

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES
EFS_FNS_AL 20-2018**

Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension

(October 30, 2018)

(Food and Nutrition Services)

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

DATE: October 30, 2018

SUBJECT: Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period
Extension for Chatham, Durham and Guilford Counties

EFFECTIVE: (Action Required) Upon Receipt

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

On September 13, 2018, Hurricane Florence brought severe flooding and power outages to many counties throughout North Carolina. Many families and individuals were directly impacted by Hurricane Florence. The Department requested a waiver from The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which allowed the extension of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) certification periods for an additional three counties that were impacted by Hurricane Florence. This extension only applies to the three counties identified within this letter. This waiver will ensure families impacted by the hurricane will be able to continue receipt of their benefits without interruption while counties work to provide disaster relief.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

USDA approved a Certification Extension Waiver for November 2018 and December 2018 recertifications for **Chatham, Durham and Guilford**. The certification period for all FNS November and December 2018 recertifications, including SNAP cases, will be extended for six months. This extension includes recertifications for both months that are, in-progress and not started. This does not include those that are pending closure or late October recertifications. The in-progress recertifications will be closed so that NC FAST can extend the certification period. If the county has received or receives the recertification form they are not required to react to information reported on the form, however if the client reports changes outside of the recertification form that result in an increase in benefits, the county is to react to the change. For recertification forms received, document on the form that the certification period was extended due to Hurricane Florence and place the form in the case file. If a non-disaster county receives the recertification form for a client in a disaster county, follow the same process as above.

- November recertification will be extended - December 2018 to May 2019
- December recertification will be extended – January 2019 to June 2019

Note: This extension does not apply to October late recertifications.

Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) actively receiving their “free” months will be given a good cause exemption for the month of September. A Work Non-Participation evidence record will be created by NC FAST for the month of September. ABAWDs that were removed from the benefit group of an active case for the month of September, October or November will also be given a good cause exemption for the month of September. For both situations, if the prior determination is on hold, the new reassessed determination will also be on hold and will have to be accepted by the case worker. If the November benefit has already issued, an Underpayment will be created and will need to be activated and issued by the caseworker if correct.

For those ABAWD cases that closed the end of September, October or November NC FAST will also give a good cause exemption for the month of September via a Work Non-Participation evidence record. The county will need to reopen the case, accept the new determination status for September, October and November, issue the November benefits, and then close the case effective November 30th if the ABAWD status did not change. A report will be posted in Fast Help for counties to identify the cases needing to be reopened.

Example 1:

ABAWD PRIOR to exemption:

July	August	September	October
Free month 1	Free month 2	Free month 3	

ABAWD AFTER the exemption:

July	August	September	October
Free month 1	Free month 2	Good Cause	Free month 3

Example 2:

ABAWD PRIOR to exemption:

August	September	October	November
Free month 1	Free month 2	Free month 3	

ABAWD AFTER the exemption:

August	September	October	November
Free month 1	Good Cause	Free month 2	Free month 3

Example 3:

ABAWD PRIOR to exemption:

September	October	November	December
Free month 1	Free month 2	Free month 3	

ABAWD AFTER the exemption:

September	October	November	December
Good Cause	Free month 1	Free month 2	Free Month 3

Notices will be sent to all households explaining the certification extension as well as the ABAWD good cause for the month of September.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Certification Extension Waiver applies only to November and December 2018 recertifications in the above-mentioned IA counties. Submit any questions regarding this information to the Operational Support Team (OST) at 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 prominent initial "D".

David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services