purpose of this GIS is to explain how districts must treat these one-time \$250 payments when determining eligibility for Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps and the Home Energy Assistance Program.

For purposes of determining eligibility under any federal program or under any state or local program financed in whole or in-part with federal funds, the ARRA of 2009 "Stimulus Bill" mandates that these payments are not countable as income and are not a countable resource for the month of receipt and the following nine months. For consistency and administrative efficiency, New York has opted to extend this policy to its federally non-participating Safety Net Assistance (SNA-FNP) program.

Temporary Assistance (TA)

The \$250 stimulus payment income and resource exclusions described below apply to both federally and State/locally funded categories of Safety Net Assistance (SNA-FP and SNA-FNP), to Family Assistance (FA) and to all categories of emergency assistance including Emergency Assistance to Needy Families (EAF), Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA) and Emergency Assistance for Adults (EAA). This includes case types 11, 12, 16, 17, 18 and 19.

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Income Exclusion

Districts must exclude the one time \$250 payments received under the ARRA “Stimulus Bill” as income when determining initial and recurring eligibility, when determining the benefit level for recurring TA (FA, SNA-FP and SNA-FNP) and when determining income eligibility for emergency TA (EAF and ESNA).

Resource Exclusion

Districts must exempt these \$250 stimulus payments as a countable resource for the month of receipt and the following nine months. This includes exempting the \$250 payments as a resource for recurring TA, and prohibits a district from considering these stimulus payments as an available resource to meet an emergency need when determining eligibility for emergency TA. Please note, for EAA, districts must continue to consider any remaining balance of the stimulus payment unavailable to meet an emergency need even after the exclusion period has expired.

For example, if a household receives a \$250 stimulus payment in May 2009, the district must not count it as income or a resource for May, and must exclude it as a countable resource for the following nine months. However, in February 2010, if the household has remaining funds from the \$250 payment, the district must treat these remaining funds as a non-excluded resource, unless the household is applying for emergency relief under EAA as noted above.

Food Stamps (FS)

As noted above, the ARRA of 2009 “Stimulus Bill” mandates that these payments not be countable as income and, for those food stamp households that cannot be considered “categorically eligible” and still are subject to a resource requirement, are **not** countable as a resource for the month of receipt and the following nine months.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

The HEAP Program will exclude these payments from income when determining eligibility. The payments, or any remaining amounts, are **not** countable as a resource for the month of receipt and the following nine months.

Medicaid

As noted above, the ARRA of 2009 “Stimulus Bill” mandates that these \$250 payments not be countable as income for Medicaid. Further, these payments are **not** counted as a resource for Medicaid in the month of receipt and the following 9 months.

NOTE:

The ARRA also contains new provisions regarding Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Temporary Medical Assistance. Information on these programs will be forthcoming for Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, HEAP and Medicaid.