

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
**EFS\_FNS\_AL-23-2016**  
**Food Nutrition Services POLICY REMINDERS AND PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS**  
**(December 12, 2016)**

**(Food and Nutrition Services)**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

**ATTENTION:** Food and Nutrition Services Managers, Supervisors and Program Integrity Supervisors

**DATE:** December 12, 2016

**SUBJECT:** FNS Policy Reminders and Procedural Requirements

**EFFECTIVE:** Upon Receipt

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The purpose of this letter is to provide policy reminders and procedural clarifications regarding Food and Nutrition Services Simplified Reporting and Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs).

**II. POLICY PROCEDURES**

**1. Simplified Reporting**

Simplified reporting reduces reporting requirements and cuts the frequency of reapplications. The Households that are subject to Simplified Reporting are required to report if one of the following changes occur during the certification period:

- a. Changes which cause the household's ongoing gross income to exceed 130 percent of the poverty income guidelines for household size.
- b. ABAWDs subject to the time limit must report any changes in work hours that bring an individual below 20 hours per week, or 80 hours averaged monthly, during the certification period.

Changes must be reported no later than 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month following the month in which the change occurred. Simplified reporting households are not required to report any changes other than the changes listed above.

**2. Simplified Reporting - Certification Length**

Households in which all members are a specified person with no earned income may be given 12-month certification periods. All other households are given 6-month certification periods and must not be changed by the caseworker.

**3. County Responsibilities**

Give the FNS unit a DSS-8550, Change Report Form, at certification and recertification. Explain the income reporting requirement for the appropriate FNS unit size and identify the maximum income amount on the DSS-8550. Indicate on the DSS-8550 that the

household has no further income reporting requirements other than when the household's income exceeds the 130% maximum allowable gross income limit. Instruct the household to add the gross amount of all sources of income to get the total amount of monthly income.

Provide the FNS unit with a new DSS-8550 if the FNS unit returns a DSS-8550 during the certification period. During the certification period the maximum allowable gross income limit that is identified for its household size at the time of certification does not change regardless of changes that may occur to the household size.

**4. ABAWD Regain Eligibility**

ABAWDS who have exhausted their 3 countable months may regain eligibility at any time by meeting ABAWD work requirements for 30 consecutive days, meeting an exemption from ABAWD work requirements or when their 3-year period expires. The ABAWDs who can verify that they will meet ABAWD work requirements within 30 days from the date of application can be reinstated. It is not necessary to hold applications for 30 days unless the ABAWD indicates they will meet the ABAWD work requirements within 30 days from the date of application.

There is no limit on how many times an ABAWD may regain eligibility. Once the ABAWD is proven to be eligible for program participation, benefits must be prorated from the date they regained eligibility.

**5. Bonus Months**

ABAWDs can gain an additional 3 months of eligibility. This provision:

- a. Applies only to ABAWDs who regained eligibility but are no longer fulfilling the work requirement.
- b. Provides that ABAWDs may only take advantage of this provision once in a 3-year period.
- c. The additional 3 months must be used consecutively.
- d. If the individual was working, the consecutive 3 months must start when the household reports that he or she is no longer in compliance with ABAWD work requirements.
- e. If the individual was participating in a work program or workfare program, the consecutive 3 months must start when it is determined the ABAWD is no longer in compliance.

The training material for ABAWD's can be reviewed in the Learning Gateway. Policies and procedures discussed in this letter will be reviewed during the Supervisor Cluster Meetings Scheduled December 2016.

If you have any FNS policy questions, please contact DHHS Operational Support Team (OST) at [ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Section Chief  
Economic and Family Services Section