



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

November 4, 2020

Dear County Directors of Social Services:

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services, Managers and Supervisors

Subject: Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension through June 30, 2021

Priority: For Information and Action

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act was signed into law recently allowing states the option to continue certain waiver options that have been approved during the Covid-19 pandemic. North Carolina has accepted the option to automatically extend all Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) cases that have a six-month certification period. Automatic extension will alleviate the need for FNS households to leave their homes to mail or deliver their recertification forms or to retrieve required verifications, reducing potential exposure to COVID-19. This automatic extension will apply to all FNS cases with a six-month certification period that ends between November 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021. The automatic extension does not apply to FNS cases with 12-month certification period or Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) cases.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

A. NC FAST Automatic Extension:

Each month between November 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, NC FAST will systematically extend the certification period for all FNS recertification cases with a six (6) month certification. NC FAST will issue a notification each month after the cases have been extended. The cases will be extended for an additional six months.

- This extension includes recertifications that are, in-progress, on-hold, or not started.
- Benefits for cases on-hold **will not** be released until the county reviews the case and releases the hold. The county must send a manual DSS-8551, Notice of Eligibility, Denial or Pending Status when the hold is removed to provide the FNS household adequate notice of the certification extension.

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

- Ensure that case workers are reviewing their on-hold decisions. Supervisors and Lead Workers can view their workers on-hold decisions to ensure tasks are being completed timely. If assistance is needed, you may refer to the “Viewing On-Hold Decisions-Supervisors & Lead Workers” job aid.
- All cases, except on-hold cases, that are automatically extended will receive a one-time approval notice (DSS-8551) as well as a one-time Change Report Form (DSS-8550). The one-time notices will not be available in NC FAST.
- NC FAST will not send out the DSS-2435, Notice of Expiration for recertification cases that have a certification period ending between November 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.
- FNS cases certification periods will be extended as follows:

Certification Period expiring:	New Cert From:	New Cert Through:
November 30, 2020	December 1, 2020	May 31, 2021
December 31, 2020	January 1, 2021	June 30, 2021
January 31, 2021	February 1, 2021	July 31, 2021
February 28, 2021	March 1, 2021	August 31, 2021
March 31, 2021	April 1, 2021	September 30, 2021
April 30, 2021	May 1, 2021	October 31, 2021
May 31, 2021	June 1, 2021	November 30, 2021
June 30, 2021	July 1, 2021	December 31, 2021

B. The following cases will be excluded from the automatic extension:

- Cases that are pending closure. These cases must be processed using normal procedures.
- Cases with a 12-month certification period.
- Simplified Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cases.

C. DSS-2435, Notice of Expiration for recertification received and in progress:

- The in-progress recertifications will be closed so that NC FAST can extend the certification period.
- If the county has received or receives the recertification form for cases that have a certification period ending between November 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, they are not required to react to information reported on the form.
- For recertification forms received document on the form that the certification period was extended due to COVID-19 pandemic and place the form in the case file.

D. Ongoing changes reported by the FNS household:

- If the client reports changes outside of the recertification form react to the change per policy outlined in FNS manual section 450.01.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Certification Extension applies only to 6-month certification cases with certification periods ending November 30, 2020 that have not been processed and recertifications ending December 31, 2020 through June 30, 2021. No action is needed by the county, NC FAST will complete the automated extension. Submit any questions regarding this information to the Operational Support Team (OST) at dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Locklear". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

David Locklear, Deputy Director

DL/rc

EFS-FNSEP-36-2020