

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 8-2020**  
**EFS\_FNS\_AL-8-2020**

**Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

**ATTENTION:** Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

**DATE:** April 15, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension  
for May 2020 Recertifications

**EFFECTIVE:** Upon Receipt

**PRIORITY:** For Information and Action

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

On March 10, 2020 Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 116, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Coordinate Response and Protective Actions to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19. The Department plans to extend the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) certification periods for **all** FNS cases that have certification periods ending May 31, 2020, with the exception of Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) cases. 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 the COVID-19.

**II. POLICY PROCEDURES**

On April 18, 2020, NC FAST will systematically extend the certification period for all FNS recertification cases with six and twelve-month certification periods ending May 31, 2020.

- 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.
- The report of cases on-hold is named "COVID\_MAY\_COVID\_MAY\_CERT\_EXTNS\_DSS\_ONHOLD\_CASES" and is located under Economic Reports; FNS Section in NC FAST Help. Reports are also attached.
- 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.
- This does not include those cases that are pending closure. These cases must be processed using normal procedures.
- The in-progress recertifications will be closed so that NC FAST can extend the certification period.
- NC FAST will not send out the DSS-2435, Notice of Expiration for recertification cases that have a certification period ending in May 31, 2020.

- 6-month certification cases:
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending May 31, 2020 will be extended – June 2020 to November 2020.
- 12-month certification cases:
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending May 31, 2020 will be extended - June 2020 to May 2021.

### **III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The Certification Extension applies only to cases with certification periods ending May 31, 2020 recertifications. 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](mailto:dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Locklear". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

David Locklear, Deputy Director  
Economic and Family Services

DL/rc