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**Sent:** Wednesday, February 27, 2013 3:55 PM  
**To:** MFH-RHIIP-TIPS-L@hudlist.hud.gov  
**Subject:** RHIIP Listserv #296 - Direct Express Debit Cards

**RHIIP Listserv Posting #296**

**February 27, 2013**

Welcome to the MULTIFAMILY HOUSING RENTAL HOUSING INTEGRITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (RHIIP) LISTSERV that brings you up-to-date RHIIP related publications, news, information and occupancy tips in an effort to help reduce errors in rent determinations and subsidy calculations.

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**Social Security Benefits Move Fully Electronic  
Effective by March 1, 2013**

**Clarification on the Treatment of the Direct Express Debit Card**

The U.S. Social Security Administration has a new policy which will eliminate the option for Social Security and SSI recipients to receive their benefits in the form of paper checks beginning on March 1, 2013. Recipients will continue to have the option to use direct deposit for their benefits or they may choose to receive a "Direct Express Debit Card." The debit card is automatically loaded with a recipient's benefits on the appropriate payment day of each month. The card is not associated with the recipient's bank account and funds cannot be added to the card by the card holder.

We have received several inquiries about the Direct Express Debit Card and how it will affect income and asset calculations for tenants of HUD subsidized properties. In order to remain consistent with HUD regulations, benefits received through direct deposit OR the Direct Express Debit Card will continue to be treated as income. The balance on the Direct Express Debit Card is also considered an asset and will be verified consistent with existing savings account verification requirements. Specifically, tenants who receive their benefit on a Direct Express Debit Card will need to provide an account balance no more than 120 days old at the time of recertification. This balance can be obtained from an ATM, though the online account service, or a paper statement. The verification document must identify the account and the account holder. If the total household assets do not exceed \$5,000, no income will be derived from this asset. If household assets exceed \$5,000, assets should be imputed at the standard rate of 2%.

For more information, please visit the SSA website at: <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10073.html>

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You can view the RHIIP Tips Archives, under "Listserv-Multifamily RHIIP Tips" at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/rhiip/mfhrhiip.cfm>

Please encourage others to sign-up for the Listserv, so they too can receive current RHIIP related information from HUD <http://www.hud.gov/subscribe/maillinglist.cfm>

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