

10A NCAC 71U .0206 STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCES

(a) The State Division of Social Services shall establish standard utility allowances for use in calculating shelter costs of those households which incur utility costs separate and apart from their rent or mortgage payments. The standard utility allowances shall be developed in conjunction with data gathered through quality control sampling and surveys of utility company rates. Once the Division gathers the sampling information and the average costs information from utilities companies, the Division shall calculate the average amounts to determine a statewide average for each type of utility cost for standard, basic, and telephone utility allowances. The standard and basic utility allowances are increased by household size. The amount of increase or decrease is calculated from the average statewide increase in utility costs per household size from the previous year.

(b) Types of utility allowances:

- (1) Standard utility allowance includes the cost of heating and cooling (air conditioning), cooking fuel, electricity, and the basic service fee for one telephone, water, sewerage, and garbage collection.
- (2) Basic utility allowance includes at least two non-heating or non-cooling utility expenses, such as cooking fuel, electricity, and the basic service fee for one telephone, water, sewerage, and garbage collection.
- (3) Telephone utility allowance includes the basic telephone services, fees, and applicable taxes.

(c) Standard utility allowances are binding upon the household for a period of 12 months following certification (initial or recertification). If the household moves before the expiration of the 12 month period and becomes ineligible for the standard, basic, or telephone allowance, the agency shall make the appropriate change.

(d) The Division shall review the standard utility allowances annually and adjust the allowance as necessary to reflect changes in the cost of the utilities. The annual update shall be effective on October 1 of each calendar year to coincide with annual, federal adjustments of the combined dependent care and shelter deduction. The annual update shall be based on information published by the North Carolina Department of Administration, Office of State Energy. The amount of the utility allowances shall not vary seasonally.

(e) The Division shall vary its standard and basic utility allowances by household size.

(f) The basic utility allowance shall be used by a household living in a public housing unit that charges the household only for excess utility costs provided the household is responsible for at least two non-heating or non-cooling utility expenses.

(g) The standard utility allowance shall be used when a household is billed for a heating or cooling component not totally paid by a vendor payment.

(h) Multiple households living in the same residence and sharing utility costs are allowed the standard or basic utility allowance for their household size.

History Note: Authority G.S. 108A-25; 108A-51; 143B-153; 7 C.F.R. 273.9(d)(6); 7 USC Section 2014(e)(6)(C); P.L. 107-171; Eff. April 1, 1982; Amended Eff. March 1, 1990; July 1, 1984; Temporary Amendment Eff. February 1, 2003; Amended Eff. August 1, 2004; Readopted Eff. October 1, 2021.