

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 26-2020  
EFS\_FNS\_AL-26-2020**

**Food and Nutrition Services**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

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

**DATE:** July 22, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension for July and August 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 Departments request to extend July and August 2020 certification periods was previously denied by United Department of Agriculture (USDA). However, USDA has reconsidered and approved to extend the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) certification periods for **all** FNS cases that have certification periods ending July 31, 2020 and August 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 July 24, 2020, NC FAST will systematically extend the certification period for all FNS recertification cases not completed with six and twelve-month certification periods ending July 31, 2020. NC FAST will systematically extend the certification period for all FNS recertification cases with six and twelve-month certification periods ending August 31, 2020. The date has yet to be determined, a subsequent communication will be issued.

- 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 reports of cases on-hold is named and will be located under Economic Reports; FNS Section in NC FAST Help on July 27, 2020.
  - "COVID\_July\_CERT\_EXTNS\_DSS\_ONHOLD\_CASES"
  - "COVID\_August\_CERT\_EXTNS\_DSS\_ONHOLD\_CASES"

- 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 August 31, 2020.
- 6-month certification cases:
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending July 31, 2020 will be extended – August 2020 to January 2021.
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending August 31, 2020 will be extended – September 2020 to February 2021.
- 12-month certification cases:
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending July 31, 2020 will be extended - August 2020 to July 2021.
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending August 31, 2020 will be extended - September 2020 to August 2021.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Certification Extension applies only to cases with certification periods ending July 31 that have not been processed by July 24, 2020 and recertifications ending August 31, 2020. 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".

David Locklear, Deputy Director  
Economic and Family Services

DL/rc