



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

Date: February 5, 2021

Dear County Directors of Social Services:

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

Subject: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Expedited ePASS Applications

Priority: Information and Action Needed

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Due to COVID-19, there has been an increase in the number of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applications being submitted through the ePASS portal. The Division is aware of county concerns that the increase in applications and the current process of identifying expedited applications is hindering caseworkers from screening and processing applications to meet the seventh (7th) day availability requirement. This letter is to provide clarification on the processes and procedures to ensure expedited applications are identified and processed timely.

Currently, as designed, all FNS applications submitted through the ePASS portal are initially displayed as Non-Expedited on the Pending Applications Detailed Report. Once a caseworker accesses or views the application, NC FAST runs the expedited screening rules based on the applicant's responses to the screening questions. At that point, if the application is determined to be expedited, the updated status will begin to be displayed on the Pending Applications Detailed Report. After that, if the expedited status needs to be changed prior to the due date, the indicator may be removed (see [Marking or Unmarking an FNS Application as Expedited in FAST Help](#)).

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

All eligible households must have the opportunity to purchase food no later than the seventh (7th) day following the date of application, if eligible for expedited service. The day following the date of application is considered the first day of the seven-day timeframe. To ensure the seventh (7th) day timeframe is met all FNS applications and reapplications eligible for expedited service must be approved no later than the fourth (4th) calendar day. It is imperative that applications are assigned to caseworkers immediately upon receipt to be screened for expedited benefits. If it is determined that an application is not eligible for expedited service, the application should be unmarked as an expedite application within the seven-day timeframe. Refer to [Administrative Letter 1-2015](#) for detailed instructions.

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

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603
MAILING ADDRESS: 2420 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2420
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6300 • FAX: 919-334-1265

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

In order for the application to be identified as expedited on the Pending Application Detailed Report on the day of submission, NC FAST has made a system change to the designed process. The system changes regarding ePASS applications are as follows:

- The expedited screening rules will now be run on ALL FNS applications submitted through the ePASS portal upon submission (without a caseworker accessing or viewing)
- Newly submitted applications determined to be expedited based on the expedited screening questions will then display on the Pending Applications Detailed report as expedited.

The application must be evaluated to determine whether the expedited status needs to be changed. The caseworkers may utilize the Job Aid, [Marking or Unmarking an FNS Application as Expedited in FAST Help](#) for complete guidance on marking or unmarking an FNS application as expedited.

If you have any questions, please submit them to the Operational Support Team (OST) at dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services Section

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