



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

YVONNE COPELAND • Director, Division of Child and Family Well
Being

Date: October 11, 2024

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services Income Maintenance Caseworkers, Managers and Supervisors

Subject: Suspend Assessments for H and I Controlled Substance Felons

Priority: Information and Action Required

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene caused severe flooding and power outages in the western counties of North Carolina. To assist households the devastation has disrupted how services are delivered by the County Departments of Social Services in the western counties; therefore, a suspension of substance abuse assessments will be in place effective immediately for the following counties:

Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Henderson, Haywood, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey.

In North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applicants and recipients that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses are required to complete an assessment in order to meet the eligibility requirements for FNS. This requirement has been temporarily suspended until the next recertification.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

Applicant and recertified households that contain an individual with a H or I controlled substance felony are required to successfully complete and/or participate in an approved substance abuse program. This requirement is being temporarily suspended until their next recertification. The individuals must still meet their minimum six-month minimum disqualification period per FNS 290.02 A.1.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

1. The worker must explain to the FNS unit that the requirement to per [FNS 270 Controlled Substance Felons](#) is being suspended in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene and will be required at their next recertification.
2. To prevent cases from closing or recipients being removed from cases prematurely, the worker **MUST** take the following actions to enter evidence and document the suspension of the requirement in NC FAST:
 - a. Enter a sanction in NC FAST using the first day of the month following the end of the certification period as the start date. Do not enter an end date.
 - b. Document in the NC FAST notes that the initial assessment was waived following the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene and the individual must comply at the next recertification. Apply normal policy as outlined in [FNS 270 Controlled Substance Felons](#) at the next recertification.

Example:

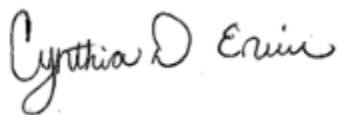
- If the certification period ends 1/31, the start date should be 2/1.
- Date of application: 4/24/2024.
- Date of conviction: 1/2/2018.
- Certification period assigned: April 2024 to September 2024.

Note: If the FNS case was closed prematurely the case **MUST** be reviewed for reopening and determine if an under issuance occurred. If an under issuance occurred, benefits can be restored up to twelve (12) months prior to the date the under issuance is discovered whichever of the following occurred first.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

This policy is effective for recertifications, any pending applications, and all new applications taken in the counties listed above. If you have any questions, please submit them to the Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist (CQIS) dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Ervin, Assistant Director
Division of Child and Family Well-Being

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