

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

EFS_FNS_AL-4-2018

(Food and Nutrition Services)

TO: County Directors of Social Services (Guilford and Rockingham County ONLY)

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

DATE: May 15, 2018

SUBJECT: Disaster Food and Nutrition Services Program

EFFECTIVE: May 17, 2018

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved a Disaster Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) Program for Guilford and Rockingham Counties. Individuals and families may be eligible for DFNS benefits if they lived in areas that were directly impacted by the tornado and severe storms on April 15, 2018 and meet the eligibility criteria. Households not affected by the tornado and severe storms are not eligible for DFNS benefits. Counties must ensure that applicants were impacted by the storms.

This letter provides instructions and procedures to be followed for administering the DFNS. This letter contains instructions, including policy, NC FAST and automation procedures.

Guilford and Rockingham Counties will take applications for **five (5) consecutive** days, beginning **Thursday, May 17, 2018** through **Monday May 21, 2018**. Counties need to designate a separate area for the disaster clients as counties must continue to operate their regular FNS program during normal business hours.

The only allowable application for disaster benefits is the DSS-1432 (Rev.10/16), Application for Disaster Food and Nutrition Services. The DFNS rules only apply to disaster applications taken during the five-day time period. Process and enter in NC FAST all approved, denied and withdrawn applications within three (3) days from the date of application.

The Division of Social Services will provide counties with DFNS on site training conducted by the Operational Support Team on **Wednesday, May 16, 2018**. This training is intended to provide instructions on implementing the DFNS program.

All employees who are assisting with the application taking process must review the following instructions carefully before the application process begins.

I. POLICY INSTRUCTIONS

A. General Procedures

1. Merit Based DSS staff must determine eligibility. Staff from other DSS agencies can take or enter applications. Volunteers cannot take applications, enter into NCFAST nor determine eligibility.
2. Only county DSS management/supervisors designated by the DSS Director can interview and determine eligibility for county department of social services employees. Applicants must be informed that 100% of these applications will be reviewed. Employee applications should be kept separate from other DFNS applications. The Division of Social Services will request copies of these applications for review within 30 days of the application processing period.
3. Dual participation is not allowed. An individual can only be included on one application/case. Each individual household member should be searched thoroughly in NCFAST to determine if that individual has a CNDS number and if currently included in an existing FNS case or DFNS application.

Note: Ineligible or disqualified household members of FNS cases that were active at the time of the disaster are eligible to apply for disaster benefits for themselves. Only enter the ineligible or disqualified individuals on the on the DFNS application, even though they are in the same household. Do not process the DFNS until instructed to, only pend the application.

Note: Active FNS recipients that were approved but prorated to zero for May benefits are eligible to apply for DFNS benefits.

4. If an individual is discovered to be included on more than one application or is included in an active FNS household take the following actions:
 - a. If an individual was a household member, in an active FNS household, they will show as ineligible on the DFNS application because they are included in another FNS household.
 - b. If an individual has already been approved on one DFNS application, they will show as ineligible on the second DFNS case as having concurrent benefits.
 - c. If an individual is discovered on more than one application prior to approval of either application, resolve the discrepancy before approving either application.
5. If a household is temporarily residing in a county that is not operating a DFNS Program, take the following action:
 - a. If the household considers the disaster county his permanent residence and resided there prior to the disaster, the client must return the county to apply for DFNS.

NOTE: Applicants cannot apply for DFNS in a county that is not operating a DFNS program.

- b. If the household has no intent to return to the disaster county and considers the non-disaster county their permanent residence, take a regular FNS application.
- 6. Enter **all** denials in NCFAST immediately. This will assist in tracking households who may attempt to apply after one application has been denied.
- 7. **Verification of identity is mandatory for the head of household and authorized representative.** This can be in the form of a picture ID or any other form of identification. This proof may include, but is not limited to, Social Security card, mail, or collateral statement. Identity is the only eligibility factor that must be verified.

Verification of residency and loss of income or inaccessibility of resources should be verified “when possible”. Verification of household composition should only be requested if questionable. Use county available resources for verification. If verification is not available, do not pend application, accept client’s statement.

NOTE: “When possible” means that the household has the verification available at the time of application, otherwise accept the client’s statement.

Accept client’s statement for the following: total net (take home) income, expenses, resources and Social Security Numbers, if available.

- 8. Applications may only be pended for the household to provide the following: verification of identity, when the applicant is unable to provide a statement of information necessary to complete the application, or when a written request from the head of household is needed for an authorized representative to use benefits. It is not necessary to complete the DSS-1688 that is used in the regular FNS program. Use the DSS-8650, FNS Notice of Information Needed, to request verification, **allow seven calendar** days for the client to provide verification. Deny the application for failure to provide verification on the fourth calendar day.
 - a. **ALL** other verifications are waived.
 - b. **Do not** complete OVS matches, as this has been waived.
- 9. When distributing the disaster EBT card, it is **vital that the sticker on the card is removed and placed on the application.** Applicants will take their application to a designated site to pick up their EBT card. A sticker located on the EBT card that contains the SUI and PAN numbers must be attached to the applicants’ application when the EBT card is issued. This will assist staff with entering the SUI and PAN numbers in NC FAST correctly. The PIN for the EBT card is the last four digits of the

card. Applicants must be notified of how they can change their PIN and encouraged to do so.

10. Penalty Warnings and Fraud posters must be **clearly displayed** at the entrances and various locations throughout the application sites.

B. Eligibility Criteria

1. The household must have lived or worked in the disaster area at the time of the disaster; and
2. Must plan on purchasing food during the disaster period; and
3. Must have experienced at least one of the following adverse effects:
 - a. Damage to or destruction of the household's home or self-employment; or
 - b. Suffered a food loss due to the disaster; or
 - c. Lost or inaccessible income, including reduction or termination of income, or a delay in receipt of income for residents of the impacted counties; or inaccessible liquid resources.

Note: Inaccessibility of resources is defined as not having access to liquid resources, such as money in a bank, for a period of 15 days or more during the disaster period.

- d. A disaster related expense that will be paid or anticipated to be paid during the benefit period, which **will not** be reimbursed by insurance or other entities.

Note: The reimbursement does not have to be received during the benefit period.

4. In order to be eligible for DFNS the total net (take-home) income received during the benefit period, plus accessible liquid resources, minus eligible disaster-related expenses shall not exceed the disaster gross income limit.

The above factors will be used to determine eligibility. All other FNS eligibility factors are waived and must not be addressed. This includes, but is not limited to eligibility requirements for citizenship/alien, students, ABAWD, substance abuse, required household members, disqualifications and Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

C. Completing the DFNS Application

1. Use the DSS-1432 Rev. (10/16) to determine eligibility. This form may be partially completed by applicant. All questions must be answered. If the applicant completes the application, the interviewer must review answers

for accuracy and completeness. All handwritten information must be legible. Only the interviewer or other designated staff must complete the shaded portions, Part F, of the application form.

2. Complete all information on the front page of the application including county name, application date and case/PDC number, Name of Head of household, permanent address, phone number and authorized representative information. Enter the disaster authorization period beginning date April 15, 2018 and ending date May 14, 2018.
 - a. Identity – The head of household and authorized representative must provide proof of identity. This can be in the form of a picture I.D. or any other form of identification. This proof may include, but is not limited to, Social Security card, mail, or collateral statement. **Identity is the only eligibility factor that must be verified.**
 - b. Authorized Representative - In order for an authorized representative to complete the application process and/or use the benefits, there must be a written request from the head of household. **It is not necessary to complete the DSS-1688 that is used in the regular FNS program.**
 - c. Residence – Verification should be attempted. If verification is not possible accept client statement that the client and his/her household lived in the disaster area at the time of the disaster.
 - d. Temporary Residence – The applicant should list the address and telephone number of his temporary residence, if applicable.
3. Part A, Household Situation, provides information to assist the agency in determining eligibility. Question 1 asks if the head of household is currently receiving FNS benefits. If **no**, proceed with the application. If **yes**, and the household lived in the disaster area and received May 2018 FNS benefits prior to the disaster, the household is not eligible for Disaster FNS benefits. Deny the application. These households are potentially eligible for replacement benefits and a supplement to bring the total benefits up to the maximum allotment for the household size, if the household has not already received the maximum allotment.
4. Part B, Household Members, include information for members of the FNS household. The applicant should include all household members who lived together and ate together prior to the disaster, this includes household members who may be temporarily living apart. If the applicant's household is temporarily staying with another household because of the disaster, do not include the other household members on the application.

To avoid duplication the application should include the following information.

- a. Name – Complete “proper” name of each household member

- b. Social Security Number – Applicant should provide a SSN for every household member, if available.
 - c. Birth Date – Applicant should provide birth dates for all household members.
 - d. Race – Complete for each household member
 - e. Sex – Complete for each household member
5. Part C, Income – includes information regarding sources, types and total net (take-home) amount of income received or expected to be received during the period April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018 by each household member. **Use actual income, do not round or convert.**

Note: Remember to deduct business-related expenses from self-employment income. It is very important to stress that the application must include all sources of income as well as total net income amounts.

6. Part D, Resources, include all cash that is currently available to the household. This is also referred to as “liquid resources.” The household should identify available resources and the amounts.

Note: Remember to deduct deposited income that is counted in Part C and outstanding checks from liquid resources.

7. Part E, Expenses, include disaster-related expenses. The household should provide accurate amounts for all disaster-related expenses.

For disaster-related expenses, **include expenses that the household paid or will pay from April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018. Do not** include expenses that were paid, will be paid or will be reimbursed by someone outside the household, such as costs covered or reimbursed by insurance or landlords. **Incurred regular expenses are not allowable.**

EXAMPLE: A household claims a \$50,000 loss because their home was destroyed. The household incurred the expense but it is very doubtful that the household will pay for a new home by May 14, 2018. It is not acceptable to allow a deductible amount as an expense if the deductible amount will be paid by May 14, 2018.

The household should provide the most accurate amounts for the following disaster-related expenses:

- a. Food destroyed in the disaster - List total dollar amount of food lost or destroyed in the disaster.
- b. Dependent care and related mileage due to disaster – List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household from April 15,

2018 through May 14, 2018. This does not include regular dependent care expenses. The cost must be as a result of the disaster.

- c. Funeral/medical expenses due to disaster - List actual expenses that are a result of the disaster and the amount paid or that will be paid by the household from April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018.
- d. Moving and storage costs - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018.
- e. Temporary shelter costs - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household from April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018. This can include lodging costs.
- f. Cost to protect property during disaster - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household from April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018 This can include, but is not limited to plywood, tape, batteries, and generators.
- g. Cost to repair or replace items for home or self-employment property. List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household from April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018.
- h. Other disaster-related expenses - The household must identify and describe other disaster-related expenses paid or amount that will be paid by the household from April 15, 2018 through May 14, 2018.
- i. Total expenses – add the total expenses.

8. Part F, Eligibility Computation –

- a. Add the total income for the household from Part C and enter in #1
- b. Add the total accessible cash resources for the household from Part D and enter in #2
- c. Add #1 and #2 and enter total in #3
- d. Add the total expenses from Part E and enter in #4
- e. Subtract #4 from #3 and enter total in #5
- f. Enter the Maximum Gross Income Limit from the Disaster Table in #6
- g. If the amount in #5 is equal to or less than #6 indicate that the household is eligible in #7

- h. If the amount in #5 is greater than #6 indicate that the household is ineligible in #8
- 9. Part G, **Penalty Warning** - includes penalty warnings that must be explained to the applicant. Review these warnings carefully with every applicant, preferably prior to completing the application process. The applicant's signature on the application is also certification that they understand the penalty warning information.
- 10. Part H, Certification and Signature - includes a statement of understanding that the applicant must read before signing the application.
 - a. If the applicant signed the application prior to the interview, review the statement during the interview. The application must be signed and dated to be valid.
 - b. The interviewer and the processor must print his or her name, and sign the application. The processor must also date the approval/denial and complete the certification period information, if applicable. The processor must also complete the denial reason section when applicable.
 - c. The individual entering the application into NCFAST must sign and date the application. If the application is entered in a county other than the household's county of residence, the interviewer must include his name, county, and phone number.

II. ACTIVE RECIPIENTS

Replacement Benefits

Active households who lived in the impacted areas and lost food as a result of the storms, and have not already requested replacement benefits, may request replacements from Thursday, May 17, 2018 through Monday, May 21, 2018. Evaluate Households needs for replacement as stated in FNS policy section 910. Verification may be requested for any questionable information. Replacement benefits must be keyed into NC FAST within three (3) days from the date of the completed affidavit.

Supplemental Benefits

Supplements will be issued for households in the affected areas who requested replacement benefits during the periods of April 16, 2018 through April 25, 2018 and May 17, 2018 through May 21, 2018. This will allow active April 2018 recipients of the two counties to receive the maximum allotment for their household size. The supplement is the difference between the household's April 2018 benefits and the maximum allotment for their household size. **The household size will not include any ineligible and disqualified members. Ineligible or disqualified individuals are eligible to apply for DFNS on their own.** Households that already received the maximum allotment for their household size will not receive a supplement.

Note: Automatic replacement benefits are not being issued to households effected in the disaster counties.

III. AUTOMATION INSTRUCTIONS

A. General Automation Procedures

NCFAST will be available for keying from 5:00 AM until 7:00 PM, **except for Sunday which will be from 12:00 PM until 7:00 PM.**

Instructions for keying are in [NC FAST Help](#)

1. These instructions are to be used in conjunction with the DSS-1432 (Rev. 10/16), Application for Disaster Food and Nutrition Services.
2. NCFAST is prepared to handle a DFNS Program with a few modifications from regular on-going FNS procedures.
3. Conduct a thorough Person Search on each household member. Register applicant(s) if not already registered in NC FAST. For more information, refer to the Registering Persons Job Aid
4. If an individual being researched appears in another FNS household for the month of application, do not include this individual in the DFNS household.

B. Application Approval

1. All disaster applications must be completed in NCFAST, even if there has been a previous FNS case for the household. This applies to FNS cases that are active at the time of the disaster and benefits prorated to zero.

NOTE: NCFAST will not allow an approval for an application when the county of residence is not one of the counties designated for DFNS.

2. When approving the application in NCFAST enter all required fields.
 - a. All applications will have a **one-month certification period** of May 1, 2018 through May 31, 2018.
 - b. Benefits will not be prorated. The system will default to the maximum allotment for the household size.
3. After case activation, return to the PDC and add Disaster EBT card. This must be completed in order to link the PDC to the EBT card.

C. Disposition of Applications Pending in NCFAST Prior to Disaster Application

1. If a pending regular FNS application is discovered when NCFAST is researched for an existing case, a Disaster FNS Application can be entered after the pending FNS application in the system is denied. Deny the pending FNS application, a denial notice will not be sent as long as the actions occur the same day.

Reopen the denied application using the original date of application; determine eligibility for regular FNS benefits effective after the disaster FNS program has ended. Do not issue duplicate benefits for the disaster certification month. A report will be run to identify all denied applications.

2. Disaster FNS cases cannot be converted to an ongoing case. NCFAST will run a batch to close all DFNS cases on May 31, 2018. If the applicant wishes to receive ongoing benefits, they must apply for regular FNS benefits.

IV. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A daily conference call will be held including, Saturday and Sunday evening, see information below.

Call in Number: 1-888-278-0296 Access code 8410903
May 17, 2018 through May 21, 2018.7:00 PM

Counties should be prepared to report out daily:

- Number of applications taken
- Number of applications approved
- Number applications denied
- If additional EBT cards are needed

DFNS Support Line 919-813-5490. Disaster Support will be provided as follows:
Thursday and Friday, May 17-18, 2018 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Sunday, May 20, 2018 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Monday, May 21, 2018 from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Any NCFAST Support needed after these dates and times use normal NCFAST Help Desk process or call 919-813-5400 and indicate it is DFNS.

Submit any questions regarding policy to the onsite OST representative. If they are unavailable then questions may be sent on the Policy Question Submission Form and email the form to DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov. To ensure these questions receive priority response, please include "Disaster" as the subject line when submitting.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director

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Attachments (6)

[Application Information](#)

[Income Limits](#)

[Fraud Poster/Fraud Poster\(sp\)](#)

[Penalty Warning Poster/Penalty Warning Poster\(sp\)](#)

[DSS-1432 Application for Disaster Food and Nutrition Services](#)

[DSS-1432\(sp\) Application for Disaster Food and Nutrition Services](#)