



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

March 31, 2021

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services Programs Administrators, Managers and Supervisors

Subject: Department of Education Outreach Program

Priority: Information Only

The United States Department of Education (DE) announced additional assistance for college students and institutions through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants program. The additional assistance provides ongoing relief from the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Act of 2020. Refer to [Amended Student of Higher Education Work Requirement Exemption for](#) guidance.

The HEERF grants program will ensure that institutions have the financial support and resources needed to support their college students and alleviate the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 emergency. The program will also ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the campus and help institutions better address the academic needs of their college students.

The DE Office of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASA) will begin its own direct outreach to inform college students about the temporary changes to the work requirement exemptions for the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program. The outreach program from the DE office will use the FAFSA data, specifically the expected family contribution (EFC) and Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program eligibility, along with the FAFSA applicant's email address to communicate to every eligible college student who has an expected family contribution of \$0. The DE office will send letters over a period of ten day via email beginning on March 31, 2021. This is an attempt to get every eligible college student to apply for FNS benefits so that they no longer have to worry about their next meal. The college students may present the email as one part of the FNS eligibility requirements to their local agency as confirmation that the expected family contribution is \$0.

The college students will be informed by the DE Office of Federal Student Aid to contact their local Department of Social Services to learn how to apply for FNS benefits or to ask other questions.

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

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

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Sincerely,

Carla West

Carla West, Senior Director for Economic Security
Division of Social Services, Economic and Family Services

CLW/vd

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