

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 1-2016  
(Work First)**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

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

**DATE:** January 6, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Clarification on the Use of the Work First Family Assistance Application and Review Documentation Workbook and County Developed Forms

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon Receipt

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Prior to the conversion to the NC FAST automated case management system, Work First cash assistance cases were processed in the Eligibility Information System, EIS. The “application” document for EIS was the DSS-8124, Application for Work First Family Assistance, MA, Refugee, and SA. The DSS-8124 is obsolete and is not the application document for the NC FAST case management system.

The purpose of this letter is to provide clarification regarding the use of the [DSS-8228, Work First Family Assistance Application and Review Documentation Workbook](#). The DSS-8228 is a tool to aid county agencies in documenting the family’s situation. The following provides the policy for when to use the DSS-8228 to support the eligibility determination process within NC FAST system. Guidance is also given regarding the use of county developed forms within the Work First program.

**II. POLICY PROCEDURES**

The application process for NC FAST consists of responses by the applicant to the Intelligent Evidence Gathering (IEG) tool which results in the creation of an Application PDF. The IEG is designed to capture the required program eligibility factors for an application. The Application PDF is produced when the IEG is submitted in the NC FAST system. The resulting document, which includes a signature page, is considered the application for cash assistance, replacing the DSS-8124. The IEG populates the Evidence Dashboard and stores the date of application. The application date must be preserved to ensure case processing timelines are met and for the correct issuance of benefits.

**A. Usage of the DSS-8228**

**1. Application**

- a. Complete a search to determine if the applicant exists in NC FAST. If not already registered in NC FAST, register and add “New Traditional Application” from the Persons page. The case owner will complete the full IEG. “New Traditional Application” does not require the use of the DSS-8228.

- b. When an applicant who was previously registered in NC FAST as a minor child living with an adult care taker applies for assistance as an adult, it is considered an application.
- c. When an adult applicant who was a household member on a case in NC FAST applies for assistance as a separate household, it is considered an application.
- d. If an application interview cannot be completed in its entirety, for whatever reason, the case owner can generate an Application PDF with limited information. At minimum, the worker must complete the first page of the IEG and submit in NC FAST. This will produce the Application PDF and preserve the application date.
- e. The case owner must provide the applicant with a return appointment. It is strongly recommended that the [DSS 8146A, Notice of Information Needed to Determine Your Eligibility for Work First Family Assistance](#), be utilized to document the return appointment date and to inform the applicant of the information required for the interview.
- f. The worker should utilize the DSS-8228 at the return appointment, if the application interview was not completed in its entirety and an abbreviated IEG was submitted to NC FAST. This will allow the case owner to capture and record all eligibility requirements.

## **2. Reapplication**

- a. If the applicant currently exists in the NC FAST system and is not applying as a separate household, this is considered a reapplication. The case owner will select an Income Support case with an open Product Delivery Case (PDC), regardless of the program area. If there is not an open PDC, select the most current Income Support case that is open.
- b. The case owner will select the action button and choose “Add Application”, this is the one page application. The “Add Application” process requires the case owner to use the DSS-8228.
- c. The case owner must complete the DSS-8228 with the applicant.
- d. Once the DSS-8228 is completed and signed, submit the one page application in NC FAST. Review the information with the applicant and obtain their signature on the one page application. Provide the household with the DSS 8146A for any pending information.
- e. The case owner will use the information on the signed DSS-8228 to manage the Evidence Dashboard in NC FAST.

## **3. Adding a Person to a Case**

- a. The worker should document the reported change on the [DSS-1662, Verification of Change in Situation](#).

- b. The case owner must ensure that all eligibility factors are met and documented within the case record. The case owner may use the DSS-8228 to assist with managing the Evidence Dashboard for the person(s) being added to the case but it is not mandatory.
- c. Provide the household with the DSS 8146A for any pending information.
- d. The case owner will select the Income Support case in the NC FAST system with the active cash assistance PDC and manage the evidence for the person(s) being added to the case.

#### **4. Review**

- a. A Work First cash assistance review requires the case owner to complete the DSS-8228 with the household.
- b. Obtain a signature on the DSS-8228 and provide the household with the DSS 8146A for any pending information.
- c. When entering the recertification on the PDC, enter the date of the interview in the “Date Received” field and “in-Person” in the “Method” field. The case owner will then manage the Evidence Dashboard to determine eligibility for ongoing assistance.

#### **B. County Developed Forms**

Prior to the implementation of NC FAST, the North Carolina Division of Social Services (NC DSS) allowed a certain level of flexibility for county agency form development and use. The only requirement was that the form be a “comparable tool” and its use be approved by NC DSS. This permitted county social services agencies to use county-developed forms that contained all of the necessary components to document a family’s situation.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) initiated a Title VI Compliance Review and expressed concerns that some forms developed by county social services agencies were not in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. As a result, county agencies were instructed to review locally developed forms and NC DSS forms that were modified by the county social services agency. Please refer to [EFS-WF-05-2010](#) for information regarding those procedures.

Since 2010, no county developed or county modified NC DSS forms have been approved for use in the Work First program. As a result, unless the county social services agency has comparable approved forms that “grandfathered in” they are required to use NC DSS issued forms in the Work First program. This includes the DSS-8228 and its use as outlined above. Failure to use the appropriate program forms may result in a financial monitoring finding.

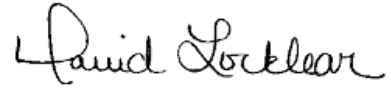
### **III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The DSS-8228 must be used at re-application and at the WFFA review. When an abbreviated IEG is submitted to NC FAST due to an incomplete application interview, complete the DSS-8228 at the return appointment. The DSS-8228 is optional when adding a person to an ongoing cash assistance case.

Review all program forms to ensure they comply with Work First program and policy requirements.

Please email any questions regarding this policy to DHHS Operational Support Team (OST) at [ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Locklear". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

David Locklear, Chief  
Economic and Family Services