
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION
APPLICATIONS
FNS 420 NORMAL APPLICATION PROCESSING

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Change #09-2021

August 9, 2021

420.01 NORMAL APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME FRAME

Both Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applications and reapplications must be processed (approved) so the household has access to a valid EBT card **and** FNS benefits that provide them the opportunity to purchase food no later than the 30th calendar day following the date of application.

This includes initial applications and reapplications. Both are treated the same throughout FNS policy, unless otherwise noted.

- Applications: A FNS household that has never received FNS in North Carolina before is referred to as an application.
- Reapplication: A FNS household that has previously received FNS in North Carolina and is applying for assistance again is referred to as a reapplication.

420.02 NORMAL APPLICATION PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS

- A. All FNS applications and reapplications must be processed to allow the applicant to have a valid EBT card **and** access to FNS benefits that provide them the opportunity to purchase food **no later than the 30th day** from the date of application.
- B. It is recommended to process all applications within 5 days of receipt of all required verifications and expiration of request of non-required information, but no later than the time frame listed in 420.02 A.
- C. The first calendar day is the day following the date of application as defined in FNS 410.03 Determining Date of Application.
- D. If the household is ineligible for benefits, the denial must be keyed by the 30th day.
 1. When the 30th day falls on a non-workday, North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) automatically extends the processing due date to the next workday for denials.
 2. This information is available daily in NC FAST on the Reporting tab, using either the Incomplete Applications report on the County Case Profile or the Pending Application Details report on the Supervisor Dashboard.
 3. Additional information may also be available in NC FAST Help or on XPTR, as communicated by NC FAST.

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- E. If the household is eligible for the month of application but ineligible for the next month, NC FAST will approve the application for the initial month only and close the case for the subsequent month and issue notice to the FNS unit.
- F. If the household is ineligible for the month of application but eligible for the next month, NC FAST will deny the application for the initial month and approve for the subsequent month. The certification period will start with the first eligible month and should not include a denied month.
- G. If the household is ineligible on the date of application but eligible by the date of the interview, and the interview is conducted in the month of application, approve the application effective with the date of application. If the interview is conducted in the month following the month of application, deny assistance for the first month and approve the application effective the first calendar day of the second month. The certification period will start with the first eligible month and should not include a denied month.
- H. If the household is eligible on the date of application but ineligible by the date of the interview, and the interview is conducted in the month of application, deny the application. If the interview is conducted in the month following the month of application, approve the application effective with the date of application in the first month and deny assistance for the second month.

420.03 PENDING AN APPLICATION BEYOND THE PROCESSING DUE DATE

For initial applications, NC FAST produces a DSS-8592 Notice of Action Taken for applications pending on the processing due date. The DSS-8592 informs the applicant that the application is pending and instructs the applicant to contact the caseworker for the reason. The notice is mailed to the applicant on the first workday following the processing due date.

If an application pends beyond 30 days, process the application within **five** calendar days of receipt of the required verifications. There are two situations in which a FNS application may be allowed to pend beyond the processing due date. These situations are as follows.

- A. If eligibility cannot be determined because the agency failed to act timely, and the application cannot be processed by the 30th day:
 - 1. Continue to pend the application until eligibility is determined.
 - 2. Determine eligibility within **five** calendar days from receipt of the required information.
 - 3. If determined eligible, approve benefits from the date of application.
 - 4. Process the application no later than the 60th calendar day from the date of application.

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- B. If the FNS unit has good cause for not providing requested information by the processing due date:
1. Process the application no later than the 60th calendar day from the date of application.
 2. See good cause reasons listed in 350.07, Regulatory Delay.
 3. Determine eligibility within **five** calendar days from receipt of the required information.
 4. If eligible, authorize benefits from the date of application. If ineligible, deny benefits.
 5. If information is not received by the 60th calendar day, deny the application.

420.04 REGULATORY DELAY FOR NORMAL APPLICATIONS

Some normal applications may experience processing delays. NC FAST will offer the option to indicate a regulatory delay and the reason when appropriate. Delays with good cause are considered overdue by USDA. However, when appropriate, use regulatory delay to notate the reason for delay in NC FAST.

- A. The following are circumstances in which good cause is applicable, and regulatory delay is allowable.
1. The household reports a change, or a change becomes known late in the application-processing period. The change requires verification, and the household must be given ten calendar days to provide the needed verification. The ten-calendar day period extends beyond the 30th day.
 2. The household files an application but fails to appear for a first or second interview until after the 20th calendar day of the application-processing period. Allow ten calendar days to provide necessary verification requested at the interview. The ten-calendar day period extends beyond the 30th day.
 3. A household jointly applies for WORK FIRST/FNS or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/FNS. The FNS portion of the application is denied prior to the processing of the WORK FIRST or SSI application. The WORK FIRST or SSI is later approved. At this point, the original FNS application must be evaluated for categorical eligibility and reopened if eligible. Upon determining eligibility, the application is reopened, and the effective date of the application is retroactive to the original date of application.

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4. Other situations for good cause may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. These situations should be discussed with your FNS state representative prior to making the determination.
- B. Good cause **cannot** be used for a normal application that is not processed timely due to caseworker delay.

420.05 NORMAL APPLICATION PROCESSING TIMELINESS MEASURE

- A. Compliance is measured from the date the FNS household has both a valid EBT card **and** access to the FNS benefits. This is known as the Benefit Availability Date (BAVDT). To be considered timely the BAVDT must be equal to or less than 30 days from the date of application.
- B. If the FNS unit is issued a new EBT card when approved, you must allow one processing day plus two days for receipt of the EBT card from the date the application is processed to determine the BAVDT.
- C. Definitions and formulas used to calculate normal application timeliness:
 1. Application Date (AD) is the date a filed application is received.
 2. Disposition Date (DD) is the date the worker keys the approval in NC FAST.
 3. Benefit availability date (BAVDT)
 - a. If a new EBT card is issued
$$\text{BAVDT} = \text{DD} + 1 \text{ processing day} + 2 \text{ days for receipt of the EBT card}$$
 - b. If no new EBT card is issued
$$\text{BAVDT} = \text{DD} = 1 \text{ processing day}$$
 4. Processing Time (PT) is the number of days between the Application date and the Benefit availability date.
 - a. $\text{PT} = \text{BAVDT} - (\text{minus}) \text{AD}$
- D. To be considered timely the Processing Time must be **equal to or less** than 30 days.

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Examples from the FNS Application Timeliness Report:

TIMELINESS	Application date	Progapp Disposeddate	Expedite Indicator	Disposition	Bavdt	Process Time	Cardissue	Certification startdate
Timely	06/14/2021	06/14/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/15/2021	1	N	06/14/2021
Timely	06/14/2021	06/14/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/15/2021	1	N	06/14/2021
Timely	06/14/2021	06/17/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/20/2021	6	Y	06/14/2021
Timely	05/27/2021	06/17/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/20/2021	24	Y	05/27/2021
Timely	05/20/2021	06/18/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/19/2021	30	N	05/20/2021
Timely	05/20/2021	06/18/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/19/2021	30	N	05/20/2021
Timely	05/21/2021	06/17/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/20/2021	30	Y	05/21/2021
Untimely	05/18/2021	06/17/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/18/2021	31	N	05/18/2021
Untimely	05/19/2021	06/18/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/19/2021	31	N	05/19/2021
Untimely	05/17/2021	06/15/2021	Not Expedited	Approved	06/18/2021	32	Y	05/17/2021

E. Per USDA directive any application that the processing time is greater than 30 days is considered an overdue application. This includes worker error and client delay, including applications that are processed using regulatory delay.

Processing Deadline Examples:

1. Date of application is May 21st. The FNS household has never received FNS before and does not have an EBT card. Allow one processing day plus two days for receipt of the EBT card. The processing deadline is June 17th to be considered timely processing.

May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 DOA	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
June						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Process Deadline	18	19	20	21

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2. Date of application is May 20th. The FNS household previously received FNS and retained their EBT card and it is valid. The processing deadline is June 18th to be considered timely.

May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 DOA	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
June						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Process Deadline	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26

3. Date of application is June 5th. The FNS household previously received FNS and retained their EBT card and it is valid. Because July 4th is a holiday the processing deadline is July 3rd to be considered timely.

June						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5 DOA	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
July						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Process Deadline	4 Holiday	5

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4. Date of application is June 4th. The FNS household previously received FNS and retained their EBT card and it is valid. However, the FNS household failed to provide all the required information. The 30th day is July 4th. Because July 4th is a holiday the processing deadline is extended to the next workday. The processing deadline to deny the application is July 7th.

June						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 DOA	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
July						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Holiday	5
6	7 Process Deadline	8	9	10	11	12