

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 39-2020
EFS_FNS_AL-39-2020**

Food and Nutrition Services

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

DATE: September 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Change Sanction Start Dates for H and I Controlled Substance Felons

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Receipt

PRIORITY: For Information and Action

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Counties are required to continue to suspend the substance abuse assessments for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applicants and recipients that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses in North Carolina by entering a future sanction date in NC FAST when processing applications, recertifications and changes. It has been brought to our attention that benefits are being reduced, cases closed or pending closure due to the sanction start dates were not extended past the current suspension month for assessments, October 2020. The sanction start dates must be changed in NC FAST by extending the sanction start date to the last day of the month after their new certification period ends to prevent premature closures and allow applicants and recipients time to comply once the suspension is lifted.

A. IMPLEMENTATION:

1. A report is posted in [FAST Help](#) >Economic Services>Reports>FNS>Drug Assessments>200915 Drug Assessments. Use the NC FAST report password to retrieve the report.
2. The report contains cases that have a status that is active, pending closure and closed. These cases have sanction start dates for the months August, September, and October 2020.

If the suspension of substance abuse assessments extends through December, additional reports will be posted in FAST Help.

- a. A second report will be posted in FAST Help October 1, 2020 which will contain cases with a sanction start date for the month November 2020.
- b. A third report will be posted in FAST Help November 2, 2020 which will contain cases with a sanction start date for the month December 2020.

3. The worker must take the following actions to enter evidence and document the suspension of the requirement in NC FAST:
 - a. Enter a sanction in NC FAST using the last day of the month following the last month of the certification period as the start date. Do not enter an end date.
 - b. Document in the NC FAST notes that the initial assessment was waived due to COVID-19 pandemic and the individual must comply at the next recertification. Apply normal policy as outlined in FNS 290 at the next recertification.

Example:

- Date of application: 4/24/2020.
 - Date of conviction: 1/2/2018.
 - Certification period assigned: April 2020 to September 2020.
 - The worker will enter a sanction in NC FAST using start date of 10/31/2020 and no end date.
 - The worker will document in the NC FAST notes that the initial assessment was waived due to COVID-19 pandemic and the individual must comply at the next recertification.
4. Once the sanction start dates are changed NC FAST will generate a notice. Caseworkers must ensure the correct notice is generated.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective upon receipt for recertifications, any pending applications and all new applications taken up to and including October 31, 2020. Submit any questions regarding this policy to Operational Support Team (OST) at DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services Section

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