

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 4-2020**  
**EFS\_FNS\_AL-4-2020 (Amended)**

**Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

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

**DATE:** March 27, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Food and Nutrition Services Certification Period Extension  
(Amended)

**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 Department plans to extend the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) certification periods for **all** FNS cases that have certification periods ending March 31 or April 30, 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 March 21, 2020, NC FAST will systematically extend the certification period for all FNS recertification cases with six and twelve-month certification periods ending March 31, 2020. NC FAST will systematically extend certification periods ending on April 30, 2020 for six or twelve months on March 28, 2020.

- This extension includes recertifications for both months 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 report of cases on-hold is named “COVID\_MAR\_COVID\_MAR\_CERT\_EXTNS\_DSS\_ONHOLD\_CASES” and “COVID\_APR\_CERT\_EXTNS\_DSS\_ONHOLD\_CASES.” These reports are located under Economic Reports; FNS Section in NC FAST Help. Reports are also attached.
- 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 or late February recertifications. 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 in April 30, 2020.
- If the county has received or receives the recertification form for cases that have a certification period ending March 31, 2020, they **are not required** to react to information reported on the form, however if the client reports changes outside of the recertification form that results in an increase in benefits, the county must react to the change.
- For recertification forms received document on the form that the certification period was extended due to COVID-19 pandemic and place the form in the case file.
- 6-month certification cases:
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending March 31, 2020 will be extended – April 2020 to September 2020.
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending April 30, 2020 will be extended – May 2020 to October 2020.
- 12-month certification cases:
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending March 31, 2020 will be extended - April 2020 to March 2021.
  - Recertification cases with certification periods ending April 30, 2020 will be extended – May 2020 to April 2021.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Certification Extension applies only to cases with certification periods ending March 31 and April 30, 2020 recertifications. 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,



David Locklear, Deputy Director  
Economic and Family Services

DL/rc

Attachments (2)

[COVID MAR CERT EXTNS DSS ONHOLD CASES.xlsx](#)  
[COVID APR CERT EXTNS DSS ONHOLD CASES.xlsx](#)