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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL

### SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

#### FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

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#### **FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS**

**Change #7-2021**

**July 26, 2021**

#### **505.01 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- A. All Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) households must file an application for recertification at the end of their certification period to be determined eligible for continued benefits.
- B. FNS households that do not file an application for recertification are not eligible to continue participation in the FNS program.

#### **505.02 SYSTEM SELECTION OF CASES DUE FOR RECERTIFICATION**

- A. North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) automatically selects active FNS households that are subject to Simplified Reporting, prints the DSS-2435i/r FNS Notice of Expiration Recertification Form and mails the forms from Raleigh each month.
- B. The selection date for cases subject to Simplified Reporting occurs on the twelfth calendar day of the month prior to the last month of the certification period. If the selection date falls on a holiday or weekend, the selection date occurs on the workday prior to the tenth calendar day of the month.
  - 1. FNS households that report a change of address after the selection date will not receive their DSS-2435 at the new address. The worker must take the following actions for those FNS households reporting a change of address after the selection date:
    - a. Print a copy of the DSS-2435 and ensure the new mailing address is correctly reflected on the form.
    - b. Mail the DSS-2435 FNS to the new address 5 mailing days prior to first day of the month of the last month of certification period or within 5 days of the reported change, if reported during the last month of the certification period or suspense month.
- C. NC FAST generates and mails the FNS unit a DSS-2435 on the next to last mailing day of the month prior to the last month of the certification period.

#### **505.03 FILED AND UNFILED RECERTIFICATIONS**

- A. **Filed Recertifications:**
  - 1. **The DSS-2435 must contain at least the following information to be considered filed and accepted by the county:**

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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL

### SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

#### FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

---

- a) Signature of an adult member of the household or the FNS unit's authorized representative; **and**
- b) The applicant's name and address.

**Note:** A DSS-8207 application or a submitted ePASS application may be used and accepted as a recertification. Treat either of the forms the same as a DSS-2435 to determine ongoing eligibility.

#### B. Unfiled Recertifications:

1. Recertification forms that do not meet the minimum requirements above are considered unfiled. The worker must take the following actions:
  - a) Return the DSS-2435 for signature and/or applicant's name and address, along with a DSS-8650 Notice of Information Needed to Complete your Food and Nutrition Services informing the FNS household that the recertification cannot be accepted as it does not include the minimum information.
  - b) Retain a copy of the DSS-2435 and document in the NC FAST casefile to indicate that the recertification form did not meet the minimum requirements to be considered a filed recertification and was returned to the FNS unit.
  - c) This is not a filed recertification, take no further action unless the form is returned and meets the requirements in 505.03 A.
  - d) An unfiled DSS-2435 does not protect the FNS households date of recertification. The date of recertification will be the date the filed DSS-2435 FNS Notice of Expiration Recertification is returned to the agency.

**Note:** Do not return the DSS-2435 for failure to answer questions. Contact the FNS unit by telephone to complete the questions. If unable to contact by telephone, send a DSS-8650 to the household to request the required information.

#### 505.04 DETERMINING AND DOCUMENTATION OF DATE OF RECERTIFICATION

- A. The date of recertification is the date the filed DSS-2435 is received in the agency. See 505.03 A.
  1. If the DSS-2435 is received during non-business hours, the date received will be the next business day.

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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL

### SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

#### FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

---

2. A faxed or emailed DSS-2435 is acceptable. If the fax or email is received during non-business hours the date received will be the next business day.
3. If received prior to the first day of the last month of the certification period, do not return to the FNS unit. Take the following actions:
  - a) Contact the FNS unit, by telephone no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> workday of the last month of the certification period. Question the household to determine if any changes occurred between the time the FNS household completed the recertification and the first day of the last month of their certification period. Document the conversation in NC FAST.
    - i. Explain to the household that in the future they should not return the DSS-2435 prior to the first day of the last month of the certification period. Encourage them to return it as close to the first day of the month as possible.
    - ii. If unable to contact by telephone, send a DSS-8650 to request the household contact you. If the household does not contact the agency, deny for failure to provide information on the appropriate due date.
  - b) For recertifications received prior to the first day of the last month of their certification period the date of recertification will be considered the first day of the last month of their certification period.

#### B. Documentation of the Date of Recertification:

1. Date stamp (physical or electronically) with the date the filed DSS-2435 is received in the agency.
2. Document the date of recertification in NC FAST per instructions found in NC FAST Help.

#### 505.05 TYPES OF RECERTIFICATION

The type of application for recertification is determined by the date the filed recertification is received in the local agency. The three types of recertifications are as follows:

##### A. Timely:

A filed DSS-2435 that is received in the agency on or before the 15th calendar day of the last month of the current certification period.

##### B. Untimely:

**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL**

**SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS**

**FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS**

A filed DSS-2435 that is received in the agency between the 16th calendar day of the month and the last calendar day of the last month of the certification period.

**C. Late:**

A filed DSS-2435 that is received in the agency anytime during the month following the last month of the certification period.

Last Month of Certification							Month After Last Month of Certification						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31				
Timely				Untimely			Late						

**505.06 RESPONSIBLE AGENCY WHEN FNS HOUSEHOLD MOVES DURING THE CERTIFICATION PERIOD**

When the FNS household has moved within the state prior to the disposition of their DSS-2435, use the following guidelines to determine the county agency responsible for processing the recertification.

**A. Active county agency:**

1. The county agency the FNS household is currently active in is responsible for the recertification when the following conditions are met:
  - a) The household reports to the active county during the last two months of the certification period or during the month following the last month of the certification period (suspense month) that they have moved into a new county **and** the FNS household has not physically visited or submitted an application/recertification to the new county of residence.  
**or**
  - b) There are incomplete pending actions on the FNS household in the active county during the last two months of the certification period or during the suspense month.

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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL

### SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

#### FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

---

2. The active county agency is responsible for processing the recertification to completion. **Do not** refer the client or forward the recertification to the local agency of the new county of residence until the recertification is complete.

#### B. New County of Residence:

1. The county agency in the new county of residence is responsible for the recertification when the following conditions are met:
  - a) The client submits a recertification directly to the new local agency **or**
  - b) The client physically visits the local agency of their new county of residence during the last two months of their certification period or during their suspense month.
  - c) Do not require the client to complete a new application. Process the DSS-2435.
2. Exception to new county agency responsibility:
  - a) If any action is pending in the active county, the active county retains responsibility for the recertification process.
    - The new county of residence should fax the -2435 to the active county for completion within 3 business days of receipt.
    - Assist the FNS household with completion of the DSS-2435. Do not refer the client back to the active county to complete the process.

#### 505.07 RECERTIFICATION INTERVIEWS

##### A. Requirements:

1. FNS units are required to have a face-to-face or telephone interview at least once every 12 months.
2. NC FAST will include the requirement for an interview on the DSS-2435 based on information entered into NC FAST.
  - The “method” selected in NC FAST at each application/recertification will determine which version of the DSS-2435 is sent for the **next recertification**.
3. Do not require an interview earlier unless the FNS unit requests one to assist with completing the DSS-2435. However, if the worker speaks with the FNS unit to complete unanswered questions or clarify information, an interview may be completed at that time.

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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL

### SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

---

#### FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

---

##### B. Documentation:

Document interview appointment and interview date as an event in NC FAST using job aids found in NC FAST Help.

##### C. Procedures for scheduling interviews:

It is encouraged that the local agency conducts telephone interviews whenever possible.

When a filed DSS-2435 is returned to the local DSS and an interview is required:

1. Contact the FNS unit by telephone to conduct the recertification interview within 3 business days of receipt of the filed recertification.
2. If the household cannot be contacted by the telephone, a DSS-8650 must be mailed with a scheduled appointment:

- a) Mail the FNS unit a DSS-8650 with a scheduled appointment. The DSS-8650 must include:

- A specific date,
- A specific time, and
- A method of the interview (telephone or face-to-face). The appointment may be either a telephone or office interview.
- The worker should review the DSS-2435. If there are missing verifications that were not provided with the recertification form, the worker may request those verifications on the same DSS-8650 used to schedule interview.
  - Only ask for verifications that are indicated by the information provided on the recertification form.

**Example:** The recertification form indicates that no one in the home is working. Unless otherwise questionable, it would not be acceptable to request wages or verification of income at this point on speculation that someone in the home is working.

- b) Conduct a face-to-face or telephone recertification interview for a Simplified Reporting household at one of the following locations:

- The department of social services (DSS) agency; or
- The FNS unit's residence; or

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## FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES MANUAL

### SIMPLIFIED REPORTING HOUSEHOLDS

---

#### FNS 505 SIMPLIFIED REPORTING RECERTIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS

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- Any other mutually acceptable location.

#### D. Failure to complete an interview:

If the FNS unit fails to complete the recertification interview deny the recertification for failure to complete an interview, using the appropriate processing time frame standards based on the type of recertification. If the client contacts the agency to complete the interview within the reopen period, the case may be reopened after the interview is completed **and** all required verifications are received. See FNS 510 Simplified Reporting Recertification Procedures for reopen period.

#### **505.08 CHANGES DURING THE RECERTIFICATION PROCESS**

Eligibility for recertification/reapplications is determined based on circumstances anticipated for the certification period starting the month following the expiration of the current certification period.

When the FNS unit reports a change or a change becomes known to the agency prior to disposition of the recertification, take the following actions:

- A. Include the changed information when determining eligibility for the new certification period.
- B. Evaluate the changed information. Use a DSS-8650 to request additional information. Allow the FNS unit ten calendar days to provide the needed information.
- C. If the DSS-8650 expiration date extends beyond the end of the current certification period due to the date the change was reported:
  1. Do not close the case on the last workday.
  2. Process the change within five calendar days of receipt of the final verification if provided by the DSS-8650 expiration date, do not prorate benefits.
  3. If the FNS unit fails to provide the requested verification, close the case on the DSS-8650 expiration date. If the DSS-8650 expiration date falls on a weekend or a holiday, close the case on the next workday.
  4. Timely and Untimely recertification: If the requested verification is received after the extended expiration date of the DSS-8650 but on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> day from the last day of the certification period, reopen the case using the date that the information is received as the new date of application and prorate benefits.