



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: December 16, 2022

Dear County Directors of Social Services

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

Subject: FNS Electronic Notices (e-Notices) Implementation

Effective: December 17, 2022

Priority: Information and Action

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved North Carolina's initiative for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) customers to receive electronic notices (eNotices). Like Medicaid recipients, FNS customers will now be able to receive certain FNS notices electronically in their ePASS account instead of through the mail. FNS applicants/recipients will have the option to create a profile that allows them to subscribe (opt-in) to receive eNotices. Depending on their selection when they subscribe, customers will receive either an email or text whenever an eNotice is available for them to view within their account. They will be able to login to ePASS using their enhanced, linked account and view their notices in PDF format through their secure inbox. Electronic notices contain the same information as the corresponding paper notices and customers have the opportunity to opt-out and go back to paper notices at any time.

The e-Notices functionality includes the following most frequently used FNS notices of case-related actions:

1. DSS-2435 - Notice of Expiration and Recertification Form,
2. DSS-6240 - Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Application,
3. DSS-8553 - Notice of Adverse Action (benefits reduced or terminated),
4. DSS-8639 - Effect of Mass Change on your Food Stamp Allotment/Notice to SNAP, and
5. DSS-8650 - Notice of Information Needed to Complete your Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

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Note: Other frequently used notices will be implemented at a later date. However, the notification of referral to the Treasury Offset Program will **not** be issued electronically.

II. BENEFITS FOR RECIPIENTS AND CASEWORKERS

The new e-Notices functionality will impact both FNS applicants/recipients and caseworkers. It may improve the applicant/recipient experience applying for or receiving FNS benefits and is expected to help customers act more quickly on notices to submit documents or complete a renewal. In addition, customers who receive timely information are less likely to call to inquire about case status.

The change is expected to simplify processes for caseworkers and help with timeliness and efficiency. Caseworkers will ideally see a decrease in workload when it comes to answering applicants/recipients calls and questions regarding their case status. This new functionality will give time back to caseworkers and allow them to focus on other priority tasks. e-Notices will also reduce printing and mailing costs, decrease lost notices and result in faster receipt of notices, create easier access within the portal, and decrease returned mail for households who lack a fixed permanent address.

III. OVERALL PROCESS

For an applicant/recipient to subscribe to eNotices, they first must establish an ePASS account, which then must be linked and enhanced. Users who already have an existing ePASS account do not need to create a new account. As a reminder, there is an identification requirement to link/enhance the account. Please refer to the training material mentioned in Section V of this DCDL.

Afterwards, the applicant/recipient can opt in (subscribe) to eNotices and select to receive an email or text prompting them to visit their online ePASS account each time an e-Notice is issued and available for viewing. Once they opt in to eNotices they will receive a confirmation letter through the USPS mail. Customers can opt out of eNotices at any time.

Customers also have the option to request specific eNotices via regular mail as well as be unsubscribed from eNotices altogether. Besides requesting to receive specific notices by mail, there are 6 reasons that would result in the eNotice(s) being switched to back paper notices:

1. Client unsubscribed
2. Caseworker unsubscribed
3. Client's account is delinked from their FNS case
4. Client's account is delinked due to numerous invalid user login attempts
5. 1 hard bounce of email notification (undeliverable, invalid/inactive)
6. 10 soft bounces of email or text notification (temporarily undeliverable)

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective December 17, 2022. If you have any questions, please the Continuous Quality Improvement Team (CQI) dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

V. TRAINING

A training package for the new functionality will be made available to caseworkers via Learning Gateway on December 19, 2022. Instructions on how and when to link/delink the FNS applicant/recipient's ePASS account as well as how to subscribe them to eNotices will be detailed in a web-based course titled "**ePASS Linking and Delinking Enhanced Accounts**". There will be an accompanying job aid available in both the Learning Gateway and in NC FAST Help which caseworkers can download for step by step instructions.

A separate job aid titled "**FNS eNotices Subscription History**" will be published which details the process on how to access and review eNotices subscription history. This job aid will support caseworkers when they receive calls from customers needing assistance understanding how or why they've been unsubscribed and how to remediate. This job aid explains how to check the subscription history and provides scenarios when the customer may be unsubscribed and what steps the customer should take to resubscribe. This will also be available in both Learning Gateway and NC FAST Help.

We are also developing an updated video about enhancing ePASS accounts and subscribing to eNotices for customers to instruct them on how to set up an ePASS account, enhance and link their account, and subscribe to eNotices. This video will also be made available to view in NCFast Help and Learning Gateway so staff can answer customer questions and assist customers with this process if needed. We will send a terminal message when this instructional video is available.

Sincerely,



Madhu Vulimiri, MPP
Deputy Director
Division of Child and Family Well-Being

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