
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION

APPLICATIONS

FNS 410 COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

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Change #09-2021

August 9, 2021

410.01

APPLICATION AVAILABILITY AND RECEIPT

- A. The county Department of Social Services (DSS) must make application forms readily accessible to individuals and families interested in applying and any groups and/or organizations involved in outreach efforts.
- B. The county DSS must also provide an application form to anyone who requests the form.
- C. The county DSS must post signs in the certification office which explain the certification processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.
- D. Information regarding same day filing must also be included in outreach materials and on the application form.
- E. County DSS is responsible for making other arrangements, such as a home visit, for individuals who are physically or mentally unable to come to the county DSS office to apply and who do not have a representative willing or able to act on their behalf.
- F. County DSS must encourage households to file an application on the same day the household or its representative contacts the FNS office in person or by telephone and expresses interest in obtaining FNS or expresses concerns which indicate food insecurity.
 - 1. If a household contacting the FNS office by telephone does not wish to come to the appropriate office to file the application on the date of the telephone call, he may receive the application form by mail upon request. If the household chooses to have the application form mailed to them:
 - a. The county DSS must mail the application form to the household on the same date as the phone call.
 - b. The county DSS must inform the household that an application form that is delivered by mail is not considered a filed application until the application is signed and returned to the agency.
 - 2. If a household submits a written request for FNS, the county DSS must mail an application on the same day the request is received in the FNS office.

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3. If a county DSS has designated FNS offices to serve specific geographic areas, households may contact an office other than the one designated to serve the area where they reside. The household must be allowed to file an application on the same day.
4. If a household has mailed the application to the wrong office:
 - a. The FNS office must mail or fax the application to the appropriate office on the same day.
 - b. Processing time standards will not begin until the appropriate office receives the application.
 - c. If the receiving FNS office fails to mail or fax the application to the appropriate office on the same day, the receiving county DSS must process the application and transfer upon approval.
5. If a household attempts to apply for FNS in a county other than their county of residence:
 - a. If the worker has not started an application in NC FAST:
 - i. Inform the applicant that he must apply in the county in which he lives or online.
 - ii. Give the household the address and telephone number of the FNS office in their county of residence and information about the ePASS online portal.
 - b. If the worker has already started an application in NC FAST:
 - i. The worker must complete the application and transfer to the county of residence upon approval.
6. If the agency attempts to divert households from applying for Work First cash assistance, do the following:
 - a. Encourage applicants to continue with their application for FNS.
 - b. Explain that some of the restrictions and requirements of applying for Work First cash assistance, i.e., time limits, do not apply to FNS.
 - c. Inform households that receiving FNS does not affect Work First time limits that may be applicable to Work First families.

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410.02 DETERMINING DATE OF APPLICATION

The date used to determine when an application is filed is the earlier date of the following:

- A. The date the interview occurs if this is the same date the application is signed; **or**
- B. The date the signed application containing the minimum required information is received in the FNS office if this is prior to the date of the interview application (if received during non-business hours the date received will be the next business day). Refer to FNS 405.02 Applicant Right to Apply for minimum requirements for filed application.

410.03 REGISTRATION OF APPLICATION IN NC FAST

- A. All FNS applications must be registered within three (3) workdays from the time the application is filed.
- B. An application is registered by keying and submitting the Intelligent Evidence Gathering (IEG) in NC FAST.

Note: The 'add app' function is only appropriate when keying a late recertification or the county is instructed to by NC FAST Help desk or job aids. Do not use the 'add app' function for applications or reapplications.

- C. Once an application is registered, the processing due date will appear on the Incomplete Applications report on the County Case Profile or the Pending Application Details report on the Supervisor Dashboard.
- D. Additional information may also be available in Fast Help or on XPTR, as communicated by NC FAST.
- E. It is recommended that the county use the daily intake log and check NC FAST to ensure all initial applications and reapplications are registered in a timely manner.

410.04 DUPLICATE APPLICATIONS

As opportunities increase for households to apply for FNS, it is possible for counties to have more than one application for the same household. The United States Department of Agriculture has provided the following instructions for when this occurs.

- A. For additional applications received **prior** to disposition of the first application:
 - 1. Document the receipt of additional applications.

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2. Honor the date of the original application.
 3. Review the additional applications to determine if the household's circumstances have changed.
 4. Determine eligibility and/or benefit level using the combined information.
 5. All known changes in situation become part of the eligibility determination process.
- B. Review applications received **after** a household has been determined eligible:
1. Determine if the household's circumstances have changed.
 2. If a reportable change is in the new application, consider that application a change report and react accordingly.
 3. To prevent dual participation, send a DSS-8551 Notice of Eligibility, Denial, or Pending Status to deny the new application.
- C. Review SNAP applications received after the automated SNAP conversion.
1. If the individual or authorized representative reports a change that affects the SNAP benefit amount or eligibility, react to the reported change.
- D. The county must act on any application that the household submits after the date of a denial notice, provided the application contains a name, address, and signature.