



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Social Services

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

MICHAEL BECKETTS • Assistant Secretary for Human Services

January 11, 2019

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Administrators, Managers and Supervisors
Program Integrity Supervisors and Investigators

Subject: Federal Shutdown and Food and Nutrition Services Impact

Priority: Action Required

Earlier today you received a letter providing information about the impact of the federal shutdown on Food and Nutrition Services. Our team has remained in contact with our partners at the USDA and our EBT card vendor. This information adds to the most current information DHHS has currently.

Early February Issuance

As previously communicated, FNS funds for beneficiaries will be loaded onto the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards and will be available to the family to use no later than January 20, 2019. To ensure that families have their benefits loaded onto their EBT cards, DHHS will transfer beneficiary information to the EBT vendor on January 14, 2019.

Any cases that cannot be processed due to a file error will be returned to NCFAST by the EBT card vendor on January 15th and assigned to the county as a task. To ensure that the household receives their FNS benefits it is critical that these cases are corrected immediately so the beneficiary information can be resubmitted to the EBT card vendor by January 16th. The EBT card vendor will not accept any additional beneficiary information for early issuance after January 16th.

Processing Recertifications

To ensure access to resources for food, FNS cases with January 2019 as the last month of their certification period will automatically have its certification period extended to February 28, 2019 if the recertification has not already been completed. Because the certification period is extended to the end of February, they have a new certification period that starts February 1st.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

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Currently, NCFAST has validation that will not allow a recertification to be processed prior to the first day of the certification period assigned to the case. NC FAST has identified the work needed to relax this requirement which will allow counties to continue processing these recertifications prior to February 1st.

Please be reminded that because the certification period for the extended cases has been moved to the beginning of February NCFAST currently will not allow these cases to be processed until a change is made to allow this functionality. There will be several days that these cases **will not** be able to be processed while we go through testing to ensure this change does not create an adverse effect on the cases. We have not yet determined the precise date of the update and additional information will be provided as soon as it is available.

While you are not able to process these cases in NCFAST at this time, the work to prepare the case for processing the recertification can occur while we are working relax the validation requirement.

Messaging

The Department has issued a press release (attached) to media outlets across North Carolina to ensure that households are informed that the benefits issued early are not additional or bonus benefits but are for February 2019 and no additional benefits will be issued until federal funding is authorized.

Additionally, DHHS will use social media and our website to provide information. We are partnering with the NC Retail Merchants Association and 211 to get the word out to the community. Additionally, a video is being created for the deaf and hard of hearing to be used in social media.

As always households may access their account information through the free mobile application called *ebtEDGE* or by calling the number on the back of the EBT card.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Locklear".

David Locklear, Deputy Director

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