February 7, 2012
Massachusetts SSI State Supplement Program (SSP) Questions and Answers
Issue 01

**SSP Administration**

**Q. How much does Massachusetts currently pay the Social Security Administration (SSA) to administer the SSP? What are the anticipated savings from the state administering the SSP?**

A. The Commonwealth currently pays in excess of $25 million per year to SSA to administer the SSP. Projected annual savings from state administration are approximately $15 million, increasing annually as the federal cost increases and the state cost decreases.

**Q. Do other states administer their SSP?**

Forty-two states currently administer their SSP. Massachusetts will be the 43rd and New York is exploring taking over administration of their program.

**Q. Will there be state regulations for the SSP?**

A. Yes, there will be regulations promulgated by the Department of Transitional Assistance and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. The proposed regulations are currently in public notice, and the comment period ends February 13, 2012. A copy of the proposed regulations may be obtained by calling 617-348-8470 or emailing dtapolicyunit@state.ma.us, or on the web at [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta) or [www.mass.gov/mcb](http://www.mass.gov/mcb).

**Q. How will SSP appeals be handled?**

A. SSP appeals will follow the existing DTA fair hearing rules and will be heard by DTA Hearings Officers. The DTA fair hearing rules may be found at 106 CMR 343.000. The regulations may be accessed on the DTA website, [www.mass.gov/dta](http://www.mass.gov/dta).

**Q. What are the timeframes for requesting an appeal?**

A. The request for a fair hearing must be received within ninety days of the written notice of the action.

* NOTE: This answer updates and corrects information which was given at the January 24, 2012, SSP Informational Meeting held at 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA.

**Disability Evaluations**

**Q. Will individuals currently eligible for SSP because of a disability need to have a new disability evaluation performed?**

A. No. The disability evaluation used to establish an individual’s eligibility for SSI or SSDI is valid for SSP.

**Q. Where will disability evaluations for SSP be done?**

A. UMass Disability Evaluation Services (DES), which currently performs disability evaluations for MassHealth and DTA, will determine disability for SSP.

**Q. Will all new SSP recipients claiming a disability be evaluated by DES?**

A. No. Individuals who have a valid disability evaluation which was performed for SSI or SSDI, or who were evaluated and found disabled based on SSI (Title XVI) disability standards by DES for another program, will not need a new disability evaluation. It is estimated that less than 1% of the SSP ongoing population will require a DES disability evaluation.

**SSP Eligibility**

**Q. Will current SSP recipients need to reapply when the state begins administering the program?**

A. No. Current SSP recipients will continue to receive SSP benefits as long as they remain eligible for the program.

**Q. When the state begins administering the SSP, will individuals denied SSI because they are over-income need to apply for SSP?**

A. No. The state will receive information electronically on a daily basis about people who are denied SSI because they are over-income. The state will use this information to determine eligibility for SSP. Individuals may be contacted to provide additional information on their living situation or to have a disability evaluation performed.

**Q. Will all SSI recipients receive an SSP payment?**

A. Yes. All SSI recipients are eligible for an SSP payment. The SSP payment is based on the individual’s State Living Arrangement (SLA).

**Q. Are all individuals who are denied SSI benefits eligible for SSP?**

A. No, only SSI applicants who are denied SSI because they are over-income are potentially eligible for SSP. This is because SSP income limits are higher than SSI income limits. If determined eligible for SSP, these individuals are referred to as “SSP-only”.

**SSP Payments**

**Q. When will SSP payments be made?**

A. SSP payments will be available on the 1st of the month, the same day SSI payments are available.

**Q. When will retroactive payments be made?**

A. Retroactive payments will be made daily.

**Q. How will SSP payments be made?**

A. SSP payments will be made in the same way the individual’s SSI payment is made:

* Direct Deposit
* Direct Express
* Check

**Q. How many SSP recipients receive checks and how many are on Direct Deposit, including Direct Express?**

A. 75% of SSP recipients are on Direct Deposit, including Direct Express.

**SSP Customer Service and Outreach**

**Q. Will there be additional outreach to specific populations?**

A. Yes. The Customer Service Call Center will make calls to blind recipients to provide additional support in the transition. Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Commissioner Janet LaBreck will also have SSP as a topic on the Reading Radio program she hosts.

**Q. What hours will the Customer Service Call Center be open?**

A. The Customer Service Call Center (877-863-1128) will be available during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Customer Service Call Center will also be open Saturday, February 18, and the Presidents Day Holiday, Monday, February 20, to provide additional assistance following the mailing of the Massachusetts informational letter to current recipients.

**Q. Which languages can the Customer Service Call Center support?**

A. The Customer Service Call Center has staff who speak Spanish and Haitian Creole. For additional languages, the Pacific Interpreters language line will be used.

**Q. Where will SSP recipients report changes such as a new address, change in living situation or a change in income?**

A. Prior to April 1, 2012, all SSI and SSP recipients will report any changes to the Social Security Administration.

After April 1, 2012:

* SSP recipients who also receive SSI will continue to report any changes to the Social Security Administration.
* SSP recipients who do not receive SSI and only receive the state benefit will report changes to the Customer Service Call Center at 877-863-1128.

**Q. What if an SSI-SSP recipient does not receive their SSP check or there is a problem with their SSP Direct Deposit?**

A. Any problem with receipt of an SSP check or with an SSP Direct Deposit should be reported to the Customer Service Call Center at 877-863-1128.