

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 6-2013  
(Work First)**

**TO:** COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION:** Work First Program Managers and Supervisors

**DATE:** November 25, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Issuance of Work First Cash Assistance payments in NC FAST

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon Receipt

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance to counties regarding the issuance of Work First cash assistance payments in NC FAST at application for work eligible individuals. In August 2013, counties began entering applications for Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) in the North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) automated case management system. For applications entered in NC FAST one month and approved the next month, the system will issue a combined cash assistance payment for the month of application and the initial ongoing month.

Work eligible individuals are required to comply with all provisions outlined on their Outcome Plan (Mutual Responsibility Agreement-B, Plan of Action) prior to receiving the ongoing cash assistance payment. Presently, NC FAST will issue the initial ongoing payment prior to individuals complying with their Outcome Plan.

**II. POLICY PROCEDURES**

**A. Applications entered in NC FAST**

1. Workers are required to explain to all work eligible applicants the Work First Benefits (WFB) requirements to receive ongoing cash assistance payments. Workers should develop the Outcome Plan within five work days of the date of application as outlined in Work First Policy Manual Section 119.
2. To avoid issuing combined payments, workers should process Work First cash assistance applications during the month of application if they have received all verifications. If a case is processed after the month of application, the participant will receive their first full month of benefits before they complete the Outcome Plan requirements for that month.
3. Workers are required to explain to all work eligible applicants that they may receive a combined cash assistance payment, which includes the prorated amount for the month of application and the initial ongoing payment. The combined payment is not considered a client overpayment.

Example: Applicant applies on September 17, 2013 and the case is not approved for benefits until October 23, 2013. The system will automatically issue the September prorated benefit amount of \$100 and the ongoing October benefit amount of \$236 will also be issued for a combined payment of \$336 in October.

4. If a case is approved in the month after the application is made and the applicant has complied with the Outcome Plan during the first full month of benefits, they will not receive a cash assistance payment in the next month. The combined payment will be for the

application month and the initial benefit month, resulting in a check not being received in the third month.

Example: Applicant applies on September 17, 2013 and the case is not approved for benefits until October 23, 2013. The system will automatically issue the September prorated benefit amount of \$100 and the ongoing October benefit amount of \$236 will also be issued for a combined payment of \$336 in October. In November the participant complies with the Outcome plan, the November benefit would be issued in December after compliance is verified.

5. If the applicant does not comply with all provisions of their Outcome Plan for the initial ongoing month, the worker will sanction the case for one month. The participant must miss one month of benefits. Workers should follow procedures outlined in NC FAST job aids on how to impose a sanction. The participant should continue to complete work activities in order to remain eligible to receive ongoing payments without having to reapply for benefits.

Example: On November 4, 2013 it is determined that the individual did not comply with the Outcome Plan in October. Workers should enter a sanction in the NC FAST system with a start and end date of 11/1/2013 - 11/30/2013. If the participant complies with the Outcome Plan requirements in December, they may receive the cash assistance payment in January 2014 for the month of December.

6. If the participant does not comply with the Outcome Plan during the sanction period, the worker will terminate the case. The participant may reapply for cash assistance at any time; however, they will not be eligible until the following month the case was terminated.

#### **B. Child Only and Ongoing WFB Cases**

Child only cases will continue to receive their Work First cash assistance payment near the beginning of each benefit month. Ongoing WFB cases must comply with the requirements of their Outcome Plan and provide verification to the worker to continue receiving cash assistance payments.

### **III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**


This policy is only applicable to WFFA applications entered in NC FAST at this time and does not apply to applications entered in the Eligibility Information System (EIS). Cases in EIS will continue to follow payment issuance and WFB requirements as outlined in the Work First Policy Manual.

### **IV. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is effective immediately for all Work First cash assistance cases entered in NC FAST until further notice.

Please email any questions regarding this policy to [WorkFirst.Support@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:WorkFirst.Support@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Acting Section Chief  
Economic and Family Services  
Division of Social Services

DL/wf

cc: Wayne Black  
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